

THE CALL TO TRUTH

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ



JAVED AHMED GHAMIDI

The Call to Truth

The Call to Truth

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi



Table of Contents

Our call 9

Belief in god 14

Fundamentals of understanding islam 40

The true religion 48

Islam and the state 82

Forbidding wrong 102

Foreword

Islam is the religion of God. What is its correct interpretation? This booklet presents that interpretation and has been arranged to invite people towards the same understanding. The writings selected for this purpose, in brief, explain the entire religion which we have elaborated and clarified in our book “Mizan.” The aim is that, in the present age, this interpretation of Islam may now be conveyed to every knowledgeable person as well as to the common people for the purpose of inviting them towards Islam:

راہ ہے کہ خضر داشت ز سرچشمہ دور بود
لب تشنگی ز راہ دگر بردہ ایم ما

The path that Khizr possessed
was far from the spring,
We have carried the thirst of
our lips to another way.

Dallas, United States of America

7 June 2026

— Javed



Our Call

Religion is the guidance which was first instilled by the Almighty in human nature and after that it was given by Him with all essential details to mankind through His prophets. Muhammad (sws) is the last of these prophets. Consequently, it is now he alone who in this world is the sole source of religion. The true religion is now only that which he, through his words and deeds and through his tacit or explicit approval, declares to be religion.¹

We call upon all people of this world to profess faith in this religion and to purify their individual and collective lives in accordance with it. The reward of those who accept this call to profess faith and to purify themselves is Paradise which is as extensive as this universe. It is a

1. The Qur'an, 62:2.

place where there is no concept of death with life, pain with pleasure, sorrow with happiness, anxiety with satisfaction, hardship with ease and bane with boon. Its comfort is everlasting, its bliss is endless, its days and nights are abiding; its peace unending, its pleasure eternal, its beauty imperishable and its perfection without limit. In it, God Almighty has provided for His servants what has never been seen by the eyes, never been heard by the ears and never been imagined by the hearts.²

We invite those who believe in this religion in these times that in order to acquire this Paradise, they should act in accordance with their faith, fulfil the rights of God and His servants with full honesty and sincerity and not commit any excess against the life, wealth and honour of anyone.³

We invite them to urge people in

2. The Qur'an, 87:14-17.

3. The Qur'an, 16:90.

their surroundings and in their circle of influence to do good and to refrain from evil. This is an obligation imposed on them by their Lord. It should be discharged by a father towards his son and a son towards his father, a husband towards his wife and a wife towards her husband, a brother towards his sister and a sister towards her brother, a friend towards his friend and a neighbour towards his neighbour – in short, a person should discharge it towards every person who has an immediate relation with him. Consequently, wherever they see someone known to them adopting an attitude which is contrary to the truth, they – according to their knowledge, capacity and ability – should try to urge him to mend his ways.⁴

If emotions, vested interests, biases, and desires try to divert them from justice in some worldly or religious matter, they should adhere to justice; in fact, if truth and justice

4. The Qur'an, 9:71.

demand their testimony, they should do so even if it puts their life in danger. They should speak the truth and submit to it; they should adhere to justice and bear witness to it, and hold fast to it in their beliefs and deeds.⁵

If they face religious persecution, then instead of retaliating with violence, they should show patience,⁶ and if possible should leave the place where they face such persecution and migrate to a place where they can openly practice their religion.⁷

In current times, the leading scholars of the Farahi School with the help and blessing of God have been able to cleanse Islam – the true religion - from every juristic and scholastic intrusion and from every adulteration of philosophy and *tasawwuf*, and have presented it in its pristine form purely on the basis of

5. The Qur'an, 4:135; 5:8.

6. The Qur'an, 41:33-35.

7. The Qur'an, 4:97.

the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The communication and dissemination of this religion, education and instruction of people on its basis and the reconstruction of Muslim religious thought in its light is a great jihad. We invite all Muslims to help us in this jihad by offering their support, time and resources for it. This is the nusrah (help and support) of the true religion of God from which nothing should be dearer to a true believer:⁸

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا، كُونُوا أَنْصَارَ اللَّهِ، كَمَا
قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ لِلْحَوَارِيِّينَ: مَنْ أَنْصَارِي
إِلَى اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ: نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ.

(61:14)

Believers! Be God's helpers, the way Jesus, son of Mary, called upon his disciples: "Who will be my helper in the cause of God?" The disciples replied: "We are God's helpers." (61:14)

8. The Qur'an, 9:24.

Belief in God

Humans are a creation. The discourse of religion commences with the realization of this fact. This is an existential reality observable directly by us whenever we wish. Thus, we know from which lifeless elements human creation occurs. These elements are ingested through food, and we know where and how they are processed inside the human body, which acts as a factory. We are aware that these elements do not contain human sperm nor anything that transforms matter into life and life into consciousness. Yet, this food, when it reaches a certain location, transforms into semen, which contains the seeds capable of forming a human. These seeds, in the millions, are found in the semen released by a man at one time. Each of these seeds has the potential to join with a woman's ovum and

develop into a complete human, a process that occurs in another kind of factory. We can see that when it joins with the ovum, the initial form that comes into existence is so tiny it cannot be seen without a microscope. Yet, this insignificant entity, over nine months and a few days, transforms from a drop of water into a clot, from a clot into flesh, then flesh onto bones, and with flesh-covered bones, emerges from the mother's womb as something entirely different, to display its amazing powers and capabilities in knowledge and reasoning, intellect and wisdom, art and craft, the excellence of which can be seen everywhere in the world today.

We observe creation and, due to the inherent structure of our consciousness, find ourselves compelled to seek its creator. This inclination arises not simply because every entity must have a creator, but because every act of creation necessitates a creator. This fundamental aspect of creation

drives our search. Embedded within us is this urge; thus, we are never truly satisfied with ceasing our quest to understand the cause behind an effect and the agent behind an action. Upon examining the great thinkers in philosophy, science, and mysticism, it becomes apparent that none have been able to forsake this pursuit. Consequently, the entire chronicle of knowledge serves as evidence to the fact that every creation has a creator; humanity, being a creation, therefore has a Creator. Furthermore, the act of creation we witness is deliberate, with each facet showcasing immense power, and unparalleled knowledge and wisdom. Just as we cannot dismiss the act of creation, we cannot overlook the nature of this action. For the nature of this act stands as a reality of existence, just as the act of creation itself does. As we behold the act, we also perceive this truth, thereby recognizing that the creator of humanity possesses purposeful intent, boundless power, and

profound wisdom.

Human intellect leads us up to this point. In this journey, it requires no external guidance. The capacity for knowledge and perception granted to humans at birth is sufficient for guidance in this journey. Yet, beyond this point, the question of who the creator is cannot be resolved with equal certainty and conviction. Typically, the human intellect contemplates the two responses that have been offered throughout human history, either selecting one or remaining undecided.

The first answer posits that the universe, in whose embrace humans awaken to consciousness, is their creator. This is the perspective of atheism.

Typically, this viewpoint is articulated as follows: The universe is endowed with self-consciousness, embodying a power that inherently possesses creative capabilities. Beyond it, nothing else exists. The concepts of "inside" and "outside"

are also confined within its bounds. Each segment of the universe harbors both an internal and external existence. While the universe operates as a nexus of causes and effects, in its totality, it is regarded as the initial cause.

This answer is merely a claim.

First, the purported self-awareness of the universe has never been substantiated through observation. We understand the universe's essence to be matter, and matter lacks intent, as well as knowledge and intellect. If such attributes exist, they are observed in the entity referred to as the creator of this universe. Moreover, if such a power exists, it resides in the very creation, without which concepts like knowledge, intellect, and purpose would be devoid of meaning.

Second, what is perceived as the manifestation of creative power in the universe is actually just the display of characteristics and effects attributable to an entity. This type of power manifestation is evident in the components of automated machinery

designed by humans and in artificial intelligence, which currently astounds us with its level of sophistication.

Third, if the universe embodies anything, it represents the aggregate of effects and characteristics that forge causal relationships. It bears no relation to the creative act that necessitates knowledge, intellect, purpose, and the capability to act at each juncture. This realm is governed by causes and effects, methodologies, and laws, without embodying deeper significance.

Who is the creator of humanity? This question has received its second answer from those who identify themselves as prophets. This profound response was imparted to humanity at the time of their creation. Therefore, the first human was not only humanity's initial member but also its inaugural prophet. This answer reveals that the creator of humanity is a knowledgeable and wise entity, transcending the confines of our universe.

Human creation commenced from the depths of the earth. The very elements found in soil, which enter our bodies as food and transform into a simple extract of water, marking the commencement of our journey to becoming human, had already undergone a similar process within decayed clay. This process continued until the creation reached completion, at which point the clay dried from the surface and became a hardened mud. Upon breaking, it revealed a living creature, representing the primal form of human existence.

Subsequently, the same transformation observed within the earth started to unfold within this rudimentary animal, which initially lacked knowledge and perception. It was then fashioned and perfected in every respect until it became capable of being endowed with a human personality. This personality was bestowed through a gentle breath, marking the final step in the creation of humanity as we understand it:

بَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ، ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ
مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ، ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ
مِنْ رُّوحِهِ، وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ
وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۖ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ.

