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The book contains basic knowledge about the foundations of Islamic faith and their interpretation.

It is well suited for general readers interested in Islamic teachings and is specially recommended as a textbook for evening courses in the Foundations of Islam in mosques and madrasahs.

هذه ترجمة إلى اللغة الإنجليزية لرسالة في أسس العقيدة للشيخ محمد بن عودة السعوي فهي في الأصل ثمرة جهد مبارك قام به مشايخ فضلاء من أساتذة الجامعات كانت الوزارة قد عهدت إليهم بإعداد مناهج في مواد العلم الشرعي لمعهد الأئمة والخطباء

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Introduction

Religion Is a Set of Rules for Worshipping Allah

Almighty Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Omniscient, the Wise, thanks to His all-embracing knowledge, His wisdom, and His omnipotence has created this great Universe and established in it an order to bring into reality His Divine purpose, and not in vain, not for mere play or for the sake of entertainment. Almighty Allah said,

"And We created not the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, for mere play. We created them not except with truth, but most of them know not." Surah "Ad-Dukhān", ayahs 38-39.

He created the jinn and the mankind informed them about the great wisdom and the higher purpose of their creation. He said,

"And I (Allah) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me. I seek not any provision from them, nor do I ask that they should feed Me. Verily, Allah is the All-Pro-

vider, the Owner of Power, the Most Strong." Surah "Adh-Dhāriyāt", ayahs 56-58.

"O, Mankind! Worship your Lord (Allah), Who created you and those who were before you, so that you may become Al-Muttaqûn (the pious), Who has made the earth a resting place for you, and the sky a canopy, and sent down water from the sky and brought forth therewith fruits as a provision for you. Then do not set up rivals unto Allah while you know (that He Alone has the right to be worshipped)." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayahs 21-22.

Lord displayed His great mercy by facilitating the understanding and helping mankind to comprehend the ultimate truth, the truth that Allah exists, being the only Creator of all things, and that man is His creation; the truth that the purpose for which humankind was created is the worship of Allah as the One True God Alone. This is what Almighty Allah has obliged every human to, and that is why all humans, regardless of their will, are Allah's servants. This facilitation and help that Allah has bestowed on people consist in the following:

1. Allah created humans with an innate disposition to feel that there is only one God they need to worship, i.e. surrender their will by following His orders. If it was not for the influence of other people, humans would definitely follow their natural instinct. Yet certain human flaws or imitation of one or another turn them away from it. Allah Almighty said,

"So set you your face towards the religion of *Hanîf* (worship none but Allah Alone), Allah's *Fitrah* (the pure Allah's Islamic nature) with which He has created mankind. No change let there be in the religion of Allah: that is the straight religion, but most of men know not." Surah "Ar-Rūm", ayah 30.

Abu Hurairahh reported that Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "***Every child is born with a true faith [to worship none but Allah Alone], and then his par-***

ents convert him to Judaism or to Christianity or to Magianism, as an animal delivers a perfect baby animal. Do you find it mutilated?" Then Abu Hurairahh read Allah's statement: "**The pure Allah's Islamic nature with which He has created mankind**" Al-Bukhari 1359, 1385, Muslim 2658.

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "***Indeed Allah has commanded me to inform you of what you are unfamiliar with, and what He has told me today: 'Every wealth I have conferred upon a slave is lawful for him. Indeed, I have created My slaves being true in Faith, but the devils approached them and turned them away from their religion. They made unlawful for them what I had made lawful for them, and they ordered them to associate with Me in worship that for which I have revealed no evidence...***" Muslim 4/2197.

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2. Allah endowed humans with intelligence by virtue of which they understand that there exists a creator of all things. By means of intelligence a man can observe the surrounding signs and reflect on them. Anyone who possesses intellect, who ponders over the parts of the world and the sky, over the Earth, which is arranged in the universe, over the stars, the planets, the sun and the moon, the mountains, the trees, the seas and the rivers of the earth, the day and the night which shroud them, and over the absolute cosmic order which was established in the world and which regulates operation of everything, will surely comprehend that the Universe has an Almighty and All-Powerful Maker Who created it and is ruling it. Almighty Lord said:

"We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth. Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things?" Surah "Fussilat", ayah 53.

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3. Allah sent Messengers to various nations to reveal to people that they had been created by Allah and that He Alone had the right to be worshipped by people, as well as to warn them against worshipping anyone or anything else except Allah. Almighty Allah said,

"And verily, We have sent among every *Ummah* (community, nation) a Messenger [proclaiming]: 'Worship Allah, and keep away from *Tâghût* (all false deities)'." Surah "An-Nahl", ayah 36.

Allah also said,

"And We did not send any Messenger before you but We revealed to him (saying): 'None has the right to be worshipped but I (Allah), so worship Me'." Surah "Al-Anbiyāh", ayah 25.

Thus, thanks to such help from Allah humans feel in their hearts that they should worship one deity only and they understand it through reason and intelligence they have been endowed with. And it was through His Messengers that Almighty Allah communicated to people the way His creatures should worship Him.

Submission to Allah means obeying Allah by doing that which He has commanded and avoiding that which He has forbidden. Any action a person takes becomes manifest either in word or in deed. Deeds in turn can be outward, apparent, in other words noticeable to others, or they can be inward, hidden, or rather exist in the heart of man.

The notion of worship can also be defined like this: worship is a concept that includes all words and deeds, both outward and inward, that Allah loves and is pleased with.

Allah informed us of the words and deeds He loves by revealing His orders and prohibitions in the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Thus, religion is a set of rules for worshipping Allah Alone, which contain orders and prohibitions of Almighty Allah.

Allah named His religion Islam:

"Truly, the *Deen* (religion) with Allah is Islam." Surah "Āl-'Imrān", ayah 19.

"And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers." Surah "Āl-'Imrān", ayah 85.

The word "*Islam*" literally means submission to Almighty Allah, supreme surrender, resignation and humbling oneself in obeying the orders and heeding prohibitions revealed by the Lord.

Deeds of the Heart are the Basis of Worship

We have already mentioned that worshipping Allah manifests itself in words and in deeds, both inward and outward, which were indicated to us by Allah the Almighty.

Among the outward, or apparent, deeds are daily prayers (*salah*), the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*), charity (*sadaqah*), filial piety and deference to the ruler, helping the people of faith, offering sacrifice and many other actions.

As for the inward, or hidden, deeds, these are deeds of the heart, which no creation is aware of. Only Lord, the Great, the Almighty, alone knows and encompasses all that is in people's hearts.

"Allah knows what is in their hearts." Surah "An-Nisā'", ayah 63.

Deeds of the heart include belief in Allah, belief in His angels, belief in His Holy Books, belief in His Messengers, belief in the Day of Judgement, belief in the Divine Decree, whether good and bad, love of Allah, trust in Allah, fear of Allah's punishment, hope in Allah's mercy, asking Allah for help, seeking refuge with Allah, repentance to Allah, sincerity towards Allah, invocation to Allah.

The core basis of deeds of the heart and the religion on the whole is belief in Allah and belief in what has been ordered to believe in by Almighty Allah, otherwise the deeds would not make any sense. Almighty Allah has commanded us to believe wholeheartedly in the following six aspects:

1. Belief in Allah.
2. Belief in His angels.
3. Belief in His Books.
4. Belief in His Messengers.
5. Belief in the Day of Judgement.
6. Belief in the Divine Decree, whether good or bad.

Scholars have named these articles "the six pillars of faith (*eemaan*)".

"O you who believe! Believe in Allah, and His Messenger, and the Book which He has sent down to His Messenger, and the Scripture which He sent down to those who were before." Surah "An-Nisā'", ayah 136.

"It is not *Al-Birr* (piety) that you turn your faces towards east and west; but *Al-Birr* is the quality of the one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, the Prophets..." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 177.

"...whosoever disbelieves in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, then indeed he has strayed far away." Surah "An-Nisā'", ayah 136.

Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, "***Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, and to believe in divine decree, both good and bad.***"

In Arabic the word "*eemaan*" — "faith, belief" — is formed from the verb "*amana*", which means "to believe", "to be faithful", "to be trustworthy".

Arabists have pointed out that the meaning of the word "*eemaan*" is acceptance, approval. Having faith in these six pillars implies acknowledging them within the heart, being convinced in heart. It is for this reason that belief in these six pillars of faith is related to the deeds of the heart.

Belief in these six pillars of faith is the basis of the religion upon which all human worship is built. When a man adheres to a certain act of worship, believe in these pillars is always present in his heart. It is this faith that acts as a driving force for a person when he intends to perform both outward and inward deeds of the heart. Next we will see that any deed of the heart is rooted in the faith in Allah and is inseparable of it.

Types of Deeds of the Heart

Love of Allah

Love is one of the most important deeds of the heart, as we should love Allah the Almighty merely because He exists. The affection that believers feel towards their Lord will only grow stronger after they have entered the abode of bliss, while their fear will fade away with the disappearance of the conditions which cause it, for those who find themselves in Paradise will know no fear and no sorrow.

Both Almighty Allah and His Messenger talked about the love of faithful believers for Allah. Thus, for instance, Almighty Allah said,

"And of mankind are some who take (for worship) others besides Allah as rivals. They love them as they love Allah. But those who believe, love Allah more." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 165.

Almighty Allah also said,

"...whom He will love and they will love Him..." Surah "Al-Mā'idah", ayah 54.

The two "Sahihs" report a hadith which narrates that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, "***Whoever possesses the following three qualities will taste the sweetness of faith: The one to whom Allah and His Apostle become dearer than anything else; who loves a person, and he loves him only for Allah's sake; who hates to revert to atheism (disbelief) after Allah has brought him out from it, as he hates to be thrown into Fire.***"

Besides, Almighty Allah has said that He, in turn, also loves those servants of His who worship Him. For example, Almighty Allah said,

"And Allah did take Ibrâhîm as a *Khalîl* (an intimate friend)!" Surah "An-Nisā'", ayah 125.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Do good. Truly, Allah loves the good-doers." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 195.

Almighty Allah also said,

"...verily, then Allah loves the pious." Surah "Āl-'Imrān", ayah 76.

Many other examples of this kind can also be cited.

Almighty Allah has pointed out that there exists a measure of truthfulness for those who declare their love for Allah. The Lord Almighty said,

"Say: 'If you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you..." Surah "Āl-'Imrān", ayah 31.

In other words, Almighty Allah has explained that love of Him necessarily implies following Allah's messenger, and following a messenger will necessarily lead to Allah's affection for His servant.

The true essence of love resides in the eagerness to please the loved ones, which is reflected in displays of affection towards whatever they love and manifestations of hatred towards whatever they detest.

Fear of Allah's Punishment

Almighty Allah made it everyone's duty to fear, as He said,

"...so fear them not, but fear Me, if you are true believers." Surah "Āl-'Imrān", ayah 175.

Almighty Allah also said,

"...and fear none but Me!" Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 40.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Fear not men but fear Me." Surah "Al-Mā'idah", ayah 44.

Almighty Allah gave praise to those who stand in awe of Him, saying,

"Verily those who live in awe for fear of their Lord; and those who believe in the signs of their Lord; and those who join not anyone (in worship) as partners with their Lord; and those who give that which they give with their hearts full of fear, because they are sure to return to their Lord; it is these who hasten in the good deeds, and they are foremost in them." Surah "Al-Mu'minūn", ayah 57–61.

At-Tirmidhi and Imam Ahmad quote a hadith reported from Aisha, Allah be pleased with her, who said: "Once I asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, do the words of Allah: '**...who give that which they give with their hearts full of fear...**', indicate the ones who forni-

cate, drink wine and steal?' Upon this the Prophet answered: *'No, daughter of As-Siddiq, rather they are the ones who pray and fast, and give charity, yet fear that it will not be accepted from them.'"*

Hope in Allah

Allah Almighty said,

"Verily, those who have believed, and those who have emigrated and have striven hard in the Way of Allah, all these hope for Allah's Mercy. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful."

Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 218.

Allah Almighty also said,

"Whoever hopes for the meeting with Allah, then Allah's Term is surely coming; He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower."

Surah "Al-'Ankabūt", ayah 5.

Allah Almighty also said,

"So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord." Surah "Al-Kahf", ayah 110.

"Sahih Muslim" reports a hadith on the authority of Jabir, Allah be pleased with him: "I heard Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, say three days before his death: "*None of you should die but hoping only good from Allah.*"

In "Sahih al-Bukhari" a hadith, narrated on the authority of Jabir, Allah be pleased with him, reports that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "*Allah the Almighty says, 'I am just as My slave thinks I am, and I am with him as he remembers Me.'"*

Almighty Allah gave praise to those who stand in awe of Him and at the same time cherish hope for Him, saying:

"Those whom they call upon desire for themselves means of access to their Lord, as to which of them they should be the nearest; and they hope for His Mercy and fear His Torment. Verily, the Torment of your Lord is to be afraid of!" Surah "Al-Isrā'", ayah 57.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord... ?" Surah "Az-Zumar", ayah 9.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Their sides forsake their beds, to invoke their Lord in fear and hope..." Surah "As-Sajdah", ayah 16.

From all this it follows that every muslim should possess them both, that is to say feel fear and have hope. One of the people who devoted himself to the service of Allah said: "Fear and hope are like the two wings of a bird: if they are equal to each other, the bird will be able to stay in the air and its flight will be immaculate; if either of the wings is shorter than the other one, the bird will not be able to fly as it should; and if the bird loses both its wings, it will be on the verge of death."

Fear is sure to result in the rising of hope; if it was not the case, man would definitely fall in despair. Hope, in its turn, brings about the emergence of fear, since otherwise man would have a sensation of being completely safe; however, both despair and the feeling of complete safety are equally reprehensible.

Almighty Allah said,

"...and never give up hope of Allah's Mercy. Certainly no one despairs of Allah's Mercy, except the people who disbelieve." Surah "Yūsuf", ayah 87.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And who despairs of the Mercy of his Lord except those who are astray?" Surah "Al-Hijr", ayah 56.

Almighty Allah also said,

"None feels secure from the Plan of Allah except the people who are the losers." Surah "Al-A'rāf", ayah 99.

Such fear which prevents a person from doing something that is prohibited by Allah is really worthy of praise. As for hope, two kinds of it deserve praise:

1. The hope of those who were fulfilling their religious obligations guided by Allah's light and got their hopes up for Allah's reward.

2. The hope of those who used to commit sins but later confessed them to Allah and got their hopes up for His forgiveness and blessing.

Such hope indicates that a servant is aware of the generosity and mercy of Allah and expects Him to manifest them, and also that he is looking forward to the broadness of Allah's grace.

Invocation to Allah

Allah, the Almighty and the Glorious, said,

"Your Lord said, 'Invoke Me, I will respond to your invocation. Verily, those who scorn My worship will surely enter Hell in humiliation.'" Surah "Ghāfir", ayah 60.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret. He likes not the aggressors." Surah "Al-A'rāf", ayah 55.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And when My slaves ask you concerning Me, then, I am indeed near. I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when

he calls on Me. So let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 186.

"Sunan At-Tirmidhi" quotes a hadeeth reported from An-Nu'man bin Bashir, Allah be pleased with him, who narrated that once the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, "***Verily, supplication is itself the worship***", and then he recited the ayah which stated: "**Your Lord said: 'Invoke Me, I will respond to your invocation. Verily, those who scorn My worship will surely enter Hell in humiliation.'**" Surah "Al-Ghāfir", ayah 60.

Asking Allah for Help

Allah, the Great, the Almighty, said,

"You Alone we worship and You Alone we ask for help." Surah "Al-Fātihah", ayah 5.

As to the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, it is known that once he said to Ibn Abbas, Allah be pleased with both of them, "***If you ask, then ask Allah, and if you seek help, then seek help from Allah.***"

Seeking Refuge with Allah (isti'adha)

Almighty Allah said,

"So when you want to recite the Qur'ân, seek refuge with Allah from *Shaitân* (Satan), the outcast." Surah "An-Nahl", ayah 98.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Say, 'I seek refuge with the Lord of the daybreak, from the evil of what He has created...'" Surah "Al-Falaq", ayahs 1–2.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Say, 'I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, the God of mankind, from the evil of the whisperer who withdraws...' " Surah "An-Nās", ayahs 1–4.

Asking Allah for Help in times of trouble (istighatha)

Almighty Allah said,

"...when you sought help of your Lord and He answered you..." Surah "Al-Anfāl", ayah 9.

As it is known, Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, invoked Allah for help with these words, ***"O Living, o Existing, o Possessor of Majesty and Honour, o Creator of the heavens and the earth! In Your Mercy do I seek relief!***"

Trust in Allah (tawakkul)

In other words, trusting the heart to Allah which manifests itself in the confidence in His protection.

Allah the Almighty and the Glorious said,

"Put your trust in Allah if you are believers indeed." Surah "Al-Mā'idah", ayah 23.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And in Allah let the believers put their trust." Surah "Ibrāhīm", ayah 11.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And in Allah let those who trust, put their trust." Surah "Ibrāhīm", ayah 12.

Belief in Allah

Belief in Allah, the Great, the Powerful, is the first and the most important of the pillars of faith (*eemaan*); it is of paramount importance and provides the basis for the other pillars of faith, such as belief the angels, in the Holy Books, in the Messengers, in the Day of Judgement, and in the Divine Decree (*Al-Qadar*), whether good and bad. All of them, being derivatives of the belief in Allah, rest on this pillar and are built upon it.