He began creating a human being from clay; then carried on his progeny from an insignificant fluid; then perfected it and blew into it from His spirit and for you made ears [for hearing], eyes [for seeing] and hearts [for understanding] – seldom are you grateful.

(Al Sajdah 32: 7-9)

This response was last provided through the Qur'an, the verses of which are quoted above. The Being on whose behalf it was presented claims that it is not the speech of any human being, but the Creator's own word, revealed by Him to His prophet; and that the prophet recited it to the people exactly as it was revealed, without addition or omission. He did not alter so much as a letter or a stroke, nor will anyone dare to alter

it until the Day of Judgement. The Qur'an therefore declares: if you do not accept it as God's Book, then produce even a single surah of comparable stature—in its guidance, its subject matter, and its style—if you are truthful in your claim:

وَأِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا،
فَاتُّوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّن مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ
مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ، إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ.

If you are in doubt about what We have revealed to Our servant, then bring a single surah like it, and call upon all your leaders besides God to help you, if you are truthful in your claim.

(Al-Baqarah 2:23)

This assertion is made within the Quran itself, and a very clear criterion has been established therein. This criterion allows us to determine whether the Quran genuinely represents the word of the Creator or if it has been mistakenly or falsely attributed to the Creator by a human

being.

What is this criterion? We can present it in the following three points:

Firstly, the process of human knowledge creation, encompassing both words and meanings, invariably involves numerous stages of trial and error. No individual is born with the innate wisdom of philosophers like Socrates or Plato, nor with the poetic genius of Ghalib or Shakespeare, nor yet with the scientific brilliance of Newton or Einstein. This learning journey is marked by a constant cycle of understanding, making mistakes, and then rectifying those errors. We witness how individuals draw from the works of their predecessors, diligently hone their skills, and gradually progress until they reach the zenith of their craft, producing masterpieces of knowledge or literature. This progression is a fundamental aspect of the human condition, inherent from birth. Throughout the annals of knowledge

and literature, there has never been a deviation from this pattern, nor is such an exception anticipated in the future.

However, the Quran stands as a notable exception to this universal rule. The individual through whom it was revealed was observed by his community day and night for forty years in a modest village comprising a few hundred dwellings. Throughout these years, his every action was visible to them, yet they never detected any indication of the customary trial and error process that is the lot of every human being. It was, therefore, astounding to them that this man, known in their midst for his truthfulness and trustworthiness, could have conceived such profound knowledge and articulate discourse on his own. Baffled, they speculated that perhaps his revelations were the work of a learned foreigner feeding him information. In response to such allegations, the Quran itself addresses this skepticism and provides

clarification:

قُلْ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا تَلَوْتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا
أَدْرَبْتُكُمْ بِهِ، فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ عُمُرًا مِّنْ
قَبْلِهِ، أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ؟ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى
عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ، إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ
الْمُجْرِمُونَ.

Say: Had God willed, I would neither have recited this Qur'an to you nor would God have informed you of it. It is His decision alone because I have spent a whole life among you before this. [When have I uttered such words?] Then, do you not use your intellect? So, who will be more unjust than the person who imputes falsehood to God or denies His revelation? In reality, such wrongdoers shall never succeed.

(Surah Yunus 10:16-17)

The point was that, 'O fools, when have you ever seen me engrossed in such discussions, expressing thoughts and ideas about them, engaged in practicing and refining them, or

acquiring any knowledge or art related to the subjects now being discussed in the verses of the Quran? For forty years, I have lived among you; have you ever detected anything in my words and actions that could hint at the message I am now conveying? Have you observed any signs of the development and evolution of what I proclaim today in my previous life stages? You are aware that the human mind cannot produce something at any life stage without evidence of its development and evolution in earlier phases. You accuse me of lying about God. Have you ever noticed the slightest inclination towards dishonesty, deceit, forgery, or cunningness in my behavior and demeanor? Until this moment, you have acknowledged me as truthful and trustworthy. How, then, can you suddenly declare that the same person has become a liar and a fabricator overnight? O servants of God, why do you not apply your intellect?'

Secondly, human knowledge is invariably marred by contradictions. The narrative of 'I crafted, I admired, I broke' initiated from day one persists till the end. This, upon reflection, is a manifestation of the aforementioned process of trial and error. Moreover, should this knowledge transform into literature, the same pattern emerges. Examining his works closely reveals variances in poetry, eloquence, and meanings. At times, his speech may seem a marvel of expression, yet at others, it appears insignificant, even trivial. Hence, it is undeniable that no human has ever been capable of consistently delivering speeches of unparalleled eloquence on a multitude of topics and under varying circumstances, such that when these speeches are gathered from beginning to end, they compile into a coherent and cohesive collection without any ideological conflicts, devoid of the speaker's fluctuating emotions and psychological states, and free from shifts in opinions or

perspectives.

The exception to this is solely the Quran. It is thus proclaimed:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ
غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا.

[Why are they hesitant about your prophethood?] Then, do these people not ponder on the Qur'ān? Had it been from someone other than God, they would have found in it many contradictions.

(Surah An-Nisa 4:82)

Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi writes:

"...Every aspect of the Quran, in its principles and branches, is so firm and interconnected that even the formulas of mathematics and Euclidean geometry cannot match its solidity and coherence. The beliefs it teaches are so intricately linked that removing even one would disrupt the entire chain. The acts of worship and obedience it commands spring from these beliefs as branches

sprout from a trunk; the actions and ethics it advocates emerge from its principles as naturally as the inherent properties of an object manifest themselves; the system of life that emerges from its collective teachings is like a well-built edifice, each brick so firmly joined to the others that removing any one would create a void in the entire structure."

(Tadabbur-e-Quran 2/347)

Thirdly, no human knowledge is ever purely truth. There is always some admixture of falsehood with truth. Hence, no person departs from this world without the errors in their knowledge, information, inferences, and assumptions beginning to emerge. This is the inevitable outcome for every thinker, whether it be Socrates or Plato, Newton or Einstein. No deviation from this pattern has been recorded in the entire annals of knowledge and literature. However, the Quran stands as a remarkable

exception. For nearly fifteen hundred years, it has withstood rigorous examination, yet no philosopher, sage, or scientist has succeeded in disproving any of its assertions or discrediting any of its teachings. In the past three centuries, despite significant advancements, not a single discovery has contradicted the truths the Quran presents; no scientific development has challenged its knowledge, and no experiment or observation has undermined the guidance it provides. What it proclaims as truth has never been found false, and what it identifies as falsehood has never been validated as true. These are incontrovertible truths concerning the Quran. It is stated:

وَأَنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ، لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ، وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ، تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ.

The truth is that this is an exalted Book. Evil can neither enter it from its front nor from its behind. It is revealed in a very thorough manner from the

Being Who is an embodiment of wisdom; has praiseworthy attributes.

(Ha Mim As Sajdah 41:42)

The Quran has informed humanity, after proving its own truthfulness by this standard, that the universe you mistakenly believe to be your creator is also a creation of the One who is your Creator. Do you not see that everything in this world is a miraculous manifestation of the art of creation, deep in meaning, meticulously arranged, full of wisdom, planning, benefit, and astonishing order and harmony, incredibly appropriate and in perfect harmony, unparalleled in its Euclidean and mathematical perfection, with no explanation other than that it has also been created by the All-Knowing, All-Wise who created you. He is the One who made the earth a cradle for you and the mountains its pegs, created you in pairs, made your sleep a source of rest, the night a cover, and the day

the time for livelihood, created seven firm heavens above you and placed a burning lamp within them. He is the One who sends down rain from the clouds and produces with it vegetation, crops, and dense gardens:

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ، عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ
وَالشَّهَادَةِ، هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ، هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ، أَلَمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ
الْمُهَيِّمُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ، سُبْحَنَ
اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ. هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ
الْمُصَوِّرُ، لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى، يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ، وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ.

[They should always keep in mind that] it is God besides whom there is no deity. Knower of the Unseen and the Seen; He is the Most Compassionate, the Ever-Merciful. He is the very God besides whom there is no deity, the Sovereign Lord, the Holy, the Embodiment of Peace, the Giver of Tranquility, the Guardian, the Mighty, the Extremely Powerful, the Most

High; exalted is God above what they state as partners! He is God, the Designer, the Creator, the Shaper. All good names are His. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him. And He is the Mighty, the Wise.

(Al-Hashr 59: 22-24)

The Quran has stated that acknowledging the lordship of this Creator is something that has been innately placed in human nature from time immemorial. It describes this matter as a covenant and pact, referring to it as an actual event. Man has been sent to this world for a test, hence this event has been erased from his memory, but its truth is etched on the page of his heart and ingrained in the recesses of his mind, immune to obliteration. When external influences do not interfere, and when reminded of this primal covenant, humans are instinctively drawn to it. This attraction is as natural as a child's instinctive rush to its mother,

despite never having witnessed its own birth. This acknowledgment of the Creator satisfies a fundamental human need, aligning with the psychological requirements of the individual. The Quran articulates that this deep-seated acknowledgment is so profound that, concerning the Lordship of God, every person stands accountable before God based solely on this inner testimony. It is said:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ
ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ، وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ، أَلَسْتُ
بِرَبِّكُمْ؟ قَالُوا: بَلَى، شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ
الْقِيَمَةِ: إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غٰفِلِينَ. أَوْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا
أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ، وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِّنْ بَعْدِهِمْ،
أَفْتَهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ؟ وَكَذٰلِكَ
نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ، وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ.

[O Prophet!] Remind them of that time too when your Lord had brought forth from the loins of Adam's children their progeny and had made them testify to themselves. [He had

asked:] “Am I not your Lord?” They replied: “Yes, [You alone are our Lord.] We bear witness to it. This We did lest you should say on the Day of Judgement: “We had no knowledge of this,” or present this excuse: “Our forefathers had already adopted polytheism and we later became their children; then, will You destroy us on account of what these wrongdoers did?” In this way, We explain Our revelations so that people are left with no excuse to deny the truth and so that they may return to the right path.

(Al-A'raf 7:172-174)

This acknowledgment forms the essence of the universe. It satisfies the human intellect and enlightens the heart. Thus, one might exclaim with conviction, "Without a doubt, Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth.":

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ، مَثَلُ نُورِهِ
كَمِشْكُوتٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ، الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ،

الزُّجَاجَةُ كَانَتْهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ، يُوقَدُ مِنْ
شَجَرَةٍ مُبْرَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ، لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ،
يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ، نُورٌ عَلَى
نُورٍ، يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ، وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ
الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ، وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ.

[The parable is that] God is the light of the heavens and the earth. [In the heart of a person,] the example of this light of His is as if there is a niche which has a lamp. The lamp is in crystal. The crystal is such as if it is a shining star. It is lit up by oil that comes from a lush olive tree which is neither eastern nor western. Its oil is [so transparent] as if it will light up even without fire touching it. Light upon light. God grants this light of His guidance to whomsoever He wills. God mentions these parables to guide people and God is aware of everything.

(An-Nur 24:35)

Imam Amin Ahsan Islahi
writes:

"...This universe, indeed the entire cosmos, is a world of darkness, a city of blindness, for those who do not believe in God or who believe in Him but do not accept His attributes and their implications. Such a person cannot know where this world came from nor can they understand the ultimate purpose and goal of its existence. They are unable to determine their own purpose of existence: Are they free and unbridled, or bound and subdued? Are they accountable or not? What is good for them and what is evil? Should they choose a path of injustice or justice? Should they follow solely their own interests and desires, or aim for a higher purpose? The correct answers to these questions are crucial for a successful and righteous life. However, one

who does not believe in God cannot find the correct solutions to these questions. They wander like a blind buffalo in darkness, ultimately falling into the abyss of destruction, reaping the consequences of their deeds. On the other hand, one who believes in God with His true attributes finds both the essence of the universe and its ultimate end becomes clear to them. The answers to all those questions, which are unsolvable for the disbeliever, become evident to them. Thus, the world no longer remains a place of darkness for them; instead, every aspect of it shines brightly with the light of faith, and every direction is illuminated for them. Every step they take is in full daylight, and the light of faith in God guides them in every direction. This reality is clearly

stated in this passage: the light of the heavens and the earth is Allah. One who has this light is in brightness and on the straight path, while one who is deprived of this light wanders in a realm of darkness, and no one else can provide them light. 'And whomsoever Allah does not grant light, for him there is no light.'"

(Tadabbur-e-Quran 5/409)



Fundamentals of Understanding Islam

In our understanding of religion, three things have the status of fundamental principles:

1. The holy Qur'an is the distinguisher between and the sole criterion to define right and wrong in the realm of religious knowledge in Islam. It is the guardian (muhaymin) over all forms of the divine revelation. The primary purpose of its revelation is to judge the religious differences of human beings so that they are able to stand firm on truth. The Qur'an itself claims this status for it. This principle leads to and entails the following fundamentals about the Book:

Firstly, the text of the Qur'an is well defined. It is confined to what an overwhelming majority of Muslims all over world, apart from a few regions

of the Maghrib, recites the text recorded in their codices. This text is recited in accordance with the way known as qira'ah al-'ammah (reading of the generality of the believers). Therefore, all other readings are not the Qur'an and cannot be granted the status of the word of God.

Secondly, the Qur'an is *qat'i al-dalalah*. It means that its words are capable of perfectly expressing the intent of the author with consummate certainty. A reader, who approaches it with the intention to follow its guidance and who tries to understand it on the basis of its language, can, therefore, be led to the intended meanings of the words it uses. It is only the lack of knowledge on the part of the readers and a failure to exert full efforts to understand it that results in his inability to get to the intended meanings of the divine text in some cases. This failure, therefore, cannot be attributed to any flaw in the language of the Qur'an and the styles of expression adopted in it for

the Book does not suffer from any inadequacy in this regard.

Thirdly, all the verses of the Qur'an upon which human guidance depends are muhkam (clear, completely comprehensible). Mutashabihat (singular mutashabih) verses are those which metaphorically express a bounty of the Heaven to be conferred on the successful slaves of God on the Last Day or an infliction to be experienced by the losers in the afterworld couched in the idiom of parables or by way of analogy. These also include the verses which analogously refer to an attribute of God, His acts, or any other transcendent reality. Neither are these verses unidentifiable nor is their signification doubtful. Diction employed in this content of the Book is originally the clear Arabic ('arabi mubin), the meanings and signification of which can be clearly grasped. The only difference between the muhkam and mutashabih verses is that the reality and essence of the referents of

the latter category cannot be grasped and comprehended by human understanding in the present world. However, the failure of human mind to grasp the reality of the referents of the mutashabih verses does not impair our understanding of the Book of God, and therefore we do not pursue their underlying reality.

Fourthly, no khafi (indirect) or jali (direct) revelation external to the Qur'an can validly affect or alter the divine injunctions spelled out in the Book. Even the recipient of the Book, the Messenger of God, cannot alter it in any degree. All that we can take as part of the religion has to be defined in the light of its clear and plain verses. Similarly, it serves as the only judge in the exercise of discarding something which is erroneously taken as a religious reality. Every tenet of 'iman (beliefs) and every discussion on 'aqidah (theological principles) is to be gleaned from the text put between its two covers. All types of wahi, ilham, ilqa', conclusions based

on a research and viewpoint of individual scholars should be gauged on its basis. Views and works of towering scholars of the past like Abu Hanifah, Shafi'i, Bukhari, Muslim, Ash'ari, Maturidi, Shibli and Junayd are to be judged in the light of its eternal words. No view, no matter however exalted its source, can be entertained in defiance of its verdicts.

2. The Sunnah, in Islam, is identified as the religious tradition instituted by the Prophet Abraham (sws) which the last Prophet of God (sws) revived, restored in its pure form and enriched with additions and instituted afresh among the believers as part of Islam. For the Qur'an directed the Prophet (sws) to follow the millah (the religion) of Abraham (sws). This tradition (i.e. the Sunnah comprising religious practices) was a part of the religion of Abraham (sws). Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad (sws) was obliged, as entailed by the above mentioned verse of the Qur'an,

to follow it himself and command the believers to adopt it. The authenticity and historicity of the Sunnah is as compelling as that of the Book of God. The only difference between the two is this. The Book of God was communicated by the Prophet (sws) to the whole body of the Companions who transmitted it to the next generation with consensus as a written and spoken text. Similarly, the Prophet (sws) taught the Sunnah to the entire generation of the Companions who received, adopted and practiced it collectively and transmitted it with consensus to the next generation. During the course of the subsequent history, both of these sources have been transmitted from generality to generality by each layer in the generations of the ummah. Just like the Qur'an, the Sunnah too has always been received and established by the consensus of the believers in a given point of time during the course of Muslim history. Therefore, there is no room for any dispute and contestation

regarding its authenticity and epistemological force.

3. Din is confined to the contents of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Nothing external to these two sources is the part of din in Islam. Nor can one validly introduce any foreign practice or concept as part of the religion. The Prophetic Hadith, a name given to the reports about the sayings, actions and tacit approvals of the Prophet (sws) transmitted through individual to individual (akhbar-i ahad) do not add to the beliefs and practices in the religion. It does not mean that they do not discuss the contents of the religion at all. However, their purely religious content explains and clarifies the religion housed in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. They can also carry the paradigmatic example set by the Prophet (sws) in the performance of the religious practices and in carrying out the divine commands. The Hadith plays no role beyond this. Thus, nothing outside this

sphere can qualify as religion merely because it is found in a Hadith report, nor can it be incorporated into religion and accepted as part of it on that basis alone.

All the Hadiths that explain and clarify the religion and thus play an acceptable role have a binding religious force for a believer who is convinced of the veracity of a Hadith report and believes it to be a valid transmission of a saying, action and tacit approval of the Prophet (sws). He is obliged to follow it and can no more validly contradict it. Rather if the Hadith in question contains a Prophetic command, it becomes necessary for this believer to unquestionably submit and surrender before its verdict.