The essence of faith in Allah, the Almighty and the Sublime, is having the heart full of belief in the following:

- only Allah is the One True God alone;
- only Allah alone is worthy of worship;
- only Allah alone possesses divine names and attributes.

These three basic convictions of the heart, which together constitute the essence of the Oneness of God, or *Tawheed*, are nothing less that the foundation upon which the whole religion rests.

Islam is a purely (absolutely) monotheistic religion as it is based on the conviction that Allah governs all things and performs all His acts alone, without any partners or assistants; that He alone has divine essence and possesses divine names and attributes, and has

no equals; and that just He alone is worthy of praise and worship, and has no equals.

As it is clear from the above, the Oneness of God — *tawheed*, which the Prophets and the Messengers of Allah came with, is composed of the three constituents:

1. The Oneness of Allah's Lordship (*Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*) is being convinced in heart that Almighty Allah alone is the Lord, the Sovereign, the Creator, the Provider of all things, He is the Giver of life and death, the One Who brings benefit and causes harm, the only One Who answers prayers in difficult times, the One Who is in control of all things, in Whose hand is all goodness, the One Who is able to do whatever He wills, and no one shares this power with Him.

2. The Oneness of Divinity (*Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah*) is being convinced in heart that Allah is the One True God alone, so all acts of worship should be devoted to Allah Alone.

3. The Oneness of the Divine Names and Attributes (*Tawheed al-Asma' wa as-Sifaat*) is being convinced in heart of all the divine names and attributes of Almighty Allah which He has affirmed for Himself in the Qur'an or which His Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has affirmed for Him in the authentic Sunnah, as well as denying that Allah has any faults or deficiencies and that He bears any resemblance to His creation. It means accepting the fact that Allah has knowledge of all things and is able to do whatever He wills, that He is the Ever-Living and the Sustainer of all existence, that neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. Everything occurs according to His will, and there is no limit to His wisdom. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing, the Compassionate, the Most Merciful. He established Himself on the Throne and is the Ruler of His kingdom. He is the Sovereign, the Most Holy, the Most Pure, the Guardian, the Protector, the Almighty, the Powerful, the Sublime. Truly, Allah is Pure and Exalted high above whatever partners they

associate with Him. And these are only a few of His beautiful names and sublime attributes.

Each of the three constituents of *Tawheed* is confirmed by ample evidence from the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

The Qur'an is totally devoted to the Oneness of Allah and narrates about its demands and the reward promised for complying with them, and also about the idolatry, its followers and the recompence for their deeds.

These three constituents of the Oneness of Allah were derived from the texts of the Qur'an and the Sunnah by the Scholars of Islam. A careful comprehensive analysis of the Sharia texts has made it possible to conceive religious truth, the point of which is that the Oneness of Allah, required from the servants, is the belief in that Allah is the One True God alone, the only One worthy of worship, and the only One Who possesses divine names and attributes. Anyone who does not subscribe to those beliefs in their totality is not a believer.

Oneness of Lordship (Tawheed al-Rububiyyah)

The Oneness of Allah's Lordship is the belief in heart that Allah alone performs divine acts. These include creation, provision, control, showing mercy, ruling, giving shape to creation, gifting and depriving, bringing benefits and causing harm, resurrection, destruction, sovereignty, predestination, and many other actions that no one else is capable of but Allah.

The Arabic word "*rububiyyah*" is derived from the verb "*rabba*", which means "to educate." Another of its derivatives is the noun

"*rabb*", which stands for "lord", "sovereign". Lordship is an attribute of Allah, the Sublime, the Almighty. In view of this, the word "rububiyyah" is formed from the noun "*rabb*", which in the Arabic language has a variety of meanings, including "a sovereign", "a lord everyone obeys to", "a reformer who improves the state of things."

Anyone who possesses intellect, who reflects on the parts of the world and the sky, on the Earth, which is established in the universe, on the stars, the planets, the sun and the moon, on the mountains, the trees, the seas and the rivers on the face of the earth, on the night and the day that shroud them, on the absolute and all-embracing order which has been established in the world and which all existence is subject to, will surely understand that the universe has an Almighty and All-Powerful Maker Who created it and is ruling it. And the more profoundly a man of sense thinks about all these deeds, the more occupied his mind is with these amazing creations, the clearer he understands that all this was created for the truth and with the truth, and that the universe presents scrolls with a collection of signs, and books which provide arguments and testimonies confirming the truth of everything that Almighty Allah stated about Himself and justifying His Oneness.

We don't know of any cases of denial of this kind of monotheism on part of representatives of other religious communities; neither do we know of any declarations stating that the world was originated by two creators who were similar to each other in their attributes and capable of performing the same actions, since it is impossible by definition; and we will be returning to this point later on.

In a similar way, there is no assertion that any person has stated that someone has taken part in the process of creating the world alongside Allah, or that there is another one who possesses the same attributes as Allah. The essence of polytheists' declarations reflects their confidence that any of Allah's associates, be it an angel, a prophet, a planet or any idol, is subject to Allah. One of the hadiths

recorded in "Sahih Muslim" on the authority of Ibn Abbas, Allah be pleased with him, reports that when pronouncing the words of *Talbiyah*, the idolaters from among the Arabs used to say: "Here I am in Your presence. You have no partner except the partner who is Your own. You are his owner as well as owner of what he owns." As for Allah's Messenger, he began uttering the words that evidenced pure monotheism,

"***Here I am at Your service, O Allah, here I am. Here I am at Your service, You have no partner, here I am. Yours alone is all praise and all bounty, and Yours alone is the sovereignty. You have no partner.***"

Almighty Allah told us that idolaters from among the Arabs, whom Allah's Messenger had been sent to, generally acknowledged Allah as the One Creator, which is mentioned in many of Qur'an's ayahs. Thus, for example, Allah the Almighty said,

"And if you ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' they will certainly say, 'Allah.' Say, 'All the praises and thanks be to Allah.' But most of them do not know." Surah "Luqmān", ayah 25.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And if you were to ask them, 'Who has created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon?' they will surely reply, 'Allah.' How then are they deviating?" Surah "Al-'Ankabūt", ayah 61.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And if you were to ask them, 'Who sends down water from the sky, and gives life therewith to the earth after its death?' they will surely reply, 'Allah.' Say, 'All the praises and thanks be to Allah!' Nay, most of them have no sense." Surah "Al-'Ankabūt", ayah 63.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Say, 'Who provides for you from the sky and 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?' They will say, 'Allah.' " Surah "Yūnus", ayah 31.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Say, 'Whose is the earth and whosoever is therein? If you know!' They will say, 'It is Allah's!' Say, 'Will you not then remember?' Say, 'Who is the Lord of the seven heavens, and the Lord of the Great Throne?' They will say, 'Allah.' Say, 'Will you not then fear Allah?' Say, 'In Whose Hand is the sovereignty of everything? And He protects, while against Whom there is no protector, if you know?' They will say, 'All that belongs to Allah.' Say, 'How then are you deceived and turn away from the truth?' " Surah "Al-Mu'minūn", ayahs 84-89.

Yet some people think that certain things were not created by Allah. Thus, for instance, dualists from among fire-worshippers believe that darkness was not created by Allah, the Qadariyahs think that Allah is not the creator of animal deeds, and some polytheists from among the Arabs and other nations believed that their deities brought them benefits or caused them damage on their own, and not by Allah's will.

Given the existence of polytheism of this kind, its inconsistency was revealed in the Qur'an. Almighty Allah said,

"No son did Allah beget, nor is there any other god along with Him. If there had been many gods, then each god would have taken away what he had created, and some would have tried to overcome others." Surah "Al-Mu'minūn", ayah 91.

The words of the Almighty in this case are nothing more than an example of a speculative argument, the essence of which lies in denying the possibility of coexistence of two creators, and a clear explanation of the fact that the True God must necessarily be the Creator capable of taking actions and holding great power. And

even if there was another god existing along with Allah that would possess the same powers, then he would be the ruler of a single creation and would also be distinguished by the capacity of taking action and by the strength. However, shared ownership would not do for the other god, so he would try to subdue his partner and assume exclusive control over everything, and if he could, he would do it, otherwise he would separate himself carrying away his own creation.

Accordingly, provided that there were two creators, one of the following two consequences would be inevitable:

- each god would carry away his own creation;
- or one of the gods would rise above the other one.

However, all that we are witnessing is contrary to the very idea of the possibility of coexistence of various creators, as orderliness and harmonious relationship between all the components of the creation — the sky and the earth, what is above and what is below — suggest that the whole world is controlled by One God Alone, the Sublime, the Almighty.

How Does the Deviation from the Oneness of Lordship Manifest Itself?

Although humanity generally has a natural and subconscious disposition to believe in the Divine Unity, which is in the nature (*fitrah*) of a human soul and which is also confirmed by ample evidence, some people still drift away from the truth concerning the Oneness of Allah. Distorted beliefs of people in reference to the recognition of Allah's Lordship can be classified and briefly described in the following manner:

The first deviation: Absolute disbelief in Allah's Lordship and the outright denial of His existence. Such beliefs are commonly

found among atheists, who tend to think that all existing things are a mere manifestation of nature or just a mere coincidence of time, or appeared on its own, spontaneously, etc.: "**And they say, "There is nothing but our life of this world, we die and we live and nothing destroys us except time.**" Surah "Al-Jāthiyah", ayah 24.

The second deviation: Denying some of the attributes of the Pure Lord or part of the manifestations of His Lordship. This is reflected, for instance, in the views of some people who disbelieve in Allah's power to cause death or resurrect humans after their death, or who deny Allah's ability to bring benefits or do harm, as well as other things.

The third deviation: giving any of the Allah's exclusive attributes to someone or something. If a person regards someone or something as having a share with Allah, the Sublime, the Almighty, in His dominion of the universe from any aspect, such as creation or destruction, resurrection or extinguishing life, showing mercy, warding harm, as well as any other feature of Lordship, it means that he associates others with Almighty Allah.

Oneness of the Divine Names and Attributes (Tawheed al-Asma' wa as-Sifaat)

Believing in the divine names and attributes has an enormous impact on the heart of a Muslim as well as on his worship of the Lord. Faith in Allah allows a servant to find the meaning of his heart-related devotion to his Lord. This faith makes him trust Almighty Allah, rely on Him alone and be mindful of his physical and mental actions, as well as gain control over his thoughts in order to think

only of what pleases Allah. He begins to love what Allah loves, he hears and sees strictly for His sake alone. And still, he is full of hope for Allah's mercy and has a fair thought concerning Him.

The names of Allah the Almighty help His servant love his Lord whole-heartedly, and this devotion is the basis of a Muslim's happiness in this world and in the Hereafter, the key to all success; this love excites him to worship the Lord in a most wonderful manner. It is relevant to highlight in this regard that the degree of such heartfelt love for Almighty Allah determines how easy or tedious the physical acts of worship become for a believer.

Performing an act of worship in that perfect way that would please Allah depends on the heartful love one has for Allah, and this love is contingent on knowing Allah by His beautiful names and attributes. This is why His Messengers worshipped Allah in the best manner, as they had the best knowledge of Him, consequently their love of the Almighty surpassed that of any other.

The Oneness of the Divine Names and Attributes (*Tawheed al-Asma' wa as-Sifaat*) is being convinced in the heart of all the divine names and attributes of Almighty Allah which He has affirmed for Himself and which His Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has affirmed for Him, as well as denying all names and attributes which Allah has declared as unbefitting of Him, and which His Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has declared as unbefitting of Him; and also acknowledging their true meaning and understanding their impact and implications on His creations.

What Forms Basis of Acknowledging the Oneness of Allah with Regard to His Names and Attributes?

FIRST: the fact that Allah has the most excellent names, that is to say, names that are more beautiful than anything can be, for Almighty Allah said: "**And the most beautiful names belong to Allah.**" Surah "Al-A'rāf", ayah 180.

Besides, to Him belong the highest and the most perfect attributes, free from any deficiency whatsoever. Almighty Allah said,

"...for Allah is the highest description." Surah "An-Nahl", ayah 60.

It is referred to the supreme, the most perfect and the finest attributes.

SECOND: the fact that knowledge about Allah's names and attributes came from above, the Qur'an and the Sunnah being the source of our knowledge about them, and this means that we should refer to these records exclusively, neither taking anything away from them nor adding anything to what they reveal.

THIRD: both confirmation and denial are used when describing Allah; what is more, confirmation should in no way resemble likening, nor should denial resemble deprivation, which was highlighted by Allah, Who said:

"There is nothing like Him; and He is the All-hearer, the All-Seer." Surah "Ash-Shūra", ayah 11.

FORTH: we know some of Allah's names and attributes, but only Allah knows what exactly they mean and imply. The Qur'anic proof in this regard is these lines:

"...but they will never compass anything of His Knowledge." Surah "Tā-Ha", ayah 110.

The two "Sahih" quote a hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah, Allah be pleased with him, who reported that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, "***Allah has ninety-nine***

names, one hundred less one. Whoever memorizes them all will enter Paradise".

In this context, memorizing implies knowing the names by heart and worshipping Allah in accordance to their meaning.

However, the number of names is not limited to the ninety-nine, because He also has such names which are not mentioned in the Qur'an nor in the Sunnah.

Imam Ahmad, Ibn Hibban and other Muhaddiths report a hadith recorded from Abdullah bin Masud, Allah be pleased with him. This hadith narrates that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, "***O Allah, I ask You by every name belonging to You, which You have named Yourself or You taught to someone from Your creation or revealed in Your Book, or have preserved in the knowledge of the unseen with You…***"

Thereby, Allah, the Sublime, the Great, has a lot names which include both names and attributes. In this respect, the names highlight the essence of the Almighty, whereas the attributes indicate the features of His perfection.

Here are some of the names and attributes of Allah.

Allah's names include the following:

Allah, Lord, the Gracious, the Merciful

In Surah Al-Fātihah Almighty Allah says,

"All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the Universe; the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful…" Surah "Al-Fātihah", ayahs 2–3.

Allah is the One Who is considered God and Who is praised.

Lord is the Creator, the Sustainer, the Sovereign Who directs all affairs, the One Who has nurtured all His creations with mercy.

The Gracious, the Merciful. Both names refer to the notion of grace, however while the name "Gracious" is indicative of a quality present in Allah, the name "Merciful" shows connection between His grace and everything that it encompasses.

Allah's grace can be divided into two parts: general, which He bestows upon all mankind, and special, which He manifests towards the believers.

In regard to the general grace, Almighty Allah stated the following:

"Verily, Allah is, for mankind, Full of Kindness, Most Merciful." Surah "Al-Hajj", ayah 65.

As for the special grace, Almighty Allah put it this way:

"…and He is Ever Most Merciful to the believers." Surah "Al-Ahzāb", ayah 43.

The One, the Everlasting

In Surah "Al-Ikhlās", which is equivalent in its significance to a third of the Qur'an, Almighty Allah says:

"Say, 'He is Allah, the One, Allah, the Self-Sufficient One…' "

Surah "Al-Ikhlās", ayahs 1–2.

In this context the One means the Unique in regard to perfection, and there is none and nothing comparable to Him, and no one shares with Him the attributes of His perfection.

The Everlasting means perfect in His attributes, the One all creatures turn to with their needs.

The Living, the Existing, the Most High, the Most Great

All these names are mentioned by the Almighty in The Throne Verse (*Ayat Al-Kursi*), which is one of the greatest of His ayahs. Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to say that for those who recited this ayah before going to bed, there would be a guardian appointed over them by Allah, and Satan would not be able to approach them till morning. Almighty Allah said,

"Allah! None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Ever Living, the One who sustains all that exists. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His permission? He knows what happens to them in this world, and what will happen to them in the Hereafter. And they will never compass anything of His knowledge except that which He wills. His *Kursî* (Throne) extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. And He is the Most High, the Most Great." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 255 — Ayat Al-Kursi.

The Living. This means that His life is eternal and perfect in every way, and no slumber can seize Him, nor sleep, neither can death take control of Him. Almighty Allah said,

"And put your trust in the Ever Living One Who dies not…"

Surah "Al-Furqān", ayah 58.

The Existing. It means that He exists per se, while others exist thanks to Him only, as He is self-sufficient and needs nothing at all.

The Most High. What is meant here is the absolute height, for example, the height of power, the height of submission and the height of existence. As for the height of power, it refers to the qualities of perfection and the qualities of majesty which characterize Allah. Relating to the height of submission, it means that sovereign-

ty over the entire universe belongs to Him and that He has control over all creations. As for the height of existence, it implies that He has established Himself over the Throne high above all His creations. Almighty Allah said,

"Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High..." Surah "Al-A'lā", ayah 1.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And when Allah said, 'O 'Îsâ (Jesus)! I will take you and raise you to Myself...'" Surah "Âl-'Imrān", ayah 55.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Do you feel secure that He, Who is over the heaven, will not cause the earth to sink with you, and then it should quake? Or do you feel secure that He, Who is over the heaven, will not send against you a violent whirlwind? Then you shall know how has been My warning." Surah "Al-Mulk", ayahs 16–17.

In this context "heaven" implies height, which is to say everything that is above the created skies.

The Most Great: this name highlights the possession of everything that pertains to majesty.

The First, the Last, the Manifest, the Hidden, the All-Knower

Almighty Allah said, "**He is the First and the Last, the Most High and the Most Near. And He is the All-Knower of every thing.**" Surah "Al-Hadīd", ayah 3.

Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, expressed his interpretation of these four names saying: "***O Allah, You are the First, so there is nothing before You, and You are the Last, so there is nothing after You. You are the Most Victorious and the Highest, so there is nothing above You, and You are the***

Most Inward, so there is nothing closer than You." This hadith is quoted by Muslim.

The All-Knower: it refers to the One Whose knowledge is all-embracing. Almighty Allah said,

"And with Him are the keys of all that is hidden, none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in the land and in the sea; not a leaf falls, but He knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth nor anything fresh or dry, but is written in a Clear Record." Surah "Al-An'ām", ayah 59.

The All-Hearer, the All-Seer

Almighty Allah said, "**...and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.**" Surah "Ash-Shūra", ayah 11.

He is the All-Hearer, and it means that hearing is an attribute of His. He is the All-Seer, and it means that sight is an attribute of His. Therefore He hears everything and He sees everything, and from Him nothing can be concealed.

The All-Wise, the All-Aware

Almighty Allah said, "**...and He is the All-Wise, the All-Aware.**" Surah "Saba'", ayah 1.

The All-Wise: it means that He takes control over His creation both in this world and in the Hereafter by means of the laws established by Him and religious laws, and He judges as He wills. And no one can reverse His decisions, and He has wisdom in virtue of which all His commands and creations are distinguished by perfect accuracy and beauty.

The All-Aware: it means having knowledge of the manifest and the hidden.

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Allah's attributes include the following:

The Face

Almighty Allah said,

"And the face of your Lord, full of majesty and honour, will remain forever." Surah "Ar-Rahmān", ayah 27.

The Hands

Almighty Allah said,

"Both His hands are widely outstretched…" Surah "Al-Mā'idah", ayah 64.

The Eyes

Almighty Allah said,

"So wait patiently for the Decision of your Lord, for verily, you are under Our eyes." Surah "At-Toor", ayah 48.

Almighty Allah also said,

"…in order that you may be brought up under My eye." Surah "Tā-ha", ayah 39.

In this verse two eyes are meant, that is why Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "***…verily, Your Lord is not one-eyed***".

The three attributes mentioned above relate to the essence of Allah.

Rising Over the Throne

Almighty Allah said,

"The Most Gracious rose over the Throne." Surah "Tâ-ha", ayah 5.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And then He rose over the Throne." Surah "Al-A'râf", ayah 54.

The statement referred to above is related to the height (the highest point), remaining above everything else, the ascension, and the fundamental strength. A statement of this kind pertains to the features of action.

Proximity

Almighty Allah said, "**He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then rose over the Throne. He knows what goes into the earth and what comes forth from it, and what descends from the heaven and what ascends thereto. And He is with you wheresoever you may be. And Allah is the All-Seer of what you do**". Surah "Al-Hadîd", ayah 4.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Have you not seen that Allah knows whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth? There is no secret of three but He is their fourth, nor of five but He is their sixth, nor of less than that or more but He is with them wheresoever they may be. And afterwards on the Day of Resurrection He will inform them of what they did. Verily, Allah is the All-Knower of everything." Surah "Al-Mujâdalah", ayah 7.

Almighty Allah also said,

"...[Muhammad] said to his companion: 'Be not sad, surely Allah is with us.' " Surah "At-Tawbah", ayah 40.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Truly, Allah is with those who fear Him, and those who are good-doers." Surah "An-Nahl", ayah 128.

This proximity can be of two types: Allah's proximity to all people, which is evidenced by the ayahs "Al-Hadīd" and "Al-Mujādalah" quoted above. This closeness has relation to the Almighty's all-encompassing knowledge of all beings created by Him.

The second type of proximity is Allah's proximity to a part of beings created by Him, which is indicated in the ayahs "At-Tawbah" and "An-Nahl" quoted above.

This applies to those who are close to Him, since, in accordance with the meaning of the ayahs, He always assists, supports and protects them.

Coming, Arrival

Almighty Allah said,

"Do they then wait for anything other than that Allah should come to them in the shadows of the clouds and the angels?" Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 210.

Almighty Allah also said,

"...and your Lord comes with the angels in rows..." Surah "Al-Fajr", ayah 22.

This refers to Almighty Allah's arrival on the Resurrection Day for a final decision concerning His servants. These attributes are the features of action.

Descent to the Lowest Heaven

The two "Sahihs" record a hadith, transmitted on the authority of Abu Hurairah, Allah be pleased with him, who narrated that the

Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "***Our Lord, Glorified and Exalted, descends to the lowest heaven every night when the last third of the night is left, and He says, 'Who will call upon Me, that I may answer him? Who will ask of Me, that I may give him? Who will ask Me for forgiveness, that I may forgive him?'***"

Thus, this hadith confirms that every night Almighty Allah, praise be to Him, comes down to the lowest heaven, which is related to the features of action.

The Speech

Almighty Allah said,

"And when Mûsâ (Moses) came at the time and place appointed by Us, and his Lord spoke to him..." Surah "Al-A'râf", ayah 143.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And when Allah will say: 'O 'Îsâ (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)!'" Surah "Al-Mâ'idah", ayah 116.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And if anyone of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the Word of Allah." Surah "At-Tawbah", ayah 6.

The speech or words of Allah pertain to His attributes. Almighty Allah speaks whenever He wills and in whatever manner He wills. His voice is heard, and Allah's words are, on the one hand, an attribute of His essence, and on the other hand — a feature of His action...

The Qur'an contains uncreated words revealed by Allah. Almighty Allah said, "**And this is a blessed Book which We have sent down, so follow it...**" Surah "Al-An'âm", ayah 155.

As already mentioned, Allah's words are one of His attributes, and His attributes are not created.

Love

Almighty Allah said, "**...Truly, Allah loves the good-doers.**" Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 195.

Almighty Allah also said,

"**Surely Allah loves the pious.**" Surah "At-Tawbah", ayah 4.

Pleasure

Almighty Allah said,

"Allah is pleased with them and they with Him." Surah "Al-Mā'idah", ayah 119.

Anger

Almighty Allah said, "**...and the anger of Allah is upon them...**" Surah "Al-Fat'h", ayah 6.

We know for sure that these names and attributes belong to Allah, because He has affirmed them for Himself, and His Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has affirmed them for Him. There is no departure from the Qur'an or the Sunnah, as it is unacceptable to depart from their clear meaning, nor is it acceptable to try to find out what lies behind it or to compare Allah's attributes with the attributes proper of humans. Almighty Allah said,

"There is nothing like Him..." Surah "Ash-Shūra", ayah 11.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Do you know of any who is similar to Him?" Surah "Maryam", ayah 65.

Almighty Allah also said,

"...and there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him." Surah "Al-Ikhlās", ayah 4.

How we should understand right the Oneness of the divine names and attributes?

The proper understanding of the names and attributes of Almighty Allah rests on a firm belief and absolute certitude in every name and attribute that Allah has ascribed to Himself and that has been ascribed to Him by His Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, neither distorting (*Tahrif*), negating (*Tatil*), or subjecting such terms to descriptive designation (*Takyif*) or comparing them to the attributes of His creations (*Tamthil*).

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Distortion (*Tahrif*) implies altering the true essence of Allah's names and attributes and can be done in two ways:

1. Distortion of a name by adding extra letters to a word, deleting one or more letters from a word, or changing vowel signs (*harakats*) on it. An instance of this can be traced in the following verse, in which some representatives of misguided groups changed the word "*istawā*" in the discourse of the Almighty: "**The Most Gracious rose [established Himself] (istawā) over the Throne**" Surah "Tâ-ha", ayah 5**.** The word "*istawā*" means "rose over", "ascended", "elevated (himself)", "established (himself)", but some people distorted it

to mean "*istawlā*", which signifies "take possession of", being a fundamentally different notion.

2. Distortion of the meaning by interpreting the word to mean something different from what Allah and His Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, intended. An example of this is the interpretation by some of the word "*iad*" (hand) in the Almighty's phrase "the Hand of Allah" as either "Allah's power" or "His blessing". Such interpretation is erroneous and it conforms to neither religious rules of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, nor the generally accepted rules of the Arabic language.

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Negation (*Ta'tīl*) refers to a total denial of Allah's attributes. Such is the claim of those who state that Almighty Allah has no attributes at all.

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Subjecting Allah's attributes to descriptive designation (*Takyif*) refers to subjecting divine attributes to human imagination in terms of how a certain quality of His could be. This is what some misguided people do when they try to give descriptive explanation of Allah's attributes and thus claim, for example, that His Hand is such or that He established Himself upon the Throne in such-and-such manner. This is truly an undue claim, for the state of Allah's attributes is only known to Him, and it is something that is beyond the comprehension of people.

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Comparing (*Tamthil*) implies comparing Allah's attributes to those of His creation. People with such attitude can say, for example, that He has hearing similar to ours or that He has a face that is similar to ours. Far exalted is Allah above such a similitude!

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The correct approach in relation to Allah's names and attributes is based on three fundamental principles, the fulfillment of which is enough to guarantee safety of any deviation in this respect. The principles are the following:

1. None of Allah's attributes should be likened to any of His creation. Almighty Allah said, "**There is nothing like Him; and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer**" Surah "Ash-Shūra", ayah 11**.** This wonderful verse indicates that there is no resemblance of any kind between the Creator and what He has created, and clearly states that the Almighty possesses the hearing and the sight which are in no way similar to the hearing and the sight of His creations, in spite of the fact that these two attributes are present in many of Allah's creations. The Qur'anic proof in this regard is this verse: "**So put not forward similitudes for Allah**" Surah "An-Nahl", ayah 74**,** as well as the following words of the Almighty: "**...and there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him**" Surah "Al-Ikhlās", ayah 4**.**

2. Any name or attribute that Allah has ascribed for Himself and that has been ascribed for Him by His Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, suits His Sublimity.

3. One should have no aspiration to comprehend the actual condition of the Almighty's attributes, as it is impossible for a created being to know this. This is proved by Allah's words: "**He knows what happens to them in this world, and what will happen to them in the Hereafter, but they will never compass anything of His knowledge.**" Surah "Tā-ha", ayah 110.

People with common sense ought to realize that human understanding has definite limits beyond which it is unable to pass, nor are their visual and hearing abilities unlimited. Whoever attempts to conceive the inconceivable for the human mind and, for instance, gets into thoughts about the condition of Allah's attributes, is like the one who wishes to see what is there on the other side of the wall or the one who is hoping to hear a sound coming from afar.

The Qur'an and the Sunnah mention a great many beautiful names and sublime attributes of Almighty Allah, and it is impossible to count them all. The names and attributes that we have cited are just some of them. Each Muslim has to believe in all the divine names and attributes in a manner that suits His Sublimity and Majesty. All believers have to accept all the qualities He ascribed to Himself in the Qur'an, because He has a better knowledge of Himself than His creations. Each Muslim also has to accept all the terms that His Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to describe Him in the Sunnah, as He knew the Lord better than any other human and was the most sincere, the most eloquent, the most devoted and the most pious among them. No one has the right to negate any of the attributes of Almighty Allah or compare them to the attributes of His creation, because **"there is nothing like Him; and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer."** Surah "Ash-Shūra", ayah 11.

Oneness of Divinity (Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah)

The word "*uluhiyyah*" in Arabic is derived from the word "*ilaah*", which means "deity". A deity is someone or something one submits to on the basis of love and glorification. People obey a deity and humble themselves to him, fear him and wish for him, turn to him in times of trouble and invoke to him in the most important moments of life, rely on him hoping for the blessing and seek refuge with him. All these feelings develop in a human heart towards a god because a deity embodies every quality of perfection and sublimity, which are not present in a human soul, nor in any other creation.

The Oneness of Divinity (*Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah*) refers to the conviction of the heart that Allah is the One True God alone and

only He alone is worthy of worship. Indeed, if Almighty Allah is the Only Lord, and if the perfect names and attributes of a divine nature are exclusively His, then none but He alone is the true deity.

Almighty Allah said,

"**And verily, We have sent among every nation a Messenger proclaiming: "Worship Allah Alone, and keep away from false deities.**" Surah "An-Nahl", ayah 36.

Almighty Allah said,

"**That is because Allah — He is the Truth, and what they invoke besides Him, it is falsehood. And verily, Allah — He is the Most High, the Most Great.**" Surah "Al-Hajj", ayah 62.

Almighty Allah told us in the Qur'an that all objects of people's worship, which they mistakenly take for deities, are nothing more than a falsehood. That is to say, people will not gain anything if they worship them by submitting to them, invoking to them, setting hopes on them, fearing them, asking them for help or relying on them. As Almighty Allah said,

"Do they attribute as partners to Allah those who created nothing but they themselves are created? No help can they give them, nor can they help themselves." Surah "Al-A'rāf", ayahs 191-192.

"And those whom you call upon besides Him cannot help you nor can they help themselves." Surah "Al-A'rāf", ayah 197.

"He merges the night into the day, and He merges the day into the night. And He has subjected the sun and the moon: each runs its course for a term appointed. Such is Allah, your Lord; He is the kingdom. And those, whom you invoke or call upon instead of Him, own not even the skin over a date-stone. If you invoke them, they hear not your call; and if they were to hear, they could not grant it to you. And on the Day of Resurrection, they will disown your worshipping them. And none can inform you like Him Who is the All-Knower." Surah "Fātir", ayahs 13-14.

The majority of people recognize Allah as the Lord, the Creator, the Sustainer, the Sovereign — and these terms refer to the Oneness of Lordship, — yet at the same time they ascribe as partners to Him in worship all sorts of idols, statues, departed righteous people, angels, stars and trees that can neither harm nor benefit anyone, nor are they capable of giving something or taking something away.

As Almighty Allah said, "**And most of them believe not in Allah except that they attribute partners unto Him.**" Surah "Yūsuf", ayah 106.

The pagans of the time of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, recognized Allah as the Lord, the Creator, the Sustainer, the Sovereign, but their idolatry was manifested in worshipping someone or something along with the Lord of the worlds. They attributed equals and partners to Allah invoking to them, asking for salvation and praying for help.

Almighty Allah pointed out in many parts of His Holy Scripture that the polytheistic tribes of Arabia acknowledged the Sovereignty of Allah, that is to say *Tawheed al-Rububiyyah*; yet at the same time they attributed partners to Him in worship. Thus, Almighty Allah said, "**And if you were to ask them: 'Who has created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon?' they will surely reply: 'Allah.' How then are they deviating?**" Surah "Al-'Ankabūt", ayah 61.

Allah, Glorified and Exalted, also said: "**And if you were to ask them: 'Who sends down water from the sky, and gives life therewith to the earth after its death?' they will surely reply: 'Allah.' Say: 'All the praises and thanks be to Allah!' Nay, most of them have no sense.**" Surah "Al-'Ankabūt", ayah 63.

He also said: "**And if you ask them who created them, they will surely say: 'Allah.' How then are they turned away?**" Surah "Az-Zukhruf", ayah 87.

He also said: "**Say: 'Whose is the earth and whosoever is therein? If you know!' They will say: 'It is Allah's!' Say: 'Will you**

not then remember?' Say: 'Who is the Lord of the seven heavens, and the Lord of the Great Throne?' They will say: 'Allah.' Say: 'Will you not then fear Allah?' Say: 'In Whose Hand is the sovereignty of everything? And He protects, while against Whom there is no protector, if you know?' They will say: 'All that belongs to Allah.' Say: 'How then are you deceived and turn away from the truth?'" Surah "Al-Mu'minūn", ayahs 84-89.

The polytheists of Arabia of the time of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not hold that idols sent down rain from the sky by themselves, sustained the world or possessed governorship over all things. On the contrary, they were convinced that only the Lord, the Exalted, was capable of performing these acts and admitted that the idols they directed their prayers to instead of Allah were creations themselves and therefore were unable to bring benefits or do harm on their own either to themselves or to those who worshipped them. They knew that those idols were uncapable of giving life, causing death or resurrecting, nor were they capable of hearing or seeing. They believed that such power belonged exclusively to Almighty Allah and that no one shared this power with Him, and they thought that neither they nor their statues were capable of this. They recognized Allah the Exalted as an only Creator and all the rest creatures as His creations, and believed that He was the unique Lord whereas the rest were His servants totally belonging to Him. Yet they attributed partners and intermediaries to Him from among His creations, asking them to intercede with Allah and thus trying to become closer to Him. Almighty Allah commented on them in this way: "**And those who take other protectors and helpers besides Him say: 'We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allah.'"** Surah "Az-Zumar", ayah 3.

In other words, they asked idols to intercede with Allah on their behalf so that they should earn help and sustenance and get their temporal affairs in proper order.

As we can see, basically polytheists recognized Allah as the unique Lord of all existence; yet, despite this fact, the Almighty did not name them Muslims. Quite the opposite, Allah, Glorified and Exalted, said that they were polytheists and non-believers, threatened them with eternal torments in Hell and made their lives and their possessions lawful for His Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, for they failed to fulfill the mandatory condition of the Oneness of Lordship, that is to say, they worshipped other gods alongside Allah.

From all of the above it becomes clear that recognizing Allah as the One True God without worshipping Him alone is not sufficient to be a Muslim and does not save one from Allah's punishment. What is more, such recognition of the Almighty's lordship without an exclusive worship of Him is a cogent argument against man himself for the sole reason that acknowledging Allah obliges him to serve the Almighty alone in a most sincere manner, without attributing partners to Him, and makes it His responsibility to worship Allah alone.