The True Religion

In one word, the essence of religion in Qur’anic terms is “‘ibadah” (worship) of God. It is in reality “worship” which the Creator of this world desires of His servants. The Qur’an says:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ.

(51:56)

And I created jinn and mankind only to worship Me. (51:56)

At various places in the Qur’an, it is mentioned very clearly that the Almighty sent His messengers to inform people of this very reality:

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا

اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ. (16:36)

And We raised a messenger in each nation with the message: “Worship God and keep away from *al-Taghut*.” (16:36)

What does “worship” mean? A little deliberation on the above verse of

Surah Nahl reveals the answer: Here man has been asked, on the one hand, to refrain from what is al-Taghut and, on the other, to worship God. al-Taghut and al-Shaytan are used synonymously in the Qur'an: they refer to someone who is arrogant and rebellious before the Almighty. The opposite of this obviously is humility and modesty. Consequently, lexicographers generally explain worship as أصل العبودية الخضوع (worship, in fact, is humility and servility).¹

If this humility and servility exists in a person with a true comprehension of the mercy, power, providence and wisdom of the Almighty then it is instrumental in totally humbling a person before Him with His great love and great fear. The Qur'anic words khushu', khudu', ikhbat, inabah, khashyah, tadarru', qunut etc are used to depict this very state of a person – a state which originates from his inner-self and which then embraces his whole self. Dhikr (remembering

1. Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-'arab, vol. 3, 271

God to attain peace and inner satisfaction), shukr (expressing immense gratitude to God on His abounding favours), taqwa (fearing God's anger), ikhlas (devoting one's self to God), tawakkul (trusting God), tafwidsubmitting one's self and all of one's affairs to God), taslim-o rida (being content at all decisions of God) – all of these are the inner manifestations of this relationship between the worshipped God and His worshippers. In the words of the Qur'an, this relationship practically manifests itself in the following ways:

إِنَّمَا يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهَا خَرُّوا
 سُجَّدًا وَسَبَّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ.
 تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ
 خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا، وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ.

(32:15-16)

None profess belief in Our revelations except those who, when reminded through them, prostrate themselves in adoration and give glory to their Lord

while expressing their gratitude to Him and are not rebellious to their Lord. Their backs forsake their beds; they pray to their Lord in fear and in hope and who spend [in His way] from what We gave them. (32:15-16)

This kneeling, prostrating, glorifying and praising the Lord, supplicating before Him and sacrificing life and wealth for His pleasure – all these are real forms of “worship”. However, since a person is not mere beliefs; he also has a practical life in this world, this “worship” relates to this practical life as well and in this manner becomes inclusive of obedience. It now requires that a person’s outer-self also bow before the Creator before Whom his inner-self has bowed. His outer-self should also become subservient to the Creator to Whom his inner-self has become subservient, to the extent that no aspect of life should be left out of it. In other words, he should become a

servant of his Lord in every sense of the word. The Qur'an says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا
رَبَّكُمْ وَأَفْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ.

(22:77)

Believers! Kneel and prostrate yourselves and become servants of your Lord and do good deeds that you may succeed. (22:77)

When “worship” prescribes metaphysical and ethical bases for this relationship between a servant and His Lord, institutes rituals and stipulates bounds and limits to fulfil the requisites of this relationship in this world, then in the terminology of the Qur'an, this is called “religion” (*din*). The form of this religion which the Almighty has explained to mankind through His prophets is called al-din by the Qur'an, and its followers are directed by the Qur'an to fully adopt it in their lives and not create any divisions in it:

شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحًا وَالَّذِي
أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى

وَعِيسَى أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ.

(42:13)

He has prescribed for you the same religion which He prescribed for Noah, and which We have now revealed to you and which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, with the assertion: “Adhere to this religion [in your lives] and do not create any divisions in it.” (42:13)

The metaphysical and ethical bases of this worship which have been prescribed by religion are called al-Hikmah, and the rituals and limits prescribed for it by religion are called al-Kitab—that is, the law—by the Qur’an:

وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ
مَا لَمْ تَكُنْ تَعْلَمُ، وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا.

(4:113)

And God has revealed to you al-Kitab and al-Hikmah and in this manner taught you what you did not know before, and

great is God's favour upon you.
(4:113)

وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ
عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ،
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ.
(2:231)

And remember the favours
He has bestowed upon you, and
the al-Kitab and al-Hikmah
which He has revealed to you,
of which He instructs you and
keep fearing Allah and know that
He has knowledge of all things.
(2:231)

The Qur'an also refers to al-Kitab
as shari'ah:

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَىٰ شَرِيعَةٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا
وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ.
(45:18)

Then We set you on a clear
shari'ah regarding religion. So
follow it, and do not yield to the
desires of men who know not.
(45:18)

al-Hikmah has always remained
the same in all revealed religions;

however, the shari‘ah has differed considerably for certain reasons:

لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا، وَلَوْ
شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً. (5:48)

We have ordained a law and assigned a path for each of you. Had God pleased, He could have made of you one community. (5:48)

A study of divine scriptures shows that the shari‘ah constitutes the major portion of the Torah and the hikmah generally constitutes the Injil. The Psalms are hymns which glorify the Almighty and are a forerunner to the hikmah of the Injil. The Qur’an was revealed as a masterpiece of literature comprising both shari‘ah and hikmah giving warning to those who evade it and glad tidings to those who follow it. The fact that the Qur’an is a blend of both shari‘ah and hikmah is clearly mentioned in the verses 2:231 and 4:113 quoted above. About the Torah and the Injil, the Almighty while narrating one of His dialogues which will take place with Jesus (sws) on the

Day of Judgement says:

وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ
وَالْإِنْجِيلَ. (5:110)

And when I instructed you with
the shari‘ah and the hikmah, that
is the Torah and the Gospel.

(5:110)

al-Hikmah basically comprises
the following two topics:

1. Faith
2. Ethics

al-Kitab comprises the following
ten topics:

1. The Shari‘ah of Worship Rituals
2. The Social Shari‘ah
3. The Political Shari‘ah
4. The Economic Shari‘ah
5. The Shari‘ah of Preaching
6. The Shari‘ah of Jihad
7. The Penal Shari‘ah
8. The Dietary Shari‘ah
9. Islamic Customs and Etiquette
10. Oaths and their Atonement

This is all as far as the content of
religion is concerned.

The envoys of God who have
brought this religion are called

“Prophets”. A study of the Qur’an shows that besides being assigned the position of “Prophethood” (nubuwwah), some of them were also assigned the position of “Messengerhood” (risalah).

“Prophethood” means that a person after receiving divine revelation teaches the truth to his addressees, and gives glad tidings of a good fate in the Hereafter to those who accept the truth and warns those among them who reject it that a bad fate awaits them. In the terminology of the Qur’an, delivering such glad tidings is called basharah and delivering such warnings is called indhar:

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً، فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّنَ

مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنْذِرِينَ. (2:213)

Mankind was once one community. [Then differences arose between them]. So God sent forth prophets as bearers of glad tidings and as warners.

(2:213)

“Messengerhood” means that a prophet is assigned to his people such

that he decides their fate through divine sanction so that if they reject him, he practically enforces the sovereignty of the truth upon them by implementing on them God's Judgement in this very world:

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولٌ، فَإِذَا جَاءَ رَسُولُهُمْ قُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ
بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ. (10:47)

And for each community, there is a messenger. Then when their messenger comes, their fate is decided with justice and they are not wronged. (10:47)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ فِي
الْأَذَلِّينَ، كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَأَغْلِبَنَّ أَنَا وَرُسُلِي، إِنَّ
اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ. (58:20-21)

Indeed those who are opposing Allah and His Messenger shall be humiliated. The Almighty has ordained: "I and My messengers shall always prevail." Indeed Allah is Mighty and Powerful.

(58:20-21)

It is in accordance with this established practice about risalah that it was thus ordained about

Muhammad (sws):

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ
لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ، وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ.

(61:9)

It is He Who has sent his rasul with guidance and the religion of truth that he may make it sovereign over all religions [of Arabia], even though these Idolaters [of Arabia] may detest this.(61:9)

The way this established practice about risalah manifests itself is that the Almighty selects His messengers so that reward and punishment can be meted out in this world through them before the actual Day of Judgement. It becomes a miniature rehearsal of what is going to take place on that Day. These messengers are told that if they honour their covenant with God, they will be rewarded in this very world and if they do not do so, they will be punished in this very world. The result is that the very existence of these messengers becomes a sign of

God, and it is as if their people can observe God walking on earth with these messengers and delivering His verdicts. On the basis of the signs of truth that they have directly observed, they are directed to propagate the truth and present to the people with full certainty the very guidance of God the way they have received it from Him. In the terminology of the Qur'an, this is called shahadah. Once this is established, it becomes a basis of the judgement of the Almighty both in this world and in that to come. Consequently, the Almighty grants dominance to these messengers, and punishes those who reject the message presented by these messengers. For this very reason, Muhammad (sws) is called shahid and shahid in the Qur'an:

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولًا، شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُولًا. (73:15)

[O Quraysh of Makkah!] We have sent forth a Messenger to you to bear witness before you,

just as earlier We sent a Messenger to the Pharaoh.