Words of the Oneness of Allah — the Testimony La ilaha illa Allah

The classification listed above does not mean that there are three independent types of monotheism, not connected with each other, and that it is enough to practice any of them paying no regard for the other two, and that there are more important or less important ones among them. A person is considered to be professing the Oneness of God as long as he affirms all the three of its types. Attributing partners to Allah in one of the types is like attributing partners to Him in all of the three types of *Tawheed*, because they are inter-

connected. A good example in this regard is the one who invokes other than Allah asking for something that Allah alone is capable of. This way this person ascribes partners to Allah in all the three types of *Tawheed*. He attributes partners to Him in worship as he offers prayers, which is a kind of worship, to someone other than Allah, hence questioning Allah's Oneness of Divinity. In terms of the Oneness of Allah's Lordship, this person calls upon other than Him, hoping to gain benefit or ward off harm, because he is sure that the one he invokes can hold the balance in the realm of Allah and satisfy his request. Regarding the Oneness of Allah's divine names and perfect attributes, his actions imply that the one he invokes is the hearing and the close, and hears everyone who calls upon him and is capable of fulfilling their wishes and granting them all they ask for.

The fact that Allah is the One True God alone is reflected in the words of the testimony "*La ilaha illa Allah*" — "there is no deity worthy of worship, except Allah". The essence of this great testimony lies in claiming that no one but Allah has the right to be worshipped by the creations, as no one but Allah possesses divine attributes — the attributes of perfection and sublimity, and only He alone is the Lord Almighty and the Creator of all existence. He alone has control over the Universe, He alone possesses all qualities of perfection, being far from deficiency of any kind, therefore He is the only one to succumb and humble oneself to. Allah Almighty alone makes creations initially and recreates them, and He has no coparticipants. And this means that He alone is worthy of worship and no one has the right to be His partner in it.

Conditions of the Testimony La ilaha illa Allah

In order for these great words, pronounced to declare one's intention to embark on the path of Islam, to come from the heart and be beneficial for the one who utters them, seven conditions of the testimony (*shahadah*) of faith should be fulfilled. References to them can be found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, but what is meant here is not to memorize the corresponding conditions, but to adhere to them in their meaning, as it can happen so that one person will comply with all these obligations but will fail to enumerate all of them, whereas another one will remember all the conditions but do the opposite of what they indicate.

FIRST: knowledge which negates ignorance

It implies knowing the meaning of this testimony which entails both negation and affirmation. Almighty Allah said,

"So know that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah." Surah "Muhammad", ayah 19.

Almighty Allah also said,

"...except for those who bear witness to the truth knowingly, and they know." Surah "Az-Zukhruf", ayah 86.

This verse refers to those who declared that there is no deity who has the right to be worshipped but Allah, knowing by their hearts the meaning of the words they had affirmed by the tongue.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Allah bears witness that none has the right to be worshipped but He, as do the angels, and those having knowledge; He maintains His creation in justice. None has the right to be

worshipped but He, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise." Surah "Āl-'Imrān", ayah 18.

SECOND: certainty which negates doubt

It means that whoever pronounces these words must have full confidence in what he is saying, without experiencing any doubt. Allah Almighty said, "**Only those are the believers who have believed in Allah and His Messengers, and afterward doubt not but strive with their wealth and their lives for the Cause of Allah. Those! They are the truthful.**" Surah "Al-Hujurāt", ayah 15.

In this manner, the Almighty declared absence of doubt one of the conditions of sincerity of their faith in Allah and His Messenger.

"As-Sahih" records a hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah, Allah be pleased with him, who reported Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, as saying: "***I testify that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah, and that I am the Messenger of Allah! Whatever servant of Allah meets Allah with these two testimonies, without doubting their truth, he will surely enter Paradise!***"

THIRD: acceptance which negates rejection or denial

It implies acceptance in the heart of what this testimony requires, expressed in word and fulfilled by deed, and rejection of everything that contradicts the meaning of the testimony. Not in this manner did the people rejecting the words of Allah's Messengers act, whom the Almighty characterized in this way:

"We sent not a warner before you to any town but the luxurious ones among them said: 'We found our fathers following a

certain way and religion, and we will indeed follow their footsteps.'" Surah "Az-Zukhruf", ayah 23.

As for those who denied the testimony, in their respect Almighty Allah stated the following:

"Truly, when it was said to them: 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah,' they puffed themselves up with pride. And they said, 'Are we going to abandon our gods for the sake of a mad poet?'" Surah "As-Sāffāt", ayahs 35-36.

In "As-Sahih" it is narrated on the authority of Abu Musa al-Ashari, Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "***The similitude of that guidance and knowledge with which Allah, the Exalted, the Glorious, has sent me is that of rain falling upon the earth. There is a good piece of land which receives the rainfall eagerly and as a result of it there is grown in it herbage and grass abundantly. Then there is a land hard and barren which retains water, and the people derive benefit from it and they drink it and make the animals drink, and utilize it for irrigation of the land for cultivation. Then there is another land which is barren. Neither water is retained in it, nor is the grass grown in it. And that is the similitude of the first one who develops the understanding of the religion of Allah and it becomes a source of benefit to him, with which Allah sent me. The second one is that who acquires the knowledge of religion and imparts it to others. Then the other type is one who does not pay attention to the revealed knowledge and thus does not accept guidance of Allah with which I have been sent.***"

FOURTH: submission which negates disobedience

It refers to the compliance to the requirement of being sincere in worshipping Allah, dedicating all acts of worship to Him alone, as the words of the testimony indicate, and refusal to worship any other deity.

Allah, the Almighty, the Sublime, said,

"And turn in repentance and in obedience with true faith to your Lord and submit to Him…" Surah "Az-Zumar", ayah 54.

And Allah Almighty also said,

"And whosoever submits his face to Allah, while he is a good-doer, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold." Surah "Luqmān", ayah 22.

In this context the reference is to the words "There is no other god worthy of worship, except Allah." With regard to the words "submits his face", the meaning is that one submits himself and does good.

FIFTH: truthfulness which negates hypocrisy

What is meant here is when one makes the announcement of the testimony, he has to say it sincerely from his heart.

Almighty Allah said,

"Alif, Lâm, Mîm. Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: "We believe," and will not be tested? And We indeed tested those who were before them. And Allah will certainly make known those who are true, and will certainly make known those who are liars." Surah "Al-'Ankabūt", ayahs 1-3.

As for the hypocrites, Almighty Allah said about them in this manner:

"And of mankind, there are some who say: 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day,' while in fact they believe not. They seek to deceive Allah and those who believe, while they only deceive themselves, and perceive it not! In their hearts is a disease and Allah has increased their disease. A painful torment is theirs because they used to tell lies." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayahs 8-10.

The two "Sahihs" recorded from Muadh ibn Jabal, Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "***Whoever witnesses that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger, Allah forbids the Fire from touching him.***"

SIXTH: sincerity which negates idolatry

This refers to purifying all matters from any traces of idolatry by means of the purity of intent to adhere to the acts of worship only for the sake of pleasing Allah. Almighty Allah said,

"And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allah, and worship none but Him Alone, and be sincere in their faith..." Surah "Al-Bayyinah", ayah 5.

Allah the Almighty also said,

"So worship Allah by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allah's sake only. Surely the religion is for Allah only." Surah "Az-Zumar", ayahs 2-3.

"Sahih Al-Bukhari" reports a hadith on the authority of Abu Hurairah, Allah be pleased with him, who narrated that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "***The most blessed of people to have my intercession on the Day of Resurrection are those who say there is no god but Allah, sincerely from the heart.***"

SEVENTH: love which negates hatred

It refers to the love of both the words of the testimony and of what they require and what indicate, as well as to the devotion to those who act according to its meaning, fulfilling all the necessary obligations. It also implies hatred of idolatry, which is incompatible with the meaning of the words of the testimony, and disdain of the idolaters. Almighty Allah said,

"And of mankind are some who take for worship others besides Allah as rivals (to Allah). They love them as they love Allah. But those who believe, love Allah more." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 165.

The two "Sahihs" report from Abu Hurairah, Allah be pleased with him, that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "***None of you will attain perfect faith until I am more beloved to him than his child, his parent, and all people.***"

The two "Sahihs" report from Anas, Allah be pleased with him, that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "***There are three things, whoever attains them will find therein the sweetness of faith: when Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, and His Messenger are dearer to him than all else; when he loves for the sake of Allah and hates for the sake of Allah; and when a huge fire be lit and he fall into it, than associate anything with Allah.***"

Pillars of Worship

As mentioned before, "*ilaah*" ("deity") is someone or something one submits to on the basis of love and glorification. And this submission based on love and glorification is what worship is, which in

Arabic is denoted by the word "*ibadah*". A path can be described as being "*mu'abbad*" (it is derived from the word "*ibadah*"), which means that it is smooth and well-trodden, that is to say it has been smoothed out, or subordinated. And that is where the word "*ibadah*" comes from, meaning subordination, submission to Allah.

Submission to Allah means obeying Allah by doing that which He has commanded and avoiding that which He has forbidden, whilst loving and glorifying Allah. Love and glorification appear in a servant's heart when he knows his Lord, knows Allah's Unity in Lordship and Allah's Unity in His perfect names and attributes.

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Love for Allah is an essential condition of worship. If a person submits to someone humbly and servilely, yet bears hatred towards him, is it fair to say that the person worships him? No, it is not!

The Almighty commented on the love the believers feel for Him in this way:

"And of mankind are some who take for worship others besides Allah as rivals (to Allah). They love them as they love Allah. But those who believe, love Allah more." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 165.

The two "Sahihs" report that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "***There are three things, whoever attains them will find therein the sweetness of faith: when Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, and His Messenger are dearer to him than all else; when he loves for the sake of Allah and hates for the sake of Allah; and when a huge fire be lit and he fall into it, than associate anything with Allah.***"

In addition to love, worship of Allah must necessarily include fear and hope.

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Fear of Allah. Man submits to Allah in order to do that which He has commanded and avoid that which He has forbidden also due to fear of Allah. Indeed, Allah frightens us by His punishment for disobedience. This fear of Allah that one feels in the heart is connected with breaking Allah's orders and violation of His bans, and is mandatory.

Allah has commanded all humans to have fear of Him.

"So fear them not, but fear Me, if you are true believers." Surah "Āl-'Imrān", ayah 175.

"...and fear none but Me." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 40.

Fear of Allah can also be related to the preoccupation that a person's act of worship will not be accepted by Allah. As Allah the Almighty said,

"Verily, those who live in awe for fear of their Lord; and those who believe in the signs of their Lord; and those who join not anyone (in worship) as partners with their Lord; and those who give that which they give with their hearts full of fear, because they are sure to return to their Lord; it is these that hasten in the good deeds, and they are foremost in them." Surah "Al-Mu'minūn", ayahs 57-61.

At-Tirmidhi and Imam Ahmad recorded from Aisha, Allah be pleased with her, who asked the Messenger of Allah about this ayah: "O Messenger of Allah! Are '**...those who give that which they give with their hearts full of fear...**' the ones who steal and commit adultery, and drink alcohol?" The Prophet replied: "***No, O daughter of Siddiq! They are the ones who pray and fast, and give charity, while fearing that their deeds will not be accepted.***"

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Hope in Allah. Almighty Allah commands us to put our hopes on Him. Hope in a person's heart is mandatory when performing acts of worship. As the Almighty said,

"...and never give up hope of Allah's Mercy. Certainly no one despairs of Allah's Mercy, except the people who disbelieve." Surah "Yūsuf", ayah 87.

Human hope can be connected with the expectation of Allah's forgiveness of the acts of disobedience, when a person repents of the sins he has committed and hopes that Allah will forgive him.

"Say: 'O my slaves who have transgressed against themselves! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: verily, Allah forgives all sins. Truly He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.' " Surah "Az-Zumar", ayah 53.

"And those who, when they have committed an indecency or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins; — and none can forgive sins but Allah." Surah "Āl-'Imrān", ayah 135.

"Why seek you not the forgiveness of Allah, that you may receive mercy?" Surah "An-Naml", ayah 46.

Human hope can be connected with the expectation that Allah will accept the acts of worship performed by a person and reward them for their devotion, as He has promised.

"Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing in prayer during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord...?" Surah "Az-Zumar", ayah 9.

"Verily, those who have believed, and those who have emigrated and have striven hard in the way of Allah, all these hope for Allah's Mercy. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 218.

Scholars called these three types of matters of heart the pillars of worship, as they must be present in the heart of all people who worship Allah.

Idolatry, disbelief, hypocrisy

Allah has commanded us to have faith in Him and that we worship Him alone. Failure to obey this order can manifest itself in three different forms: polytheism (*shirk*), disbelief (*kufr*) and hypocrisy (*nifaq*).

Polytheism (shirk)

Polytheism in Arabic is expressed by the word "*shirk*", which is derived from the verb "*sharika*" meaning "to be an associate, a partner (in business)." The word "*shirk*", correspondingly, means "association, partnership".

Polytheism in its general meaning implies ascribing a partner or rival to Allah in what should be exclusively for Him. There are three types of such shirk:

- The first type is ascribing partners to Allah in Lordship, which is to say setting up an equal to Allah among His creations in any attribute that should be reserved for the Lord or ascribing any of these attributes, such as creation, providing for the creation, taking of life, administrating the Universe, etc., to another. Allah, Glorious and Exalted is He, said, **"Is there any creator other than Allah who provides for you from the sky and the earth? None has the right to be worshipped but He. How then are you turning away?"** Surah "Fâtir", ayah 3.

- The second type is ascribing partners to Allah with regard to the divine names and attributes, which is to say setting up an equal to Allah among His creations in any of His names and attributes. The Almighty said, "**There is nothing like Him; and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.**" Surah "Ash-Shūra", ayah 11.

• The third type is ascribing partners to Allah in Divinity, which is to say setting up an equal to Allah among His creations in something which is an exclusive right of Allah, being the only True God worthy of worship. This may be through praying, fasting, supplicating, asking for salvation, offering sacrifices, taking an oath, as well as other kinds of worship, both major and minor, obligatory or voluntary, inward and outward. Allah Almighty said, "**And of mankind are some who take for worship others besides Allah as rivals. They love them as they love Allah.**" Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 165.

Major shirk implies associating someone or something with Allah as an equal and worshipping him in the same manner as worshipping Allah. This kind of shirk puts the one who does it beyond the pale of Islam and destroys whatever good deeds he might have done previously. Whoever dies as a polytheist will become a permanent inhabitant of the Hellfire, unless this kind of shirk is repented from before death. Death will not deliver him in Hell, nor will its torment be ever lightened for him.

Minor shirk includes all acts that may lead to major shirk, as well as any statement or action which is described as polytheism in the texts of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, but does not reach the extent of being major shirk. The fate of the one who indulges in minor shirk will depend on Allah's volition. If Allah Almighty wishes, He will forgive such sinner on the Day of Judgement, or else He will requit him with a painful retribution.

There are certain differences between major polytheism and minor polytheism, the most important of which are the following:

1. Major shirk can be forgiven by Allah Almighty only if the one who falls into it repents before death, whereas minor shirk may be forgiven whether the one who falls into it repents or not, according to Allah's will.

2. No previous act of worship will be valid if a person falls into major shirk. Minor shirk, however, only invalidates the act with which it occurs.

3. Major shirk puts a person beyond the pale of Islam, as the one who engages in it is judged as a disbeliever, whereas minor shirk does not put a person outside the fold of Islam.

4. The one who dies having fallen into major shirk will remain permanently in the Hellfire, and Paradise will forever be forbidden for him. Minor shirk, however, is qualified as any other sin and does not imply the same punishment.

How did shirk appear?

The root of shirk and the motive behind the occurrence of this vice among humanity is excessiveness in extolling and praising of their righteous and highly esteemed ancestors. Allah Almighty said: "**And they have said, 'You shall not leave your gods: nor shall you leave Wadd, nor Suwâ', nor Yaghûth, nor Ya'uq nor Nasr.' And indeed they have led many astray. So grant no increase to the wrongdoers save error!**" Surah "Nūh", ayahs 23–24.

Wadd, Suwâ', Yaghûth, Ya'uq and Nasr are names of some righteous people from among the people of Nuh. After their death their contemporaries made their statues and named them after those righteous men. They did it with the aim of glorifying their pious ancestors, immortalizing their remembrance, commemorating their virtues and greatness. However, they ended up worshipping them, thus deifying them beside Allah.

It is reported that the idols which were worshipped by the people of Nuh were worshipped later by the Arabs. Concerning the idol Wadd, it was worshipped by the tribe of Kalb at Daumat al-Jandal; Suwâ' — by the tribe of Hudhayl. Yaghûth was the idol of the tribe

of Murad first, and then was worshipped by Banu Ghutayf at Jurf near Saba'. Ya'uq was the idol of the tribe of Hamdan, and Nasr was the idol of Himyar, the branch of Dhi-al-Kala. The names of the idols formerly belonged to some righteous men of the people of Nuh. When they died, Satan inspired their fellow tribesmen to prepare and set down idols at the places where they used to sit, and to call those idols by their names. The people did so, but the idols were not worshipped until the people who initiated them had died and the origin of the idols had become obscure, whereupon people then began worshipping them.

It is also reported: "They [Wadd, Suwâ', Yaghûth, Ya'uq and Nasr] were a group of righteous people from among the descendants of Adam who had others who followed their example. After their death, it came to the minds of their followers that if they produced images of their deceased leaders, it would give them more enthusiasm for engaging in acts of worship of Allah whenever they remembered those virtuous men. They, therefore, made statues of them. After their demise, Iblis (Satan) rushed to tell the succeeding generation: 'They (your forefathers) used to worship those men, and for their sake, they were usually blessed with rain. Thus, that generation began to worship them.' "

You should be aware that by doing so, they combined two evils. First, they started gathering, directing their devotion to the graves of the virtuous men. Second, they carved out images that they later placed upon the area where those men sat and started visiting them. This led to ascribing partners to Allah, taking place within the history of humanity. Thus, these two acts were the major cause of shirk and remain the principal means of its occurrence at any time and in any place.

Some types of shirk

Associating partners with Allah in such form of worship as supplication. Since supplication is an act of worship, invoking anyone other than Allah is shirk. Accordingly, whoever directs supplication to a Prophet, an angel, a righteous person, a tomb, a stone or any other creation is a polytheist and a disbeliever.

Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He, said, "**And whoever invokes, besides Allah, any other god, of whom he has no proof; then his reckoning is only with his Lord. Surely! The disbelievers will not be successful.**" Surah "Al-Mu'minūn", ayah 117.

It is also evidenced by the following words of the Almighty: "**When they embark on a ship, they invoke Allah, making their faith pure for Him only; but when He brings them safely to land, behold, they give a share of their worship to others.**" Surah "Al-'Ankabūt", ayah 65.

Associating partners with Allah in such form of worship as intention. This happens when a person's intentions for performing good deeds are purely material, mundane or for showing off and gaining fame, and aim to gain neither Allah's pleasure nor the blessing of Paradise. Such a person falls into major shirk, as it was described by Allah the Almighty: "**Whosoever desires the life of the world and its glitter, to them We shall pay in full their deeds therein, and they will have no diminution therein. They are those for whom there is nothing in the Hereafter but Fire, and vain are the deeds they did therein. And of no effect is that which they used to do.**" Surah "Hūd", ayahs 15-16.

This type of polytheism is hidden and very dangerous.

Associating partners with Allah in obedience. Whoever obeys any of Allah's creations, whether they make lawful what Allah has prohibited or make prohibited what He has made lawful, and believes that they have the right to allow or forbid whatever they will

either for him or for any other, even when he knows that their judgement in this regard goes against the teachings of Sharia, then he takes those whom he obeys as other lords besides Allah and therefore commits major shirk.

Almighty Allah commented on this: "**They took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allah, so did they take Messiah, son of Maryam, while they were commanded to worship none but the One God. None has the right to be worshipped but He. Far above is He from having the partners they associate with Him.**" Surah "At-Tawbah", ayah 31.

This verse, the meaning of which is uncontroversial, reveals that the subject matter here is not just invoking their scholars and monks, but obeying them in their appeal to disobey Allah, that is to say, in changing the divine Law. Thus, when Adiyy bin Hatim, a companion of the Prophet's, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, remarked: "We never worshipped them", the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, explained to him that their compliance with the orders of those religious leaders, when they ask to commit sins and change the Law of Allah, is in fact their worshipping of them. He asked Adiyy: "***Is it not true that they forbid what Allah has permitted and permit that which He has forbidden, and you follow them in both?***" Adiyy, Allah be pleased with him, replied: "Yes, it is true." The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, then said: "***That is how you worshipped them.***" At-Tirmidhi, "Sunan" (3095) who said that it is a Hasan (good) hadith, Al-Tabarani "Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir" (17/92).

Associating partners with Allah in love. This refers to love in conjunction with servitude and usually implies glorification, exaltation of the object of love, as well as humiliation and submission to the beloved. This kind of love is due to Allah alone, Who has no partners. And if a servant offers it to another, he indulges in major shirk. The proof for this is found in the words of the Almighty: "**And of mankind are some who take for worship others besides Allah**

as rivals. They love them as they love Allah. But those who believe, love Allah more." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 165.

What is disbelief (kufr)?

The linguistic meaning of the Arabic word "*kufr*" is "covering", "concealing". Alternatively, the Sharia, or legalistic, meaning of it is quite the opposite of faith, which is lack of belief in Allah and His Messenger. One can be a disbeliever if he really considers the truth a lie, or else if he, without holding such views, doubts the truth or deliberately avoids the truth because of envy, pride, submission to his passions which take him away from the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

What are the types of disbelief?

Disbelief, just as polytheism, is divided into major and minor. Major disbelief will lead a person to abide permanently in the Hellfire, while minor disbelief will subject a person to a transitory punishment, but not permanent torture in Hell.

Major disbelief can be manifested in five forms:

The first type is disbelief as a result of considering the truth a lie (*kufr al-takdhib*). This form of disbelief implies lack of belief in the truthfulness of the Prophets and Messengers of Allah. Any person who considers them liars, either in word or in deed, is an unbeliever. The proof for this is found in the words of the Almighty: "**And who does more wrong than he who invents a lie against Allah or denies the truth, when it comes to him? Is there not a dwelling in Hell for disbelievers?**" Surah "Al-'Ankabūt", ayah 68.

The second type of major disbelief is disbelief as a result of rejection of the truth and arrogance (*kufr al-iba wa al-istikbar*). A person who falls into this type of kufr, in spite of being convinced of

the truthfulness of Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and of him bringing the truth from Allah, arrogantly and stubbornly refuses to abide by his rules or comply with his orders. Allah the Almighty said, "**And when We said to the angels: "Prostrate yourselves before Adam." And they prostrated except Iblîs; he refused and was proud and was one of the disbelievers.**" Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 34.

The third type of major disbelief is disbelief as a result of doubt (*kufr al-shak*). It refers to the situations when one remains hesitant and is unconvinced of the truthfulness of Allah's Messengers. This form of disbelief is also called disbelief to suspicion, because lack of certainty and being indecisive are the opposite of confidence and belief. The Qur'anic proof in this regard are the following verses: "**And he went into his garden while in a state unjust to himself. He said, 'I think not that this will ever perish. And I think not the Hour will ever come, and if indeed I am brought back to my Lord, I surely shall find better than this when I return to Him.' His companion said to him during the talk with him: 'Do you disbelieve in Him Who created you out of dust, then out of a small drop of fluid, then fashioned you into a man? But as for my part, Allah Alone is my Lord, and none shall I associate as partner with my Lord.'**" Surah "Al-Kahf", ayahs 35-38.

The fourth type is disbelief as a result of deliberate avoidance of the truth (*kufr al-irad*). Avoidance in this context implies keeping oneself completely away from the religion of Islam by turning a deaf ear to the message of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and paying no attention whatsoever to it. The proof for this is found in the words of the Almighty: "**But those who disbelieve turn away from that whereof they are warned.**" Surah "Al-Ahqāf", ayah 3.

The fifth type of major disbelief is hypocritical disbelief (*kufr al-nifaq*). This is the case when one pretends to be a believer in or-

der to show off to people, while in reality he is not. This is confirmed by the words of Almighty Allah: "**That is because they believed, and then disbelieved; therefore their hearts are sealed, so they understand not.**" Surah "Al-Munāfiqūn", ayah 3.

Minor disbelief is a kind of disbelief that does not convert one into an unbeliever, however it subjects him to a severe punishment, but not to eternal torment in Hell. Minor disbelief in fact presents ingratitude for Allah's mercy and includes all the acts which in the texts of the Qur'an and the Sunnah are referred to as disbelief (*kufr*), but which do not reach the extent of what can be termed as major disbelief.

Below are some of the examples of minor disbelief.

Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, "***Two (things) are found among men which are tantamount to unbelief: slandering one's lineage and lamentation on the dead.***" "Sahih Muslim", 67.

The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, also said, "***Do not revert to disbelief after me by striking the necks of one another.***" "Sahih Al -Bukhari" 121, "Sahih Muslim" 65.

These and other similar examples found in the religious texts allude to minor disbelief, which do not take a person out of the fold of Islam.

Two types of Hypocrisy

Major hypocrisy

Such is the hypocrisy which is related to faith, which is to say concealing disbelief whilst making an outward show of being a Muslim. Those who have committed this sin will find themselves in the lowest depth of Hellfire, below all other unbelievers, as it was said by Allah the Almighty:

"**Verily, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depth of the Fire; no helper will you find for them.**" Surah "An-Nisā'", ayah 145.

Minor hypocrisy

This type is sometimes referred to as "practical hypocrisy", which means that its manifestations are manifold. Thus, for example, it is narrated that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "***There are three signs of a hypocrite: when he speaks, he lies; when he makes a promise, he breaks it; when he is trusted, he betrays his trust.***" This hadith, narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah, Allah be pleased with him, was reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

It is also narrated that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "***Whoever has the following four characteristics will be a pure hypocrite, and whoever has one of the following four characteristics will have one characteristic of hypocrisy unless and until he gives it up: whenever he is entrusted, he betrays; whenever he speaks, he tells a lie; whenever he makes a covenant, he proves treacherous; whenever he quarrels, he behaves in a very imprudent, evil and insulting manner.***" This hadith was quoted by Al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Abdallah bin Amr, Allah be pleased with him.

Belief in the Angels

Faith in the angels implies firm belief that Allah has angels, that they are His creations which He made from light to do certain tasks which they execute, that they are subject to His Lordship and subjugated to Him, and that Allah gave them power to execute His commands.

Belief in the angels includes faith in general and belief in certain particularities.

With regard to belief in the particulars, it refers to belief in those angels whose names Allah and His Messenger have made known to us, as well as to belief in the truthfulness of messages about their attributes and actions. As for belief in general, it is related to all other issues.

Muslim in his "Sahih" and Ahmad in his "Musnad" report a hadith, from Aisha, Allah be pleased with her, who narrated that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: "***Angels were created from light, jinn were created from a smokeless flame of fire, and Adam was created from that which you have been told*** (i.e., sounding clay like the clay of pottery)."

One of the attributes proper of angels are the wings. Almighty Allah said,

"All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, Who made the angels messengers with wings, two or three or four. He increases in creation what He wills. Verily, Allah is Able to do all things." Surah "Fâtir", ayah 1.

The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, for his part, narrated that he had seen Angel Jibril (Gabriel) in his original form and he had six hundred wings.

By the command of Allah the Almighty angels can take the form of a man, for which reason Jibril, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, appeared before Maryam in the form of a man, perfectly formed; and as for Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, he saw Jibril coming towards him as a man with extremely white clothing and extremely black hair. Angels which were sent by Allah to Ibrahim and Lut, peace and blessings of Allah be upon them, also came to them in human form.

Almighty Allah commented on their worship, complete obedience and submission in this way:

"Surely, those who are with your Lord are never too proud to perform acts of worship to Him, but they glorify His Praise and prostrate themselves before Him." Surah "Al-A'râf", ayah 206.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And those who are near Him are not too proud to worship Him, nor are they weary of His worship. They glorify His Praises night and day, they never slacken." Surah "Al-Anbiyâ", ayahs 19-20.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And they say, 'The Most Gracious has begotten a son.' Glory to Him! They are but honoured slaves. They speak not until He has spoken, and they act on His command. He knows what is before them, and what is behind them, and they cannot intercede except for him with whom He is pleased. And they stand in awe for fear of Him." Surah "Al-Anbiyâ", ayahs 26-28.

Almighty Allah also said,

"...who disobey not the commands they receive from Allah, but do that which they are commanded." Surah "At-Tahrīm", ayah 6.

Various verses of the Qur'an and hadiths mention some names of angels, their categories and the tasks they were entrusted with.

Thus, for example, Jibril was entrusted with carrying revelations to the Messengers. Almighty Allah said,

"Say, 'Whoever is an enemy to Jibrîl (Gabriel), for indeed he has brought this Qur'ân down to your heart by Allah's permission…'" Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 97.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And truly, this is a revelation from the Lord of the Universe, which the trustworthy Spirit (Jibrîl) has brought down upon your heart that you may be a warner..." Surah "Ash-Shu'arā'", ayahs 192-194.

Some of the hadiths mention that Angel Mikhail is assigned with the task of distributing rain and vegetation, while Angel Israfil has been assigned the task of blowing the Trumpet that signals the events of the Day of Resurrection.

Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to mention the names of these three angels in commencement to his voluntary night prayer; he would get up at night and start his prayer with these words: ***"O Allah, Lord of Jibril, Mikhail, and Israfil, Originator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the seen, You judge between Your slaves concerning that in which they used to differ. Guide me, by Your permission, to the truth about which people differ. Verily, You guide whom You will to the straight path!"*** This hadith was recorded by Muslim.

The Qur'an also has references to an angel named Malik, the keeper of Hell. Almighty Allah said,

"And they will cry, 'O Malik! Let your Lord make an end of us.' " Surah "Az-Zukhruf", ayah 77.

On the Categories of the Angels

1. Among them are those who bear the Throne of Allah.

Almighty Allah said,

"Those who bear the Throne and those around it glorify the praises of their Lord, and believe in Him, and ask forgiveness for those who believe…" Surah "Ghāfir", ayah 7.

Almighty Allah also said,

"…and eight angels will, that Day, bear the Throne of your Lord above them." Surah "Al-Hāqqah", ayah 17.

2. Among them are those who have been assigned the task to protect humans. Almighty Allah said,

"For each person there are angels in succession, before and behind him. They guard him by the command of Allah." Surah "Ar-Ra'd", ayah 11.

3. Among them are scribes who are assigned the task to record man's deeds. Almighty Allah said,

"But verily, over you are appointed angels to watch you, honourable recorders, they know all that you do." Surah "Al-Infitār", ayahs 10-12.

Almighty Allah also said,

"The two recording angels receive each human being, one sitting on the right and one on the left, to note their actions. Not

a word does he utter but there is a watcher by him ready." Surah "Qāf", ayahs 17-18.

This refers to the two angels appointed to every human, one sitting on the right, and one on the left. The one on the right records all good deeds, the one on the left — all evil deeds.

4. Angels who are sent to the foetus in the mother's womb.

The evidence of this is a hadith reported by Ibn Masud, Allah be pleased with him, who narrated: "Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, whose truthfulness is confirmed, said: ***'The way that each of you is created is that he is gathered in his mother's womb for forty days as a sperm drop, and then for a similar length of time as a blood-clot, and then for a similar length of time as a lump of flesh. Then an angel is sent and he breathes the spirit into (the foetus), and is charged with four commands: to write down his provision, his life-span, his actions, and whether he will be wretched or happy.'***" This hadith is recorded by Al-Bukhari.

5. Angels that are responsible for taking people's souls after their death.

It refers to the Angel of Death and his helpers. Almighty Allah said,

"Say, 'The angel of death, who is set over you, will take your souls. Then you shall be brought to your Lord.'" Surah "As-Sajdah", ayah 11.

Almighty Allah also said,

"...until when death approaches to one of you, Our Messengers (angels) take his soul, and they never neglect their duty." Surah "Al-An'ām", ayah 61.

Apart from the above mentioned, there are also other categories of angels.

Belief in the Revealed Books

It is referred to the Holy Scriptures which Almighty Allah revealed to His Messengers, peace and blessings of Allah be upon them all, and which contained the words of truth and guidance to mankind.

We, Muslims, believe in the Scriptures mentioned in the Qur'an. They are:

- The Glorious Qur'an (*al-Qur'an*), which was revealed to our Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

- The Torah (*at-Taurat*) which was revealed to the Prophet Musa (Moses), peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Almighty Allah said,

"Verily, We did send down the Taurât (Torah), therein was guidance and light." Surah "Al-Mā'idah", ayah 44.

- The Gospel (*al-Inyil*), which was revealed to Isa (Jesus), peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Almighty Allah said,

"And in their [the Prophets] footsteps, We sent ʿÎsâ, son of Maryam, confirming the Taurât (Torah) that had come before him, and We gave him the Injeel (Gospel), in which was guidance and light and confirmation of the Taurât that had come before it, a guidance and an admonition for the pious." Surah "Al-Mā'idah", ayah 46.

- The Psalms (*az-Zabur*), which was revealed to David (Dawud), peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Almighty Allah said,

"...and to Dâwûd (David) We gave the Zabûr (Psalms)." Surah "Al-Isrā'", ayah 55.

- The Scrolls (*as-Suhuf*), which Allah sent down to Ibrahim (Abraham) and Musa (Moses), peace and blessings of Allah be upon both of them. Almighty Allah said,

"Or is he not informed with what is in the Scripture of Mûsâ (Moses), and of Ibrâhîm (Abraham) who fulfilled all that (Allah ordered him to convey)...?" Surah "An-Najm", ayah 36-37.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Verily, this is in the former Scriptures — the Scriptures of Ibrâhîm and Mûsâ." Surah "Al-A'lā", ayah 18-19.

Besides, we also believe that Almighty Allah revealed distinct Scriptures to His other Messengers, peace and blessings of Allah be upon them.

Regarding the belief in the Qur'an, it differs from the belief in other Books in that it requires following it and that Allah has attributed to it such characteristics which the previous Scriptures did not possess.

Belief in the Messengers

This pillar of faith involves firm belief that Allah the Almighty sent a Messenger to every nation to call people to worship the One True God alone and disbelieve that He has any partners. Almighty Allah said,

"And verily, We have sent among every nation a Messenger proclaiming: 'Worship Allah Alone and keep away from false deities.' " Surah "An-Nahl", ayah 36.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And there never was a nation but a warner had passed among them." Surah "Fātir, ayah 24.