(73:15)

This position of shahadah was bestowed, besides other messengers, upon the progeny of Abraham (sws) too. For this reason, the Qur'an (2:143) called them an intermediate group (ummat-i wasat) between God's Messenger and His creation, and asserted that they have been chosen for this position just as the Almighty chooses some great personalities among mankind and grants them the status of a prophet or a messenger:

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ، هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ
وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ، مِلَّةَ
أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، مِنْ
قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ
وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ. (22:78)

And struggle for the cause of God in a befitting manner. He has chosen you [for this responsibility], and laid on you no burdens in the observance of your faith. He has chosen for you

the way of Abraham, your father. He named you Muslims earlier and in this [period of the last Prophet] as well. [He had chosen you] so that the Prophet may bear witness before you, and that you yourselves may bear witness [to this religion] before other people of this world. (22:78)

Generally, the Almighty has also revealed His books with prophets and messengers, and, according to the Qur'an, the purpose of their revelation is to judge between what is right and what is wrong so that people can resolve their differences through them. In this manner, they are able to adhere to justice regarding the truth. The Qur'an says:

وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ
النَّاسِ فِي مَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ. (2:213)

And with these [prophets], He sent down His Book as the decisivetruth so that it may settle these differences between people.
(2:213)

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ

بِالْقِسْطِ. (57:25)

And with these [messengers]
We sent down Our Book which
is the Judge [between the right
and the wrong] so that
[through it] people are able to
adhere to justice [regarding
what is the truth]. (57:25)

The chain of prophets and
messengers began with Adam (sws)
and ended on Muhammad (sws).
After his departure, divine revelation
ceased and the institution of
Prophethood was terminated (the
Qur'an, 33:40). Consequently, the
responsibility of indhar ie. to warn
people to adhere to their religion now
lies with the scholars of the ummah
till the Day of Judgement. This
responsibility has been mentioned in
the Qur'an in the following words:

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَآفَّةً، فَلَوْلَا
نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي
الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَحْذَرُونَ. (9:122)

And it was not possible for all

the believers to undertake [this job]. So why did not a few from every group among them come forward to gain sound knowledge in religion and warn the people of their [respective] nations, when [after acquiring knowledge] they returned to them that they take heed. (9:122)

The Almighty has specified that this indhar shall be done through the Qur'an. Verses such as *فَذَكِّرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَنْ يَخَافُ وَعَيْدِ* (50:45) (remind through the Qur'an whoever fears My warning, (50:45)), and *وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا* (25:52) (and through this [Qur'an] fight with them with full force, (25:52)) point to this. For this very reason, the Prophet (sws) is a nadhir (warner) for the whole world, and the scholars of religion actually communicate his indhar to people: *تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا* (25:1) (blessed be He who has revealed al-Furqan to His servant, that it may warn the whole world, (25:1)). Consequently, the Qur'an says:

وَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَيَّ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنُ لِأُنذِرَكُم بِهِ وَمَن
بَلَغَ. (6:19)

And this Qur'an has been revealed to me that I may thereby warn you and those whom it may reach.(6:19)

The religion introduced in the foregoing pages is called “Islam”, and the Almighty has asserted in the Qur'an that no other religion is acceptable to Him:

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِندَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ ... وَمَن يَبْتَغِ
غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَن يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ، وَهُوَ فِي
الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ. (3:19, 85)

The only true religion in God's sight is Islam ... and he that chooses a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him and in the world to come he will surely be among the losers. (3:19, 85)

Just as the word “Islam” is used for the whole corpus of religion, it is also sometimes used to imply its outer form. As regards its outer form, it consists of the following five

things:

1. Bearing witness that there is no god besides Allah and Muhammad (sws) is His Messenger

2. Offering the prayer

3. Paying zakah

4. Keeping the fasts of Ramadan

5. Offering the hajj of the Baytullah

The Qur'an has stressed upon all these directives at numerous places. In a narrative of the Prophet (sws), all these five have been mentioned thus:

الإسلام أن تشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمدًا
رسول الله، وتقيم الصلوة، وتؤتي الزكاة، وتصوم
رمضان، وتحج البيت.

Islam is that you bear witness that there is no god besides Allah, and Muhammad (sws) is His Messenger and be diligent in the prayer and pay the zakah and keep the fasts of Ramadan and offer the hajj of the Baytullah.²

The inner aspect of religion is “iman” (belief). As per its details

2. Muslim, Al-Jami' al-sahih, 24-25, (no. 93).

mentioned in the Qur'an, this inner aspect also consists of five things:

1. Belief in God
2. Belief in the Angels
3. Belief in the Prophets
4. Belief in Divine Books
5. Belief in the Day of Judgement

The Qur'an says:

أَمِنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ،
كُلٌّ أَمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ، لَا نُفَرِّقُ
بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ، وَقَالُوا: سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ
رَبَّنَا وَالْيَاكُوفُ الْمَصِيرُ. (2:285)

The Messenger has believed in what has been revealed to him by His Lord, and so do those who follow [him]. All of them professed faith in God and His angels and His books and His messengers. [They affirm:] “We do not discriminate between any of God’s messengers,” and they said: “We heard and have obeyed. Lord! We seek Your forgiveness, and [believe that on the Day of Judgment] to You shall we return.”(2:285)

The Prophet (sws) while including a corollary of belief in Allah – the good and evil of fate ordained by God – has referred to this set of beliefs in the following manner:

الْإِيمَانُ: أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ
وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدْرِ
خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ.

Imanis that you believe in God and His Angels and His Books and His Messengers and the Hereafter and the good and evil fate [ordained by your God].³

When this iman, in its essence, enters the heart and receives its confirmation from it, then on the very basis of its presence requires two things:

- (1) Righteous Deeds (a‘mal-i salih)
- (2) Urging one another to the truth and urging one another to remain steadfast on it (tawasi bi al-haqq wa tawasi bi al-sabr)

The Qur’an says:

وَالْعَصْرِ، إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ، إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

3. Ibid., 22, (no. 93).

وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ، وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ، وَتَوَاصَوْا
بِالصَّبْرِ. (103:1-3)

Time bears witness that these people shall definitely be in a state of loss. Yes! except those who accepted faith and did righteous deeds and urged one another to the truth and urged one another to remain steadfast on it. (103:1-3)

(1) Righteous Deeds

All deeds which result once the morals of a person are purified are called righteous deeds. All their bases are found in human nature and intellect, and the shari‘ah of God has been revealed to guide mankind towards these righteous deeds.

(2) Urging one another to the truth and urging one another to remain steadfast on it

This relates to one’s immediate surroundings. This is an obvious requirement of accepting the truth and is also termed as amr bi al-ma‘ruf and nahi ‘an al-munkar by the Qur’an, implying the fact that a person should exhort those in his surroundings to

what is ma‘ruf (good) according to human nature and intellect and forbid them from what is munkar (evil) according to it:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ
بَعْضٍ، يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ. (9:71)

And believers, both men and women, are friends to one another. [They] enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil.

(9:71)

Likewise, if political authority is established anywhere in the world, it is necessary that some people from among the Muslims be formally appointed to this task. The Qur’an says:

وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ
وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ، وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ. (3:104)

There should be some among you who are appointed to call to what is good, enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong. Make this arrangement, and remember: it is they who will attain success.

(3:104)

This responsibility will obviously be discharged in some matters through preaching and exhortation and in others through the force of law. The Friday pulpit, reserved for those entrusted with authority for this very purpose, serves the first function; the police department, established in a Muslim government to discharge this responsibility, serves the second.

Every Muslim should fulfil this requirement of faith as a well-wisher. If a person wants to fulfil this requirement with the right spirit, then it cannot be fulfilled unless he is a well-wisher of his fellow human beings. The Prophet (sws) is reported to have said:

الدِّينُ النَّصِيحَةُ لِلَّهِ وَلِكِتَابِهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلَا أُمَّةٍ
الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَعَامَّتِهِمْ.

Religion is well-wishing for God, for His book, for His Messenger, for the rulers of the Muslims and for their common masses.⁴

Described above are the

4. Ibid., 44-45, (no. 196).

requirements of faith in ordinary circumstances. However, there are certain circumstances in which three other requirements can arise. They are:

(1) Migration for the Cause of Religion (Hijrah)

(2) Helping the Cause of Religion (Nusrah)

(3) Adhering to Justice (Qiyam bi al-Qist)

Their details follow:

(1) Migration for the Cause of Religion (Hijrah)

If it becomes difficult for a person to worship the Almighty, he is persecuted for his religious beliefs and a stage comes when it becomes impossible for him to live as a declared Muslim, then his faith requires him to shift to another place where he can openly practice his faith. In the terminology of the Qur'an, this is called hijrah (migration). In the times of the Prophet (sws), when God and His Prophet (sws) directly called people to it, those who evaded it were

promised the dreadful doom of Hell by the Almighty:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْنَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ
 قَالُوا فِيْمَ كُنْتُمْ، قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي
 الْأَرْضِ، قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةً
 فَتُهَاجِرُوا فِيْهَا، فَأُولَئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ،
 وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا. (4:97)

The angels will ask people whose souls they take in circumstances such that these [people] had wronged their souls: “In what circumstances were you in?” “We were helpless and oppressed in the land,” they will reply. The angels will say: “Was not the earth of God spacious enough for you to migrate [to another place]?” It is these people whose abode shall be Hell, and what an evil abode it is. (4:97)

(2) Supporting the Cause of Religion (Nusrah)

If there arise circumstances in which for the purpose of protection or dissemination of religion some action is required to be taken, it is a requirement of faith that one should

offer this support through whatever means one can. In the terminology of the Qur'an, this is called nusrah (help) of the Almighty. When, after the formation of the Islamic state in Madinah, the Prophet (sws) required nusrah, and people were asked to present themselves for an armed struggle, the Qur'an called people for this nusrah in the following words:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا، هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَى تِجَارَةٍ
تُنْجِيكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ؟ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ
وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ
وَأَنفُسِكُمْ، ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ، إِن كُنتُمْ
تَعْلَمُونَ. يَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُمْ
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسْكِنَ طَيِّبَةً
فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ، ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ. وَأُخْرَى
تُحِبُّونَهَا، نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ، وَبَشِيرِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ. يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا، كُونُوا أَنْصَارَ
اللَّهِ كَمَا قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ لِلْحَوَارِيِّينَ:
مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ
أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ. (61:10-14)

Believers! Shall I point out to you a deal that will save you

from a woeful torment? Profess faith in God and His Messenger, and fight for God's cause with your life and wealth. This would be better for you, if you understand. [In return] God will forgive your sins and admit you to gardens below which streams of water flow; He will lodge you in pleasant mansions in eternal gardens. This is great success. And [Listen!] He will [also bestow upon you] what you desire: help from God and a victory which will soon come. And [O Prophet!] Give these glad tidings to the faithful. Believers! Be God's helpers in the way Jesus son of Mary said to his disciples: "Who will be my helper in the cause of God?" The disciples replied: "We are God's helpers." (61:10-14)

All efforts which have been undertaken in the near or distant past for the protection, survival and revival of religion, have been undertaken to

fulfil this requirement of faith. In Muslim history, the source of all these efforts which were through the spoken or the written word or through wealth and money or through the sword and blade is this very requirement of faith. The Qur'an asserts that if at some time this requirement arises, a true believer should give it the foremost priority and nothing in this world should be dearer to him. The Qur'an says:

قُلْ: إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ
وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ
اِقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ
كَسَادَهَا وَمَسْكِنٌ تَرْضَوْنَهَا
أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا
حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ، وَاللَّهُ
لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ. (9:24)

[O Prophet!] Tell them: "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your family, the wealth you have acquired, the merchandise you fear may not be sold, and the homes you like, are dearer to

you than God, His Prophet and the struggle for His cause, then wait until God makes His Judgement and [keep this in mind that] God does not guide such people who break their promises.” (9:24)

(3) Adhering to Justice (Qiyam bi al-Qist)

If emotions, vested-interests and biases try to divert a person from justice in some worldly or religious matter, his faith requires him not only to adhere to justice but also if his witness is required in these matters, he should do so even if it puts his life in danger. He should uphold the truth by saying what is the truth and surrendering before it. He should adhere to justice and bear witness to it, and stick to it in his beliefs and deeds. This is called qiyam bi al-qist, and in the Qur'an it is referred to in the following words:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ
شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ
وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ، إِنْ يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ

أَوَّلَىٰ بِهِمَا، فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا، وَإِنْ تَلَّوْا أَوْ تُعْرِضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا. (135:4)

Believers! Adhere to justice by bearing witness to it for God, even though it be against yourselves, your parents, or your kinsfolk. If someone is rich or poor, God only is more worthy for both. So do not be led by base-desires [by leaving His guidance], lest as a result you swerve from the truth. And if you distort [what is true and just] or evade [it, you should remember that] God is well aware of what you do. (4:135)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ، وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا، اْعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ، وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ. (8:5)

Believers! Be those who adhere to justice by bearing witness to it for God. And your animosity for some people

should not induce you to turn away from justice. Be just; this is nearer to piety. And have fear of God; indeed, God is well aware of all your deeds. (5:8)

The objective of this religion stated in the Qur'an is tazkiyah. This means that the individual and collective lives of people should be purified and their beliefs and deeds be developed in the right direction. At many places in the Qur'an, it has been mentioned that the objective of mankind is to enter Paradise in which they will be pleased with their Lord and their Lord will be pleased with them, and only those people have been promised Paradise who have purified their souls:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى. وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى. بَلْ
تُؤْتِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا. وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى.
(87:14-17)

[At that time], however, successful shall be he who purified himself, and remembered his Lord's name, then prayed. [No], in fact, you

give preference to this worldly life in spite of the fact that the life to come is better and more lasting. (87:14-17)

Consequently, it is tazkiyah which is the objective and purpose of religion. It is for this end that the prophets were sent, and the whole religion was revealed to guide man in attaining this objective:

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ،
يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ. (2:62)

It is He Who has sent forth among the unlettered a Messenger from their own who recites to them His revelations, purifies them, and [for this, he] instructs them in the shari‘ah and in hikmah. (62:2)

The correct attitude which the followers of this religion should adopt is called ihsan. It means to do something in the best possible way. When some religious duty is carried out in a manner that a complete balance is maintained between its

form and spirit, every constituent of it is taken fully into consideration and a person does the deed in a manner that he considers himself to be standing before God, then this attitude is called *ihsan*. The Qur'an says:

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِّمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ، وَهُوَ
مُحْسِنٌ، وَاتَّبَعَ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا. (125:4)

And who has a better religion than he who submits to God, such that he does *ihsan*, and follows the faith of Abraham, who was devoted to [God].

(4:125)

The Prophet (sws) has explained *ihsan* in the following subtle words:

الْإِحْسَانُ: أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ
تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ.

Ihsan is that you worship God as if you are seeing Him because if you are not able to see Him, He surely sees you.⁵

5. Ibid., 22, (no. 93).

Islam and the State

The situation that certain organized groups, acting in the name of jihad and armed struggle, have created today for Islam and Muslims throughout the world is the destructive product of the very thought that is taught in our religious seminaries and propagated day and night by Islamic movements and religious political parties. What, in contrast, is the correct Islamic understanding? We have presented it with arguments in our book *Mizan*. For the details one should refer to that book itself; here we present a summary of the part that relates to Islam and the state:

1. The message of Islam is primarily addressed to an individual. It wants to rule the hearts and minds of people. The directives it has given to the society are also addressed to individuals who are fulfilling their

responsibilities as the rulers of Muslims. Hence, it is baseless to think that a state also has a religion and there is a need to Islamize it through an Objectives Resolution and that it must be constitutionally bound to not make any law repugnant to the Qur'an and Sunnah. People who presented this view and were successful in having it implemented actually laid the foundations of a permanent division in the nation states of these times: it gave the message to the non-Muslims that they are in fact second rate citizens who at best occupy the status of a protected minority and that if they want to demand anything from the real owners of the state must do this in this capacity of theirs.

2. It can be the dream of every person that countries in which Muslims are in majority should unite under a single rule and we can also strive to achieve this goal but this is not a directive of the Islamic shari'ah which today Muslims are guilty of disregarding. Certainly not! Neither

is khilafah a religious term nor its establishment at the global level a directive of Islam. After the first century hijrah, when celebrated jurists of the Muslims were among them, two separate Muslim kingdoms, the Abbasid kingdom in Baghdad and the Umayyad kingdom in Spain had been established and remained so for many centuries. However, none of these jurists regarded this state of affairs to be against the Islamic shari‘ah. The reason is that there is not a single directive found on this issue in the Qur’an and the Hadith. On the contrary, what everyone, including this writer, does say is that if at any place a state is established, rebelling against it is a heinous crime. Such is the horrific nature of this crime that the Prophet (sws) is reported to have said that a person who does so dies the death of jahiliyyah.¹

3. The basis of nationhood in

1. Al-Bukhari, Al-Jami‘ al-sahih, vol. 6, 2588, (no. 6645-6646).

Islam is not Islam itself, as is generally understood. At no place in the Qur'an and Hadith has it been said that Muslims must become one nation. On the contrary, what the Qur'an has said is: (49: 10) **إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ** (All Muslims are brothers to one another, (49:10)). Thus the relationship between Muslims is not based on nationhood; rather, it is based on brotherhood. While being divided into several nations, countries and states they are brothers in faith. Hence, what can be demanded from them is that they should keep themselves aware of the circumstances of their brothers, help them in their troubles and tribulations, support those who are oppressed among them, give them preference in economic and social ties and under no circumstances close their doors on them. However, what cannot be demanded from them is that they give up their nation states and national identities and become one nation and one state. Just as they can create separate nation states, in the same way if they have the freedom to

follow their religion, they can live in the capacity of citizens of non-Muslim states and adopt their nationality. None of this is forbidden by the Qur'an and Sunnah.

4. If some Muslims of the world declare themselves as Muslims and, in fact, insist on this and adopt a belief or deed which is not approved by one or more scholars or the rest of the Muslims, then this deed or belief of theirs can be regarded as incorrect and even a deviation and departure from Islam, yet these people cannot be regarded as non-Muslims or disbelievers (kuffar) because these people adduce their views from the Qur'an and Hadith. For the ruling of God on such beliefs and deeds, we must wait for the Day of Judgement. Their proponents in this world in accordance with their own acknowledgement are Muslims, must be regarded as Muslims and must be dealt with in the way Muslims are. It is the right of the scholars to point out their mistake, to invite them to

accept what is correct, to regard what they find as constituting polytheism and disbelief in their ideology and also inform people about all this. However, no one has the right to declare them as non-Muslims or to ostracize them from the Muslim community because only God can give this right to someone, and everyone who has knowledge of the Qur'an and Hadith knows that God has not given this right to anyone.

5. Polytheism, disbelief and apostasy are indeed grave crimes; however, no human being can punish another human being for these crimes. This is the right of God alone. In the Hereafter too, He will punish them for these crimes and in this world it is He Who does so if He intends. The matter of the Hereafter is not under discussion here. In this world, this punishment takes place in the following manner: when the Almighty decides to reward and punish people in this world on the basis of their deeds, He sends His messenger towards them. This messenger

conclusively communicates the truth to these people such that they are left with no excuse before God to deny it. After this, the verdict of God is passed and people who even after the conclusive communication of the truth insist on disbelief and polytheism are punished in this world. This is an established practice of God which the Qur'an describes in the following words: **وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ رَسُولُهُمْ قُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ** (47:10) (And for each community, there is a messenger. Then when their messenger comes, their fate is decided with full justice and they are not wronged, (10:47)). Its nature is the same as of the sacrifice of Ishmael (sws) and the incident of Khidr. It is not related to us human beings. Just as we cannot drill a hole in the boat of a poor person to help him and cannot kill a disobedient boy nor embark upon slaughtering any of our sons on the basis of a dream as Abraham (sws) did, similarly, we cannot undertake this task except if a revelation comes from God or if He

directly gives an order. Everyone knows that the door to this has permanently been closed.

6. No doubt *jihad* is a directive of Islam. The Qur'an requires of its followers that if they have the strength, they should wage war against oppression and injustice. The primary reason for this directive is to curb persecution which is the use of oppression and coercion to make people give up their religion. Those having insight know that Muslims are not given this directive of *jihad* in their individual capacity; they are addressed in their collective capacity regarding this directive. They are not individually addressed in the verses of *jihad* which occur in the Qur'an. Thus in this matter only the collectivity has the right to launch any such armed offensive. No individual or group of Muslims has the right to take this decision on their behalf. It is for this reason that the Prophet (sws) is reported to have said: "A Muslim ruler is a shield; war can only

waged under him.”²

7. The directive of *jihad* given by Islam is war for the cause of God; therefore, it cannot be waged while disregarding moral restrictions. Ethics and morality supersede everything in all circumstances and even in matters of war and armed offensives, the Almighty has not allowed Muslims to deviate from moral principles. Hence, it is absolutely certain that *jihad* can only be waged against combatants. It is the law of Islam that if a person attacks through his tongue, then this attack shall be countered through the tongue and if he financially supports the warriors, then he will be stopped from this support; however, unless a person picks up arms to wage war, his life cannot be taken. So much so, if right in the battle field an enemy throws down arms and surrenders, he shall

2. Al-Bukhari, Al-Jami‘ al-sahih, vol. 3, 1080, (no. 2797).

be taken a prisoner; he cannot be executed after this. The words of the verse which mention the directive of *jihad* are: وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ (2:190) وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ. (And fight in the way of God with those who fight against you and do not transgress bounds [in this fighting]. Indeed, God does not like the transgressors, (2:190)). The Prophet (sws) forbade the killing of women and children during war.³ The reason for this is that if they had embarked upon *jihad* with the army, it was not in the capacity of combatants. At best, they could boost the morale of the combatants and urge them through the tongue to fight.

8. Centuries before the thinkers of the present age, the Qur'an had declared: أَمْرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ (42:38) (the affairs of the Muslims are run on the

3. Al-Bukhari, Al-Jami' al-sahih, vol. 3, 1098, (no. 2851); Muslim, Al-Jami' al-sahih, vol. 3, 1364, (no. 1744).

basis of their mutual consultation, (42:38)). This clearly meant that an Islamic government would be established through their consultation, everyone would have equal rights in this consultation, whatever done through consultation could only be undone through consultation and every individual would become part of the consultative process. Moreover, if a decision could not be reached through a consensus or total agreement, then the opinion of the majority would be accepted as the decision.

This is precisely what democracy is. Thus dictatorship is not acceptable in any case whether it is of a dynasty, a class, a group, or a national institution and not even of religious scholars in the interpretation of issues related to religion and *shari'ah*. These scholars indeed have the right to present their views and express their opinions; however, their view can only become a law for the people to follow when the majority of the elected representatives accept

it. In modern states, the institution of the parliament has been constituted for this very purpose. It holds and should hold the final authority in the system of a state. People do have a right to criticize the decisions of the parliament and point out their mistakes; however, no one has the right to disobey them or rebel against them. Neither scholars nor the judiciary is above the parliament. The principle of *أَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ* (42:38) binds every individual and every institution to practically submit to the decisions of the parliament even though they may differ with them.

It is only this approach which is justifiable in setting up the rule of Islam and running it. If any other way is adopted to set up this rule, then it will be illegal even though the forehead of its ruler may glisten with the signs of prostration or even if he is bestowed the title of *amir al-mu'minin*.

9. If at some place a Muslim government exists, it is generally asked to implement the *shari'ah*. This

expression is misleading because it gives the impression that Islam has given the right to a government to forcibly implement all the directives of the *shari'ah* on people. The fact is that the Qur'an and Hadith do not give this authority to any government. The Islamic *shari'ah* contains two categories of directives. The first category comprises directives which are given to individuals and the second category comprises directives which are given to a Muslim society. The first category relates to directives which are between an individual and God. In these directives, a person is not responsible to any government; on the contrary, he is responsible to God. Hence, no government, for example, can force a person to fast or go for *hajj* or *'umrah* or to circumcise himself or to keep his moustaches trimmed or in the case of a woman to cover her chest, refrain from displaying her ornaments or to wear a scarf when going out. In such matters, a government has no authority beyond urging and educating people

except if there is a chance of rights being usurped or excesses being committed against the life, wealth and honour of people. The Qur'an has explicitly said that among the positive directives of religion, a state can only forcibly demand from them to offer the prayer and pay *zakah*. The Qur'an (9:5) says that after this, it is incumbent upon the state to leave them alone and not try to enforce anything on them. As for the second category of directives, they are only given to a government because it is a government which represents a society in collective affairs. If religious scholars demand from those in authority to obey them, then they certainly will be justified. In fact, it is their duty in their capacity as scholars to make such a demand. It should be clear that this demand is the demand to follow the *shari'ah*. Implementation of the *shari'ah* is not the right name for this demand. This second category comprises the following directives:

- i. Muslims will not be subjects of

their rulers but equal citizens. No discrimination shall be made between them in the state system and the laws of the state. Their life, wealth and honour shall hold sanctity – so much so that without their consent the state shall not impose any tax on them other than *zakah*. If a dispute arises in their personal affairs like marriage, divorce, distribution of inheritance, financial transactions, and other similar matters, then it shall be decided in accordance with the Islamic *shari'ah*. They shall be provided with all the essential facilities for their daily prayers, the fasts of Ramadan and *hajj* and *'umrah*. They will be governed with justice and fairness on the principle of *أَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ* (42:38) (the affairs of the Muslims are run on the basis of their mutual consultation, (42:38)). Their public wealth and assets shall be reserved for the collective needs of the society and shall not be given in private ownership; in fact, they shall be developed and looked after in such a way that the

needs of people who are not able to financially support themselves are fulfilled from their income. If they pass away, they shall be enshrouded and prepared for burial according to Muslim rites; their funeral prayer shall be offered and they shall be buried in the graveyard of the Muslims the way Muslims are buried.

ii. It shall be the responsibility of the government to organize the Friday and the *'id* prayers. These prayers shall be held only at places which are specified by the state. Their pulpits shall be reserved for the rulers. They themselves will lead and deliver the sermon of these prayers or some representative of theirs will fulfil this responsibility on their behalf. Within the confines of the state, no one will have the authority to organize these prayers independently.