We should believe in every Messenger that Allah named in His Book. They are twenty-five in number: Adam, Nuh (Noah), Idris (Enoch), Hud (Heber), Salih, Ibrahim (Abraham), Ismail (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Yaqub (Jacob), Yusuf (Joseph), Lut (Lot), Shu'aib (Jethro), Yunus (Jonah), Musa (Moses), Harun (Aaron), Ilyas (Elijah), Zakariya (Zachariah), Yahia (John the Baptist), al-Yasa (Elisha), Dhul-Kifl, Dawud (David), Sulayman (Solomon), Ayyub (Job), Isa

(Jesus), and Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon them all.

We also believe that apart from them there were other Messengers, as Allah the Almighty said,

"And Messengers We have mentioned to you before, and Messengers We have not mentioned to you." Surah "An-Nisā'", ayah 164.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And indeed We have sent Messengers before you: of some of them We have related to you their story. And of some We have not related to you their story." Surah "Ghāfir", ayah 78.

We also believe that all the Messengers were righteous, truthful, honest and God-fearing, and that they conveyed everything with which Allah sent them, without concealing or omitting anything. Almighty Allah said,

"Are the Messengers charged with anything but to convey clearly the Message?" Surah "An-Nahl", ayah 35.

Almighty Allah also said,

"The Messenger's duty is only to convey the message in a clear way." Surah "An-Noor", ayah 54.

Belief in each of Allah's Messengers involves belief in all of them, that is why whoever disbelieves in the message of one of them is considered to have disbelieved in all of them, and in Almighty Allah Himself. Almighty Allah said,

"Say: 'We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Ibrâhîm, Ismâ'îl, Ishâq, Ya'qûb and their offsprings, and that which has been given to Mûsâ and 'Îsâ, and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have submitted.' So if they believe in the like of that which you believe, then they are rightly guided; but if they turn away, then they are only in opposition. So

Allah will suffice you against them. And He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayahs 136-137.

Almighty Allah also said,

"The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and so do the believers. Each one believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers. They say: 'We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers…' "

Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 285.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Verily, those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and wish to make distinction between Allah and His Messengers saying: 'We believe in some but reject others,' and wish to adopt a way in between, they are in truth disbelievers." Surah "An-Nisâ'", ayahs 150-151.

As for belief in Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, we must accept wholeheartedly everything he has brought to us from Almighty Allah and follow the divine message he conveys.

Arch-Prophets (Ulul-Azm)

This is what Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, Isa and Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon them all, are called. Almighty Allah said about them:

"And remember when We took from the Prophets their covenant, and from you, and from Nûh, Ibrâhîm, Mûsâ, and 'Îsâ, son of Maryam. We took from them a strong covenant…" Surah "Al-Ahzāb", ayah 7.

Almighty Allah also said,

"He (Allah) has ordained for you the same religion which He ordained for Nûh, and that which We have revealed to you, and that which We ordained for Ibrâhîm, Mûsâ and 'Îsâ saying you should remain steadfast in religion, and make no divisions in it." Surah "Ash-Shūra", ayah 13.

The Universal Message of Our Prophet Muhammad,

peace and blessings of Allah be upon him

Our Messenger Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was sent to all jinn and all of mankind.

The proof of the fact that the Prophet was sent to all of the jinn is found in the words of Almighty Allah:

"And remember when We sent towards you a group of the jinn, listening to the Qur'ân. When they stood in the presence thereof, they said: 'Listen in silence!' And when it was finished, they returned to their people, as warners. They said, 'O our people! Verily, we have heard a Book sent down after Mûsâ, confirming what came before it: it guides to the truth and to the Straight Path. O our people! Respond to Allah's Caller, and believe in him. Allah will forgive you of your sins, and will save you from a painful torment.'" Surah "Al-Ahqāf", ayahs 29-31.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Say, 'It has been revealed to me that a group of jinn listened to this Qur'ân. They said: 'Verily, we have heard a wonderful recitation! It guides to the Right Path, and we have believed therein, and we shall never join in worship anything with our Lord.' " Surah "Al-Jinn", ayahs 1-2.

There is evidence that the jinn came to see him and that he talked to them and recited the Qur'an to them.

As for the fact that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was sent to all of mankind, it is proved by many Qur'anic verses and also hadiths. Almighty Allah said,

"And We have not sent you except as a giver of glad tidings and a warner to all mankind…" Surah "Saba'", ayah 28.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Say, 'O mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allah…' " Surah "Al-A'râf", ayah 158.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Say, '…this Qur'ân has been revealed to me that I may therewith warn you and whomsoever it may reach.' " Surah "Al-An'âm'", ayah 19.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And We have sent you as a Messenger to mankind, and Allah is sufficient as a witness." Surah "An-Nisâ'", ayah 79.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Blessed be He Who sent down the criterion [this Qur'ân] to His slave that he may be a warner to the universe…" Surah "Al-Furqān", ayah 1.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And We have sent you not but as a mercy for the universe." Surah "Al-Anbiyâ'", ayah 107.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And say to those who were given the Scripture and to those who are illiterates: 'Do you submit yourselves to Allah?' If they do, they are rightly guided; but if they turn away, your duty is only to convey the Message." Surah "Āl-'Imrān", ayah 20.

Jabir bin Abdullah, Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: ***"I have been given five things which were not given to any one else before me: Allah made me victorious by awe, (by His frightening my enemies) for a distance of one month's journey; the earth has been made for me (and for my followers) a place for praying and a thing to perform Tayammum, therefore anyone of my followers can pray wherever the time of a prayer is due; the booty has been made Halal (lawful) for me yet it was not lawful for anyone else before me; I have been given the right of intercession (on the Day of Resurrection); every Prophet used to be sent to his nation only, but I have been sent to all mankind."*** This hadith was recorded by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Abu Hurairah, Allah be pleased with him, narrated that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: ***"By Him in Whose hand is the life of Muhammad, he who amongst the community of Jews or Christians hears about me, but does not affirm his belief in that with which I have been sent and dies in this state (of disbelief), he shall be but one of the denizens of Hell-Fire."*** This hadith was recorded by Muslim.

It is known that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, sent his messages to different countries and their leaders, including the king of Persia, the emperor of the Roman Empire, the governor of Egypt, the emperor of Ethiopia and other rulers to invite them to embrace Islam.

With regard to those people from among Jews and Christians who accepted the message of Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, as truthful, but said: "He was sent to Arabs",

their words lack consistency, for whoever accepts this message as truthful must accept it fully, and Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that he had been sent to all of mankind.

There were others who declared erroneous the message of Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, although the signs of the truthfulness of his prophecy were evident, and they are ample.

Muhammad,

peace and blessings of Allah be upon him,

is the Final Prophet

Our Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is the last of the divine prophets, for Almighty Allah said: **"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets."** Surah "Al-Ahzāb", ayah 40.

The point of this ayah is to highlight that Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, became the final prophet sent to mankind and that there will be no other prophets after him.

Ulemas (Islamic scholars) differed in their opinion concerning the distinction between a prophet and a messenger. Some of them said: "There is no difference between them, that is why every prophet is a messenger and every messenger is a prophet." Others said

that there was a difference between a prophet and a messenger, agreeing that a messenger's mission was more specific than a prophet's mission, which means that if there are no prophets after Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, then, apparently there will be no messengers.

This is evidenced by many hadiths.

Thus, for example, the two "Sahihs" report a hadith narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah, Allah be pleased with him, that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, ***"My similitude in comparison with the other prophets before me, is that of a man who has built a house nicely and beautifully, except for a place of one brick in a corner. The people go about it and wonder at its beauty, but say: 'Would that this brick be put in its place!' So I am that brick, and I am the last of the Prophets."***

The two "Sahihs" also record another hadith, by Jubair bin Mut'im, Allah be pleased with him, who narrated that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, ***"Verily, I have several names: I am Muhammad and I am Ahmad, I am the eraser through whom Allah erases unbelief, I am the gatherer at whose feet the people will be gathered, and I am the last prophet after which there are none."***

Muslim narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah, Allah be pleased with him, that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, ***"I have been given superiority over the other prophets in six respects: I have been given words which are concise but comprehensive in meaning; I have been helped by terror (in the hearts of enemies); spoils have been made lawful to me; the earth has been made for me clean and a place of worship; I have been sent to all mankind and the line of prophets is closed with me."***

Al-Bukhari and Muslim reported from Sad bin Abu Waqqas, Allah be pleased with him, that one day the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said to Ali ibn Abi Talib, Allah be pleased with him: ***"Are you not satisfied with being unto me what Aaron was unto Moses but with this exception that there would be no prophet after me?"***

There are many other authentic hadiths which clearly indicate that our Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is the final of the Prophets.

In his "Tafsir" Ibn Kathir, Allah have mercy on him, wrote: "Allah Almighty in His Book and His Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in many of the hadiths narrated that there would be no other prophet after Him so that people should know that any one who lays a claim to prophethood after Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is a liar, a disruptionist, an imposter, depraved and a seducer."

Belief in the Last Day

The Last Day is the Day of Resurrection, when Allah will raise all His servants to life from their graves for reckoning and retribution; He will then judge them according to their deeds, and those who deserve to go to Paradise will be sent to it, while those who deserve to go to Hell, will be sent to it.

The Day of Judgement is referred to as "The Last Day" because it is going to be the last day of this world. Allah Almighty told people about this great Day, about what would happen on this day and also about the signs that would indicate its arrival, and Qur'an draws attention to this Day on numerous occasions.

Thus, for example, Allah the Almighty swears by this Day. Almighty Allah said,

"I swear by the Day of Resurrection…" Surah "Al-Qiyāmah", ayah 1.

Also, Almighty Allah commanded to His Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, that he should swear that all people would be resurrected. Allah the Almighty said,

"The disbelievers pretend that they will never be resurrected. Say, 'Yes! By my Lord, you will certainly be resurrected, then you will be informed of what you did; and that is easy for Allah.'" Surah "At-Taghābun", ayah 7.

And Almighty Allah praises those who believe in this Day. Almighty Allah said,

"...and who believe in the revelation which has been sent down to you and in that which was sent down before you, and they believe with certainty in the Hereafter. They are on true guidance from their Lord, and they are the successful." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayahs 4–5.

And Almighty Allah condemns those who disbelieve in the Last Day. Almighty Allah said,

"Ruined indeed will be those who denied the Meeting with Allah, and were not guided." Surah "Yūnus", ayah 45.

And Allah the Almighty has narrated that this Day is already near. Almighty Allah said,

"The Hour has drawn near, and the moon has been cleft asunder." Surah "Al-Qamar", ayah 1.

By Means of Illustrative Examples and Contemplative Reasoning Almighty Allah Proves that the Coming of This Day Is Possible

With regard to illustrative examples, Almighty Allah told people about those whom He had caused to die and then brought back to life in this world, referring to six such cases.

First: Almighty Allah said,

"And remember when you said: 'O Mûsâ! We shall never believe in you until we see Allah plainly.' But you were seized

with a thunder-bolt while you were looking. Then We raised you up after your death, so that you might be grateful." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayahs 55-56.

This verse is about the people of Musa whom Allah mortified after they had said that and then resurrected them.

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Second: Almighty Allah said,

"And remember when you killed a man and fell into dispute among yourselves as to the crime. But Allah brought forth that which you were hiding. So We said, 'Strike him (the dead man) with a piece of the cow.' Thus Allah brings the dead to life and shows you His signs, so that you may understand." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayahs 72-73.

This refers to the people of Musa from among the children of Israel who got into an argument with each other over who was the murderer, following which they were commanded to slaughter a cow and touch the body of the dead man with a piece of meat of the sacrificed cow, and when they did it, the man arose from his death, announced the name of his murderer and became silent again.

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Third: Almighty Allah said,

"Did you not think of those who went forth from their homes in thousands, fearing death? Allah said to them, 'Die.' And then He restored them to life. Truly, Allah is full of bounty to mankind, but most men thank not." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 243.

This verse is about the people from among the children of Israel who fled their homes when a plague broke out among them, so Almighty Allah first caused them to die and then He brought them back to life.

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Fourth: Almighty Allah said,

"Or like the one who passed by a town while it had tumbled over its roofs. He said, 'Oh! How will Allah ever bring it to life after its death?' So Allah caused him to die for a hundred years, then raised him up again. He said, 'How long did you remain (dead)?' The man said, 'I remained a day or part of a day.' He said, 'Nay, you have remained (dead) for a hundred years, look at your food and your drink, they show no change; and look at your donkey! And thus We have made of you a sign for the people. Look at the bones, how We bring them together and clothe them with flesh.' When this was clearly shown to him, he said: 'I know now that Allah is Able to do all things.'" Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 259.

Now, the man who was passing by the town in ruins could not even imagine that Allah the Almighty would be capable of bringing all that back to life, so Allah caused the man to die for a hundred years and then brought him to life again.

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Fifth: Almighty Allah said,

"And remember when Ibrâhîm said: 'My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead.' Allah said, 'Do you not believe?' Ibrâhîm said, 'Yes, I believe, but to be stronger in faith.' Allah said, 'Take four birds, then cause them to incline towards you, then cut them to pieces, and then put a portion of them on every hill, and call them, they will come to you in haste. And know that Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.'" Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 260.

This verse describes how Ibrahim asked his Lord to show him how He brought the dead back to life, so Allah commanded him to kill four birds, cut them up and place their pieces on top of the nearest hills, and then call back the birds, saying that they would fly back to Ibrahim.

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Sixth: it refers to those people who stayed in their cave for many years. Almighty Allah said,

"And they stayed in their cave three hundred years, adding nine years." Surah "Al-Kahf", ayah 25.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Likewise, We awakened them that they might question one another." Surah "Al-Kahf", ayah 19.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And thus We made their case known to the people, that they might know that the Promise of Allah is true, and that there can be no doubt about the Hour." Surah "Al-Kahf", ayah 21.

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As for the contemplative reasoning in favour of the possibility of the resurrection of the death, they can be very different.

First: conclusion about the possibility of a second creation derived on the basis of knowledge about the first one, for the One Who managed to create it all for the first time, will be able to perform it again. Almighty Allah said,

"And he puts forth for Us a parable, and forgets his own creation. He says, 'Who will give life to these bones after they are rotten and have become dust?' Say, 'He will give life to them Who created them for the first time! And He is the All-Knower of every creation!' " Surah "Yā-Sīn", ayahs 78-79.

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Second: argument based on the knowledge of a possibility of producing a thing from its opposite, for example, the possibility of bringing forth hot and dry fire out of a cold wet green tree. Almighty Allah said, **"He Who produces for you fire out of the green tree, when behold you kindle therewith."** Surah "Yā-Sīn", ayah 80.

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Third: argument based on the assumption that the One Who was able to create a great thing will certainly be able to create something small. Almighty Allah said,

"Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth, Able to create the like of them?" Surah "Yā-Sīn", ayah 81.

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Fourth: argument in favour of a possibility to resurrect the dead, based on the knowledge of the possibility of reviving the earth after its death. Almighty Allah said,

"And among His signs, that you see the earth barren; but when We send down water to it, it is stirred to life and growth. Verily, He Who gives it life, surely, is Able to give life to the dead. Indeed, He is Able to do all things." Surah "Fussilat", ayah 39.

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Fifth: argument in favour of a possibility of Resurrection based on the knowledge that after sleep comes waking, as sleep is like a minor death and waking is like a new life after death. Almighty Allah said: **"It is He Who takes your souls by night, and has knowledge of all that you have done by day, then He raises you up again that a term appointed be fulfilled, then unto Him will be your return. Then He will inform you of that which you used to do."** Surah "Al-An'ām", ayah 60.

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Sixth: argument in favour of the possibility of resurrection, based on the knowledge of Allah's wisdom and justice, according to which both resurrection and reckoning are inevitable. Almighty Allah said,

"Did you think that We had created you in play, without any purpose, and that you would not be brought back to Us?" Surah "Al-Mu'minūn", ayah 115.

About the Appointed Time of the Hour

Knowledge of the Hour belongs exclusively to Allah, and we can only say that it will come suddenly.

Almighty Allah said,

"They ask you about the Hour: 'When will be its appointed time?' Say, 'The knowledge thereof is with my Lord Alone. None can reveal its time but He. Heavy is its burden through the heavens and the earth. It shall not come upon you except all of a sudden.' They ask you as if you have a good knowledge of it. Say, 'The knowledge thereof is with Allah Alone, but most of mankind know not.' " Surah "Al-A'rāf", ayah 187.

It is narrated that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: ***"I and the Hour have been sent like these two"*** (and he held out his middle and index fingers). This hadith was recorded by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

It is also narrated that when Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, answered questions about the coming of the Resurrection Day he used to say that he had no knowledge of it, suggesting that the people who asked him should devote themselves to something more appropriate, namely think about the best way to prepare themselves for this Day, and sometimes he talked about the minor day of resurrection, that is to say, about death.

Thus, for example, when Jibril, Allah be pleased with him, told the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him: "Tell me about the final Hour", the Prophet responded in this way: ***"The one asked does not know more than the one asking."*** This hadith was recorded by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

The two "Sahihs" report another hadith, which narrates that one day a Bedouin came and asked the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him: "When will The Hour be established?", — to what the Prophet replied: ***"It will surely come to pass. What have you prepared for it?"***

Besides, the two "Sahihs" report another hadith, on the authority of Aisha, Allah be pleased with her, who said: "Some rough Bedouins used to visit the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and asked him, 'When will the Hour be?' He would look at the youngest of all of them and say, ***'If this should live till he is very old, your Hour will take place'*** — he meant by the Hour their death".

However, the texts of the Qur'an and the Sunnah contain clear signs that indicate that the Hour is nigh. Thus, for example, Almighty Allah narrates about the major signs, such as the smoke, the second descent of 'Isa, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, the appearance of Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj (Gog and Magog), the rising of the sun from the West, the appearance of the Beast.

As to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, he mentions some details in relation to the signs which include the appearance of the Antichrist, three collapses of the earth: one in the west, one in the east, and one in the Arabian Peninsula, — the emergence of a fire from Yemen which will drive mankind to their place of assembly. Besides, Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that the Hour will not come until the following events have come to pass: two big groups will fight one another, and there will be many casualties —

they will both be following the same religious teaching; nearly thirty deceivers (*dajjal*) will appear, each of them claiming to be a messenger from Allah; knowledge will be taken away; earthquakes will increase; time will pass quickly; temptations will appear; killing will increase; a fire will come out of the land of Hijaz, and it will throw light on the necks of camels at Busra.

All these signs, as well as other indications of the Hour, are divided into major and minor signs. Minor signs are further classified into those that have occurred and have ended, those which have occurred and continue to proliferate, and those signs which have yet to occur. As for the major signs, their time has not come yet, but when any of them occurs, the rest will come, too.

Death and Events in the Grave

Belief in the Last Day implies belief in everything which is told in the Qur'an and the Sunnah in this respect, namely everything connected with death and what will happen after it.

Belief in death and things that accompany it includes the following:

1. Believing that in this world death is inevitable for all living things. Almighty Allah said,

"Everyone shall taste death. Then unto Us you shall be returned." Surah "Al-'Ankabūt", ayah 57.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Everything will perish save His face. His is the decision and to Him you shall be returned." Surah "Al-Qasas", ayah 88.

2. Believing that everyone has a term appointed for them, and neither can one delay it nor advance it. This term is known to Allah.

Not only did he establish it, He also determined the cause of death of everyone. Almighty Allah said,

"And no person can ever die except by Allah's leave and at an appointed term." Surah "Āl-'Imrān", ayah 145.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And every nation has its appointed term; when their term comes, neither can they delay it nor can they advance it an hour." Surah "Al-A'rāf", ayah 34.

3. Believing that none but Allah knows this term. Almighty Allah said,

"No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die. Verily, Allah is All-Knower, All-Aware." Surah "Luqmān", ayah 34.

4. Believing that some changes and experiences, which Almighty Allah talked about, take place before death:

"...until when death approaches one of you, Our Messengers (angels) take his soul, and they never neglect their duty." Surah "Al-An'ām", ayah 61.

Almighty Allah also said,

"When the soul of a dying person reaches the throat, and you at the moment are looking on, but We are nearer to him than you, but you see not..." Surah "Al-Wāqi'ah", ayahs 83-85.

This verse indicates that when the soul of a dying person reaches the throat, agony starts. At this moment all the people present are looking at him, but as for Almighty Allah, He knows more about the dying man than the people, and His angels are closer to him than the people, but they do not see it.

When a sinner or a wicked person dies, he regrets everything that he has done and wants to return back to this world. Almighty Allah said,

"When death comes to one of them, he says: 'My Lord! Send me back, so that I may do good in that which I have left behind!' No! It is but a word that he speaks; and behind them is a barrier until the Day when they will be resurrected." Surah "Al-Mu'minūn", ayahs 99-100.

With reference to taking the soul out of the body of a wrong-doer, Almighty Allah said this:

"And if you could but see when the wrong-doers are in the agonies of death, while the angels are stretching forth their hands saying: 'Deliver your souls! This day you shall be recompensed with the torment of degradation because of what you used to utter against Allah other than the truth. And you used to reject His signs with disrespect!' " Surah "Al-An'ām", ayah 93.

It means that the angels are stretching their hands towards the wrong-doer, hitting him and tormenting him.

"Musnad" of Imam Ahmad and other collections record a hadith, reported by Al-Bara' bin 'Azib, Allah be pleased with him, which tells that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: ***"When a believer is about to leave the world and go forward to the next world, angels with faces white as the sun come down to him from heaven with one of the shrouds of Paradise and some of the perfume of Paradise and sit away from him as far as the eye can see. Then the angel of death comes and sits at his head and says: 'Good soul, come out to forgiveness and acceptance from God.' It then comes out as a drop flows from a water-skin and he seizes it; and when he does so, they do not leave it in his hand for an instant, but take it and place it in that shroud and that perfume, and from it there comes forth a fragrance like that of the sweetest musk found on the face of the earth. They then take it up."***

Then the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said,

"But when an infidel is about to leave the world and proceed to the next world, angels with black faces come down to him from heaven with hair-cloth and sit away from him as far as the eye can see. Then the angel of death comes and sits at his head and says: 'Wicked soul, come out to displeasure from God.' Then it becomes dissipated in his body, and he draws it out as a spit is drawn out from moistened wool. He then seizes it, and when he does so, they do not leave it in his hand for an instant, but out it in that hair-cloth and from it there comes forth a stench like the most offensive stench of a corpse found on the face of the earth. They then take it up."

Therefore, great and important events take place after death; some of them will happen in the grave, and some of them will occur after resurrection of the dead.

And here is what happens to a person in the grave:

1. The Trial of the Grave

Once a person is placed within his grave, he undergoes a trial, as two angels come to him and ask him questions: "Who is you Lord?, What is your religion?, Who is this man who was sent among you?" As for a believer, he will reply: "My Lord is Allah, and my religion is Islam," — and to the third question he will respond: "He is Allah's servant and His Messenger." As for an infidel, he will answer all the questions in this manner: "Alas, alas, I do not know," and a hypocrite or the one who doubts would say: "I do not know. I heard people saying something, so I said the same."

2. Blessing and Torment of the Grave

After being questioned in the grave, the deceased stays therein till the very Day of Resurrection enjoying the blessing or suffering torments, which affect both the body and the soul or just the soul.

The evidence of the trial of the grave, which awaits everyone and which is related to the questioning carried out by the two angels, is found in many Qur'anic ayahs and hadiths that also narrate about the blessing and the torments in which we must believe in general and in particular; but we shall not speak about how exactly it will happen.

The indications which prove this are the following:

Almighty Allah said,

"Allah will keep firm those who believe, with the word that stands firm in this world and in the Hereafter..." Surah "Ibrāhīm", ayah 27.

Almighty Allah also said,

"...while an evil torment encompassed Pharaoh's people. The fire, they are exposed to it, morning and afternoon. And on the Day when the Hour is established, it will be said to the angels: 'Cause Pharaoh's people to enter the severest torment!' "

Surah "Ghāfir", ayahs 45-46.

The two "Sahihs" report a hadith, from Al-Bara' bin Azib, Allah be pleased with him, which narrates that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: ***"When a Muslim is questioned in his grave, he will testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger, and that is what is meant by Allah's Statement:*** **'Allah will keep firm those who believe, with the word that stands firm in this world and in the Hereafter...'** Surah "Ibrāhīm", ayah 27. ***"***

The hadith recorded in Imam Ahmad's "Musnad", on the authority of Al-Bara' bin Azib, Allah be pleased with him, the begin-

ning of which is cited above, also narrates that first the angels take the soul of the deceased up and then bring him back to earth.

Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, ***"His soul is then restored to his body, two angels come to him, and making him sit up say to him: 'Who is your Lord?' He replies, 'My Lord is Allah.' They ask, 'What is your religion?' and he replies: 'My religion is Islam.' They ask, 'Who is this man who was sent among you?' and he replies: 'He is Allah's Messenger.' They ask, 'What is your source of knowledge?' and he replies: 'I have read Allah's Book, believed in it and declared it to be true.' Then one cries from heaven: 'My servant has spoken the truth, so spread out carpets from Paradise for him, clothe him from Paradise, and open a gate for him into Paradise.' Then some of its joy and fragrance comes to him, his grave is made spacious for him as far as the eye can see."***

As for an infidel, Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said the following in his regard: ***"His soul is then restored to his body, two angels come to him, and making him sit up say to him: 'Who is your Lord?' He replies: 'Alas, alas, I do not know.' They ask, 'What is your religion?' and he replies: 'Alas, alas, I do not know.' They ask, 'Who is this man who was sent among you?' and he replies: 'Alas, alas, I do not know.' Then one cries from heaven: 'He has lied, so spread out carpets from Hell for him, and open a gate for him into Hell.' Then some of its heat and hot air comes to him, his grave is made narrow for him so that his ribs are pressed together in it."***

The two "Sahihs" record a hadith, reported on the authority of Anas bin Malik, Allah be pleased with him, who narrated that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: ***"When the servant is placed in his grave, his companions retrace their steps, and he hears the noise of their footsteps, two angels come to him and make him sit and say to him: 'What do you have to say***

about this person (the Prophet)?' If he is a believer, he would say: 'I bear testimony to the fact that he is a servant of Allah and His Messenger.' Then it would be said to him: 'Look to your seat in the Hellfire, for Allah has substituted (the seat of yours) with a seat in Paradise.' He would be shown both the seats. The hypocrite and the infidel are asked: 'What do you have to say about this person (the Prophet?)', they would reply: 'I do not know; I held the opinion others held.' They will retort: 'You neither knew nor did you follow [the believers].' He will then be given a blow with iron hammers and will utter a shout which will be heard by all who are near him, with the exception of men and jinn."

The two "Sahihs" record a hadith, reported by Ibn Abbas, Allah be pleased with him, who narrated that one day the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, passed by two graves and said: ***"They are being tortured not for a great thing to avoid."*** And then added: **"Yes, for one of them used to go about with calumnies while the other never saved himself from being soiled with his urine."** Then the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, took a green leaf of a date-palm and split it into two pieces and fixed one piece on each grave and said: ***"May their punishment be abated till these (two pieces) get dry."***

It is also narrated that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, used to call upon Allah asking Him to protect him from the torment of the grave and commanded other people to do the same, as it is proved by many hadiths.

There two types of torments in the grave:

1. There are incessant torments which people are exposed to all the time. Almighty Allah refers to this type in this verse:

"The fire, they are exposed to it, morning and afternoon..."

Surah "Ghāfir", ayah 46.

2. Other torments are transitory; they last for a while and then cease. This is the torment that some non-observant Muslims will

experience, and the severity of their torment will depend on the severity of their sins. Then their punishment shall be lightened by virtue of supplication in favour of the deceased, charity, or other deeds.

Some of the people who have gone astray denied that people would experience torment or enjoy blessing in their graves. Their doubts emerged because they could not perceive it empirically, since they had never seen the dead being questioned or experiencing blessing or torments.

This can be answered in the following way:

1. Given that the Qur'an and the Sunnah are the main sources of all our knowledge regarding the Last Day, a Muslim has to accept and affirm all the evidence, and this is what distinguishes Muslims from all other humans, as they believe in the hidden and follow the right path thanks to the guidance of Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

2. In the Hereafter there are other regulations that cannot be judged according to the conceptions we are used to in this world. This means that we cannot conceive what exactly is happening to the deceased. We can just state that Allah's power is great and He thought it necessary that people should not be allowed to see or hear what was going on in the other world, because otherwise they would not be able to bear it and because He worried that people would start burying one another, and also to distinguish the believers from the rest of mankind.

3. A human being is unable to comprehend everything. Thus, for instance, when Jibril, peace be upon him, descended to see the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and talked to him, none of the people who were near them saw him or heard him. Besides, we know that all that exists praises Allah, but we cannot tell exactly how it happens.

4. Almighty Allah makes it possible for us to see something similar even in this world, as a person can sometimes see something very pleasant and joyful in a dream, but other times quite the opposite of that, although in reality he is just sleeping in his bed, being far from what he sees, and his dreams are not accessible to the perception of others.

Something similar could be said about modern inventions. Thus, we are unable to perceive the processes happening in electric conductors until we touch a live bare wire, and it is different if we touch it with an iron object or with a wooden object.

Events after the Resurrection

Rising up from the Graves

People will rise up from their graves when Angel Israfil, peace be upon him, blows the Trumpet. The Qur'an states that he will do it three times.

1. At the first blowing of the Trumpet everyone will be struck with fear.

The first blowing of the Trumpet will destroy the established world order and throw everyone into confusion. Almighty Allah said,

"And remember the Day on which the Trumpet will be blown — and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth, will be terrified except him whom Allah will exempt."

Surah "An-Naml", ayah 87.

2. At the second blowing of the Trumpet all living beings of the world will be caused to die. Almighty Allah said,

"And the Trumpet will be blown, and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will swoon away, except him who Allah wills." Surah "Az-Zumar", ayah 68.

3. At the third blowing of the Trumpet everyone will be revived and raised up from their graves. Almighty Allah said,

"Then it will be blown a second time, and behold they will be standing, looking on." Surah "Az-Zumar", ayah 68.

Gathering

The way people will be raised from their graves is described in a hadith reported by Aisha, Allah be pleased with her, and recorded in the two "Sahihs". Aisha narrated: "I heard Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, say, ***'On the Day of Resurrection people will be gathered barefooted, naked and uncircumcised.'"***

"Sahih Muslim" reports a hadith, on the authority of Al-Miqdad bin Al-Aswad, Allah be pleased with him, who transmitted that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: ***"The sun will be a distance of a mile from the creation on the Day of Resurrection. People will sink in their perspiration according to their deeds."***

In this situation the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, will intercede for people with the Lord, as Adam, Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa and 'Isa, peace and blessings of Allah be upon all of them, will not undertake it, and this is going to be the Major Intercession, the Prophet's greatest distinction and mark of his excellence.

Standing before Allah and Reckoning

By standing, here we mean that all people will stand before Allah, the Almighty, the Sublime. Almighty Allah said,

"And they will be set before your Lord in rows, and Allah will say, 'Now indeed, you have come to Us as We created you the first time…' " Surah "Al-Kahf", ayah 48.

Almighty Allah also said,

"That Day shall you be brought to Judgement, not a secret of you will be hidden." Surah "Al-Hāqqah", ayah 18.

Regarding the reckoning, Allah, the Almighty, the Sublime, will inform people of their good deeds and their bad deeds and will remind them of the matters they have forgotten. Almighty Allah said,

"On the Day when Allah will resurrect them all together and inform them of what they did. Allah has kept account of it, while they have forgotten it…" Surah "Al-Mujādalah", ayah 6.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Verily, to Us will be their return; then verily, for Us will be their reckoning." Surah "Al-Ghāshiyah", ayahs 25-26.

Almighty Allah also said,

"So think not that Allah will fail to keep His promise to His Messengers. Certainly, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Able of retribution on the Day when the earth will be changed to another earth and so will be the heavens, and all creatures will appear before Allah, the One, the Irresistible. And you will see the disbelievers that Day bound together in fetters. Their garments will be of pitch, and fire will cover their faces, that Allah may requite each person according to what he has earned. Truly, Allah is Swift at reckoning." Surah "Ibrāhīm", ayahs 47-51.

At the same time the scrolls of deeds will be unrolled and everyone will be questioned, including the messengers and the members of their communities. Almighty Allah said,

"...then surely, We shall question those to whom it was sent and verily, We shall question the Messengers." Surah "Al-A'râf", ayah 6.

However people will be questioned and taken to account in different ways. As for Muslim believers, their sins will be disclosed to them, they will repent and the sins will be covered up for them.

The two "Sahihs" record a hadith on the authority of Aisha, Allah be pleased with her, who reported: "Once Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, ***'Whoever is fully taken to account about his deeds on the Day of Resurrection will surely be punished.'*** I said, 'Has not Allah said: **'...he surely will receive an easy reckoning'** Surah "Al-Inshiqāq", ayah 8?' The Prophet said, ***'This means only the presentation of the accounts.'***"

The two "Sahihs" record a hadith, transmitted by Ibn Umar, Allah be pleased with both of them, who heard the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, say: ***"A believer will be brought close to his Lord on the Day of Resurrection, and enveloping him in His mercy, He will make him confess his sins by saying: 'Do you remember doing this sin and this sin?' He will reply: 'My Lord, I remember.' Then He will say, 'I covered it up for you in the life of the world, and I forgive it for you today.' Then the record of his good deeds will be handed to him. Regarding infidels and hypocrites, their evil acts will be exposed publicly and the witnesses will say, 'These are the people who lied against their Lord.'"***

Among the believers there are people who will enter Paradise without reckoning or torments, for example, those seventy thousand people who are referred to in a hadith transmitted by Ibn Abbas, Allah be pleased with both of them, which is recorded in the two "Sahihs".

As for the infidels, their accounts will not be the same as the accounts of people whose good and bad deeds will be measured, for no good deeds will be in their records. Almighty Allah said,

"And We shall turn to whatever deeds they did, and We shall make such deeds as scattered floating particles of dust."

Surah "Al-Furqān", ayah 23.

The reckoning of the infidels will consist in that they will be informed of their bad deeds and then condemned for them.

The Balance

This is referred to the Balance that on the Day of Resurrection will be set up to weigh the deeds of Allah's servants and distinguish them from one another, as well as to calculate their number. The deeds will be weighed after reckoning, because the reckoning is necessary to determine which deeds have been done and weighing them on the Balance is necessary for people to see how heavy their deeds are, according to which they will be recompensed.

Both the Qur'an and the Sunnah include many indications which prove the accuracy of the Balance.

Thus, for example, Almighty Allah said,

"And We shall set up balances of justice on the Day of Resurrection, then none will be dealt with unjustly in anything. And if there be the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it. And Sufficient are We to take account." Surah "Al-Anbiyā'", ayah 47.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Then as for him whose balance of good deeds will be heavy, he will live a pleasant life. But as for him whose balance of good deeds will be light, he will have his home in the Abyss."

Surah "Al-Qāri'ah", ayahs 6-9.

"Sahih Al-Bukhari" reports a hadith, from Abu Hurairah, Allah be pleased with him, narrating that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: ***"There are two words which are dear to the Beneficent Allah, and they are light for the tongue to say, but very heavy in weight in the balance. They are 'Glory be to Allah the Great' and 'Glory be to Allah and His is the praise' "*** (*"Subhan Allah Al-Azim"* and *"Subhan Allah wa-bi hamdihi"*).

Scrolls with Records of the Deeds

After the reckoning and weighing the deeds are over, each person will take the record of his deeds and will read what is written in it, and among people there will be some who will take records in their right hands and others who will take the record in their left hands from behind their backs. Almighty Allah said,

"Then as for him who will be given his record in his right hand will say: 'Here! Read my record! Surely, I did believe that I shall meet my account!' So he shall be in a life, well-pleasing, in a lofty Paradise, the fruits in bunches whereof will be low and near at hand. We shall say to him, 'Eat and drink at ease for that which you have sent on before you in days past!' But as for him who will be given his record in his left hand, will say: 'I wish that I had not been given my record and that I had never known how my account is! Would that it had been my end! My wealth has not availed me; my power has gone from me!' " Surah "Al-Hāqqah", ayahs 19-29.

The Bridge (As-Sirat)

This is the name of a bridge that is laid across Hell over which the first and the last will pass, and whoever crosses it, will escape the

Fire, and people will pass over the Bridge only after they have left the place of reckoning. The believers will cross the Sirat thus avoiding Hellfire; as for those destined to Hell, they will fall down from the Bridge directly to Fire. Almighty Allah said,

"There is not one of you but will pass over it (Hell): this is with your Lord; a Decree which must be accomplished. Then We shall save those who used to fear Allah and were dutiful to Him. And We shall leave the wrongdoers therein humbled to their knees." Surah "Maryam", ayahs 71-72.

The two "Sahihs" report a hadith, narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah, Allah be pleased with him: "One day the people said, 'O Allah's Messenger! Shall we see our Lord on the Day of Resurrection?' This hadith narrates the following words of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him: ***'Then a bridge will be laid across Hellfire. I and my followers will be the first ones to go across it and none will speak on that Day except the Apostles. And the invocation of the Apostles on that Day will be: 'O Allah, save! Save!' In Hell (or over The Bridge) there will be hooks like the thorns of As-Sa'dan.'***"

"Sahih Muslim" records a hadith reported on the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Allah be pleased with him, who narrated that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: ***"Then the bridge would be set up over the Hell and intercession would be allowed and they will say: 'O Allah, keep safe, keep safe.'"*** It was asked: "Messenger of Allah, what is this bridge?" He said: ***"The void in which one is likely to slip. There would be hooks, tongs, spits like the thorn that is found in Najd and is known as Sa'dan. The believers would then pass over within the twinkling of an eye, like lightning, like wind, like a bird, like the finest horses and camels. Some will escape and be safe, some will be lacerated and let go, and some will be pushed into the fire of Hell till the believers will find rescue from the Fire."***

The Bridge

After the believers have crossed the Sirat and have escaped the Fire, before entering Paradise they will be stopped at another bridge laid between Paradise and Hell. This would be done so that the offended could retaliate against their offenders regarding the wrongs they have committed in this world, and when they are purified through the retaliation, they will be admitted into Paradise.

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: ***"The believers, after being saved from the Hellfire, will be stopped at a bridge between Paradise and Hell and mutual retaliation will be established among them regarding wrongs they have committed in the world against one another. After they are cleansed and purified, they will be admitted into Paradise; and by Him in Whose Hand Muhammad's soul is, every one of them will know his dwelling in Paradise better than he knew his dwelling in this world."*** This hadith was reported by Al-Bukhari.

In reference to this bridge, there are differences of opinion among the commentators. While some of them considered it the closure of the Sirat, mainly that part of it which was adjacent to Paradise, others claimed it was another bridge.

The Pond

It refers to the pond of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

The "Sahih" of Al-Bukhari and that of Muslim record a hadith, transmitted on the authority of Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn Al-'As, Allah be pleased with him, who narrated that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: ***"My Lake-Fount is so large that it takes a month's journey to cross it. Its water is whiter***

than milk, and its smell is nicer than musk, and its drinking cups are as numerous as the number of stars of the sky; and whoever drinks from it, will never be thirsty."

The two "Sahihs", just as other collections, record many other hadiths which make reference to this pond.

Paradise and Hell

Paradise and Hell are two types of dwelling that humans will make their home, which Allah Almighty has destined for His servants as reward of their deeds.

Paradise is the abode of bliss and manifestation of generosity towards those God-fearing believers who have got closer to Allah, have believed in Allah, His Messenger and in that which he has come to people with, who have submitted themselves to Allah and His Messenger, have worshipped Allah Alone sincerely and followed His Messenger. Almighty Allah said,

"Verily, those who believe and do righteous good deeds, they are the best of creatures. Their reward with their Lord is 'Adn (Eden) Paradise, underneath which rivers flow. They will abide therein forever, Allah will be pleased with them, and they with Him. That is for him who fears his Lord." Surah "Al-Bayyinah", ayahs 7-8.

Almighty Allah also said,

"And march forth in the way which leads to forgiveness from your Lord, and for Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the pious." Surah "Āl-'Imrān", ayah 133.

Many pleasures await the righteous in Paradise, which no one has ever seen or heard of in this world, not even imagined them. Almighty Allah said,

"No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do." Surah "As-Sajdah", ayah 17.

But the greatest pleasure for those who find themselves in Paradise will be the possibility of seeing their Lord with their own eyes, as it has been stated by the Almighty:

"Some faces that Day shall be radiant, looking at their Lord." Surah "Al-Qiyāmah", ayahs 22-23.

The same point is referred to many times in various hadiths.

As for Hellfire, it is the abode of torture and humiliation which Allah has destined for His enemies from among the infidels who have not believed in Him and who have disobeyed His Messengers. Almighty Allah said,

"And fear the Fire, which is prepared for the disbelievers..." Surah "Āl-'Imrān", ayah 131.

The wrong-doers will be punished and tormented in Hell in many ways. Almighty Allah said,

"Verily, We have prepared for the wrong-doers a fire whose walls will be surrounding them. And if they ask for help, they will be granted water like boiling oil that will scald their faces. Terrible is the drink, and an evil dwelling!" Surah "Al-Kahf", ayah 29.

Many Qur'anic verses and a lot of hadiths contain descriptions of Paradise and Hell, indicating that they have been created and that they exist nowadays, and make reference to the eternal bliss or the grievous punishment which awaits those who find themselves in Paradise or in Hell.

Both Paradise and Hell will last forever and will never pass away. Here is what Almighty Allah said about Paradise:

"...its provision is eternal and so is its shade." Surah "Ar-Ra'd", ayah 35.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Verily, this is Our provision, which will never finish." Surah "Sād", ayah 54.

Almighty Allah also said,

"…they will abide therein forever." Surah "Al-Bayyinah", ayah 8.

Almighty Allah also said,

"They will never taste death therein except the first death." Surah "Ad-Dukhān", ayah 56.

Almighty Allah also said,

"...nor shall they ever be asked to leave it." Surah "Al-Hijr", ayah 48.

Regarding Hell, Almighty Allah stated the following:

"They will long to get out of the fire, but never will they get out therefrom; and theirs will be a lasting torment." Surah "Al-Mā'idah", ayah 37.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Neither will it have a complete killing effect on them so that they die, nor shall its torment be lightened for them." Surah "Fātir", ayah 36.

Almighty Allah also said,

"...to dwell therein forever." Surah "An-Nisā'", ayah 169.

Intercession

Our Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, will be the first among those who ask to open the gate of Paradise, and his followers will be the first people to enter it.

Only our Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, will intercede on behalf of the believers with the Lord asking for them to be admitted to Paradise; only he is granted the honour of the greater intercession and will intercede for all mankind with Allah so that He will pass judgement amongst His servants on the Day of Resurrection; and only he interceded for his uncle Abu Talib so that Allah would reduce his suffering in Hellfire, which will be al-

lowed exclusively to our Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

As for other kinds of intercession, they will be granted to the Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and other prophets, angels and righteous people. Among them such types can be distinguished:

1. Intercession for wrong-doers who deserve Hell, that they may not enter it.

2. Intercession for some people who have entered Hell, that they might be brought forth from it.

3. Intercession for some of the believers who deserve Paradise, that they may be raised in status in Paradise.

Intercession of these kinds will only happen if the following two conditions are met:

1. Permission of Almighty Allah, as Almighty Allah said,

"Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His permission?" Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 255.

2. Allah's approval of the one for whom intercession is made. Almighty Allah said,

"And they cannot intercede except for him with whom He is pleased…" Surah "Al-Anbiyā'", ayah 28.

We know about everything that will occur in the Hereafter, in particular during the period between the death of a person and the Day of Resurrection, on the Resurrection Day, in Paradise and in Hell, — only by virtue of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and we believe in it, despite the lack of knowledge about the details of how it is going to happen.

Belief in Divine Decree, Whether Good or Bad

Divine Decree *(Al Qadar)* is what has been predestined by Allah for all existing things. The existence of Preordainment and the necessity of believing in it has been referred to many times both in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Thus, for example, Almighty Allah said,

"Verily, We have created all things with Qadar (Divine Preordainment)" Surah "Al-Qamar", ayah 49.

Almighty Allah also said,

"The command of Allah is a decree determined." Surah "Al-Ahzāb", ayah 38.

Almighty Allah also said,

"No calamity befalls, but by the leave of Allah, and whosoever believes in Allah, He guides his heart." Surah "At-Taghābun", ayah 11.

It is recorded in "Sahih Muslim" that one day Abdullah ibn Umar ibn al-Khattab, Allah be pleased with him, was told that there had appeared some people in their land who recited the Qur'an and pursued knowledge, and that they also claimed that there was no such thing as Divine Decree and that events were not predestined. He told the man who gave him the news: "When you happen to

meet such people, tell them that I have nothing to do with them and they have nothing to do with me. And tell them that Abdullah ibn Umar swears by Him (Lord) that if any one of them had with him gold equal to the bulk of the mountain Uhud and spent it in the way of Allah, Allah would not accept it unless he affirmed his faith in Divine Decree," — and then he told the man a hadith about Jibril, narrated by his father, who had heard it from Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

"Sahih Muslim" records a hadith, on the authority of Tawus ibn Kaysan, Allah be pleased with him, who said, "I met several companions of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, who used to say that everything is by predestination."

Tawus also said that he heard Abdullah ibn Umar, Allah be pleased with him, report Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, as saying: ***"Everything is by predestination to the extent of dullness and smartness or smartness and dullness."***

"Sahih Muslim" records a hadith, on the authority of Abu Hurairah, Allah be pleased with him, who reported Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, as saying: ***"A strong believer is better and is more lovable to Allah than a weak believer, and there is good in everyone, (but) cherish that which gives you benefit and seek help from Allah and do not lose heart, and if anything comes to you, do not say: 'If I had done not that, it would not have happened so and so,' but say, 'Allah did that what He had ordained to do' and you 'if' opens the gate for the Satan."***

Components of the Belief in Predestination

First: Belief that Allah's knowledge embraces absolutely everything, that the Almighty knew about all people even before He created them, and also that He knew about all their actions, their provision, the lifespan for each individual, their good deeds, their wrongdoings, etc., before they came to existence.

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Second: Belief that Allah has recorded everything in the Book of Decree (the Preserved Tablet).

The Qur'anic prove of the above mentioned components are the following words of Almighty Allah:

"Know you not that Allah knows all that is in the heaven and on the earth? Verily, it is all in the Book. Verily, that is easy for Allah." Surah "Al-Hajj", ayah 70.

"Sahih Muslim" reports a hadith, transmitted on the authority of Abdullah ibn Amr ibn Al-As, Allah be pleased with both of them, who narrated: "I heard Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, as saying: ***'Allah ordained the measures of quality of the creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth, as His Throne was upon water.'***"

The decree, which is fully compliant with the knowledge of the Almighty, refers both to all things in general and to the particulars. As for the general decree, it is nothing less than general preordained destiny of all creation, which is written in the Preserved Tablet. The second form of decree refers to the particulars and is related to three different periods of time:

1. The life-time decree of a person.

The two "Sahihs" report a hadith, on the authority of Abdullah ibn Masud, Allah be pleased with him, who narrated that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: ***"Verily, the creation of any one of you takes place when he is assembled in his mother's womb; for forty days he is as a drop of fluid, then it becomes a clot for a similar period. Thereafter, it is a lump of flesh for a similar period. Then an angel is sent to him, who breathes the spirit into him. This angel is commanded to write four decrees: that he writes down his provision, his life span, his deeds, and whether he will be among the wretched or the blessed."***

2. The yearly decree, which is the decree for the affairs of the year to come.

During the Night of Decree Allah destines the matters of creation for the coming year. Almighty Allah said,

"That night is decreed every matter of ordainments." Surah "Ad-Dukhān", ayah 4.

3. The daily decree for everything which occurs during the day; it is related to life and death, honour and disgrace, and so on. Almighty Allah said,

"Every day He is engaged in some affair." Surah "Ar-Rahmān", ayah 29.

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Third: Belief that whatever Allah wills will come to pass; that His power has no limit; that what Allah wills, happens, and what He does not will, does not happen; that nothing occurs in the heavens or on earth without the will of Allah; that whatever is in the universe, occurs by the will of Allah; and that He has power over all things. Almighty Allah said,

"And your Lord creates whatsoever He wills and chooses…" Surah "Al-Qasas", ayah 68.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Verily, your Lord is the doer of whatsoever He intends." Surah "Hūd", ayah 107.

Almighty Allah also said,

"Certainly, Allah has power over all things." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 20.

In this respect, Allah's will can be of two types:

1. Will which is related to worldly affairs and existence in general and to the decree, but which is not connected with love and benevolence. Almighty Allah commented on the matter in this way:

"And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islâm; and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and constricted, as if he is climbing up to the sky." Surah "Al-An'ām", ayah 125.

2. Will which is related to religious affairs and religious laws. Will of this type includes elements of love and benevolence, as indicated by the Almighty's words:

"Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 185.

This means that if some matter related to obeying occurs, then Allah has willed it in the first meaning of this word, that is to say He decreed it and has wished for it, having willed it also in the second meaning of this word, which means that He loves it and favours it. If, however, some matter related to disobedience occurs, it suggests that Allah has willed it in the first meaning of this word, but has not willed it in its second meaning, for such actions for Him are odious and undesirable.

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Fourth: Belief that Almighty Allah is the Originator and Creator of everything that exists, including the actions of His creations and the absence of action. There is no other creator besides Him, and no Lord.

Almighty Allah said, **“Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the Guardian over all things.”** Surah “Az-Zumar”, ayah 62.

Almighty Allah said that His Prophet Ibrahim, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, told his nation:

“While Allah has created you and what you make.” Surah “As-Sāffāt”, ayah 96.

The servants of Allah are given capacity for action, as they are given abilities and a will, but the One Who has created them, their abilities and their will is Allah. Almighty Allah said,

“...to whomsoever among you who wills to walk straight. And you cannot will it unless it be that Allah wills — the Lord of the Universe.” Surah “At-Takwīr”, ayahs 28–29.

This way Almighty Allah has stated that humans possess will, but it can manifest itself only by the will of Allah.

Since Allah’s servants have abilities for action and a will, and since Messengers were sent to them and Books revealed to them, it means that Allah has provided them with His arguments and explanation, and from this it follows that for their deeds they will either be rewarded or exposed to punishment. In light of this, Allah’s servant must believe in the Divine Decree, obey the provisions of His law and ask Allah to put him on the right track. Besides, he should set heart on that which will do him good and reject that which might harm his worldly and religious matters, entrusting himself to the Almighty and asking Him to help, to facilitate accomplishing the desired and to keep him away of what is disapproved of by Sharia. And if the means that the man chooses do good to him, he must praise Allah and thank Him for it. But if it does not do him good, he must stay calm, because he did everything he possibly could, be patient, wait for Allah’s reward and ask Allah to give him something instead. Almighty Allah said,

"Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope. He gets reward for that which he has earned, and he is punished for that which he has earned." Surah "Al-Baqarah", ayah 286.

It is reported that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: ***"Do perform good deeds, for everyone is facilitated in that for which he has been created."*** This hadith was reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim, on the authority of Ali ibn Abu Talib.

It is also said that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: ***"How wonderful is the case of a believer; there is good for him in everything and this applies only to a believer. If prosperity attends him, he expresses gratitude to Allah and that is good for him; and if adversity befalls him, he endures it patiently and that is better for him."*** This hadith is reported by Muslim.

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