iii. Law enforcing departments shall be primarily reserved for *amar bi al-ma'ruf and nahi 'an al-munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil). Thus the most pious of people will

be selected as workers of these departments. They will urge people to do good and forbid them all what mankind has always regarded as evil. However, they will only use the force of law when a person is guilty of usurping rights or goes after the life, wealth and honour of people.

iv. The state shall always adhere to justice (*qa'im bi al-qist*) with regard to its enemies as well. It will speak the truth, bear witness to it and will not take any step contrary to justice and fairness.

v. If the state enters into agreement with someone within its jurisdiction or with some foreign entity, then as long as the agreement exists it shall be honoured both in letter and in spirit with full honesty and sincerity.

vi. The death penalty will be given in two cases only: murder and spreading anarchy in the land. If a Muslim is guilty of murder, theft, fornication, falsely accusing someone of fornication (*qadhf*) or spreading anarchy and disorder in the land and

a court is fully satisfied that he does not deserve any leniency arising from his personal, familial and social circumstances, then those punishments shall be meted out to him which the Almighty has prescribed in His Book for those who have whole-heartedly accepted the call of Islam.

vii. Dissemination of Islam to all parts of this world shall be organized at the state level. If any power of the world tries to hinder this effort or persecutes Muslims, then the state, according to its capacity, will try to remove this hindrance and stop this persecution even if it has to use force for it.⁴

10. These are the directives of the *shari'ah* which relate to the state and have been given with the warning that those who, after acknowledging the Book of God, do not decide according to the law He has revealed will be regarded as wrongdoers (*zalim*),

4. In order to see the details of these seven requirements in the sources of Islam, my book *Mizan* can be consulted.

defiant (*fasiq*) and disbelievers (*kafir*) on the Day of Judgement.⁵ However, if the rulers of the Muslims, in spite of this warning are guilty of some error in this regard or become rebellious, then the only responsibility of scholars and reformers is to warn them of its consequences in this world and the Hereafter. With wisdom and kindly exhortation, they should call them to mend their ways, face their questions, dispel their doubts and logically reason with them as to why God has given them His *shari'ah*. They should explain to them its relevance in the collective sphere of life. They should also elucidate to them the basis of its directives and the difficulty which a person of the modern era faces in understanding it. They should adopt styles and ways to explain and clarify it so that its underlying wisdom and objective becomes evident to them and their hearts and minds are able to adopt it with full satisfaction and they

5. Qur'an, 5:44-47.

become prepared to follow it. The Qur'an has stated that the real status of religious scholars is to invite people to the truth and warn them about any deviation from it. God does not want them to force people to follow Islam or to organize their followers in groups that ask people at gun point to follow the *shari'ah*.

—————



Forbidding Wrong

One of the necessary requirements of faith is that people be exhorted to do good and to abstain from wrong. Both the exhortation and admonition should be done with sagacity and benevolence in the manner of suggestion and advice. The righteousness or deviation of people is a matter that is in God's hands. He is aware of those who have deviated from His path as well as of those who will be guided. Therefore, in calling people to truth and justice, no one should play the keeper of morals or decree Heaven or Hell for any of his or her addressees. It is obvious from the Qur'an that, in his role of calling people to the truth, none of the messengers of God was allowed to go beyond effective and clear communication or exhortation and reminding. God Almighty says:

إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ لَّسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ.

(88:21-22)

Your task is to admonish; you are not responsible for their supervision. (88:21-22)

However, matters are different in the domain of authority. For example, on attaining maturity, a man may become a husband to a wife and, as a consequence of this relationship, a father to his children. Nature and religion entail that a certain degree of authority be granted to him in both these roles. Similar is the role of institutions and governments. When they are formed, their heads are also granted a certain degree of authority. It is regarding the ambit of this authority that the Prophet (sws) is reported to have said:

مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ فَإِنْ
لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ
وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ.

He amongst you who sees a wrong should redress it by hand; if he does not find in himself the strength to do it, then by his tongue; and, if even

that is not possible, he should despise the wrong in his heart -- and this is the lowest level of faith.¹

The Arabic word used here for “wrong” is *munkar*. It does not refer to sins of purely religious nature; instead, it refers to those wrongs that all humankind, regardless of religion or creed, regards as evil. Theft, lying, dishonesty, misappropriation, embezzlement, fraud, adulteration, violation of others’ rights, indecency, causing injury to life or damage to property or honour, and other violations of these kinds fall within the category of *munkar*. This statement attributed to the Prophet (sws) also relates to these wrongs. It is an offshoot of the Qur’anic directive of *amr bi’l-ma’ruf* (commanding right) and *nahi ‘an al-munkar* (forbidding wrong). The Prophet (sws) has warned that, if, in the realm of one’s authority, one does not even regard these wrongs as evil, one falls

1. Muslim, Al-Jami‘ al-sahih, vol. 1, 69, (no. 45).

below the lowest level of faith.

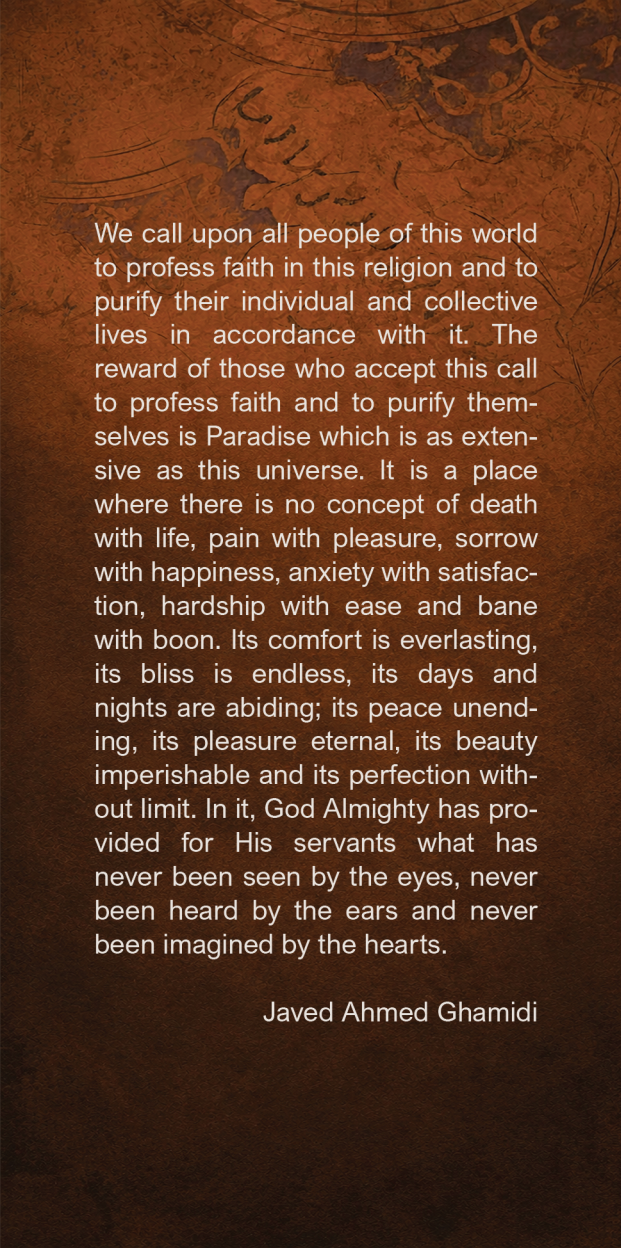
The words *in lam yastati*‘

also need to be properly understood. They do not refer to the kind of ability that entails responsibility. The reason is that in the absence of this kind of ability, a person does not remain accountable and therefore does not fall in the levels of faith. In this reported statement, the words connote “strength” and “courage” that may increase or decrease with the level of one's faith. It is therefore only in the sphere of one's authority that one might be considered as having fallen to lower levels of faith if one does not remedy a wrong by hand. The reason for this difference is that, in this latter case, the person does not make the required endeavour to eradicate evil despite having the right and the authority to do so. The moral imperative here does not at all mean that, for achieving a higher level of faith, people have the right to gather their followers on their

own and go out as vigilantes to end wrong. Such steps, if taken, translate into the worst kind of disorder, which has no sanction at all in religion. All directives in religion are given in relation to one's ability and authority.

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ([in His directives,] God does not burden any soul with what is beyond it, (2:286)) is an unequivocal principle that is kept in consideration in all the directives of religion and the divine law. It is this principle that should be kept in mind to understand the Prophet's statement regarding the prohibition of wrong.





We call upon all people of this world to profess faith in this religion and to purify their individual and collective lives in accordance with it. The reward of those who accept this call to profess faith and to purify themselves is Paradise which is as extensive as this universe. It is a place where there is no concept of death with life, pain with pleasure, sorrow with happiness, anxiety with satisfaction, hardship with ease and bane with boon. Its comfort is everlasting, its bliss is endless, its days and nights are abiding; its peace unending, its pleasure eternal, its beauty imperishable and its perfection without limit. In it, God Almighty has provided for His servants what has never been seen by the eyes, never been heard by the ears and never been imagined by the hearts.

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi