THE OVERWHELMING TRUTH:

A Discussion of Some Key Concepts in Islamic Theology

by
His Eminence
Shaykh Aˆmad b. ™amad
al-Khal,l,
Grand Mufti
of the Sultanate of Oman

Half title. Copyright.
ISBN No. etc.

Contents

Preface 5

THE FIRST DISCUSSION:
ON SEEING ALLAH 29
Introduction 30
Chapter 1
Differences among the *ummah*
on the possibility of seeing Allah and its
actually happening 32
Chapter 2
On the evidence of those who affirm the seeing
41
Evidence for the possibility of seeing Allah
41
Evidence from the Book 42
Evidence from the Sunnah 50
Evidence for its actually happening 54
Evidence from the Book 54
Evidence from the Sunnah 73
Chapter 3
On the evidence of those who deny seeing 88
Proofs and evidence from the Book 90
Evidence from the Sunnah 120
Conclusion: The outcome of the Discussion 126

THE SECOND DISCUSSION:
ON THE QUR|>N'S BEING CREATED 129
Introduction 130
Chapter 1
On the differences among the *ummah* on the
revealed Word being eternal or created 138
Chapter 2
On the clash of opinions of those
who believe in the Qur|~n's being eternal (not-
created) 165

Chapter 3
On the evidence of those who deny the creation of the Qur|~n 199
Chapter 4
On the evidence of those who believe in the Qur|~n's being created 212
Rational evidence 212
Evidence from the Qur|~n 216
Evidence from the Sunnah 233
Conclusion 236

THE THIRD DISCUSSION:
ON THE PERMANENT STAYING IN THE FIRE
OF THOSE WHO COMMIT MAJOR SINS 239
Introduction 240
Chapter 1
On the dispute about permanency of the Garden and the Fire 243
Chapter 2
On the arguments of those who believe in the end of the punishment 249
1 The verses from the Qur|~n 249
2 A narration from the Prophet 256
3 The philosophical ideas 257
Chapter 3
On the evidence of those who believe in the permanent dwelling in the Fire of those who commit the major sins 262
Evidence from the Book 262
Evidence from the Sunnah 292
Conclusion of the Discussion 295

CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK 298

THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 301

Preface

Praise belongs to Allah who chose for His servants the religion by which He unified the groups of the believers, and by whose orders He brought the hearts of the sincere into one accord. Glorified is He. He is One in His Essence, Glorified in His attributes, Exalted in His Majesty, the Creator of what is in His earth and in His heavens. 'Nothing is like to Him, He is All-Hearing and All-Seeing' (*al-Shfr~*, 42.11); 'The (faculties of) seeing cannot grasp Him, and He grasps all seeing, He is the All-Subtle and All-Aware' (*al-An`~m*, 6.103), the True in promise and warning. He does what He wills and He decides what He wants. None can change His decision; there is no changing His words, and no unfulfilling of His promise. I praise Him as one who believes in His Majesty, and acknowledges His Perfection. And I testify that there is no god but Allah, He is alone, He has no partner. 'To Him belongs the praise in the first and in the last, and unto Him is the judgement and to Him you will be returned'' (*al-Qa‰a‰*, 28.88). And I testify that our master, our Prophet Mu^ammad is His servant, His Messenger, and His chosen one among His creatures, and His chosen one among His Messengers. He sent him with the most true, clear and manifest signs, and the most dazzling miracles. He perfected by him the religion, and completed by him the favour upon His believing servants. Peace be upon him, his descendants, all his Companions, and their sincere followers until the Day of Judgment.

Difference in the conditions of people is a well-known characteristic of mankind. That is why you find them differing in understanding, in

tastes and sentiments. That is the cause of the multiplicity of their doctrines on the same matter, and their differences in thinking on the same issue. 'But they will not cease to differ, except those on whom your Lord has bestowed His Mercy, and for this did He create them' (*Hfd*, 11.118-19). Often prejudice takes root within them, growing over time into a strong conviction in thought and feeling, which cannot then be shifted or altered.

That is why the preaching of the Messengers, upon them be peace, cost them so much effort over such a long time. Even then, the thoughts of most people remained in error, drowned in blindness, not listening to the manifest proofs, and not opening up to clear miracles. Rather, whenever the proof was clearer and the miracle brighter they would grow more deaf and more blind, and more deeply enmeshed in opposition and dispute.

Every *ummah* has suffered from schism among its members. The *ummah* of Muˆammad, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, was kept safe from that. It was particularized by the sending of the greatest Messenger to it, and the revelation to it of the greatest Book, and it was very clearly warned against schism and its causes, and the evil consequence of it was explained in strong verses of the Book. He says, Exalted is He: 'and hold fast all together, by the rope of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3.103). And He says, Glorified is He: 'Be not like those who are divided among themselves, and fall into disputations after receiving clear signs; for them is a dreadful chastisement' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3.105). And He says: 'And fall not into disputes, lest you lose heart and your power depart' (*al-Anf~l*, 8.46). And He says to His Messenger, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah: 'As for those who divide their religion

and break up into sects, you have no part in them' (*al-An`~m*, 6.159). In spite of all that, this *ummah* did not remain safe from this serious disease which affected other *ummah*s. But Allah particularized this *ummah* by preserving the Book revealed to it from deformations of its letters by mockers and alterations by its enemies, by way of fulfillment of His promise: 'We have, without doubt, sent down the Message, and We will assuredly guard it' (*al-™ijr*, 15.9). And Allah enabled this *ummah* to know the authentic Sunnah of His Messenger, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, and made for the believers a way out of disputation and schism by referring to Allah and His Messenger, where He says: 'If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger if you do believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is best and most suitable for final determination' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.59).

'Referring to Allah' cannot be but by referring to His Book, from which the truth should be derived and the reality known. Similarly, 'referring to His Messenger', upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, does not mean other than referring to his affirmed and authentic Sunnah.

Regardless of the availability of this way in which we have been commanded to take refuge from the calamities of dispute, differences have continued, and schism has not ceased. The Book is interpreted in different ways reliant on fancies and inspired by desires; so too, the people adopt diverse positions in determining the authentic Sunnah, and in determining the goals of that of the Sunnah which is approved by all. Thence has arisen, among the *ummah*, dispute in both the roots (*u%fl*) and branches (*furf`*) of the religion.

The most harmful, dangerous, consequential, and worst in outcome, was the dispute in the fun-

damentals of the religion. For these fundamentals are the foundations of the religion; on them stand its pillars, on them is established its building; the strength of the religion itself is according to the strength of these foundations. That is why the *ummah* has often tolerated the differences that arise among its groups in the *furu`* of the Shari`ah. But the difference among the *ummah* hardens and deepens when it concerns a matter that is fundamental. According to the closeness or distance between one group and another in respect of the fundamentals, they come together or separate from one another. The source of accusation and defamation among the different groups of the *ummah* is not other than their differences on the fundamentals of the religion, and difference too in the sources from which belief is derived, varying between excess and insufficiency in reliance upon tradition or reason.

Dispute over the fundamentals of the religion, irrespective of the unity of the source to which the disputing minds refer, is nothing but a result of difference among the leaders of the groups in understanding and concepts. Then, the prejudice of the masses in favour of the opinions of their leaders causes each group to regard the opinion of its leader as a fundamental——to the extent that the proofs that go against him are, by every possible means of interpretation, made into proofs in his favour. Thereby the *ummah* is divided into sects and parties. 'Each party is pleased with what they have' (*al-Mu|minfn*, 23.53).

I do not exaggerate when I say of the Ibadis——the people of truth and *istiq~mah* (steadfastness on the straight path)——that their belief is distinguished, and their method of understanding the fundamentals of the religion is characterized, by three things:

1 Purity of derivation: in their argumentation for the authenticity of their beliefs they have reconciled sound narration and clear reasoning.

The Ibadis did not reject sound texts because of their apparent contradiction with the demands of reason——which is the state of the rationalist school who held reason to be higher, purer and more authentic than what the Prophets, upon them be peace, brought from Allah, Exalted is He, and who relied upon reason to decide between beauty and ugliness, to give explanation and pass judgement. Equally, the Ibadis did not extinguish the torch of reason either——so as, for example, to become imprisoned by the outward meaning of words without seeking guidance therein and (through reasoning) unveiling the deeper, inward meaning and going deeper into the intent and purport of those words. That is the state of the worshippers of the word who do not take from the text but the outer shell, do not go beyond its form to its reality, beyond its surface meaning to its content and purport. By contrast, the Ibadis have attached themselves firmly to the strong hooks of the text while using wholesome reasoning as an argument by which to understand the aims of the text, and they have used the conventions of the language as devices by which to track down fugitive meanings. No surprise in this, for the Ibadis walk in this matter by the guidance of the Qur|~n itself. How often you will find in the Qur|~n (expressions like these): 'signs for people who understand' and 'for people who think' and 'for people who know' and 'for the people of intellects'; as you will find in it (the verse): 'Indeed, We have sent it down an Arabic Qur|~n, that you may understand' (*Yfsuf*, 12.2). The Qur|~n, though it far exceeds the eloquence of the most eloquent among Arabs and non-Arabs, does

not pass the bounds of being Arabic in language and in style. And Allah has made it easy for memorization by the comprehensibility of its verses, the intelligibility of its intentions, and the guidance that can be derived from it.

2 Absence of such prejudice in favour of their im~ms that they become deaf to sound texts, and blind to clear minds, as we find with many jurists and theologians.

An example of the worst of what we have come across is the statement of `All~mah ^~w, in his marginal notes on the *tafs,r* of al-Jalalayn: 'It is not allowed to follow other than the four schools, even if doing so agrees with the opinion of the Companions, the sound *ˆad,th* and the verses of the Qur|~n. One who goes out of the four schools is misled and misleading——maybe it leads him to unbelief, because taking the external meanings of the Book and Sunnah is among the fundamentals of unbelief.'[1]

Ibadis have left this narrow path in the law and belief for the vast field of vision of the *ummah*. They have not permitted themselves to raise the statement of any of their im~ms to the status of the word of Allah or the saying of His Messenger, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, whatever height he may have attained in knowledge and piety. This is what Im~m Nfr al-D,n al-S~lim,, may Allah have mercy on him, says on the fundamentals of the religion, in his book *Jawhar al-niŒ~m*: 'They are the matters on which is built the authenticity of our religion, so turn to them. There is no religion for a man if he does not know what is compulsory from it, so you should learn. And rely on that on the basis of evidence for matters definite and indefinite.'

---

1 ™~*shiyat al-^~w, `al~ tafs,r al-Jalalayn* (Beirut: D~r Iˆy~| al-Tur~th al-`Arab,), 3:10.

Until he says: 'Do not compare with the Book of Allah, nor with the saying of the Chosen one, the tender-hearted (Messenger).' The meaning of which is: do not make anyone an equal to Qur|~n and Sunnah, even if he is an expert scholar.[2]

He also says: 'We give preference to *^ad,th* wherever it comes over our analogy (*qiy~s*), and there is no doubt about that. After that, we turn, in explanation of a judgement, to the consensus of the scholars.'[3]

You will find, respected reader, in what I will present to you and what is presented by other Ibadis, what will clearly demonstrate to you the soundness of what I have here said, that the people of *istiq~mah* (and praise belongs to Allah) are innocent of this fundamental that al-^~w, has chosen as the foundation of the palace of Islam. And you will find, *insh~| All~h*, that al-^~w, is not alone in this field. There are those who walked on the same path, as their method in discussion will show, as you will discover, *insh~| All~h*, during your reading of this study that I am presenting to you. That does not mean that all followers of the four schools are involved in what al-^~w, and others are involved in, the mire of hated imitation, and raising the opinions of the im~ms to a level higher than the level of the Word of Allah, the saying of the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, and the opinions of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. By no means——for many of them have freed themselves from the yoke of such blind imitation, and are fair-minded with their opponents in judgement, as you will also find in this study, *insh~| All~h*. (Justice demands that mention be made of the refutation of

---

2 *Jawhar al-niŒ~m* (10th edition), 1:6.

3 Ibid, 22.

al-^~w,'s statement by the great scholar Shaykh Aˆmad b. ™ajar al-Bu\~m,, the first judge in the Shar,`ah court of the state of Qatar. He has presented this in a point by point refutation in a book entitled *Tanz,h al-Sunnah wa l-Qur|~n `an kawni-him~ ma‰dar al-ŧal~l wa l-kufr~n*.)

3 Flexibility and tolerance in dealing with other groups of the *ummah* though the difference among them has reached as far as it has.

The Ibadis have never dared to exclude anyone from the *millah* (community of Muslims) nor severed his relation with the *ummah* as long as he continues to acknowledge the two testimonies, and does not deny anything that is known without *ta|w,l* (interpretation) as necessary in the religion. As for the one who resorts to *ta|w,l*, his *ta|w,l* is——though it be weaker than a spider's thread——in the Ibadis' view, sufficient to protect him from the judgement that he has transgressed the boundaries of the *ummah*. On this point came that fair declaration——which has defined the Ibadis' principle in the way they see the *ummah*——from the most famous Ibadi leader, Abƒ ™amzah al-Mukht~r b. `Awf Sulaym,, in a speech that he delivered on the *mimbar* (pulpit) of the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah. Time has listened to this speech, the epoch recorded it and history has eternalized it. He, may Allah have mercy on him, said in that speech: 'The people are from us and we are from the people, except three: an associator or idol worshipper (*mushrik bi-l-l~h*), an unbeliever from the People of the Book, or an unjust im~m.'[4]

Ibadis have walked on this safe path, and held this straight principle in their dealing with the rest of the groups of the *ummah*, as history bears

[4] Abƒ l-Faraj al-I‰bah~n,, *al-Agh~n,* (Bul~q), 2:104.

witness. And we find this fair tone in the voices of the leaders of thought among them in the later generations as it was in the early generation. This is Im~m Nfr al-D,n al-S~lim,, may Allah have mercy on him, stating for us anew the position of Ibadis towards the rest of the *ummah* in his words:[5]

> And we do not require of the servant of Allah any belief beyond the two testimonies. Whoever utter both sentences, we will say they are our brothers and we will take care of their rights. Except if they breach the form of the statement [of testimony], and believe in error in their religion. Then we will stand up to explain the truth to them, and we will regard that as their right. Whatever you see in the books of *taw^,d*—i.e. refutation of certain topics and solution of the problems brought by one who is misguided—we will stand to refute them and strive to express the truth so he cannot mislead the people. If they are silent in respect of us, we will remain silent in respect of them, and we will be content with them that they accept Islam.

On this foundation, Ibadis have based their judgement about the groups of the *ummah* which turned away in their beliefs from the truth and deviated from the reality. The Ibadis have been rather cautious in excluding any of them from the religion for the sake of his belief, as long as that was based on some interpretation of a legal text, even though that person's interpretation might have no foundation of correctness. Hence the criticism of the great Ibadi im~m, Ma^bfb b. Ra^,l, may Allah have mercy on him—hardened against H~rfn al-Yaman, who passed on the *mushabbihah* (anthropomorphists) the judgement of *shirk* and consequent exclusion from the *millah*. Ma^bfb wrote two comprehensive letters on this issue; in

---

[5] *Kashf al-^aq,qah ma`a anw~r al-`uqfl* (Oman: al-Ma\abi` al-`Alamiyyah), 25.

them are contained his arguments invalidating the opinion of H~rfn. He sent one of them to the Ibadis of Oman, and the second to the Ibadis of Hadramawt.[6] Ibadi opinion has agreed in its support of him, and in its criticism of H~rfn for error.

Al-Mu^aqqiq al-Khal,l,, may Allah be pleased with him, was asked about the verdict on the *mushabbihah*: Are they *mushrik*? His answer to the questioner was:

> Be cautious! Be cautious in hastening to pass a judgement of *shirk* on the people of the *qiblah* before knowing the fundamentals [of the matter], because it is a subject of perishing and destruction.[7]

By contrast, you will find the followers of the four im~ms——whom al-^~w, has made a criterion to distinguish between truth and falsehood rather than the Book and Sunnah——accusing each other of disbelief on this issue. It will suffice you to read what is in *al-Sayf al-%aq,l f, l-radd `al~ Ibn al-Zaff,l* of `All~mah Subki Sh~fi`,, and *Tabd,d al-Œalam al-mukhayyim min Nfniyyat Ibn al-Qayyim* of `All~mah Kawthar, ™anaf,, and *al-Bar~h,n al-s~\i`ah f, radd ba`d al-bida` al-sh~|i`ah* of `All~mah Qu‡~`, Sh~fi`,, and others like them, on the judgement of excluding these *mushabbihah* from the boundaries of Islam. And the verdicts of the *mushabbihah* about others are no less harsh. Let what `All~mah Ibn al-Qayyim says in his *Nfniyyah* suffice: 'Surely the *mu`a\\il* (one who denies all attributes of God) has de-

---

6 Both letters are in the third volume of *Kit~b siy~r al-Mursal,n*. We hope that this volume will be published soon *insh~| All~h* under the care of Wiz~rat al-Tur~th al-Qawm, wa l-Thaq~fah which issued the first part of it. Ma^bfb was one of the great im~ms of knowledge at the end of the second century because he was the intermediary between the eastern and western Ibadis.

7 *Kit~b Tamh,d qaw~`id al-,m~n* (Oman: Wiz~rat al-Tur~th al-Qawm, wa l-Thaq~fah), 1:224.

clared enmity; the *mushrik* is lighter in disbelief.'

His intention with regard to *ta`\,l* (denial of the attributes of God) is not otherwise than to refer indefinite texts in Qur|~n and *ˆad,th* to those that are definite, in the desire to purify understanding and interpret the Word of Allah and His Messenger by the styles of eloquence in the language of the Arabs and to remove any hint of contradiction and difference.

The matter did not stop there. Rather, you will find jurists of the same im~m out of the four im~ms accusing each other of *shirk* on this and other issues. Here is Fakhr al-D,n al-R~z, who calls the book of Muˆammad b. Isˆ~q b. Khuzaymah——which he himself called *Kit~b al-Tawˆ,d*—— 'Kit~b al-Shirk', whereas both of them are Sh~fi`, in *fiqh*. You will find *insh~| All~h* in the Second Discussion of this book literal quotations from the writings of Ibn Taymiyyah about the difference among Hanbalis on the words, letters and sounds of the Qur|~n, with mutual accusations of unbelief. I do not want to detail the examples or enumerate instances in this matter. I did not intend by what I have said to 'name names'. Rather, it is something necessitated by the contrast between the caution and deliberate self-control of Ibadis in passing judgement and the haste of some scholars of the *ummah* in issuing such verdicts that do not but reduce to tearing down the wall of the *ummah* and breaching its unity. It is a matter of grief and sorrow for the wise. How can this *ummah* descend to the field of disputatiousness and schism, ignoring the unity, harmony, friendship and love that Allah has made compulsory upon it? Did not Allah command this *ummah* to remain united by saying in His Book: 'And hold fast all together by the rope of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves; and

remember with gratitude Allah's favour on you; for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His grace you became brothers, and you were on the brink of the Pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3.103)? Did He not warn the *ummah* against the result of division by saying: 'And fall not into disputes lest you lose heart and your power depart' (*al-Anf~l*, 8.46)? Did He not send to them a noble Prophet, a trustworthy Messenger, inviting to unity just as he invited to *taw^,d*? He established the best example of that by dissolving the dispute and difference of his people in the crucible of faith. Through the faith he made a unity among fighting groups, and through Islam he made a close family of once averted hearts. And he explained that this unity is the unity of belief and action, principle and end, in hope and hardship. He depicted it in the most wonderful way when he said: 'The believer for the believer is like a building, one part of which strengthens the other part.' And he said: 'The likeness of the believers in their friendship, tenderness and care for each other is like the body: when a part of the body suffers, the rest of the body shares with it in the fever and sleeplessness.'

Is not this unity of the faith what was called for by the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, and he raised the flag of this unity among his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them? Is it not this unity that uplifted the state of this *ummah*, then Allah replaced its humiliation with honour, its weakness with power, its lowliness by high status so that it became able to conquer the world despite its lack in numbers and equipment and the greatness in number and equipment of its opponents?

Is not the schism that the *ummah* is suffering from reflected in what it is experiencing of the

negative effects in its states? It is divided after unity, humiliated after honour, weakened after power. Those eyes are despising it which used to respect it. Those nations are greedy to possess it which, before, did not want to challenge it. I wish I knew if there is recovery after this intoxication, and a wakening after this sleep, in which are drowned the intellects of this *ummah*, and in the forefront are its scholars to whom Allah has entrusted His religion, and He has taken covenant from them to take the hands of their *ummah* to the path of guidance.

O leaders of the religion! Why are you sleepless, when you are numerous and well-equipped?
You differ in opinion amongst yourselves, and the [people's] condition is failure and breaking of covenants!
Behind you are those who exploit your divisions, your words bouncing off their ears and hearts [scarcely heard or understood]:
They think of you as goats in the field who respond, when called, as goats do missing their little ones.
Come to true resolutions, for those are the armour of every society and every individual.
What error we are in! To miss our way like the council of the Quraysh leaders and the 'Shaykh of Najd' [Satan].
Amid loss of hope we graze about, content with the lower rather than the higher pastures.
To be sure we feel pain in our souls, but each in himself feels his own pain [not another's].
Before our enemies we keep our swords sheathed, drawing them out for our kinsfolk.

What a state we are in! It has snatched away my courage. I am cast among those I should have been with only after death.
O Master of me! A servant has missed his way in his aim. And You are the Master of the servant.
Then help him. And a society fallen into disputes, its [protecting] dams all breached.
We beseech from Your grace wealth and honour, help and

every good fortune.
So gather up our divisions and improve our state, and judge for us against the unjust wrong-doer.[8]

Perhaps it surprises many readers to learn for the first time of the anxiety of leading thinkers among Ibadis to unite this *ummah*, and gather it together, after the disputes about opinions that have drained its blood, and the sentiments of prejudice that have torn it apart. How intensely they have wished that the great figures of the *ummah* should feel as they feel, and share with them in these anxieties which their hearts endure, and which startle their nights and rob them of sleep. How intensely they have wished that there had been from them efforts to step forward in this way, and make preparation for this campaign with material expenses from their pockets and the pockets of the sincere people from the whole *ummah*. The reader will find a most true example of that in the question that was put forward by a thinker, scholar and experienced leader, Shaykh Sulaym~n b. `Abdull~h b. Ya^y~ al-B~rfn,, member of the council of al-Mab`uthan in the Ottoman Empire, and known as Sulaym~n P~sh~ al-B~rfn,. He was one of the Ibadis of the mountain of Nafusah in the Libyan quarter. He directed his question to the scholars of the Ibadis in the east and their referee in religious affairs, Im~m `Abdull~h b. ™umayd S~lim,. The text of the question is:

Do you agree that from among the strongest reasons of difference among Muslims is the multiplicity and divisions of the schools [doctrines]? On the assumption of non-agreement on that, what then is the reason for the divisions [among the *ummah*]? On the assumption of agreement, is it possible to unite the Muslims by reconciling their divided opinions, and abolishing the

[8] From a *qa‰,dah* of the great Omani poet, Shaykh `Abdull~h b. `Al, al-Khal,l,.

multiplicity [of doctrines], at this time when we are more needy of unity than anything else? On the assumption of impossibility of [achieving] unity, what in your view is the strong matter preventing this unity? Is there any way to remove it? On the assumption of the possibility of [achieving] unity, then what is the way that can facilitate the attainment of the desired result? And which city will be appropriate to present this matter in? How many years will it take to produce? And how much wealth is needed for it? How will action for it be organized? In any case, what is the legal and political ruling for one who is making this effort? Is he a reformer or a mischief-maker? ...

This question was put in the year 1326 AH. The answer of that im~m to the question was:

Yes, we agree that the reason for schism is the difference in schools and opinions. It is the biggest reason for the disunity of the *ummah* according to what your broad vision has led you to see.

And for the disunity, there are other reasons. Among these are envy, hatred for one other, and greed for the pleasures of this world. And among them is greed for leadership.

Unifying the *ummah* on the primordial Islamic nature (*fitrah*) after the branching growth of differences is possible to conceive, but impossible [to realize] in the normal course of things. When Allah wills it, then it happens. 'If you had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have produced that affection, but Allah has done it, for He is Exalted in Power, All-Wise' (*al-Anf~l*, 8.63).

The one who makes effort to bring [Muslims] together is a reformer. No doubt. The closest way for it is to urge people to give up the titles of the schools, and invite them to name [their groups] after Islam: 'Surely, the religion with Allah is Islam' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3.19). If the people respond to this great reality, then the prejudice for [their] school will depart from them, though after some passage of time. Then each person will be left seeking the truth for himself. The truth will first be with the individuals, then will

spread gradually until it [the ethos] comes back to the true norm (*fitrah*).

It is the call of Islam, that the Prophet Muˆammad, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, was sent with. And the innovations will fade away gradually, then the people will become brothers. 'Whoever goes astray, he does so against himself' (*Yfnus*, 10.108; *al-Isr~|*, 17.15; *al-Zumar*, 39.41). If the kings and rulers respond to that, then the people will hasten to accept it and you will be spared suffering. If this proves difficult [to realize] among the kings then the matter is difficult and suffering increases.

The most convenient place for this call is the place of the Revelation, the place of the angels' frequent visitation, then the place [i.e. Makkah] which is attended by the elite and the mass of people, the safe sanctuary of Allah, because it is the place of resort for everyone.

We do not have any school but Islam. That is why you will find us accepting the truth from whoever brings it even if he is a hated one. We refuse the false from whoever brings it, even if he is a beloved. We recognize people by the truth. The great to us are those who agree with the truth. The lesser to us are those who differ from it. Ibn Ibb~‡ did not invent a school for us. Rather, we were linked to him in order to be recognizable when other groups each took a different path.[9]

This is a statement in no need of any comment. If it is not a just testimony, and a clear sign of the nobility of intention of both questioner and replier, the high status of their thinking, and the beauty of what they desire, then nothing can seem correct to any mind.

If literature is a mirror reflecting the inner feelings of its writers, then Ibadi literature, both old and new, is full of distillations of

[9] *al-`Iqd al-tham,n min ajwibah nfr al-d,n* (1st edition), 1:126-27.

feelings of the pain that they suffer because of the divisions of the *ummah*. If you, O reader, sensed an image of that in the words of a contemporary literary man that I quoted earlier, then I present to you another image which reflects the sentiments of an expert literary man and a universal scholar from among the past men of letters and scholars of this group. He is the great scholar, the poet of Islam and Muslims, Abƒ Muslim N~%ir b. S~lim al-Bahl~n, al-Raw~ˆ,, who had long been writing with his gifted pen to depict for us, through his phrases of faith, his anxieties and feelings for his *ummah* and religion. This is an extract from a poem of his entitled 'Wake up, O Children of the Qur|~n':

O Children of the Qur|~n, where are your reasoning faculties while these harsh gales are blowing?
Have those faculties been snatched from our bodies, or have our sight and hearing been lost?
I wish the virtues of the Children of Islam had been more rooted, then harsh gales would not have shifted them.
I wish they had been governing their kingdoms by the light of Muhammad, when snails took them unawares.
I wish they had not slit their throats with their weapons when the idea of severing relations jumped into their hearts.
Our delusions have empowered our enemies over us. In the desert a shimmering mirage has appeared.
And there is attacking of one another, a campaign of Zayd against `Amr, and none to impede their strife.
And tearing apart of the religion. And everyone has his opinion and backers for it supporting him in what he claims.
The religion is not but one. What we see is only errors of the followers of their fancies clashing with one another.
The chosen one did not leave a thousand religions; nor is this dispute to be found in the Qur|~n.
I wish the people of the religion had not divided. And I wish the order of the religion had been inclusive

for all.
. . . .
Islam is not put to the slaughter except by our own swords wielded by ourselves against ourselves.
Had the sword been drawn by the right hand of brotherhood, it would have cut down the mountains of aggression.
The tearing apart of Islam by its enemies is not greater than what is happening by the hand of the peoples of Islam themselves.
How many rebellious swords have cut the veins of their religion more severely than the sword of an unbelieving *mushrik*!
Falling for this earthly world, and infatuation of desire——in truth that is a lethal poison.
The appearance of hatred in the heart of Muslim against Muslim is not but a herald of death.
If both hearts had been clean they would not have hated; no leader would have been an oppressor, nor any follower oppressed.
This earthly world is not of such worth to afford the wasting of a beneficent treasure from Allah.
The hoarders and the greedy of this world have not accomplished but its sins and pollutions.
If its leaning toward piety had been deep in the soul, the soul would not have been so inclined to dispute.
Our selling off the good and the pleasure of our Lord is a sale from which the seller can never hope to gain.
To what end [then] are some of us killing others of us, and avarice inflaming the hatred of the soul?
Had the souls been caused to drink inward sight, evil would not have owned over them any control.
But they have been caused to drink of a sickness, the like of snakes hiding in their holes.[10]

An instance of good news that has come for the *ummah*, within the light of the contemporary Islamic revival, is the good news of the friendship, love and mercy that, in the beginning, pre-

[10] *D,w~n Abf Muslim* (Oman: Wiz~rat al-Tur~th al-Qawm, wa l-Thaq~fah), 262-63.

vailed among the Muslim youth on whom the lights of this revival shone. In the beginning of their awakening, they did not, except for a very few of them, pay attention to the differences of the schools, nor care for group slogans. The odd few people were those whose hearts were not cleansed by the effects of this revival. They were unknown among that majority whose care mixed into the wide ocean of Islam which gathers and does not disperse, which unifies and does not cause schism. The disputed issues were on the point of being thrown into the corners of neglect to become forgotten until, just when this friendship had bloomed and was about to bear fruit, it was struck by the blind gales of prejudice. Thereafter, the revival was moved by the hatreds inside some hearts which did not care for the unity of the *ummah* and finished off its radiance: then what had been friendship became hatred, closeness became far separation, relations were cut off, and mercy became punishment.

The first casualty of this hated conspiracy was Islam itself, then those Muslim youths who were about to change the trend of history, and bring back to the present of this *ummah* its pristine past, by presenting the best examples in Islamic unity and religious inter-relation. These youths were taken away from the bounds of Islamic unity and pushed into the wilderness of dispute and schism——something that could have been avoided.

I wish that it had stopped there, with argument and debates, and not reached to accusation of unbelief, the issuing of unjust verdicts against many Muslims, pronouncing them out of the *millah*, and removing from them the covering of Islam and leaving them naked.

Ibadis were forced with others to the narrow paths of this *fitna* (strife, trial), in spite of

their aversion to it. They were in the forefront of those pleased with the tidings of unity of faith among the *ummah*, pleased with the spirit of brotherhood which governed the Muslim youths regardless of the difference of their groups. Soon they realized that the fuel of this *fitna* was poured over their heads, and its fires lit over them, by the verdicts issued against them, accusing them of misguidance, heresy and disbelief, and presenting them as a serious disease in the body of the *ummah* which should be cut out: 'And they mistreated them for no other reason than that they believed in Allah, Exalted in Power, Worthy of All Praise' (*al-Burfj*, 85.8). For they did not mistreat the Ibadis except for their purification of the Creator, Exalted is He, and their attesting to the truth of what He has sent in His noble Book, and what is affirmed in the Sunnah of His Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah.

Many times Ibadi students in the cities of Islam and elsewhere have faced different kinds of distress from their brothers and colleagues—— while noting the sincerity and goodness that they have for them——so far so that some stupid people called the Ibadi students to declare the testimonies in order to be counted among Muslims——as if they, in the eyes of those people, had been from among atheists or associators!

It is a matter of grief for every wise person, and sorrow for every one who has a heart. How should Ibadis, the people of truth and *istiq~mah*, be brought down to this status, when their feet are so firm in *taw^,d*, their source of belief so pure, and they are known among all people, high and low, for their piety in religion and their fear of the power of Allah? What have the Ibadis done that this judgement has been stuck on them

like a label, and they are dealt with in this way?

Those who have issued these terrible judgements about the Ibadis, and dealt with them in this evil way, have exploited three issues, on which Ibadis hold a position that suited the desires of those malevolent people. They regarded each of these issues as a justification to pass upon the Ibadis the verdict of disbelief and non-relation with the rest of the *ummah*, whereas the Ibadis are not alone in holding that position. There are many others who have the same opinion on these issues as the Ibadis, and they supported their position, as will become abundantly clear through this study, *insh~| All~h*. Moreover, the Ibadis have taken on each issue the proofs of the Qur|~nic texts and the Sunnah affirmed from the Messenger. The three issues are:

A their denial of seeing Allah;
B their opinion of the creation of the Qur|~n;
C their belief in the permanent staying in the Fire of those who have committed the major sins (i.e. without repentance).

I was inundated with questions from students from here and there about the position of our people on these three issues, and the evidence that they rely upon, and their view of the evidence of those who hold a contrary opinion. Our students had had no concern with these disputed issues and their investigation, except those specialized in such study. The only thing that urged them to this insistence on seeking to uncover the face of the truth, is the severity that they encountered from people who are only concerned with awakening a sleeping hatred and rousing a *fitna* that had died down. That prompted me to write this book in which the reader will find, *insh~| All~h*, a complete study of each of these issues, with summaries of research into the evidence of

each group in the light of the sayings of Allah, Exalted is He, and the sayings of His Messenger, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, together with deriving some understanding of the purport of both by referring to the rules of the clear Arabic language which Allah has honoured by making it a vessel for the noble Qur|~n, and the language into which the Last Messenger was born. *Insh~| All~h*, you will find, respected reader, through reading what I am presenting to you, that the Ibadis have not derived their belief from the philosophy of Greece or any other fictions of the earlier nations, as would fit with what those claim who are ignorant of the matter. Rather, Ibadis have derived their belief from the purest source of the truth and the brightest rays of the reality. They have referred to the mighty Book and the authenticated Sunnah, acting upon the saying of Allah, Exalted is He: 'If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you do believe in Allah and in the Last Day. That is best and most suitable for final determination' (*al-Nis~|*, 3.59). A poet says:

So long as I am hidden from the foolish,
I do not mind that the eyes of the blind do not see me.

Before this, I had been striving not to become involved in these marginal issues and not to take any position on these abuses except silence. For the truth is too pure and clear to become polluted by doubts on its being covered. A poet says:

In an act of failure is he engaged who, envying the sun's light, seeks to bring a parallel to it.

An evil saying harms only its speaker, not the one about whom it is said. What harm was done to the Messengers and their followers by the slanders invented about them, and the accusing labels

hung upon them? This is the *sunnah* of Allah in His creation: 'Those in sin used to laugh at those who believed. And whenever they passed by them, used to wink at each other in mockery; and when they returned to their own people, they would return jesting; and whenever they saw them, they would say: ''Behold! these are the people truly astray.'' But they had not been sent as keepers over them' (*al-Mutaffif,n*, 83.29-34). A poet says:

We and whatever defamation is said about us are like the ocean:
whatever is thrown in the ocean is drowned in it.

But I preferred the side of refutation over silence in order to explain the truth and defend the reality, and to stand up to those who inflame the *fitna*s and hatreds by these efforts to destroy the unity of the *ummah*. For no one other than Allah knows the end of this *fitna* once its fire is kindled. I seek refuge with Allah.

By Allah, the trials, tests, breakdowns and losses that this *ummah* suffers from today make it deserving of pity from its worst enemy, then how should we allow its suffering to be doubled and its wounds to be inflicted over again by these abuses, without pursuing it with refutation by convincing proof and evidence. That is why I have stood forward, in spite of many other preoccupations, to write this book in order to explain the overwhelming proof of the truth, and to put an end to the suspicion of falsehood. Allah is Who makes truth as truth and declares the falsehood of the false. 'No, but We hurl the Truth against falsehood, and It breaks its head, and behold falsehood vanishes' (*al-Anbiy~|*, 21.18). I have gathered this refutation into three separate Discussions.

THE FIRST DISCUSSION:

ON THE SEEING OF ALLAH

This discussion contains an Introduction, three Chapters and a Conclusion.

Introduction

On the dictionary meaning of *ru|yah*:

Al-Q~mfs and its commentary by Zab,d, says:

al-ru|yah with *ŧamma*: perception of the perceptible. And that is of several kinds depending on the faculty of the one perceiving: (1) The first kind is seeing with the eye, the organ of sight, or whatever serves that function. An example of the latter is Allah's saying (*al-Tawbah*, 9.105): 'And say: Do deeds, for Allah will see your deeds, and His Messenger.' Here 'see' has been used in the sense of seeing with the eye, for direct use of the organ of sight is not correct for Allah. Similarly (*al-A`r~f*, 7.27): 'Surely he [Satan] and his tribe see you from a position where you cannot see them.' (2) The second kind is conjecture, as in: 'I think [*ara*, lit. see] that Zayd will go.' (3) The third kind is seeing in the mind, as in [the Qur|~nic verse, 8.48]: 'Surely I see what you do not see.' (4) The fourth kind is seeing with the heart, i.e. the spiritual intellect, as where Allah says (*al-Najm*, 53.11): 'The heart did not lie in what it saw.' And again in another verse (53.13): 'And he did see him descending another time.'[11]

Ibn S,dah says: '*al-ru|yah* means looking with the eye and the heart.'[12] This interpretation gives the more specific word (*ru|yah*) the more general meaning (of *naŒar*), for sometimes there is looking (directing the eye or mind) without actual seeing. An example of that is: 'I looked for the crescent but I did not see it.' Here, looking is an effort to see but not seeing itself.

In sum, *ru|yah* is of two types: sensible and non-sensible. The sensible is in the ordinary

---

[11] *T~j al-`arfs* (Beirut: D~r Maktabat al-Hay~h), 1:139.

[12] *Lis~n al-`arab* (Cairo: Bul~q), 19:2.

meaning of perception, and that perception is sight for those entities that have eyes. Im~m S~lim, has explained it in this way: '*Ru|yah* is the contact of a ray of vision with the seen object, or the reflection of the form of the seen object in the pupil.'[13]. That is the meaning adopted by most of those who hold that there is seeing of Allah. There is no difference between those who, on the one hand, affirm both the seeing of Him in this world and in the next world and, on the other, those who affirm it of the next world but not of this world. As al-Shayb~n, said:

Whoever says that he will see Him with his eye in this world
is a heretic, rebellious and disobedient.
Rather, His [true] servants will see Him in Gardens of Paradise
as in the traditions we report by unbroken chains from the Prophet.

Another said:

For Allah there are eyes which will see Him plainly;
No darkness can cover those eyes, nor can they ever weary.[14]

---

13 *Mash~riq al-anw~r* (2nd edition), 186.

14 Part of a *qa%,dah* quoted by Ibn al-Qayyim in ™~*d, al-arw~ˆ* (Beirut: D~r al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah), 13, 15.

Chapter 1

Differences among the *ummah* on the possibility of seeing Allah and its actually happening

The dispute among the different groups of the *ummah* about the possibility of seeing Allah, Exalted is He, and its actually happening, has become bitter. Of the groups which are related to the Sunnah, some, from among Salafis, Ash`aris, Maturidis, Zahiris and others, hold the opinion that the seeing is possible in this world and in the hereafter, but the majority of them affirm its happening in the hereafter, not in this world.

However, though one group says that the seeing happens in this world as well as in the hereafter, they nevertheless differ among themselves on whether it is restricted in this world to the Messenger, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, or it is common for him and for the believers. Most of them hold that it is restricted to him, and that is the opinion of Ash`ar, and most of his followers according to ™~fiŒ Ibn ™ajar.[15] And that, too, is the opinion of Nawaw,. No one has claimed its happening in this world for anyone other than the Messenger, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, except extremist Sufis. The apparent meaning of Alƒs,'s text suggests that he is inclined to that view, but in fact he has gone to the extreme of permitting explanatory similitudes for Allah, Exalted is He above any such. The actual text he wrote is:

[15] *Fatˆ al-b~r,* (al-Ma\ba`ah al-Salafiyyah), 8:608.

Al-Mun~w, has reported that al-Kam~l b. al-Hum~m was asked about what al-D~rqu\n, and others have narrated from Anas of the Messenger's saying, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah——I saw my Lord in the best form——and understood this seeing as seeing in wakefulness. Ibn al-Hum~m answered that it is the veil of the form.

Alfs, goes on to say that 'the best form' is the visible manifestation common to Sufis. And it is as the same sort of visible phenomenon that they understand the manifestation of Allah, Exalted is He, in the tree for Mfs~, upon him be peace, and His manifestation for His creatures on the Day when 'the shins shall be disclosed' (*al-Qalam*, 68.42). However, though the Exalted manifests Himself in visible form, He is not confined to that form: 'And Allah encompasses them from what is beyond them' (*al-Burfj*, 85.20)

The seeing that Mfs~, upon him be peace, had asked for is not this seeing. Alfs, says:

Some people have said that Mfs~, upon him be peace, used to see Allah, Exalted is He, but that he did not know that what he was seeing was He. Likewise will be interpreted what has come in some disputed narrations——'I have seen my Lord in the form of a youth'—— and in some narrations it is added——'wearing sandals of gold'. Some people have taken the seeing in the narration of al-D~rqu\n, as seeing during sleep. And the literal sense of al-Suyf\,'s writing is that there is no harm in explanatory similitudes. That is what I have heard from my teachers, may Allah purify their hearts. In any case, the issue is a controversial one.

Alfs, goes on:

If what my teachers have said and what the writing of Suyf\, has explained is correct, then, praise belongs to Allah the Exalted, I have seen my Lord in vision three times. The third time was in the year 1246 AH. I saw Him having of the light what He had, facing towards the east, then He addressed to me certain words which I was made to forget when I awoke. And I saw Him once in a long vision: I was in Paradise before Allah,

and between me and Him was a strongly woven curtain of pearl of different colours. Then He commanded that I should be taken to the station of `…s~, upon him be peace, then to the station of Muˆammmad, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah. Then I was taken thereto, where I saw what I saw, and Allah's is the favour and bounty.[16]

That is a statement such that the skin shudders at it, and the mountains are sundered by it. There is in it an effrontery in respect of Allah, Exalted is He, that is beyond all bounds. How could it be so, whereas the Children of Israel were immediately seized by the thunderclap (*s~`iqah*) merely upon asking for the seeing? And M*f*s~ received what he did of unconsciousness for no other thing than that he asked for the seeing in order to prevent his people——by the severe response to his asking——from overstepping the bounds, and so cut the root of their excessive desire. And as soon as he recovered his senses he said: 'Glory be to You, I turn to You in repentance and I am the first of the believers' (*al-A`r~f*, 7:143). Had I not intended, O reader, to convey to you the strange confusion that these people's belief in the possibility of seeing has encouraged, I would not have cited even a single letter of what Al*f*s, has written.

But Al*f*s, went beyond even that: he began to allude to the sayings of major Sufis for what very explicitly rejects the answer of Allah to M*f*s~: 'You shall never see Me' (*al-A`r~f*, 7.143), and to prefer these sayings over the clear Qur|~nic text. Here is a fragment of what he presents; he writes:

Shaykh al-Akbar has said that M*f*s~ saw Him after he fell senseless, and he has also stated that he asked M*f*s~ about this and he confirmed what has been said. But in my opinion the verse does not explicitly sup-

[16] *Ruˆ al-ma`an,* (D~r Ihy~| al-Tur~th al-`Arab,), 9:52.

port that. Seeing after being thunderstruck is also the opinion of Qu\b al-R~z, in his explanation of a statement of al-Zamakhshar,'s. But such seeing is only possible in the sense of, and after, full unveiling, a state that cannot be attained unless the self has perished, cut off looking to its own existence let alone the existence of others.'

Alfs, goes on until he says: 'Shaykh Ibr~h,m Kfr~n, held the opinion that Mfs~, upon him be peace, saw his Lord, Exalted is He, in reality, before falling senseless, that is the reason why he was stricken, as the mountain had been….' Alfs,'s self-contradictory statement is such that I have preferred to leave it, because there is little point in pursuing it and much trouble.

Those who believe in seeing Him in the next world differ also——as to who will see Him and when. The majority of them say that the seeing is restricted to believers, because it is a favour that Allah will bestow upon them, after which the bounty of Paradise will become lighter by comparison. But at the same time we find them rushing to refer for evidence to the *ˆad,th*, 'Soon you will see your Lord'. However, the context of that *ˆad,th* requires that this seeing will take place in the Station where all are gathered before the Judgement, and that it will then not be restricted to believers; rather, the hypocrites also will share in it, because the *ˆad,th* adds: 'and this *ummah* will remain with its hypocrites, then Allah will come to them in a form other than what they knew.' Even stranger is what Ibn Kath,r has stated in his commentary on His saying 'Nay, surely they will be veiled from seeing their Lord that Day' (*al-Mutaffif,n*, 83.15): 'the veil will be lifted, the believers and unbelievers will look at Him. After that, the unbelievers will be veiled from Him, and the believers will look at Him every day, morning and evening.' Ibn Kath,r

referred to Ibn Jar,r that he narrated this from ™asan. I did not find it in the *tafs,r* (Qur|~nic commentary) of Ibn Jar,r. I found it only in a narration from ™asan that he said: 'The veil will be taken away, so the believers can look at Him morning and evening', or something to that effect. ™~fiŒ has narrated the opinion that the believers and the unbelievers will share in looking at Him on the Day of Resurrection from a group of theological scholars, like S~limiyya from among the Basrans.

When we compare this with what Ibn al-Qayyim has stated in ™~*d, al-arw*~ˆ——from the narration of Ibn Ab, ™~tim from Awz~`, that he said: 'I hope that Allah will keep away Jahm and his followers from His best reward that He has promised to His friends'——we find grave contradiction in the claims of these people. I listened to a cassette recording of the *khutbah* (Friday sermon) of a famous *khat,b* in one of the Gulf countries, in which he sought proof of the seeing in Allah's saying, 'Nay, surely they will be veiled from seeing their Lord that Day', adding: 'Indeed the Ibadis are those who will be veiled from their Lord, so they will not see Him, while the believers will see Him. Rather, the Ibadis will see M~lik, the Guardian of the Fire, because of their denial of seeing.' (I seek refuge in Allah from the insinuations of ignorant people and the errors of those who follow their caprices.)

Ibn al-Qayyim has said that sound *ˆad,ths* indicate that the hypocrites will see Him, Exalted is He, on the Day of Resurrection, and even unbelievers, as that is in the *ˆad,th* of manifestation, on the Day of Resurrection. After that he said:

There are three opinions of the Ahl al-Sunnah concerning this matter:
The first is that only believers will see Him.

The second is that all the people of the Station, believers and unbelievers, will see Him, then the unbelievers will be veiled from Him and they cannot see Him after that.
The third is that the hypocrites will see Him, but not the unbelievers.
All three of these opinions are recognized in the *madhhab* of Aˆmad ibn ™anbal, and each has its followers.

Thus you see, O respected reader, the conflict of opinion among those who confirm seeing in this matter, to the extent that they even attribute contradicting opinions to one and the same im~m and different judgements. That is enough to prove the weakness of the foundation on which they have established their belief. By contrast, the truth cannot bear such conflict, because its argument is clear, and its path is straight. Allah has spoken the truth: 'And (He commands you) this is My straight path, so follow it, and follow not other paths, for they will separate you away from His Path' (*al-An`~m*, 6.154).

I wish I could understand how it can be that if the seeing is the greatest reward that Allah has prepared for believers, and unbelievers and hypocrites share in it with them, then what is left of the believers' distinction? And how can the unbelievers and hypocrites not share with them in the bounty of Paradise, when Paradise is, as these people hold, as nothing compared to the great reward of seeing Allah? They have attributed to one of the im~ms that if he had not been sure that he would see his Lord on the Day of Resurrection he would have not worshipped Him. It means that the author of this saying thinks that Allah, Glorified is He, does not deserve worship from His creatures——if the seeing that they expect is not there——neither for His greatness, nor for His favour, nor for His reward and punishment. By [Allah], how dangerous this saying is!

And to attribute it to a Muslim scholar! How like it is to what the Children of Israel said: 'We shall never believe in you till we see Allah plainly' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.55).

On the other hand, some ™anbalis have declared that affirming the seeing of Allah for unbelievers on the Day of Resurrection is a false opinion contrary to the consensus (*ijma`*) of this *ummah*. Ibn Taymiyyah has narrated from Q~‡, Abƒ Y~`l~ and other Hanbalis that both, those who confirm seeing Allah in the hereafter and those who deny it, agree that unbelievers will not see Him. They affirm that the consensus of the *ummah*——for those who approve seeing and those who deny it——is the impossibility of *ru|yah* for unbelievers. And any opinion presented in opposition to the settled consensus is invalid and rejected.

Ibn Taymiyyah has also narrated from Abƒ Y~`l~ and other Hanbalis to the effect that: those narrations which have come about seeing of Allah by believers are as good tidings. If the unbelievers share with them in this matter then the tidings become void. And there is no dispute among those who confirm seeing that seeing Him is among the greatest honours of the people of Paradise.

Then he says that 'Abƒ Y~`l~ has said: The opinion of those who say that He will show Himself to them as a punishment for them and as cause of regret to them for missing the permanent seeing——after their knowledge of the honour and pleasure that is in it——implies logically that He should enter unbelievers into Paradise and show them the houris and youths therein, and feed them its fruits and offer them its drinks, then prevent them therefrom, so to let them know the value of what they have been deprived. So their regret will increase after their knowledge of its importance.

Then Ibn Taymiyyah said:

The foundation of their argument in this matter is the saying of Allah, Glorified is He: 'Nay, surely they will be veiled from seeing their Lord that Day.' So the veiling them from their Lord will continue all the day, and that day is 'the Day when all mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds', the Day of Resurrection. If it is said that He will keep them away in one state but not the other, then it will be narrowing the sense of the word (*maˆjfbfn*) without reason, and it will mean parity between believers and unbelievers since the *ru|yah* will not be for believers all the time. This verse has come to explain their punishment by veiling and their reward by veiling, and it is impermissible that believers should be equal to unbelievers in the punishment.[17]

Our people——the Ibadis——hold the opinion that seeing is impossible in this world and the hereafter. That is the opinion of the Mu`tazilis, the Jahmis, and of the Zaydis and Imamis from among the Shi`a. And that is the opinion of a group of theological scholars who are independent of *taql,d* (imitation and consolidation of the thought of predecessors) like Im~m Ja%%~% in *Aˆk~m al-Qur|~n*. And Im~m al-Ghaz~l, has inclined towards this position in some of his works, and made it explicit in other of his writings. And this opinion is affirmed to us from the *salaf* (the earliest generations) of this *ummah*. Im~m Rab,` has narrated it from Aflaˆ b. Muˆammmad, from Abƒ Ma`mar Sa`d,, from `Al, b. Ab, œ~l,b; he has also narrated it from Jubayr, from ~aˆˆ~k, from Ibn `Abb~s; as also, by way of Abƒ Nuaym, from `Abb~s Abƒ Isˆ~q, from Sa`id b. Jubayr, from Nafi` b. Azraq, from Ibn `Abb~s. Again, he has narrated it from `>|ishah, Muj~hid, Ibr~h,m Nakh`,, Makˆƒl Dimashq,, `A\~| b. Yas~r, Sa`id b. Mƒs~yyab, Sa`id b. Jubayr, ~aˆˆ~k b. Muz~him, Abƒ ^~liˆ, the author of the Qur|~n commentary, `Ik-

[17] *Fat~wa Ibn Taymiyyah*, 6:300-01.

rimah, Muˆammmad b. Ka`b, Ibn Shih~b Zuhr, and Muˆammmad b. Munkadir. The same opinion is implied in what Ibn Jar,r has narrated from Ibn `Abb~s that he explained M*f*s~'s saying, upon him be peace, 'And I am the first of the believers' as meaning 'I am the first of the believers in the fact that no one can see You'. And in what Ibn Jar,r has narrated from Sudd, that he said about the words of Allah, Exalted is He, 'The (faculties of) seeing cannot grasp Him' (*al-An`~m*, 6.103), that they mean nothing can see Him whereas He sees all creatures. And soon will come to you, *insh~| All~h*, the narration of `Abd b. ™umayd and Ibn Jar,r from Muj~hid, and the narration of Ibn Mardawayh from Ibn `Umar and `Ikrimah, and the narration of Ibn Jar,r and `Abd b. ™umayd from Ab*f* ^~l,ˆ. Ibn ™azm has also attributed it to Muj~hid, and made this excuse for Muj~hid that the report did not reach him. Ibn ™azm has also related it from ™asan Ba‰r, and `Ikrimah and then said: it has been narrated from ``Ikrimah and ™asan that the seeing of Him, Exalted is He, is certain.[18]

And, as we shall explain, *insh~| All~h*, what Ibn ™azm has narrated from ™asan and `Ikrimah of what they think as confirming the seeing of Allah, Exalted is He, does not contradict what has been understood and accepted as denying it when their intentions are kept in mind.

[18] *al-Fi‰al f, l-milal wa l-niˆal*, 3:2.

Chapter 2

On the evidence of those who affirm the seeing

The evidence they offer is of two sorts: (1) evidence that argues the possibility of seeing Allah and (2) evidence of its actually happening.

Evidence for the possibility of seeing Allah

Their evidence is divided into two kinds: rational and traditional.

The rational evidence may be summarized as equivalent to measuring the being of God with the being of creation. That is why they have claimed that all existents share the property of being perceptible. Since Allah is existing, seeing Him must also be possible.

The answer to that may be summarized in this way: if their existence is the cause of perceived beings being perceived, then there is no hindrance to regarding their existence as a cause in their creation. What then follows is that Allah, Glorified is He, possibly will share with them in creation just as He shares with them in existence. But if we regard *ˆudfth* (being originated from nothing) as the cause of their creation, then it becomes compulsory for us to regard it as the cause of the possibility of seeing them, and to purify the Creator from likening Him to them in being perceptible, just as we purify Him from likening Him to them in creation. In any case, the claim——that the seeing of every existent is possible——is demolished by so many invisible existents like the soul, the intellect, the sense, and perception. The same is true of sounds, at-

mospheres, ether and electricity. The opening of the door of comparison between the Creator and the creation will lead to describing Him, Glorified is He, with many of those things that are—— the divine Messages and the scholars are alike unanimous on this——impossible about Him, Exalted is He. For the existence of creatures cannot be perceived except with the existence of time and space, whereas the Creator was when there was neither time nor space. And He is now as He was before. He is not characterized with transient attributes, neither is He perceived with the senses, nor is it permitted about Him that He be attached with anything of the creation or separated from it. The intellect, however high it goes, reaches its furthest limit at the doorstep of 'Incapacity to perceive is perception' and 'He has not recognized Allah who compares Him with any of His creatures'. The ultimate destination of intellect is its perception of Him in this way: 'there is nothing like Him, and He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing' (*al-Shfr~*, 42.11). Sayyid Sanad has made it clear in *Shar^ al-maw~qif* that the way of reasoning cannot lead to proof of the possibility of seeing Him, Exalted is He.[19]

As for the traditional evidence, some of it is from the Book, and some from the Sunnah. There are two items of evidence from the Book:

Evidence from the Book

The request of Mfs~ for the seeing when he said: 'O my Lord, show (Yourself) to me, that I may look upon You' (*al-A`r~f*, 6.143). Their way of arguing from this is to suggest that the question may result from ignorance. But that is impossible, because of the impossibility of Prophets be-

[19] See Im~m S~lim,, *Mash~riq al-anw~r* (2nd edition), 187.

ing ignorant of what is impossible in respect of Him when they are the most knowledgeable of people about Allah, His greatness, and what is compulsory in respect of Him and what is impossible. Another possibility is that the question Mƒs~ put was accompanied by his knowledge that seeing Allah is impossible. That is also void, because wilfully seeking the impossible is not of the state of righteous people, so how could it be expected of one of the Prophets? That is only the state of impudent and disputatious people. It then follows that seeing is allowed in respect of Him, Exalted is He, and that Mƒs~, upon him be peace, knew of the possibility of it and that is why he dared to ask for it.

The answer to that has been given as follows: Mƒs~, upon him be peace, was aware of the impossibility of seeing Allah, but in asking for it he did not intend obtaining the impossible. He only intended thereby to hold back his people, who were stubborn in seeking it and made their belief in his Message dependent upon it. So that, perhaps, when they were struck by the severe response that it is impossible, they would pull back from their error, turn from their presumption, especially when the response was accompanied by a clear sign rebuking them for such obduracy.

It has been objected to this answer that if those people were believers, Mƒs~'s response that it is impossible should have sufficed them, seeing that he was the trustworthy Messenger and his call was accompanied by clear signs which leave no room for any doubt about the truth of his word or the validity of his call. But if they were unbelievers then the answer to them that it is impossible would be of no avail to them.

This objection has been rebutted on the ground that those people were not on anything of the

faith. How could the attribute of belief be applied to such as those who said: 'We shall never believe in you until we see Allah plainly' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.55)?

Mƒs~, upon him be peace, only intended to eradicate their obstinacy, and to eliminate their stubbornness by an emphatic response coming to them from Allah the All-Powerful, the All-Wise. That response contradicts the character of what he said on their behalf——in it are manifested such signs as cut off every doubt, and knock out every desire for the impossible thing they asked.

What supports the argument that Mƒs~, upon him be peace, did not ask for the seeing on is own account, but on account of his people, is that the Qur|~n has repeatedly stated that Allah reproached them for this question, and regarded it as one of their greater crimes and graver acts of unbelief. As He said: 'Indeed they asked Mƒs~ for an even greater than that, for they said: Show us Allah openly' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.153). And He said: 'And (remember) when you said: ''O Mƒs~, we shall never believe in you until we see Allah plainly'', and even while you looked on, the thunderclap seized you' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.55). And Mƒs~, upon him be peace, made his excuse to his Lord after the violent quaking from what happened, referring it to the foolish among his people. He said: 'O my Lord, if it had been Your will, You could have destroyed, long before, both them and me. Would You destroy us for the deeds of the foolish ones among us? This is no more than trial from You. By it, You cause whom You will to stray, and you lead whom You will into the right path. You are our Protector. So forgive us and give us Your mercy, for You are the best of those who forgive.' (*al-A`r~f*, 7.155)

Two objections have been put forward to this answer:

1 If Mƒs~, upon him be peace, had not asked for the seeing on his own account, he would not have repented of asking.
2 If he had asked it for other than himself he would not have related it to himself. He would have said 'O my Lord, show Yourself to them so they may look upon You', rather than 'O my Lord, show Yourself to me that I may look upon You'.

The answer to the first objection is that he hurried to repentance because he felt implicated in what he asked, though he had a good intention that was known to Allah, Exalted is He. This situation demands his seeking permission from Allah before putting the question.

The answer to the second objection is that, when he related the matter to himself rather than to his people, it was more effective in convincing them of the impossibility of seeing. When they realized that Mƒs~——regardless of his high position and his heart's being clean of their foulness——cannot see, they would understand that what is impossible for him is even more so for them.

In sum: Mƒs~, upon him be peace, did not ask for the seeing in a desire to achieve it. He only did so in order to make his asking an instrument for the persuasion of his people, for which he strove, and as a means for the mission that he stood for. His likeness in this is Ibr~h,m, upon him be peace, who, upon seeing the star, the moon and the sun, said: 'This is my Lord' (*al-An`~m*, 6.76-8). It is quite certain that he did not intend to make them divine, for no sound intellect can easily accept deification of creatures. Then how could such a thing be possible for the intellects of the Prophets who are prepared under the supervision of Allah, Exalted is He, and chosen by Him to be vessels for His guidance, and to em-

body the Truth that they are sent with? And how possible for the intellect of Ibr~h,m the Friend, whom Allah honoured with His friendship, and whom He chose to be father of the Prophets and leader of the *ˆan,fs*. He, upon him be peace, only intended by his speech——which was unbelief in appearance but in reality was belief and *tawˆ,d* (affirmation of the Oneness of God)——to establish proof against those around him who worshipped celestial bodies, by affirming that these bodies are merely mutable creatures——they pass through different positions and experience decline and setting. Anything that is like that cannot have any relation to Lordship or Godhood. That is evident from what Allah, Exalted is He, said after narrating Ibr~h,m's story: 'That was Our argument which We gave to Ibr~h,m to use against his people.' (*al-An`~m*, 6.83)

That is how the speech of Ibr~h,m is interpreted, upon him be peace, even though there is no wording in the Qur|~n that indicates that his people worshipped celestial bodies. Therefore, given the abundance of expressions indicating that it was the people of M*ƒ*s~ who asked for the seeing, that interpretation is better suited to explain M*ƒ*s~'s question as intended to reproach his people. Is it intelligible that M*ƒ*s~ would ask for the very same thing that they asked for and received the rebuke that they did for doing so? By Allah, to allege such a thing is nothing other than to assimilate M*ƒ*s~ to the despicable ones among the Children of Israel, and to lower him, upon him be peace, from the sublimity of Prophethood to which Allah had raised him and of the cause for which He chose him, to the lowest levels of ignorance to which those ancestors of the Jews had fallen who demanded to see Allah. So the word of Allah became true for them, through

their deserving humiliation in this world and punishment in the hereafter.

After what I had recorded here I became aware of a writing of Shaykh al-Isl~m, the thorough scholar al-Khal,l,, Allah have mercy on him, which strengthens and clarifies my argument. So I thought to quote it *verbatim* so that the bare body of my words may be adorned with the pearls of his speech. He said, after explaining the sense of M*f*s~'s question:

The supporting testimony for this is what Allah, Exalted is He, has referred to Ibr~h,m, upon him be peace, as saying: 'When the night covered him over he saw a star. He said: ''This is my Lord.'' But when it set, he said: ''I do not love those that set.'' When he saw the moon rising in splendour, he said: ''This is my Lord.'' But when the moon set, he said: ''Unless my Lord guide me I shall surely be among those who go astray.'' When he saw the sun rising in splendour, he said: ''This is my Lord, this is the greatest of all.'' But when the sun set, he said: ''O my people, I am indeed free of your fault of ascribing partners to Allah.''' (*al-An`~m*, 6.76-8). So, see how it was permitted to Ibr~h,m, upon him be peace, to utter the word of polytheism three times, saying it to them as from himself, without any obligation, and without any fear of threat to himself, his religion or his property. He was neither forced to that, nor compelled. He had wide field to argue by some other means. Indeed, he did reason with them with other things more than once, as is made clear in the Book of Allah, Exalted is He. But he found that to address them according to this method and deal with them by this means would be more effective in cutting down their argument, invalidating their utterances, silencing them and making them speechless. That is why Allah praised him for that, and narrated what he spoke there, and said in support of him: 'That was Our argument which We gave to Ibr~h,m against his people.' (*al-An`~m*, 6.83)

The speech of Ibr~h,m, upon him be peace, with its clear polytheism——since it was presented to demolish the foundations of polytheism and uttered to elucidate

the truth——was not called polytheism, neither literally, nor in meaning, nor understood as such by any reason or judgement. That being so, how can it be right to say of the speech of Mƒs~, upon him be peace——if its intention was to silence his people and establish an argument over them by having them hear from Allah, Exalted is He, the prohibition of seeing——that it is false. Rather, it is the clear truth.

Thus, Mƒs~ to whom Allah spoke directly and Ibr~h,m the Friend are equal in the matter of truth. Their utterances, in the apparent meaning, are equally prohibited. But they were spoken in order to ruin the false and to affirm the truth. So both of them are the same in the matter of lawfulness. Will it be permitted to differentiate between them? There is no difference between them to whoever knows the truth. Both are right and the essence of guidance. Their like cannot emanate but from the office of Prophethood. But even the daylight can be hidden to some eyes. How apt is what the poet has said: 'If you are unaware of the situation, then you consult an expert: do not therefore dispute with him. If you cannot sight the crescent, then surrender to those who have seen it with their eyes.'

If you ask: How can it be sound to compare and argue from the story of Ibr~h,m in these verses, upon him be peace, when the commentators have differed as to its interpretation?

We will answer: The right interpretation of the verses is what we have said. That is what the experts believe and those who are fair-minded. But some of the people, since they were not able to get to the essence of it, said that this incident happened during the childhood of Ibr~h,m, upon him be peace. But that is invalid, for the account of polytheism is meaningless alike from a child as from an adult, because it is vain. What is the point of making Ibr~h,m appear foolish, upon him be peace, and narrating polytheism from him during his childhood?

Some have said that Ibr~h,m said it interrogatively, in order to leave his people with an uncertain impression [as to his true faith]. But that is not a strong opinion. Others have said that the implication is that Ibr~h,m said to his people, 'This is my Lord *as you*

claim.' But this interpretation has no basis as there is nothing to demonstrate the point made in the addition. And others have said that the implication is that it was *they* [i.e. Ibr~h,m's people] who said, 'This is my Lord.' But there is no proof for this interpretation either. Therefore, the correct interpretation is the first one.[20]

Their second evidence from the Qur|~n is the word of Allah, Exalted is He: 'But look upon the mountain——if it abides in its place then you will see Me' (*al-A`r~f*, 6.143). Their reasoning from this verse is that Allah, Exalted is He, conditioned the seeing on the abiding of the mountain, which in itself is something possible, and whatever is conditioned on something possible is itself possible also.

The answer to this is that there is no such possibility after the mountain had been disintegrated, and the decree of Allah, had become clear. The decree of Allah cannot be reversed, for there is no changing the word of Allah. It was in the knowledge of Allah that the mountain would not abide, and nothing can go against His knowledge. The mountain's abiding was only possible according to the circumscribed and restricted knowledge of creatures, before it became clear to them through the disintegration of the mountain what was in the knowledge and decree of Allah. In this regard Im~m Ibn `Ashƒr says:

Since the negation of the mountain's abiding in its place was known to Allah, it was right to connect with it the matter whose actual impossibility was intended, without paying any attention to the evidence of negation. That is why there is no argument from this conditional, for the Ahl al-Sunnah against the Mu`tazilis, that could imply that seeing Allah, Ex-

[20] *Tamh,d qaw~`id al-,m~n* (Oman: Wiz~rat al-Tur~th al-Qawm, wa l-Thaq~fah), 1:383.

alted is He, is allowed, in contrast to the habit of reasoning from it of many of our *`ulam~|*.
His saying 'Then you will see Me' is not a promise of seeing. For, His saying beforehand, 'You shall never see Me', has eliminated the desire of the one who asked for the seeing. Rather, it was a declaration that the purpose behind M*f*s~'s looking at the mountain is to come to know with certainty the human incapacity to see Allah, Exalted is He, and that is more appropriate in respect of the non-abiding of the power of the mountain. Then the force of the speech is: the mountain will not abide in its place because of the manifestation that will happen to it; therefore, you [O M*f*s~] are not the one who can see Me, for that is impossible for you. The type of conditional here used is the impossible conditional.[21]

Evidence from the Sunnah

As for evidence from the Sunnah:

It is narrated from a group of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, that they confirm the seeing of his Lord by the Prophet upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, on the night of Isr~| and Mir~j. The way they reason from this to the possibility of seeing is that if seeing Allah had not been possible then none of the Companions would have held the view that it really happened, and they had more wisdom, knowledge and insight than those who came after them. The reason for taking account of this evidence from the Sunnah is that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, could not report such a matter arbitrarily. They could only do so in reference to what they learnt from the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah.

[21] *al-Ta^r,r wa al-tanw,r* (al-D~r al-T*f*nisiyyah li-l-Nashr), 9:92-3.

The answer to this is that the narration of the Companions' confirming the Prophet's seeing of his Lord is either a fabrication of the narrators in attributing it to the Companions, or it is a result of the narrators' misunderstanding what they narrated. How could anyone of the Companions say that the Prophet upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, had seen his Lord, while the Mother of the Believers, `>|ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, rejects such a claim, regarding it as a great slander against Allah, as it has been narrated from her with the most sound and strong chains in the *Musnad* of Im~m Rab,` b. ™ab,b and in the *^a^,^*s of al-Bukh~r, and Muslim through Masr*ƒ*q. Indulging in a grave slander against Allah is the greatest of all major sins. It is compulsory upon any Muslim to avoid it, let alone the Companions of the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, who are the people of the best period. It is recorded in al-Bukh~r, that Masr*ƒ*q says:

I said to `>|ishah, may Allah be pleased with her: 'O my mother, has Mu^ammmad seen his Lord?' Then she said: 'Surely my hair has stood on end on account of what you have said!'

Those words indicate the terror and constriction around her heart that she felt because of the impossibility of such a thing in respect of Allah, Exalted is He.

Among those from whom an opinion contrary to `>|ishah's is narrated, the most famous is that of `Abdull~h ibn `Abb~s, may Allah be pleased with them. However, anyone who examines the text of his narration closely will find that Ibn `Abb~s only meant by 'seeing' the extreme or peak of knowledge of Allah, Exalted is He, that came to the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, on that blessed night, because of the signs of Allah that appeared to

him, and the secrets of the Supreme Realm that were revealed to him.

Im~m Muslim says in his ^a^,^: 'Abƒ Bakr b. Ab, Shaybah and Abƒ Bakr al-|Ashajj narrated to us, both of them from Wak,`. Al-|Ashajj says: Wak,`, who narrated to us, says: `Amash narrated to us from Ziy~d al-™u‰ayn Ab, Jahmah from Abƒ al-`>liya from Ibn `Abb~s, who said, referring to Allah's saying——''The heart did not lie in what it saw. And he did see him descending another time.''——''He saw Him with his heart twice.''' And in another narration `A\~| reported Ibn `Abb~s saying: 'He saw Him with his heart.' It is so clear that the seeing was with the heart, not the eye. Clearer still in negation of seeing with the eye is what Ibn Mardawayh has stated, through `A\~|, that Ibn `Abb~s, may Allah be pleased with them, said: 'The Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, did not see Him with his eye. He only saw Him with his heart.' `Uthm~n b. Mandah al-D~rim, has narrated the consensus of the Companions that he did not see Him.[22]

If it is objected: the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, was the most perfect of all people for he was honoured with the Prophethood and the lasting Message by Allah, so how can it be said that he had two kinds of knowledge of Allah, if 'seeing' is interpreted as 'knowing'?

The answer to that objection is: different states of manifestation of Allah befall the knower of Allah, and then he is absorbed in a state of experiencing His Glory and Majesty as he sees Him, Exalted is He. Without doubt the Prophet, upon him be the best peace and the

[22] *Ma^~sin al-ta|w,l* of Q~sim, (`…s~ al-B~b, al-™alab, and Co.), 15: 5567.

blessings of Allah, as the greatest of all in intellect and knowledge, was honoured by Allah with what is far greater and more lasting than what could be attained by others when these inner states befall them, especially in that noble journey when the veils were lifted for him, and those secrets of the Supreme Realm appeared to him that had not appeared to anyone other than him. Perhaps on these two occasions, which is what Ibn `Abb~s is referring to, the manifestations were more complete and more comprehensive. So Ibn `Abb~s, may Allah be pleased with him, interpreted it as seeing with the heart. However, we prefer to interpret the seeing in the verse in *al-Najm* (53.11-13) in accordance with what has been related of the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, through `>|ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, in the *Musnad* of Im~m Rab,` and the *^a^,^*s of al-Bukh~r, and Muslim. She says: 'I am the first person of this *ummah* who asked the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, about that. The Prophet said: ''The 'him' was just Jibr,l. I did not see him in the form in which Allah has created him other than on these two occasions. I saw him descending from the heaven, the greatness of his being covered what is between the heaven and the earth.''' It is certain that the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, had better knowledge of the meanings and aims of the Qur|~n: after affirmation by the *marff`* (the statement of the Prophet himself) no attention need be paid to the *mawqff* (the statement of a Companion).

The negation of seeing Allah, Exalted is He, has been clearly and firmly narrated from the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, in a way that does not leave any room for doubt. Im~m Muslim has narrated in his *^a^,^* from Abƒ Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, that

the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, was asked: 'Have you seen your Lord? He said: ''A Light. How can I see Him?''' In his words 'How can I see Him?' is expressed the unlikelihood of his being able to see Him, Exalted is He. Ibn Mardawayh has narrated from `>|ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, that she said: 'I am the first who asked the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, about this. I said: ''O Messenger of Allah, did you see your Lord?'' He said: ''No. I only saw Jibr,l descending.''' How could it be imagined of Ibn `Abb~s, may Allah be pleased with them, that he would say that the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, saw Him with his eye, when the negation of seeing in this world and the next has been narrated from him——as we shall see below, *insh~| All~h*.

Many of those who confirm the seeing in the hereafter have made it clear that it did not happen to anyone, even the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, in this world. Perhaps that is the opinion of most of them.

Evidence for its actually happening

The second type of evidence concerns its happening in the hereafter. It consists of some quotations from the Book and the Sunnah.

Evidence from the Book

The citations from the Book are:

1 Allah's saying, Exalted is He: 'Some faces that Day will be radiant, looking to their Lord.' (*al-Qiy~mah*, 75.22, 23)

This is the strongest evidence that they have referred to in this context. The counter-argument to this is that the word *naŒar* (the word that has been used in the verse to meaning seeing) is more general than *ru|yah*. *NaŒar* is even used in the meaning of making an effort to see, though seeing did not happen in fact. For it is sound to say, 'I looked at it but I did not see it', whereas it is impermissible to say, 'I saw it but I did not see it'. It is written in *al-Q~mfs*:

NaŒarahf [*naŒirahf*] on the pattern of *na%arahf* and *sami`ahf*, and [*naŒara*] *|ilayhi naŒaran wa manŒaran wa naŒar~nan wa manŒaratan wa tanŒ~ran*: contemplated it with his eye.

In the commentary on *Q~mfs*, Im~m Zab,d, quoting from Ba%~|ir writes:

al-naŒar is also used in the meaning of turning the eye to perceive a thing and to see it. Sometimes only observation is meant by it. Sometimes it means the knowledge that is attained after observation.

Then the commentator says:

naŒartu il~ something: when you direct your eye to it, you see it or you do not see it.[23]

NaŒar is commonly used in the meaning of *intiŒ~r* i.e. waiting, as Allah, Exalted is He, says: 'Will they wait until Allah comes to them in canopies of clouds with angels?' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.210). And His saying: 'They will not wait for aught but a single Blast' (*Y~ S,n*, 36.49); and His saying: 'The Day when the hypocrites——men and women——will say to the believers: ''Wait for us so that we may borrow a light from your light''' (*al-™ad,d*, 57.13). It is in this sense that *naŒar* in the verse (from *al-Qiy~mah*) will be interpreted, and for the following reasons:

1 Avoiding contradiction between interpretations of the Qur|~n: if *naŒar* in the verse is inter-

[23] *T~j al-`arfs* (Maktabat al-Hay~h), 3:573.

preted as seeing, it will contradict the firm evidence of its negation, soon to be presented, *insh~| All~h*.

2 The well-known coherence and inter-relatedness of the verses of the Qur|~n. And this cannot be except by interpreting *naŒar* in the sense of *intiŒ~r* (waiting). For these verses of the Qur|~n have divided the people that Day into two parties. Of one party: their faces will be radiant——i.e. delighted and shining with expectation of their reward from Allah——for they are awaiting the mercy of Allah and entering His Paradise. The other party: they will be in the state contrary to those of the first: their faces will be dismal——i.e. gloomy and pallid on account of the punishment that they are expecting——in the thought that some back-breaking calamity is about to be inflicted on them. The radiance of these faces is compared with the darkening of those. And the waiting of these for the mercy of Allah and entering His Paradise is compared with the others' expectation of the Punishment. If *naŒar* here is interpreted as seeing, then this relation between the verses will be cut, and their connection will be broken, and their coherence will go. Because there will be no comparison between the seeing of one group and the expectation of the other group of some back-breaking calamity. Such rhetorical niceties are not missed by eloquent people in their speech, prose or poetry. Then what of the Speech of Allah, Exalted is He, which is more subtle in expression, and more effective in depiction, more coherent, and more harmonious, than any human speech? And how could it be otherwise, when it is the Speech of Allah, Exalted is He?

This interpretation is the one that is in harmony with the end of *Sfrah `Abasa*, and that is His saying: 'Some faces that Day will be radiant, laughing, rejoicing. And other faces that Day will be dust-stained, darkness will cover them' (`*Abasa*, 80.38-41). For there is no difference between the description of the believers' faces here and the description of their faces in the verse of *al-Qiy~mah*. The one who waits for the mercy, he rejoices in that waiting; and the one who rejoices awaits that which will give him joy.

Placing the object of the action before its agent means that it is confined to it. Thus, the placing of *il~ rabbi-h~* in the verse before *n~Œirah* tells us that those faces do not look but to Him. That only can be right if *naŒar* is interpreted as *intiŒ~r*. If the intended meaning had been 'seeing', this would imply that they will not see anything except Him, Exalted is He. While it is known, rationally and traditionally, that the people will see each other and the blessings that Allah has prepared for them.

Those who affirm the seeing have rejected the interpretation of *naŒar* as *intiŒ~r* for three reasons:

The first reason is that in the waiting there is a vexation which is incompatible with Allah's honouring His loyal servants on the Day of Resurrection.

The second reason is that His believing servants awaiting the mercy of Allah is something that is done in this world. Then how can there be promise of such waiting in the hereafter?

The third reason is that use of the preposition *il~* with *naŒar* prohibits the interpretation of it as waiting, especially when 'faces' is the subject of the verb.

All these reasons are rejected. The first is rejected because the verses portray for us the

Station on the Day of Resurrection before the righteous people are moved to the place of reward, and the sinful to the place of punishment. The context of the preceding verses is evidence for this. And what Allah says about the wretched ones——'they will think that a back-breaking calamity will be inflicted upon them'——confirms this. Because, surely, this happens before their entering into the Fire: there is no sense in their thinking that after they have entered the Fire and have experienced what they have experienced, and after the back-breaking calamity that they expected has indeed been inflicted upon them. Also, there is no doubt that the people in the Station will be in different states. The faces of the righteous will be radiant with their awaiting Allah's mercy that had been promised them. And the wretched will be in the contrary state. It is not permissible to deny this Station where the righteous and wretched will be held before being moved to the permanent abode of their reward, for it is something proven from the Book and the Sunnah.

The second reason is rejected because of the sheer unlikeness of the waiting in this world and that in the hereafter. What a difference between the one who, in the sphere of desires and temptations, is unaware of his end, unsure of his destiny, and the one who has passed the stages and traversed steep tracks until the angels have received him among the group of the fortunate ones with the words: 'Fear you not, nor grieve, but receive the glad tidings of the Garden that you were promised' (*Fu%%ilat*, 41.30).

And the third reason is rejected because clear evidence and established authorities have confirmed that *naŒar*, even when used with the preposition *il~*, can have the meaning of waiting. The

opinion of whoever rejects that is unworthy of consideration. As an Arab poet says:

Sometimes, because of a sore, the eye cannot recognize the light of the sun.
And sometimes, because of sickness, the tongue cannot recognize the taste of water.

Among the authorities that confirm this sense for *naŒar* is the statement of the author of *al-Lis~n*: 'One says to someone from whom he expects something: *inna-ma nanŒuru il~ All~h thumm~ ilayk*——My hope rests only upon Allah, then upon you.'[24] Among the proofs is what Im~m Rab,`, may Allah's mercy be with him, has narrated from Sufy~n b. `Uyaynah, from `Amash, from Abƒ R~shid that a slave-girl of `Utbah b. `Umayr said: 'I only look to Allah and to you.' Then `Utbah said to her: 'Do not speak in that way! Rather, say: ''I only look to Allah then to you''.'[25]

And this saying of Jam,l b. Ma`mar:

When I look upon you as a king, though the ocean divides us
it [seeing you] increases me in blessings.

Another poet has said:

Surely I am looking to you for what you have promised
As the impoverished man looks to the prosperous, wealthy one.

And another has said:

Some faces there on the night of Hijaz and in love
are looking to a king who is the resort for the whole creation.
All people look to his generosity as the pilgrims look to the rising of the crescent.

There is no reason to differentiate between the word's referring to faces or to something else——to do so would be an arbitrary opinion

---

24 *Lis~n al-`arab* (Bul~q), 7:72.

25 Im~m Rab,` b. ™ab,b, *al-J~mi` al-‰aˆ,ˆ* (D~r al-Fatˆ), 3:228.

without argument. In any case, it has been used in this meaning with reference to faces in the usage of Arabs. An example is the saying of ™ass~n:

Some faces on the day of Badr were looking to the Most Merciful that He would bring success.

Bu`ayth has said:

Some faces are looking at a king who is the people's resort . . .

If it is argued that the location of expectation is the heart, not the face, and therefore *naŒar* in the verse must be interpreted in the sense of seeing, not waiting, because eyes (and they are the instruments of seeing) are located in the face. The answer to this is that seeing is not done with the face; rather, it is done with the eyes. Moreover, relating seeing to faces is simply not in the language——no one has ever been heard to say: 'I saw him with my face.' The license for such usage is extremely difficult for anyone who denies metaphor altogether, and specially in the Qur|~n, which is the case with many of those who affirm the seeing. As for us, we interpret 'faces' as 'persons', for that is a usage known to Arabs, as they say: 'I intended your face' meaning 'I intended you'. Therefore, waiting, though related literally to faces, is, in the meaning here, related to persons. That is why 'thinking' can be related to the same subject, as in His saying: 'they will think that a back-breaking calamity will be inflicted upon them' (*al-Qiy~mah*, 75.25). Similarly, humiliation, hardship and tiredness are related to faces in His saying: 'Some faces, that Day, will be humiliated, labouring hard, weary' (*al-Gh~shiyah*, 88.2-3). And the meaning 'persons' is confirmed by what follows 'They will enter the Blazing Fire, they are given to drink of a boiling hot spring. No food will there be for them but a bit-

ter (food)' (4-6). For entering into the Fire is not confined to the faces, and the drink and food are, surely, for the persons with the faces. Similar again is the relating of joyful striving and pleasure to faces in His saying: 'Other faces that Day will be joyful, pleased with their striving' (88.8-9).

In addition to what I have presented above, the interpretation of *naŒar* in this verse as waiting is narrated from the Companions, Followers and those after them. Im~m Rab,` b. ™ab,b has narrated it in his sound *Musnad* from `Al, b. Ab, œ~lib through Abƒ Ma`mar Sa`d,. Again, he has narrated it from Ibn `Abb~s, may Allah be pleased with them, through Daˆˆ~k b. Qays and Sa`,d b. Jubayr. He has related it also from Muj~hid, Makˆfl, Ibr~h,m, Zuhr,, Sa`,d b. Jubayr and Sa`,d b. Mƒs~yyab.[26] Ibn Mardawayh has narrated it, from among the Companions, from Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them), and, from among the Followers, from `Ikrimah. Then, `Abd b. ™umayd has narrated it from `Ikrimah as well as from Muj~hid and Abƒ ^~liˆ with a chain of narration that has been affirmed as sound by ™~fiŒ Ibn ™ajar.[27] Im~m Ibn Jar,r has narrated it from Muj~hid with five different chains. In Muj~hid's statement there is clear denial of seeing. In Man%ƒr's narration from Muj~hid has come that he said: 'No one of His creatures will see Him.' Another narration through Man%ƒr records that he said: 'The people were talking about the *ˆad,th* (Then they will see their Lord), so I said to Muj~hid that ''Some people say that He will be seen.'' Muj~hid said: ''He will see, but nothing will see Him.'''

In the *Tafs,r al-miz~n* of All~mah al-œab~\~b~|i (one of the contemporary Im~mi Shi`a

---

[26] Ibid, 3:226, 228.

[27] *Fatˆ al-b~r,* (al-Ma\bah al-Salafiyyah), 13:425.

scholars): 'In the *`Uyfn*, in the chapter on narrations on *taw^,d* from Ri‡~, peace be upon him: with his chain to Ibr~h,m b. Ab, Ma^mfd that he said that `Al, b. Mfs~ Ri‡~, Allah have mercy upon him, said of His words——''Some faces, that Day will be radiant, looking to their Lord''——''that is, shining and waiting for the reward from their Lord''. He said: I say that it has been narrated in *al-Taw^,d*, *al-Ihtij~j* and *al-Majma`* from `Al,, peace be upon him.'[28]

From most firm evidence and most clear proofs, we know that *naŒar*, while being used with the preposition *il~*, does not have the sense of seeing in His speech: 'As for those who sell the faith they owe to Allah and their own solemn plighted word for a small price, they shall have no portion in the hereafter. Nor will Allah speak to them or look at them on the Day of Judgement' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3.77). Because, if *naŒar* in this verse is interpreted as seeing, it will lead to the meaning that Allah will not see these people on the Day of Resurrection. This is altogether impossible, and such a belief is real error because it is a rejection of faith in Allah, Exalted is He. There is no way but to interpret *naŒar* here as mercy and favour. Hence we know that *naŒar* of the strong one to the weak is his mercy and favour, and *naŒar* of the weak to the strong is awaiting that from him.

It will be clear to you from the preceding discussion that this verse portrays to us the state of the people in the Station before the fortunate ones are moved to the Abode of Favour, and the unfortunate to the Fire of hell. If *naŒar* in this verse had the meaning of seeing, and the faces are radiant on account of this seeing, then

---

[28] *Tafs,r al-miz~n* (Mu|assasat al-A`lami li-l-Ma\bu`at), 2:116.

it implies that this state will also include the hypocrites of this *ummah* because they will share the seeing with the believers as is the implication of the *^ad,th* of Abƒ Sa`,d and Abƒ Hurayrah in the *^a^,^s* of al-Bukh~r, and Muslim, upon which those who affirm seeing rely. (The explanation of this will follow, *insh~| All~h*.)

It has become difficult for those who affirm seeing to relate 'seeing' in the verse to 'faces'. They are undecided in interpreting the seeing as seeing with the eyes, or with the faces, or the whole body, or some sixth sense. This confusion is clear evidence that they do not have any ground for their opinion. If they had understood the verse in the right way, and interpreted it according to the language and the context, then they would have been safe from this confusion and avoided this bewilderment.

The expert and fair-minded ones from among the believers in seeing have realized the weakness of the arguments to prove seeing from this evidence, and they have acknowledged as much. Sayyid Mu^ammmad Rash,d Ri‡~ says in *al-Man~r*:

As for the seeing of the Lord, Exalted is He, it should probably be said that the verses of negation are more clear than the verses of affirmation, like His saying 'You will never see me' (*al-A`r~f*, 7.143), and His saying 'The eyes can not reach Him' (*al-An`~m*, 6.103). These two verses are clearer in what they denote than what, on the side of affirmation, is denoted by Allah's saying: 'Some faces that Day will be radiant, looking to their Lord'. Because the usage of *naŒar* in the meaning of *intiŒ~r* (waiting) is abundant in the Qur|~n and in the speech of Arabs. Like His saying: 'They will not wait for aught but a single Blast' (*Y~s,n*, 36.49); or 'Are they not waiting but for its fulfilment?' (*al-A`r~f*, 7.53); or 'Will they wait until Allah comes to them in canopies of clouds with angels?' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.210). And it is confirmed that *naŒar* has been used in this meaning with the

preposition *il~*, and that is why some people have interpreted it the other way——that is, directing the sight to the object to be seen——where it has been related to the faces, and there is nothing in the faces to which seeing can be connected except the eyes.[29]

What Ri‡~ points to at the end of the argument of those who interpret *naŒar* as seeing because of its relation to faces, and the refutation thereof, has been stated above.

That most thorough scholar Im~m Ibn `>sh*f*r says in the *tafs,r* of this verse:

The reading of the verse that makes it mean——the believers will see with their eyes and their seeing is seeing the Essence (*dh~t*) of Allah——is a speculative one. It has made possible the interpretations put forward by the Mu`tazilis——that the intended meaning is seeing of His Majesty and pleasure in His Holiness, which seeing will not be granted to those who are not from among the fortunate ones.[30]

2 Allah's saying, Exalted is He: 'To those who do right is a goodly reward and more' (*Yfnus*, 10.26)

They have interpreted 'goodly reward' as Paradise and 'more' as the seeing. Their evidence for this meaning is the *ˆad,th* of ^uhayb in the *^aˆ,ˆ*s of al-Bukh~r, and Muslim that the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: 'When the people of Paradise enter Paradise a caller will call out: ''For you there is a promise with Allah that He wants to fulfil.'' They will say: ''Did You not make our faces white, did You not deliver us from the Fire, and did You not enter us into the Garden?'' He says: ''Then the veil will be lifted.'' He said——By Allah, Allah has not given them anything more beloved to them than looking to him.'

---

29 *al-Man~r* (4th edition), 9:131.

30 *al-Taˆr,r wa l-tanw,r* (al-D~r al-Tfnisiyyah li-l-Nashr), 29:353.

You see that the word 'more' is uncertain in meaning. It does not denote seeing in its proper meaning or normal usage. As for the *^ad,th* that they have relied on to interpret this verse, its denoting the meaning that they want is very weak:

Firstly, because *naŒar* does not necessarily mean 'seeing', as was explained above in the discussion of the verse from *al-Qiy~mah*. The lifting of the veil is perhaps an allusion to more of respect and of elevating the rank, and opening the doors to unlimited bounty. This is definitely the meaning in which lifting of the veil and looking at Allah in the *^ad,th* should be interpreted in order to prevent contradiction between the verses of Allah and the *^ad,th*s of His Messenger, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah.

Secondly, interpreting 'more' to mean the seeing contradicts their interpretation of the verse of *al-Qiy~mah* upon which they relied to affirm the seeing. The sense of the verse of *al-Qiy~mah* is that the seeing will take place at the Station before entering Paradise, whereas, according to their interpretation of the verse of *Yfnus* and the *^ad,th* of ^uhayb, the seeing will not happen except after entering Paradise.

Thirdly, because this contradicts the *^ad,th*s of Ab*f* Hurayrah and Ab*f* Sa`,d, upon which they have relied to prove the seeing at the Station.

Even if the *^ad,th* had been a clear text in interpreting *naŒar* as seeing, there would have been no proof in it because of its being a solitary (~^~*d*) tradition and its opposition to the proofs of the negation of seeing which are stronger and clearer. So how are we to rely on it when there is doubt about it? It is said: 'When doubt falls upon the evidence, the argument based upon it falls.' This is a matter to do with the faith, so only that evidence is acceptable that is secure in both text and meaning.

Fourthly, the interpretation of 'more' has been narrated from the *salaf* with some sense other than seeing. If the *^ad,th* had been a clear and correct text with the meaning of seeing, then the narrators had no right to abandon it in favour of something else. Among examples of that are what Im~m Rab,` and Im~m Ibn Jar,r[31] have narrated from Ibn `Abb~s, may Allah be pleased with them, that he interpreted the 'more' as an elevated chamber of pearl having four doors. Im~m Rab,` has narrated from Ibn `Abb~s that the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: 'The people of the Garden will remain surprised by the state they are in until Allah opens for them the door of ''more''. When it is opened, then nothing will come to them from it but will be better that what they have in their Garden.' Ibn Jar,r has narrated from Ibn `Abb~s and from `Alqamah b. Qays that 'more' means multiplying the good tenfold. And this, too, is what Im~m Rab,` has narrated from Ibn `Abb~s and from ™asan.

Im~m Rab,` has narrated through his chain of narration from Im~m `Al, b. Ab, œ~lib, may Allah honour his countenance, that he interpreted 'more' as an elevated chamber of a single pearl, which will have four doors——which is similar to what has been narrated from Ibn `Abb~s, mentioned above. Ibn Jar,r has narrated from ™asan that he interpreted 'more' as forgiveness from Allah and His pleasure. That is also narrated from Muj~hid through Rab,`. Rab,` has narrated from Abƒ ™~zim, and Ibn Jar,r has narrated from Ibn Zayd, that the 'more' is the people's not being accountable for what He had given them in this world.

---

31 Ibn Jar,r has narrated this with three chains of narration.

Rab,` has narrated from Sha`b, that 'more' is entering Paradise, and from Mu^ammmad b. Ka`b that it is the respect and reward that Allah will increase for the people.[32]

Some of these opinions are different from each other and some of them are inter-related or close to each other. Most obvious of all these is that 'more' is abundance of the material and spiritual gifts that Allah will provide to His servants in Paradise without limit. That is the sense of the *marff` ^ad,th* of Ibn `Abb~s, narrated by al-Rab,`, and that is the implication of ^uhayb's *marff ^ad,th* in its true sense, as narrated by Im~m al-Bukh~r, and Im~m Muslim.

3 Allah's saying, Exalted is He: 'And there is more with Us' (*Q~f*, 50.35)

It is narrated from some of them that 'more' (*maz,d*) is seeing Allah, Exalted is He. As their argument in favour of seeing from the word *ziy~dah* has failed, their argument from the word *maz,d* fails for the same reasons.

4 Allah's saying, Exalted is He: 'Verily, from their Lord that Day will they be veiled' (*al-Mu\affif,n*, 83.15).

Their reasoning here is that as the wording means veiling of the unbelievers from their Lord, its implication suggests that the believers will see Him. As the veiling from the unbelievers is a punishment they have been threatened with, so nothing is appropriate for the believers but the opposite thereof. This is a failed argument for a number of reasons:

The first reason is that 'veiling' in this verse is a figurative expression for being deprived of His mercy and being kept away from the

---

[32] Im~m Rab,` b. ™ab,b, *al-J~mi` al-%a^,^* (Maktabat al-Istiq~mah), 3:232; *Tafs,r Ibn Jar,r* (D~r al-Baz), 11:75-76.

house of His honour. Just as nearness to Allah is not a physical thing, but is interpreted as carrying out His commands and refraining from disobedience, in the same way Allah's nearness to the servant does not mean anything other than His encompassing the servant with His merciful care, and covering him with His divine gifts. Both senses come together in the *ˆad,th quds,* that Muslim has narrated through Abƒ Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him: 'Whoever approaches Me by a hand's breadth, I approach him by an arm's length, and whoever comes nearer to me by an arm's length, I come nearer to him by the span of both arms outspread.' Qat~dah and Ibn Ab, Mulaykah have interpreted 'veiling' in this verse, as Ibn Jar,r has narrated from them, in the sense I have just explained.[33]

The second is that this reasoning is based on *mafhƒm al-mukh~lafah*, that is, on an understanding of the words that is at variance with the meaning of the words, and is therefore conjectural. The jurists have differed about accepting this kind of evidence in deciding even secondary practical matters, so how could it be accepted in fundamental matters of faith? While faith is a fruit of certainty, this way of reasoning is comparable to using a *laqab* (agnomen, nickname), which is the weakest route to understanding——that is the opinion of experts in *u%fl al-fiqh* (the sources and principles of jurisprudence), of jurists, and of all the people of other branches of knowledge——so much so that they have accounted those who took that line as most strange.

The third is that if it is permitted to refer to this sense in order to affirm that the believers will see Allah on the Day of Resurrection, then it would be more appropriate to refer to the

[33] *Tafs,r Ibn Jar,r* (D~r al-Fikr), 3:100.

meaning to be understood from the condition 'that day' in order to affirm the seeing of Him by the unbelievers *before* 'that day'. For words that express time follow the same grammatical rule as adjectives in determining the subject, and the sense of an adjective is among the strongest in determining meaning. This is confirmed in the writing of experts in *u%fl al-fiqh.* Im~m Nfr al-D,n S~lim,, may Allah be pleased with him, has said in *Shams al-u%fl*: 'The adjective, the intended object and the condition——all of these are the strongest and clearest (in determining) the sense.'

From among those pleasantries which should be stored up for the distraction of bereaved mothers is what Ibn al-Qayyim has narrated in ™~*d, al-arw*~ˆ from Ibn al-Mub~rak that the pronoun in Allah's saying——'This is what you rejected as false' (*al-Mutaffif,n*, 83.17)——is referring to the seeing,[34] thereby to facilitate its interpretation as a threat against those who deny seeing. To the tune of this narration have danced many of those people who say what they do not know, and those who digest whatever is thrown to them. Among them is the *khat,b*, whose recorded speech I have listened to in his own voice, and to which I referred earlier. It comes in this man's *khutbah* that the threat is falling upon the Ibadis who deny the seeing, and they (the Ibadis) are the ones meant by it. I would like to know if this statement has arisen from a desire that has made him dumb and blind, or out of his ignorance of the language and styles of speech. Because anyone who has a sense of human language can realize that the indication cannot be to other than the antecedent, which may be present or have the force of being present because it has been given

[34] ™~*d, al-arw*~ˆ (Beirut: D~r al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah), 241

in the context. The pronoun in the verse being referred to is the demonstrative pronoun, which is pointing to the entering into the Fire that has been mentioned antecedently. Like that is His saying, Exalted is He: 'Depart to that which you used to reject as false. Depart to a shadow in three columns, which yields no shade of coolness, and is of no use against the fierce blaze' (*al-Mursal~t*, 77.29-31). If the matter had been as they claim, then it would have been decisive that they will see Him. Because, when you say to someone, in a style of reproach and scolding: 'This is what you did not believe in', then there is no possibility other than that you are pointing to something that you have now made plain after it had been secret. Then the proof has been established against him by this making plain. Had they not been so jejune in their statements interpreting the Book of Allah, Exalted is He, and so careless in the way they shift the speech from its context, I would have gathered the statements of *mufassir,n* (the exegetes of the Qur|~n) on the verse 'That which you used to reject as false', especially those among them who believe in seeing, so that the error of this corrupt interpretation would have been clear. But its corruptness is clear enough for there to be no need to make it clearer. An Arab poet has said: 'Nothing can be right in the mind when daylight needs proof.'

5 Allah's saying, Exalted is He: 'On raised couches will they command a view' (*al-Mutaffif,n*, 83.23).

This is an argument from something that has no evidence. For the end of the verse describes them as 'commanding a view', without mentioning the object of the view. It is securely known that they will get enjoyment by looking to different kinds of bounties, and different kinds of strange

things, that will please their souls and cool their eyes. No one of the *salaf* has said that the meaning of 'commanding a view' in the verse is seeing Allah. Rather, Ibn Jar,r and others have narrated from Ibn `Abb~s, Qat~dah and others that they will look at their enemies in the Fire, mocking them. This is what the context requires, and what the *mufassir,n* have relied on, except those among them who are heretical.

6 Those verses that declare the meeting with Allah.

They argue from these verses because they have interpreted the meeting as seeing. And that is a mistake, because meeting is more general than seeing. Sometimes 'meeting' is used for things that cannot be seen. As it is in His saying, Exalted is He: 'You did indeed wish for Death before you encountered it' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3.143). There is no dispute as to the permissibility of the blind person saying: 'I met so-and-so'. A common figure of speech among Arabs is: 'I experienced in (lit. 'met from') this matter severity, or relief, or a way, or hardship, or ease, or good, or ill'. In the Qur|~n has come a promise of meeting for unbelievers, as in His saying, Exalted is He: 'So He has put, as a consequence, hypocrisy into their hearts till the Day whereon they shall meet Him' (*al-Tawbah*, 9.77). And His saying: 'O man! Verily, you are ever toiling on towards your Lord——painfully toiling——but you shall meet Him' (*al-Inshiq~q*, 84.6). If it is said that the pronoun in the first verse is referring to hypocrisy, and in the second verse to toiling, not to Allah, then we will say that in this too is a proof for us that the meeting is more general in sense even than the sense of seeing. Because hypocrisy and toiling cannot be

seen, for they are examples of invisible entities.

Meeting with Allah has been interpreted as the movement to the Last House, because with it the promise of Allah will be fulfilled and the secrets of His unseen revealed. With this meaning in mind, the word has also been used for death: it can be said of someone who has died that 'he has met Allah'. In the *Lis~n*, through Ibn al-Ath,r's commentary on the *ˆad,th*——'Whoever loves the meeting with Allah, Allah loves the meeting with him'——it is said that the meaning of 'meeting' here is turning one's mind to the Last Hour and seeking what is with Allah.[35] Meeting can be a threat as it can be a promise, as it is in both the previous verses quoted, and as it is in the *ˆad,th*, 'he will meet Allah while He is angry with him'.

7 Allah's saying, Exalted is He: 'And when you look there you will see bliss and a Realm Magnificent.' (*al-Ins~n*, 76.20)

Fakhr al-D,n al-R~z, has argued from this verse in his *tafs,r* on *Sfrat al-An`~m*, claiming that one of the readings of the verse is '*m~likan*' (king). And he says: 'The Muslims are unanimous that that king is no other than Allah, Exalted is He. In my view the reasoning from this verse is stronger than that from any other verse.'[36]

Al-R~z,'s saying that 'the reasoning from this verse is stronger than that from any other verse' is a sufficient evidence for you of the weakness of the evidence that they hold. This argument is no more than chasing 'a mirage in sandy deserts, which the man parched with thirst mistakes for

---

35 *Lis~n al-`arab*, 20:121.

36 *al-Tafs,r al-kab,r*, 13:131.

water; until, when he comes up to it, he finds it to be nothing' (*al-Nfr*, 24.39). For the reading that al-R~z, has claimed is not proven. I consulted the books of readings and the books of *tafs,r* which are concerned to quote readings, but I did not find any mention of this reading. Moreover, Fakhr al-D,n al-R~z, himself does not mention this reading while interpreting this verse. Where he has mentioned it, that is, in the *tafs,r* of *al-An`~m*, he does not refer it to any authority. If we assume that it is a narrated (i.e. authoritative) reading, then it must be one of those solitary readings, about which most experts say that they cannot be taken as proof for subsidiary legal matters, so how can such readings be a proof in a matter of faith?

Evidence from the Sunnah

As for the Sunnah, they have put forward an abundance of those *^ad,th*s that they have gathered in favour of their argument. The most famous and the strongest of the *^ad,th*s that they have relied upon is the *^ad,th*: 'Soon you will see your Lord openly as you see the moon on the night of full moon.' They have narrated this *^ad,th* through Abƒ Hurayrah, Abƒ Sa`id Khudr, and Jar,r with differences in wording. Mostly in the books of faith, they confine themselves to a portion of the whole text. Before commenting on their argumentation, I shall discuss some of the different wordings and chains of narration.

Both Shaykhs——the wording is from al-Bukh~r,—— have narrated it in *Kit~b al-taw^,d*. Im~m al-Bukh~r, says:

`Abd al-`Az,z b. `Abdull~h has narrated to us, that Ibr~h,m b. Sa`d has narrated to us from Ibn Shih~b, from `A\~| b. Yaz,d al-Layth,, from Abƒ Hurayrah that

the people said: 'O Messenger of Allah, will we see our Lord on the Day of Resurrection?' Then the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: 'Are you harmed by the moon on the night of full moon?' They said: 'No, O Messenger of Allah.' Then he said: 'Are you harmed by the sun having no veil?' They said: 'No, O Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'So surely you will see Him like that. Allah will gather the people on the Day of Resurrection. Then He will say: ''Whoever worshipped anything he should follow it.'' So whoever worshipped the sun, he will follow the sun. And whoever worshipped the moon, he will follow the moon. And whoever worshipped false gods, he will follow the false gods. And this *ummah* will remain with its intercessors' or 'its hypocrites'—Ibr~h,m was uncertain of the wording—'Then Allah will come to them and He will say: ''I am your Lord.'' Then they will say: ''This is our place until our Lord comes to us. When our Lord comes We will recognize Him.'' Then Allah will come to them in His form that they knew. Then He will say to them: ''I am your Lord.'' Then they will say: ''You are our Lord.'' Then they will follow Him….' [to the end of the *^ad,th*]

Im~m Muslim has narrated it in *Kit~b al-,m~n* from Zuhayr b. ™arb, from Ya`qƒb b. Ibr~h,m with the previous chain. In his narration it is firmly 'with its hypocrites' with no doubt. In it, there is this addition:

Then Allah, Exalted is He, will come to them in a form other than that they knew, then He will say: ''I am your Lord.'' Then they will say: ''We seek refuge in Allah from you. This is our place until our Lord comes….'' [to the end of the *^ad,th*]

It has come with different wording in the *^a^,^ayn* and other books of ™ad,th. An example is the *^ad,th* of Abƒ Sa`,d in the *^a^,^ayn*. You, O respected reader, will perceive with your insight, that taking these words literally will lead to what is rejected by reason and refuted by the evidence, as will become clear from the sequel:

It follows from it that His Essence (*dh~t*), Exalted is He, changes from one form to the other. Such change is a characteristic of contingent existents (*ˆuduth*). It, necessarily implies contingency of Him, Exalted is He.

It also follows from it that Allah, Exalted is He, is seen by this *ummah* (including believers and hypocrites) in this world with clear sight so that His form will remain printed in the minds of those who see. Then, when He comes to them in another form, they will refuse to accept that form as their Lord, and they will seek refuge in Allah from it. Otherwise, how would they recognize His form, seeing that they did not recognize Him when He came in a form other than that, and they recognized Him when He turned back to it? And all this at the first of the Stations of the Day of Resurrection!

There have been debates between myself and certain scholars on that matter. When I pinned them down with this argument, they answered that this knowledge of His form is not a result of any earlier seeing. It is a result of their knowledge from description of Him in His Book and in the Prophet's Sunnah. Then I urged them strongly: Whoever has read the Book of Allah and has studied the Sunnah of His Messenger must know that real form in which He will see his Lord, Exalted is He, so that, when he sees Him in another form he does not recognize Him. Then please bring me the description of this form and definition of it from your knowledge through your reading of the Qur|~n and your study of the *ˆad,th*s of the Messenger, upon him be the best peace and the blessings of Allah. Then they were taken aback and their argument became void, and the praise belongs to Allah. And among what falsifies their interpretation that they turned to——fleeing from the compelling argument——is its opposition to the

clear text of the *^ad,th* of Abƒ Sa`,d in the *^a^,^ayn*. It is in the *^a^,^* of al-Bukh~r, with the words: 'Then the Omnipotent will come to them in a form than that they had seen Him in at first.' The wording of Muslim is: 'Until when no one is left except those who worshipped Allah, pious and non-pious, then the Lord of the Universe, Exalted is He, will come to them in a form closer to the one they have seen Him in.' Both wordings are clear that their knowledge of His form will be a result of a previous seeing. There is no way for those who take the *^ad,th* literally but to say that He is seen in this world. Yet most of them have rejected that (the seeing of Him in this world). Whoever said it restricted the seeing of Him to some special individuals, and did not hold the opinion that it included the pious and non-pious of this *ummah*, nor the opinion of the seeing of Him in *barzakh* (the isthmus between the two worlds). That is something no one has claimed before, let alone had any evidence for it.

After this explanation that I have put forward, I read in *Fat^ al-b~r,* :

> And someone other than him [i.e. other than Kha\\~b,] has said about 'in the form that they knew' that, possibly, it is a hint to their knowledge of Him when He took out the progeny of Adam from his spinal column, then He caused them forget that in this world, then will cause them remember it [again] in the next world.[37]

There are two possible ways of taking this opinion: either the speaker means that when they were taken out from the spinal column of Adam they saw His Essence, Exalted is He, or he means that they attained a knowledge that was not

[37] *Fat^ al-b~r,* (al-Ma\bah al-Salafiyyah), 13:428.

theirs later. The first one is void for two reasons:

No one has previously held this opinion, and no text has pointed to it. It is contrary to the reason they give for not seeing their Lord in this world, namely that they have not moved from the state of perishing, and perishing existents have no capacity to see the Eternal. Is it intelligible that while in the spinal column of Adam in some microscopic form they were better able and fitted to see Him than M*f*s~, whom Allah addressed directly, after he had been chosen for the message and His speech, and brought closer to the near station?

The second is not understandable, because it is unimaginable that the future progeny of Adam will be, in that transitional moment, possessed of more knowledge of Allah than after their growth in this world where Allah has favoured them with knowledge and intellect. The declaration that they have seen Him according to the *ˆad,th* of Ab*f* Sa`,d causes this possibility to fall down——except if the seeing is interpreted as knowledge. Then it follows from it, necessarily, that the intended meaning of the seeing in the *ˆad,th* is an increase of knowledge of Him.

That the seeing of Him is common to the pious and non-pious, believers and hypocrites, is contrary to what most of them have declared: that the seeing is a special reward for the people of faith.

It is contradictory to the *ˆad,th* of ^uhayb that they presented as evidence for the seeing by interpreting looking (*naŒar*) in that *ˆad,th* as seeing. For that *ˆad,th* makes it clear that the seeing will occur after their entering into Paradise, and that it is an addition to the bounty that has been bestowed upon them, as was explained above.

Most believers in the seeing hold that it will happen without *kayf* (without our understanding of how it will happen). The comparison in the *ˆad,th* with the seeing of the moon——'like that you will see Him'——contradicts this view. So too does the mention of the form in the *ˆad,th* and their not recognizing it when it has changed from what they were familiar with.

On account of this difficulty with the *ˆad,th*, the affirmers of seeing are puzzled in understanding it. Ibn Ba\\~l has narrated that Muhallab said: 'In truth, Allah will send for them an angel to examine them on their belief in the attributes of their Lord, nothing is like Him. When the angel will say to them: ''I am your Lord'', they will reject him because the characteristics of creaturehood that they will see in him, saying: ''When our Lord will come we will recognize Him'' i.e. When He appears to them in a kingdom which is not appropriate to anyone other than Him, and in a glory which is not similar to anything of His creatures, then they will say: ''You are our Lord.'''[38]

This is a statement that indicates only confusion combined with insistence upon supporting a particular notion whether it is proved or not. There are two things which reject this interpretation:

The first is that telling a lie is hateful to Allah and shameful. Allah is not to command a lie, because Allah does not command evil and shameful things; rather, He forbids them. The most shameful and dangerous lie is that a servant from among the servants of Allah should claim that he is Allah. No angel among the angels of Allah, who of all His creatures are the most

[38] Ibid.

aware of His rights, and the most fearful of His punishment, could dare to say such a thing.

The second is that that place is the place of reward, not a place of testing of belief or any other thing. The reward of the people will be only according to the belief and action that they achieved in this world, not according to what they will have in the Last House.

If the seeing in the *ˆad,th* is interpreted as knowing, then the difficulty is resolved, the ambiguity cleared and the contradiction removed. Yes, there will remain a difficulty in their saying 'We seek refuge with Allah from You.' Because seeking refuge *from* Allah cannot be imagined from a believer in any state. That is why this addition needs further reflection. Perhaps it is a kind of representation of their dismay of the terror that they will see in that great Station. It is similar to what has come in the *ˆad,th* of repentance (when, in total confusion, the penitent uttered): 'O Allah, You are my servant and I am Your Lord.' And the renewal of the servant's knowledge of his Lord by seeing those signs which were not anywhere in his mind, is something that cannot be denied. It is not far-fetched to say that the *ˆad,th* is a representation of thoughts interacting within them, while they are seeing scenes unfamiliar to them, and there is clarifying for them of those matters that they did not know. Then there is no wonder if a confusion befalls them such as to cause their minds to fly off——until when their minds come down to the tree of reality, and settle upon the solidity of certainty. Those scenes that they will see, and those manifestations that they will experience, will not be but from Him, Exalted is He. He turns the states as He wills. In each state there are manifestations of His Majesty, and scenes of His greatness, which have been expressed (in the

Qur|~n) as being forms related to Him, because they are from Him and will return to Him.

A group of those who affirm the seeing have come close to this interpretation. One example is what ™~fiŒ Ibn ™ajar has quoted, saying: 'Those who affirm the seeing have differed as to its meaning. A group of the people have said that knowledge of Allah, Exalted is He, will come to the viewer, as through eyesight it comes in respect of the things that are seen.' That is in accord with Ibn ™ajar's saying about the *^ad,th* from the chapter 'as you see the moon'. However, He is ineffably-pure from direction, dimension and instrumentality (*kayfiyyah*). That knowledge is something greater than merely knowing. Some of them have said that the meaning of seeing is knowledge. Again, some have expressed it as a change occurring in the state of a human being that is somehow related to His unique Essence in the same way that the eyes are related to visible things. Others among them have said that the seeing of Allah by the believers is a kind of revealing and knowledge but it is more complete and more clear than knowledge. And this is closer to the truth than the first opinion.[39]

Close to that is the interpretation of seeing by Im~m al-Ghaz~l, in some of his books.

The use of 'seeing' in the meaning of 'knowing' is known in the language, as we noted with reference to the author of *al-Q~mfs* and its commentator. Among the proofs for this is the saying of Allah, Exalted is He: 'Have you not seen how your Lord does prolong the shadow?, (*al-Furq~n*, 25.45). And: 'Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the `>d?'. (*al-Fajr*, 89.6). And: 'Did you not see how your Lord dealt with the Companions of the Elephant?' (*al-F,l*, 105.1). And: 'Did

[39] Ibid, 426.

you not see that Allah knows all that is in the heavens and on earth?' (*al-Muj~dalah*, 58.7). And: 'Did they not see how many of those before them We destroyed?' (*al-An`~m*, 6.6). And the poet says: 'I have seen that Allah is the greatest of every thing.' Another poet said: 'I have seen that Allah destroyed the people of `>d.'

The claim that 'seeing' does not have the meaning of 'knowing' except when the verb has two objects is rejected by the saying of Allah, Exalted is He: 'Now you have seen it and you were looking' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3.143). And His saying: 'Did they not see how many of those before them We destroyed?' (*al-An`~m*, 6.6).

No doubt that in the Garden there are divine manifestations for the people of Bliss that will supersede what is in the Stations of Resurrection. So no wonder that the most truthful of all mankind and jinn, and the most eloquent of Arabs and non-Arabs, express themselves using 'seeing', or other phrases similar to it, to bring it closer to the mind. The Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, used to address the Arabs in the clear Arabic language that they grew up in, so they knew its meanings, and realized its purposes. So do not wonder if this mode of speech did not cause any problem for them.

When the servant purifies himself for Allah, Exalted is He, in this world, regardless of the thickness of the curtains of its dark material nature, there appear to him in his invocation and prayer scenes of greatness, and the signs of Majesty are revealed to him that remove him from his own existence, drowning him in the realm of observation, so he is oblivious of himself and busy with the graces of intimacy, bestowed upon him by Allah, which are flowing from the realm of holiness——especially in certain states, like solitary worship, and at certain times, like the nights of

Rama‡~n, and in certain places, like the two Sanctuaries. What, then, are we to imagine of the Last House, which is prepared for the pious and where their souls will ascend to the height of human perfection?

Such scenes of intimacy in this world none can deny except one who is deprived of that transparency of the soul and thinness of the bodily senses that the servant feels whilst standing before Allah, Exalted is He, praying or invoking, until he becomes, as a result of his intimacy with his Lord, as if he were seeing Him with his eye, without His changing the Essence that is imperceptible with the eyes. The Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, has named this state as *iˆs~n*. That is in his saying: '*Iˆs~n* is that you worship Allah as if you were seeing Him. For if you do not see Him, He sees you.' Then, why wonder if there occur for the believers who are true in their faith, sincere in their actions, those Majestic manifestations for their intellects and hearts in the hereafter which are greater than that? And why be surprised if this is expressed as 'seeing', given that such usage is familiar in the Arabic language?

From this, the meaning of seeing in the *ˆad,th*s will be clear. And by this it is possible to reconcile these *ˆad,th*s and those verses of purification (transcendence) which are explicit in forbidding the seeing. And however it may be, these *ˆad,th*s are in any case solitary traditions (*aˆad*). Such *ˆad,th*s cannot stand as proof in the matters of belief. Because the belief is a fruit of certainty, and certainty is only established on the basis of firm proofs which are *mutaw~tir* (narrated by many from many), and explicit in denotation so as to leave no possibility of any other interpretation. The *aˆad ˆad,th* permits no

more than conjecture as to the affirmation of its text. That is why the experts have said that it can make some particular action compulsory, but does not serve to bring knowledge (of relevant principles). If this is the status of *aˆad ˆad,ths* in respect of proof, what then of their status when they are opposed by firm texts of the Qur|~n? That is why we judge as invalid those narrations which (if they cannot be otherwise interpreted) are clearly fashioning similitudes between the Creator and the creature. For it is impossible that any such could come from the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, who never speaks out of desire. That is like the *ˆad,th*: 'When it is Friday He descends on His Chair, then the Chair is encompassed with the pulpits of light, then the Prophets come until they sit on them….' This is contrary to both reason and authoritative tradition. Moreover, it is contrary to what the believers in seeing themselves say——that He will be seen without being encompassed——because He would necessarily be encompassed if the pulpits of the Prophets encompass the Chair on which He will be established.

Also: some Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did not accept the narration of others of them when they found it contrary to their understanding of the meaning of the Book. This was the case with `Umar on the narration of F~\imah b. Qays. And it was the case with `>|ishah on the narration of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with all of them). Yet, they were the people of the best of times and finest of epochs. Then, what do you think about those who came after them, when confusion became apparent, and deception, heresy (*bid`a*) and intrigues became more frequent, and the time far removed from the respected epoch?

I heard in the recorded *khutbah*, to which I referred earlier, a mocking criticism of the Ibadis from the speaker, to the effect that the Ibadis do not rely on the *ˆad,th*s of seeing because they are *~ˆad*. As if no one other than the Ibadis have held the view that an *~ˆad ˆad,th* is unacceptable for a matter of belief! Indeed, the man is only mocking himself for, in saying this, he has affirmed his ignorance of what the experts of his *`ulam~|* have said. I will only quote some of their statements, without pointing to any statement by the Ibadis:

Im~m Ibn al-Subk, in *Jam` al-Jaw~mi`*, and Maˆall, in the commentary on it, have said: 'The solitary narration does not convey knowledge unless it is accompanied by and linked to a corroborative context—as in informing a man of the death of his son who was close to death, with corroborating information about the weeping (for the dead), the bringing of a shroud and coffin…. Most people say that the *aˆad ˆad,th* does not convey knowledge in any circumstance.'

In *Tanq,ˆ* of Ibn al-™~jib and its commentary *al-Tawd,ˆ* there is the observation: 'The *aˆad ˆad,th* leads to conjecture if it accrues those conditions that we will mention *insh~| All~h*. Such *ˆad,th*s are sufficient to make action compulsory, according to some scholars; according to other scholars, not so: they do not convey necessary knowledge. There is no act but from [necessary] knowledge ….(continuing, until the author says:) Reason bears witness that it [*aˆad ˆad,th*] does not lead to certainty.'[40]

In the *H~shiyah* of Sa`d al-D,n al-œaft~z~n, on them is written: 'This is the opinion of the ma-

[40] *al-Tawd,h `al~ l-tanq,ˆ*, 431, 432, in the margins of *H~shiyat al-Talw,ˆ* of Sa`d Taft~z~n, (Ma\ba`ah Maktab Sanayi` min taraf al-Shar,ka al-Siˆ~fiyyah al-`Uthm~niyyah, 1310).

jority.'[41] Then it says: 'But the intellect bears witness that the report of one reliable does not necessitate certainty, and that the possibility of a lie stands, though it is unlikely. Otherwise it will be necessary to believe firmly in two contradictory things, when both are reported by two reliable people.'[42]

Hujjat al-Isl~m Abƒ ™am,d al-Ghaz~l, says: 'Know that we mean by *khabar al-w~ˆid* here those reports that do not reach to the extent of *taw~tur* (many from many) in providing knowledge. So whatever has been reported by a group of five or six, for example, is *khabar al-w~ˆid* ….(continuing, until he says:) That understood, we then say that *khabar al-w~ˆid* does not provide knowledge. This is known axiomatically. For we do not testify to everything that we hear. If we accept and suppose contradiction of two reports then how can we testify to two opposites? As to what has been narrated from the *muˆaddith,n* (*ˆad,th* scholars) that it provides knowledge: perhaps they meant that it provides knowledge of (particular) actions becoming obligatory, as conjecture can also be called knowledge. That is why some of them have said that *khabar al-w~ˆid* provides outward knowledge. Knowledge does not have any outward or inward side. That 'knowledge' is merely conjecture.'[43]

In *Faw~tiˆ al-raˆamft bi sharˆ Mfs~llam al-thubft* of Ibn `Abd al-Shukƒr there is the comment: 'Most of the people of *u%fl* (sources and principles of jurisprudence), including the three im~ms, hold that *khabar al-w~ˆid*, if this one person is not a protected Prophet, does not pro-

---

41 *al-Talw,ˆ* of Sa`d œaft~z~n, , 431.

42 Ibid, 433.

43 *al-Musta%fah min `ilm al-u%fl* of Im~m Abƒ ™am,d al-Ghaz~l, (Bul~q), 1:145.

vide knowledge at all. It makes no difference if it is surrounded by corroborative links or not…. (continuing until he says:) If the report of one had provided knowledge then it would have led to contradiction when two reliable people report two contradicting things.' Then he says: 'And that (i.e. reporting of two contradicting things by two reliable persons) is possible, indeed it is happening, as will not be obscure to anyone who has explored the *^i^~^*, *Sunan* and *Mas~nid*.'[44]

Im~m Mu^ammmad `Abduh has said in one of his fatwas: 'If an heretic wants to call to this belief then it is compulsory for him to establish for it the evidence that leads to certainty, either with rational convincing proofs, or with the traditional *mutaw~tir* proofs. It is not allowed for him to make an *a^ad ^ad,th* a proof for his belief, even if its chain is strong. For it is known to all im~ms that *a^ad,th a^ad* do not provide anything but conjecture. ''And conjecture avails nothing against truth'' (*al-Najm*, 53.28).'[45]

All~mah Sayyid Mu^ammmad R~shid Ri‡~ says:

Some *a^ad ^ad,th*s will be proof for the one for whom they are proven and whose heart is satisfied with them, but they will not be proof for anyone other than him in such a way that the act becomes obligatory. That is why the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did not write down all the *^ad,th*s that they heard, and they did not invite to them, whereas they did invite to following the Qur|~n and acting upon it, and to the practical Sunnah explaining it .... as the *^a^,fah* of `Al,, may Allah honour his countenance, which contained certain *a^k~m* like blood money, releasing the prisoner, and making the city [Madinah] a

---

[44] *Faw~ti^ al-ra^amft bi shar^ Mfs~llam al-thubft* (printed on the lower part of the pages of *al-Mu‰ta‰fa*), 2:121.

[45] From a fatwa of Im~m Mu^ammmad `Abduh quoted by al-Q~sim, in the *tafs,r* of *Sfrat al-A^z~b* in his *tafs,r*, *Ma^~sin al-ta|w,l* (`…s~ al-B~b, al-™alab, & Co.), 13:4920.

sanctuary like Makkah. Im~m M~lik did not accept from either Caliph al-Man%fr or al-Rash,d that they should make people act upon his books, even *al-Muwa\\~*. Acting upon *aˆad ˆad,th* is compulsory to one who is satisfied with its narration and its meaning.[46]

If that is the status of proof of the *aˆad* in the subsidiary practical matters, then what of matters of belief? But how can it be a proof when it contradicts the firm *mutaw~tir*? This Im~m himself has said: 'If the *ilal* (technical difficulty) with a *ˆad,th* which prevents it from being classed as *%aˆ,ˆ* is the opposition of its narrator to other reliable narrators, then the opposition to the firmness of *mutaw~tir* Qur|~n is more deserving to deprive it of the quality of being *%iˆˆah.*'[47]

In what Ri‡~ has said there is the implication of statements by experts in *ˆad,th* terminology in their discussions about the fabrication of *ˆad,th*. Indeed, it is what is understood from the action of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in their accepting some narrations and rejecting others, as we said above. Regardless of the emphasis of the people of *ˆad,th* in their reliance on *aˆad* reports in the matter of religion, and their criticism of those who do not accept these narrations, we find Im~m al-Bukh~r, conditions acceptance thereof for the subsidiary matters when he says: 'the chapter of what has come in permitting the report of one reliable in the matter of *adh~n*, prayer, fasting, duties and *aˆk~m*.'[48]

---

46 *al-Man~r* (4th edition), 1:138.

47 Ibid, 85-86.

48 *ˆaˆ,ˆ al-Bukh~r,* with *Fatˆ al-b~r,* (al-Ma\bah al-Salafiyyah), 13:231.

Chapter 3

On the evidence of those who deny seeing

These proofs and evidence are of two types: rational and traditional.

The rational proofs may be summarized by saying that Allah, Glorified is He, was before the creation of all existence. His Essence did not move nor His attributes change after the creation from what they were before it. So His Essence, Glorified is He, is not attached to any thing of His creation, as It is not detached from it. To be so (attached or detached) is an attribute of contingent existents. Hence it was impossible, according to reason and according to tradition, to perceive the reality of His Essence. The furthest extent of the knowledge of Allah's Essence is a sense of inability to perceive Its reality. As it is said: 'Incapacity for perception is perception'.

The familiar seeing with the eye occurs through reflection of the form of the seen object into the pupil of the viewer by means of vibrations of light which receive the forms. It is conditional upon a number of factors:

1 The first is the soundness of the sense organ.
2 The second is that the object must be of the kind that are visible. So those things that cannot be seen, such as the soul, intellect, smells and sounds, are excluded.
3 The third is that the object must face the eye in some direction, or its form be reflected in something facing the viewer. (In this are included those forms which can be seen in mirrors or screens.)
4 The fourth is that the object must not be, like microbes, so minute that the eye is un-

able to make out its form or perceive its reality. This factor (of size) varies with the variation in the state of the eye, its strength or weakness.

5 The fifth is that the object must not be at the extreme of thinness, as clear air is.

6 The sixth is that the object must not be too close: attachment to the eye will veil the object from being seen——that is how the eyelids are veiled from being seen by the pupils.

7 The seventh is that the object must not be too far away. Because the eyesight is too weak to see a thing that is very far. That is why massive celestial bodies remain hidden from our eyes——they are too remote. The quality of seeing varies under this factor with the variation in strength and weakness of the eye, and with the variation in greatness or smallness of the object being viewed.

8 The eighth is absence of any obstructing veil, that is, an opaque body or whatever may function in that way such as accumulated fog.

9 The ninth is that the object must be either luminous in itself, or the light of something else must fall upon it.[49]

There has been an objection to this argument that these conditions are only relevant to seeing something in the present or visible realm. It is not permissible to extend them by analogy to seeing something in the absent or invisible realm (*ghayb*).

The answer to this is that that is the seeing with which people are familiar, and there is no difference in this regard between present and absent. Moreover, those who affirm seeing have, in the matter of attributes, themselves likened see-

[49] *Mash~riq al-anw~r*, 198, citing *al-Maw~qif* and the commentary thereon, with some additions and changes.

ing the absent to the present. So why do they run here from what they resort to there?

The point cannot be raised here that Allah sees His creations without His seeing being bound by any of the conditioning factors mentioned. Because He is unlike His creatures in everything: He sees, not in the way they see. As He listens, not in the way they listen; He knows, not in the way they know; He has power, not in the way they have it; He does, not in the way they do. The creatures——even if their states differ——do not exceed the limits of creaturehood, and they are not characterized with any of the attributes of the Creator, neither in this world, nor in the hereafter.

As for proofs from tradition: some are from the Book, and some are from the Sunnah.

Proofs and evidence from the Book

The proofs and evidence from the Book are as follows:

His saying, Exalted is He: '*l~ tudriku-hu l-ab%~r, wa huwa yudriku l-ab%~r, wa huwa l-la\,fu l-khab,r*——'The (faculties of) seeing cannot grasp Him, and He grasps all seeing, He is the All-Subtle and All-Aware' (*al-An`~m*, 6.103). The reasoning from this verse is that Allah, Exalted is He, has praised Himself therein, in the statement that sight cannot reach to Him. The reach of sight is seeing. So it has become clear from the verse that inability of sight to see Him is an Essential attribute, permanent with Him, because, if He is seen, then His praise will necessarily vanish. And when it vanishes it will turn into its opposite, namely dispraise, Exalted be He from any such. From another angle the verse conveys information from Allah, Glorified is He,

about one of His attributes. And information about Allah's attributes cannot change, because if it does, it means the information is (at some point in time) untrue. 'And who is more true in speech than Allah?' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.122)

Objections to this reasoning have taken five pathways:

The first is that the verse has negated 'reach', not 'sight', and there is a difference between the two. 'Reach' implies encompassing what is reached from all around it, which is impossible in respect of Him, Exalted is He. 'Sight' does not require that, because it is more general than 'reach'. The negation of the more specific is not a negation of the more general. In the same way, His saying, Exalted is He——'And they will not comprehend (*wa l~ yuˆ,\fna*) Him in knowledge' (*œ~h~*, 20.110)——does not negate knowledge altogether. Because the servants have some knowledge of Him, Exalted is He. They fear Him because of that knowledge, and they expect from Him, they obey Him and they worship Him. (In the verse from *Sfrat al-An`~m*,) He is only negating the encompassing of the reality of His Essence, Glorified is He.

That is the best known of the points those who affirm the seeing of Allah have relied on in rebutting this argument. That is why you will find them rushing to it in haste to escape it.

The second objection is that, in this verse, there is nothing more than negation of all eyes seeing Him——that is what is termed negation of the generality. The verse is not negating that each individual eye will see Him ——that is what is termed generality of negation. Everyone agrees (they say) that *all* eyes will not see Him; rather, only *some* eyes will see Him. The least that can be said is that this is a possible meaning of the verse; and if there is a possibility

of an alternative interpretation of the evidence, the reasoning from that evidence fails. Some of the extremist fanatics have so far exaggerated as to reverse the meaning of the verse, claiming that it rather denotes affirmation of seeing than negation of it. They base this opinion on the fact that the sentence (lit. 'The sights do not reach to Him') is negative, not bound to any general or specific reference. Therefore, the verse is to be interpreted as 'not reaching by *some* eyes', not 'by *all* eyes'. The specification of some with the negation, connotes affirmation of that which is negated for the others.

The third objection is that though the verse is general about individuals, it is not general about times. The negation is without any condition, and therefore not bound to any meaning of 'for all time'.

The fourth is that the verse denotes inability of eyes to see Him. But it does not denote inability of the viewers to see Him. Because it is possible that the verse is negating the seeing done in the usual way, by the part of the body (the eye) facing and reflecting (what is seen). Therefore, it does not necessarily negate the seeing (of Allah in some other way). In sum, this objection is: the praise of Allah in the verse is with the negation of His being *mab%%iriyyah* (an object of sight), not with the negation of seeing Him at all.[50]

The fifth is that the generality of reference in the verse is narrowed by the proofs and evidence (elsewhere) of affirmation of the seeing.[51]

---

[50] *Ma^~sin al-ta|w,l*, 16:2450-52, with summary and explanation. See also *al-Maw~qif* and its commentary, and the *tafs,rs* of al-Fakhr, al-Nasaf, and al-Alfs, on this verse.

[51] al-R~z,: *Maf~ti^ al-ghayb* (Tehran: D~r al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah), 13:128.

All these objections are rejected:

As for the first: it is contrary to the Arabic usage of *daraka/idr~k* and its derived forms. The meaning of 'encompassing' cannot be understood from the word. The statements of the pillars among experts in Arabic language, and their clear and affirmed proofs indicate that *idr~k* does not have the meaning of 'encompassing'. Rather, the two meanings are quite distinct from each other.

The author of *al-Q~mfs* and its commentator say:

d-r-k, vocalized *al-daraku*: reaching (*al-laˆ~qu*); *wa qad adraka-hu*: when something reached it. *Al-daraku* is a noun from (the *ma%dar*) *al-idr~ku*. In *al-^iˆaˆ*: *al-idr~ku*: reaching (*al-laˆfqu*). It is said: *mashaytu ˆatt~ adraktu-hu*——I walked until I reached him; *wa `ishtu ˆatt~ adraktu zam~na-hu*——I lived until I reached his time.[52]

The text of al-Jawhar,'s statement in *al-^iˆ~ˆ* is:

al-idr~ku: reaching (*al-laˆfqu*). It is said: *mashaytu ˆatt~ adraktu-hu*: I walked until I reached him; *wa `ishtu ˆatt~ adraktu zam~na-hu*: I lived until I reached his time; *wa adraktu-hu bi ba%ar-,*: I saw him (lit. I reached him with my sight).[53]

In *al-Lis~n*:

al-daraku: reaching…. [continuing until it says]…. *wa tadaraka al-qawmu*: the people caught up with each other. In the Qur|~n: '*ˆatt~ idh~ |dd~rakf f,-h~ jam,`an*——until when they catch up with one another all of them [in the Fire]' (*al-A`r~f*, 7.38).[54]

These are the texts of the pillars of the language, who have transmitted it to us with objectivity. There is nothing in them that would indicate interpretation of *al-idr~ku* as 'encompass-

---

[52] *T~j al-`arfs* (D~r Maktabat al-™ay~h), 7:126.

[53] *al-^iˆ~ˆ* (Beirut: D~r al-`Ilm li al-Mal~y,n), 4:1582.

[54] *Lis~n al-`arab* (D~r al-Ma`~rif), 3:1363.

ing'. It is impossible to interpret the meaning of *al-laˆfqu*, *al-laˆ~qu* in that way. One's saying (for example) *laˆiqtu al-jid~ra bi yad-*, (lit. 'I reached the wall with my hand') does not mean anything other than touching the wall. That is a good, clear expression, acceptable in the language and by convention, and it is impossible that the hand should 'encompass' the wall. Like that is the Arabic saying: 'I dropped the rope into the well until it reached (*laˆiqa*) water'. Such examples are innumerable. I did not find any lexical reference work which interprets *idr~k* as 'encompassing'. It is sufficient as proof of the error of this interpretation that convention and taste will not accept one's saying about a wall encompassing a farm: *inna-hu mudrikun la-hu* (lit. 'it is reaching to it'). In the same way (it would be unacceptable) for one to say——*al-baytu mudrikun li-man k~na wa m~ k~na d~khila-hu* (lit. 'the house is reaching to whoever or whatever is inside it')——when one knows beyond doubt that the house 'encompasses' (and not 'reaches') whatever is inside it.

If the meaning of *l~ tudriku-hu l-ab%~r* is that the *ab%~r* do not reach Him, then its meaning is firmly that the faculties of sight do not reach to Him in any way such that He becomes seen by them, because *ba%ar* is used for the sense of seeing, as it is used for the instrument of it, namely the eye. And the illustrative example given by the author of *al-Siˆaˆ*——*`ishtu ˆatt~ adraktu zam~na-hu*: I lived until I reached his time——is evidence for the correctness of what I have said about the difference between reaching (*idr~k*) and encompassing (*iˆ~\a*). Everyone can understand that the speaker of that sentence did not mean that he 'encompassed' the time of the person from beginning till end. Because if that had been the meaning then it would not have been

allowed for anyone to say about any of the Companions of the Messenger, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, that the Companion reached his time unless that Companion had encompassed his time from birth to death.

Among the proofs which indicate the error of interpreting *idr~k* as 'encompassing' is that no one will dispute the correctness of the sentence about someone struck by an arrow: *adraka-hu al-sahmu* ('the arrow reached him'). If someone says *a^~\a bi-h, al-sahmu* ('the arrow encompassed him'), then no reasonable person will regard his utterance as anything but senseless.

Clearer than these is what was quoted above from the commentary on *al-Q~mfs* whose author interpreted *ru|yah* as *idr~k al-mar|i*. In *al-Lis~n* also: *al-idr~ku*: reaching (*al-la^fqu*). It is said: *mashaytu ^att~ adraktu-hu* ('I walked until I reached him); *wa `ishtu ^att~ adraktu zam~na-hu* ('I lived until I reached his time'); *wa adraktu-hu bi ba%ar* ('I saw him').[55]

The various derived forms of *idr~k* denote the same. His saying, Exalted is He, in the Qur|~n—— *'^att~ idh~ |dd~rakf f,-h~ jam,`an* ('until when they catch up with one another all of them' (*al-A`r~f*, 7.38)——does not intend that each group has 'encompassed' the other. It only means that each group has followed and caught up to the one before it.

What is quoted from the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, about the verse (6.103) denying the seeing is among the clearest, strongest and most firm proofs that *idr~k*, when related to the eyes, is only used in the meaning of 'seeing'. For they, may Allah be pleased with them, were pure Arabs, created in the eloquent Arabic tongue with their native Arabic upbringing. The

[55] Ibid, 1364.

Qur|~n that was being revealed among them, increased their knowledge of the meanings of this language and their awareness of its usage. Then how could they be ignorant of the difference between *ru|yah* (seeing) and *idr~k* (reaching with the sight) if there had been a difference between them?

Of what has been narrated from them on that matter is what Im~m Rab`, in his *Musnad* and both Shaykhs in their *^a^,^s* have narrated from Masr*f*q that he said:

I was resting on a cushion in the house of `>|ishah, then she said: 'O Ab*f* `>|ishah, there are three things that whoever utters one of them has invented a great slander against Allah. Whoever claims that Mu^ammad, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, has seen his Lord, has invented a great slander against Allah.' I was leaning on the cushion then I sat up and I said: 'O Mother of the Believers, give me some time and do not rush [me]. Has not Allah, Honoured is He and Exalted, said: ''And without doubt he saw him in the clear horizon'' (*al-Takw,r*, 81.23) and ''Indeed he saw him at a second descent''(*al-Najm*, 53.13)?''
Then she said: 'I am the first person of this *ummah* who asked the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, about this matter. He said: ''The 'him' was just Jibr,l. I did not see him in the form in which Allah created him other than on these two occasions. I saw him descending from the heaven, while the vastness of his being covered whatever is between the heaven and the earth.'''
Then she said: 'Did you not hear what Allah says: *l~ tudriku-hu l-ab‰~r, wa huwa yudriku l-ab‰~r, wa huwa l-la\,fu l-khab,r*——The faculties of sight do not reach to Him, but He reaches all sight, and He is the All-Subtle, the All-Aware (*al-An`~m*, 6.103)?'

Im~m Rab`, has narrated from `Al~| and Ibn `Abb~s, may Allah be pleased with them, that they

cited this honoured verse to deny the seeing of Allah.[56]

Fakhr al-D,n al-R~z, has made an attempt to reject `>|ishah's citing of this verse in denial of the seeing as a proof that the meaning of *idr~k* here is not restricted to 'encompassing'. He writes: 'Knowledge of the words of the language is only attained through the scholars of the language. As for how to cite evidence: it is not something to be left to *taql,d* (imitation).'[57]

This is a failed effort, to be rejected on three grounds:

The first is that the pure Arabs——when relying only on their own Arabic nature in their speech and understanding of the meanings of that speech——are stronger as evidence than those scholars of the Arabic language who came after them, and compiled its words and explained their meanings. Indeed, the latter referred to the former in order to understand meanings; and, in this regard, it was not the other way around.

The second is that what the authorities of the Arabic language have quoted from Arabs about the meanings of *idr~k* is in complete agreement with what `>|ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, has chosen in the *^ad,th* quoted.

The third is that citing her argument is not doing *taql,d*. It is only adopting a means to understand the meanings of the language.

In differentiating between *ru|yah* and *idr~k*, Ibn Jar,r al-œabar, has relied on His saying: 'And when the two hosts saw each other (*tar~|a*), the people of M*fs~* said: ''We are surely overtaken (*la-mudrakfn*)''. He (M*fs~*) said: ''By no means, my Lord is with me, soon He will guide

---

[56] *Musnad al-Im~m al-Rab`*, (Maktabat al-Istiq~mah), 3:226-27.

[57] *al-Tafs,r al-kab,r*: *Maf~t,^ al-ghayb* (2nd edition), 13:128.

me.’’’ (*al-Shu`ar~|*, 26.61-62). Here M*f*s~ negated his people’s fear of their enemy overtaking them, while the seeing happened on both sides. Ibn ™azm has followed Ibn Jar,r.[58] ™~fiŒ Ibn ™ajar has quoted the same from al-Qur\ub,, the author of *al-Muf^im*, and commented on this with the statement:

It is a strange argument. Because the word to which ‘*idr~k*’ is attached in the verse of *al-An`~m* is *ab%~r* (‘the faculties of sight’). When the sight reaching to Him has been negated, the obvious meaning is negation of seeing——in contrast to how *idr~k* is used in the story of M*f*s~. Had no reports existed concerning the affirmation of seeing, then it would not have been permitted to turn away from that obvious meaning.[59]

I add to what ™~fiŒ Ibn ™ajar has said that the meaning of *idr~k* differs according to the difference of the kind of *mudrik~t* (that which is to be reached). So *idr~k* of the eye is its seeing of an object; *idr~k* of the ear is its listening to a sound; *idr~k* of the hand is its touching of a body; *idr~k* of the sword is its falling upon the one being hit; *idr~k* of the arrow is its reaching a target; *idr~k* of the spear is its reaching to the one being hit; and *idr~k* of one enemy to another is having power over the other and being able to inflict harm upon him. So the companions of M*f*s~, upon him be peace, did not wish to avert their enemy’s seeing them, rather they feared their enemy’s power over them.

Ibn ™ajar’s statement implies that he holds our opinion as to the interpretation of the verse, but relies, in opposing its meaning (i.e. its denial of seeing), on reports which confirm the seeing. But, O reader, as was explained above, these reports do not convey confirmation

---

58 *al-Fi%al f, l-milal wa l-ni^al* (Maktabat al-Sal~m al-`>lamiyyah), 3:2.

59 *Fat^ al-b~r,* (al-Ma\ba`ah al-Salafiyyah), 8:607.

of the seeing of Allah. So——and praise belongs to Allah——the soundness of our argument has been established.

The best of what I have read on the interpretation of this verse is the statement of Im~m Abƒ Bakr Aˆmad b. `Al, al-R~z, al-™anaf,, known as al-Ja‰‰~s, in his book *Aˆk~m al-Qur|~n*. The text of it is as follows:

It is said that the original meaning of *idr~k* is 'reaching', as one says: *adraka zam~n al-Man‰fr*——he reached the time of al-Man‰fr. And one says: *adraka Ab~ ™an,fata*——he reached Abƒ ™an,fah. And *adraka al-\a`~m* i.e. the food was ready (reached the state of being cooked); *adraka al-zar`u wa l-thamaru* i.e. the crops and fruit were ripe (reached maturity); and *adraka al-ghul~mu* i.e. the boy became a man (reached maturity).

And *idr~k al-ba‰ar li-l-sh~|*——reaching of the sight to the thing, seeing it. Because there is no dispute among scholars of the language that saying of someone *idraktu bi-ba‰ar-i shakhsan* (I have reached someone with my sight) means I have seen him with my eye. It is not correct that *idr~k* is encompassing. Because a house encompasses what is in it, but it does not *idr~k* or 'reach' to [what is in it]. So Allah's saying: *l~ tudrikuihu l-ab‰~r* means that the eyes cannot see Him. This is praise [of Him] by negating the seeing of the eyes, as in His saying (2.255): *l~ ta|khudhu-hu sinatun wa l~ nawm* (Sleep does not overtake Him nor slumber). Whatever Allah praises by negating it from Himself, then affirming its opposite is dispraise and shortcoming. So confirmation of its opposite is not in any way permissible. For if His deserving the attribute of *l~ ta|khudhu-hu sinatun wa l~ nawm* becomes void, then it cannot but lead to an attribution of fault.

Seeing cannot be particularly affirmed from His saying (*al-Qiy~mah*, 75.22-23): 'Some faces, that Day, will be radiant, looking towards their Lord (*il~ rabbi-h~ n~Œirah*)' because *naŒar* has several possible meanings, such as waiting for the reward——as has been narrated from a group of the *salaf*. Therefore, when that inter-

pretation is possible, then objection to it by means of an interpretation which is not possible is not allowable.

[As for] the reports that are narrated about the seeing, if they are sound——the intended meaning behind them is simply knowledge. It is secure knowledge with no doubt in it, for the use of 'seeing' in the sense of 'knowledge' is well known in the language.[60]

As for the second objection: it contradicts His praise in the verse of not being visible to the faculties of sight. Because if the verse is interpreted as denying only universality (i.e. as denying only that *all* eyes will see Him)——as they claim——then there will be no meaning of praise. Then all visible creatures will share with Allah, Exalted is He, in this quality, for there is no creature that has been or could ever be seen by *all* eyes, not even the sun——which is the most visible to all those living on the planet earth——for the beings of other worlds do not see the sun on account of their distance from it, just as we do not see, among those far bodies which are moving in the remote galaxies, what is bigger and brighter than the sun——let alone human beings and whoever may be likened to them. Indeed, any human being from us cannot be seen by all the contemporary eyes on this earth alone, let alone by those who died before him, or will come after him, or who may be in other worlds. From another angle, the permission to interpret the verse in this way implies the permissibility of the same interpretation in similar verses, such as: 'Allah does not love transgressors' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.190; *al-M~|idah*, 5.87); 'Allah does not love squanderers' (*al-An`~m*, 6.141; *al-A`r~f*, 7.31); 'Allah does not love those who do wrong' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3.57; 140); and 'Allah does not love any arrogant boaster' (*Luqm~n*, 31.18). There is no reason to

[60] *A^k~m al-Qur|~n* (D~r al-Kit~b al-`Arab,), 3:4.

regard these verses in a different way as all of them have been presented in the context of His praise. And that suffices to expose the failure of that possibility that they have mentioned.

As for making the verse a proof that the seeing is permitted——on the grounds that it is negating without restrictive reference either universal or particular and, therefore, is to be interpreted as not seeing by *some* eyes, not by *all* eyes, because specifying negation for some denotes affirmation of the same for others——the reasoning is so weak as hardly to need to be weakened further. Anyone whose reason is safe from intoxication of desire, and whose taste is free of corruption, will realize its voidness. The negation in His saying 'the faculties of sight (*ab%~r*) cannot reach to Him' does not specify some seeing faculties. Rather, it includes all eyes with explicit wording which is corroborated by the associated contexts. The article in *al-ab%~r* means universality, which we can understand as either 'the kind as a whole' (*jins*) or as 'each and every' (*istighr~q*). If we take it in the sense of 'each and every' then it is more clear than needs further explanation: there is no meaning of 'each and every' but inclusion of the particular individuals to which the meaning of the word applies. If we take it as 'the kind as a whole', then every member of the genus is included in the term whether in affirming or negating. If the argument were correct, anyone who swears in the name of Allah that he did not visit graves, though visiting them all the time, could not be regarded as making a false oath because it is beyond reason that he could have visited all the graves on earth. Similarly, it follows from that argument that whoever swears that he did not commit adultery with women, though he has done so with thousands of women, will be truthful and not

false to his oath because it is impossible that he could have committed adultery with all the women on earth. The argument likewise implies that one will not be falsifying his oath who swears that he did not steal dates, though he has stolen innumerable dates. The argument implies, in fact, that a person's saying 'I did not visit graves' is to be understood as meaning 'I have visited some graves'. And the same in the other examples.

If it is proposed that, perhaps, according to those who offer this argument, the article in *al-ab‰~r* is bound to a context (*`aˆd,*), not referring to the 'kind as a whole', nor to 'each and every', we answer that this interpretation of it as so bound is contrary to the praise (of Allah) that is understood by the verse and is the implication of the context. Such a usage (being bound to context) must have a referent to which it is connected (*maˆfd*), and there is none. Even if we assume that there is such a referent, is it possible that negation of something for that referent, means affirmation of the same for everything else? Is not this a sort of *mafˆfm al-laqab*——reasoning from the absence of a qualifying term in apposition, an invalid proposition——something that is not relied upon even for matters of conjecture, so how rely upon it in matters that must depend upon certain authority?

As for the third objection: that unconditional negation does not denote permanency. This is rejected, alike by the language, as by custom and law. Everybody knows that saying 'I do not drink milk' denotes negation of drinking milk at any time. If that were not true, then he will not have made a false oath who swears that he does not fornicate, does not steal, does not drink wine, does not kill the forbidden soul without right, even if he does any of those things in the

future—on the grounds that an unconditional negation does not include all times.

There is no dispute that negative imperative constructions have the same implications as negative constructions. If the opinion (that permanency is not entailed in such constructions) is allowed, then no prohibition will stand. For it will be allowed to the people to consume the usury that Allah has forbidden in His Book, and to kill the forbidden soul without right, and to commit every corruption in the earth, and to do all that is forbidden in Islam, on the argument that a negative imperative is not inclusive of all times.

As was explained above, the fact that this verse is like other verses on the same pattern which are presented in the context of His praise, refutes their claim. If the negation in this verse is taken to mean for this world, not for the hereafter, then it must be allowed in similar verses, like His saying: 'Slumber does not overtake Him, nor sleep' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.255); and: 'He has taken neither a wife nor a son' (*al-Jinn*, 72.3); and: 'He does not beget, nor is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him' (*al-Ikhl~%*, 112.3-4); and: 'And your Lord does not treat anyone with injustice' (*al-Kahf*, 18.49). Then, it would be permitted in respect of Him in the hereafter what was forbidden in this world, like slumber, sleep, a spouse, children, a peer, injustice. Allah is Exalted and High above that.

Indeed, it is obligatory for every Muslim to believe that this world and the next world have no effect on the Essence of Allah, Exalted is He. It is impossible for Allah, Glorified is He, that the time can affect Him, as it is impossible for Him that space can accompany Him. Allah, Exalted is He, is the Creator of time and space. His Essence never changes, nor His attributes ever

shift. The change of states in this world and in the next world is restricted to creatures.

Im~m ~iy~| al-D,n `Abd al-Az,z al-Tham,n,, may Allah be pleased with Him, has stated in his *Ma`~lim* that the opinion that something denoting the generality of individuals unconditionally does not denote the generality of times, is one held by some im~ms of jurisprudence like >mid,, al-Qar~f, and al-I‰bah~n,. This opinion is far from reflecting deep or comprehensive study. Profound study on the matter is reflected in the opinion of such experts as Fakhr al-D,n, Ibn Daq,q al-`…d, Subk,, his son, and many others from among the later scholars——namely, that the construction necessarily implies that the meaning of the word is comprehensive of all instances.[61]

As for the fourth objection: that the verse has negated the reach of the faculties of sight, not the reach of the viewers. This is refuted by the fact that in principle sight is the faculty through which the eye achieves perception. Its use for the eye is correct, as the use of hearing is allowed for the ear. If we suppose that someone sees with his head, or his ears, or his nostrils, or his hands, or his legs, or his whole face, or his whole body, then the seeing faculty will be available in whatever he sees with. Since what is negated in the verse is the reach of the faculty of sight, then any other means of it will be included in the negation.

As for the fifth objection: that the verse is specific in reference. This is rejected for two reasons. The first is the inexistence of any specifier. This is clear from what we have already established of the voidness of what the affirmers cling to as proof and evidence. The second is

---

61 *Ma`~lim al-d,n* (Oman: Wiz~rat al-Tur~th al-Qawm, wa l-Thaq~fah), 2:38-39.

that the presentation of this verse in the context of His praise, Exalted is He, by negating the reach of the faculties of sight prevents reference to anything specific.

If it is said that the negation of seeing Allah, Exalted is He, cannot be regarded as praise of Him because other things, such as air, spirits, atoms and electricity, share with Him in not being visible:

The answer is that the negation of seeing Him, Glorified is He, is on account of His Majesty and greatness, whereas negation of it in respect of other things which are not visible is because Allah has made them hidden from sight. Moreover, it would follow from that objection that His saying 'Slumber does not overtake Him, nor sleep' and 'He did not take (to Himself) any spouse or any children' cannot be counted as praise of Him because the existence of those of His creatures which do not sleep, do not marry and do not beget. The angels are qualified with all of those; and the sun, moon, earth and other celestial bodies also do not sleep.

The thorough scholar al-Khal,l, has divided things in this regard into four categories. He writes:

1 The first is that which sees but cannot be seen. It is the peak of honour and summit of perfection, because it is qualified with the ability of seeing everything, and being above the reach of any sight. It is true only of Allah, Exalted is He and Glorified. He alone is of unlimited perfection, and unique in the quality of honour and Majesty. 'There is nothing whatever like unto Him, and He is One who hears and sees' (*al-Shfr~*, 42.11).
2 The second is that which both sees and is seen. It is the best of all later types and comprises all living things like angels, jinn, human beings, birds and all classes of animals, for example cat-

tle, other quadrupeds, herbivores, carnivores, and most insects.

3 The third is that which is seen but cannot see—— like opaque bodies such as earth, mountains, minerals, plants and all substances and contingent properties (*a`r~ǂ*).

4 The fourth is that which can neither see nor be seen, like those things that are felt by the senses of smell and taste, and sounds that are prehended by the hearing, or those things that are not felt by the senses such as belief, unbelief, reason and knowledge, anger and restraint and other qualities and morals which are commanded by the law and for which there is reward or punishment.[62]

Both Ibn Taymiyyah and Fakhr al-D,n al-R~z, have said in interpretation of the verse, 'the faculties of sight cannot reach to Him', what is rejected by sound reason, and refused by fair-minded taste. They have turned this verse into an instrument to support their claim which is contradictory to its clear sense. They have regarded it as an argument in favour of those who affirm the seeing, by turning its meaning upside down.

Ibn Taymiyyah says:

This verse is more indicative of the permissibility of seeing than of its impossibility. Because Allah, Glorified is He, has presented it in the context of His praise. It is known that praise is done only with positive qualities because mere not-being is not a perfection, and it is not praised with. The Lord, Exalted is He, has praised with not-being only when it implies the existence [of a positive attribute]: like His praise with the negation of slumber and sleep, which implies the perfection of His being Everlasting; and the negation of death which implies the perfection of his being Ever-living; and the negation of tiredness which implies the perfection of his being All-

62 *Tamˆ,d qaw~`id al-,m~n* (Sultanate of Oman: Wiz~rat al-Tur~th al-Qawm, wa l-Thaq~fah), 1:183.

Powerful; and the negation of partner, wife, children and supporter which implies the perfection of His being Lord, His Divinity, and His being the Overwhelming; and the negation of eating and drinking which implies the perfection of His being the Self-Sufficient; and the negation of intercession without His permission which implies the perfection of His Oneness and His being without need of His creation; and the negation of injustice which implies the perfection of His Justice, Knowledge and Abundance; and the negation of forgetting and absence of anything from His knowledge which implies the perfection of His Knowledge and its comprehensiveness; and the negation of any like or peer which implies the perfection of His Essence and attributes. That is why He is not being praised with any mere not-being which does not imply any affirmative attribute. Because the negated in its not-being shares in the name. The Perfect cannot be described with an attribute shared by Him and by the non-existent. If the meaning of His saying 'the faculties of sight do not reach to Him' had been that He is never seen in any state, then there would not have been any praise or any perfection in that, because the non-existent shares with Him in that—mere not-being is not seen and cannot be reached by sight. The Lord is above being praised with something shared with mere not-being. Therefore, the meaning [of the verse] is that 'He will be seen but He will not be grasped or encompassed.'[63]

That is a statement to baffle anyone who enjoys a bit of reasoning that is not clouded by wishing. It is obviously void, and contradictory. Suffice it to point out that Ibn Taymiyyah affirmed at the outset that the verse is presented in the context of praise. He followed that with the statement that Allah cannot be praised with mere not-being. He went on to say that mere not-being cannot be seen and cannot be reached with

---

[63] Ibn al-Qayyim (narrating from Ibn Taymiyyah) *™ad, al-arw~h il~ bil~d al-afr~h*, 209-10. See also: *al-Man~r* (4th edition), 9:132.

sight. Then he presented the conclusion of all that, namely that Allah will be seen, but will not be comprehended or 'encompassed'. This implies that the negation of being reached by sight does not constitute praise of Him, and that, on the basis of how he has interpreted *idr~k*, that the High Essence of Allah *can* be 'encompassed' since, as he himself made clear, mere not-being *cannot* be 'encompassed' (just as it cannot be seen).

In sum, the strangest aspect of what Ibn Taymiyyah has presented in this statement of his is to subject the firm texts to a rule made out of conjecture and fancy, which has no rational or traditional basis. Whereas, it is obligatory for us, O servants of Allah, that we affirm for Allah what He has affirmed for Himself, and we negate from Him what He Himself has negated. Because He, Glorified is He, is the most knowledgeable of His Essence and His attributes. It is not for us to object to Him as to His negation and affirmation.

Among the strangest things of all is the hardening refutation by Hanbalis——including Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim——of Ash`ari, Mu`tazili and other theologians on matters that are most deserving of acceptance as correct, true and close to reality and to the principles of a theology that reconciles rational argument with the scriptural texts. By contrast, you find them (the Hanbalis) letting go the reins of their imaginations to derive these speculative propositions for no other reason than to flee the overwhelming force of the scriptural texts and the compelling force of the argument.

If we do, just for the sake of argument, assume their failed logic, we would say that in the negation of seeing Allah, Glorified is He, there is affirmation of an attribute of perfection for Him, and it is His Majesty. In a sound *^ad,th*

there is a clear text that the Majesty of Allah, Glorified is He, prevents the seeing of Him. Both Shaykhs (al-Bukh~r, and Muslim) have narrated from Abƒ Mƒs~ Ash`ar, that the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: 'Two gardens are of silver, their pots and whatever is in them; two gardens are of gold, their pots and whatever is in them. There will not be between the people and their looking to their Lord anything but the mantle of Majesty on His Face in the Garden of Eden.' Then, what is the problem in Allah's negation, Glorified is He, that eyes can see His exalted Essence?

On the assumption——it is not true——that there is a difference in meaning between *ru|yah* and *idr~k*, Ibn Taymiyyah is forced——according to this rule that he has contrived from his own imagination——to admit that he is confirming for Allah what He has negated from Himself, that is, the eyes reaching to Him.

Among the greatest dangers for religion is when storms of desire so uproot the reason of the most learned scholars that they begin playing with the text as they please until they make from it an argument which contradicts the text's very meaning.

Fakhr al-D,n al-R~z, says:

If the seeing of Allah, Exalted is He, had not been possible, then there would not have been any praise [of Him] in 'the sight does not reach to Him'. Do not you see that the non-existent cannot be seen? The sciences, power, intention, smells, and tastes—— nothing of these can be seen. There is no praise for any of them in their not being seeable. Thus it is proved that His saying 'the sight does not reach to Him' does carry the meaning of praise, and proved that it only implies praise if the seeing is possible. This means that His saying 'the sight does not reach to Him' conveys [the meaning] that His seeing is possible. Full reflection on the matter tells us that when

something in itself is such that seeing it is impossible, then its being not seen does not imply any praise or honour for it. But if it in itself is possible to be seen, and it has got power to veil the faculties of sight from seeing and grasping it, then this perfect power will connote praise and greatness. Thus it is established that this verse denotes that He, Exalted is He, may be seen according to His Essence.
When thus proven, it is obligatory to affirm that the believers will see Him on the Day of Resurrection. The relevant evidence is that there are two opinions: Some people say that the seeing is possible and that believers will see Him. Some say that they will not see Him, and seeing Him is not possible. As for the opinion that seeing Him is possible but no one of the believers will see Him: this is an opinion that no one of this *ummah* has held, so it is void. Then, it is proved from what we have said that this verse denotes that His seeing is in itself possible, and given that the matter is proven to be so, then it is obligatory to affirm that the believers will see Him. Thus it is proven, from what we have said, that this verse denotes that the seeing is to happen. It is a fine, subtle argument from the verse.[64]

After this statement that Fakhr al-D,n al-R~z, has given expression to, there cannot be any comment from anyone except——so long as he takes the negation of a thing to be a proof of its affirmation——to question his belief in the Oneness of Allah and negating children and partners to Him. According to this statement, the Christians and the *mushrikfn* (those who associate partners with Allah) can derive from His saying, 'Say: Praise is for Allah, Who begets no son and has no partner in His dominion' (*al-Isr~|*, 17.111) a firm proof that He, Glorified is He, has a son and a partner, and that they can add to that affirmation of a spouse for Him, Exalted is He, affirma-

64 *Maf~tiˆ al-ghayb: al-Tafs,r al-kab,r* (Tehran: D~r al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, 2nd edition) 13:125.

tion of everything that He has negated of Himself, like slumber, sleep, unawareness, tiredness, injustice——all, so long as the negation is a firm evidence of possibility, and hence of affirmation.

You may marvel at this, but the wonder is that Fakhr al-D,n could make from His saying 'the sight does not reach to Him' a means to affirm the proof of seeing by turning reality, and the argument, upside down, when he it is who claimed in his own rulings that connections of words to meanings are no better than conjecture. He says it clearly:

> The connections of words to their meanings are conjectural, because they depend on transmission of language, on [knowledge of] declensions and conjugations, while the first thing about those transmitting it is that they were individuals. The reports by individuals only convey conjecture [not authority]. Also those denotations of meaning are dependent on the meaning not being ambiguous, not being figurative, not being transformed, not being unclear, not being particularized, not being contradictory to reason. Assuming the occurrence of any of these, it becomes compulsory to take the [meaning of the] word metaphorically [nonliterally]. Without doubt, belief in these assumptions [about the meanings of words] is mere conjecture. What depends on conjecture is very apt to be conjecture.[65]

Note how Fakhr al-D,n al-R~z, presents the connection of the words to their original meanings as conjectural, while he makes their denoting the opposite of those meanings firm and reliable.

To sum up the preceding discussion: the meaning of the honorific verse on negation of seeing Him in this world and in the next world is a

---

[65] Ibid, 1:28. The invalidity of the ruling of Fakhr al-D,n has been explained by Im~m Nfr al-D,n S~lim, in *Talat al-Shams* (Oman: Wiz~rat al-Tur~th al-Qawm, wa al-Thaq~fah), 1:30.

firm, clear meaning. All of what those who oppose this depend upon amounts to no more than a fog of fancy, which lingers only to disappear with the rising of the sun of reality. The text of this verse is enhanced by what comes at the end of it: 'And He is the All-Subtle (*al-La\,f*) and the All-Aware (*al-Khab,r*)'. His being *al-La\,f* is the reason why 'the faculties of sight cannot reach to Him', and His being *al-Khab,r* is the reason behind 'And He reaches to all sight'. Both attributes are of His Essence, and can never alter. As for *al-Khab,r*: it is obvious that it is among His Essential attributes because it is similar in meaning to the Name 'the All-Knowing'. As for *al-La\,f*: Im~m Ibn `>sh*f*r says:

It is a *%ifah mushabbahah* [a permanent quality] denoting one of the attributes of Allah's Essence, Exalted is He. It is an attribute purifying Him from the ability of reason to encompass His Essence, or the ability of the senses to encompass His Essence or attributes. Therefore, the choice of this word to express this attribute for Allah, Exalted is He, is the summit of precision and elegance in diction. Because it is the nearest way in the Arabic language to express the meaning of the description of His Essence according to the usage of the language, and closer to the customs and norms of the people.[66]

2 His saying to M*f*s~, upon him be peace: '*lan tar~-n,* (You shall not see Me)' (*al-A`r~f* , 7.143).

This is an unconditional negation, not bound to any time, and there is no alteration in the words of Allah. If the seeing could happen in any time from the times of this world or the next, then that would be in contradiction to the truth of this information. That the text has just this

[66] *al-Ta^r,r wa l-tanw,r* (al-D~r al-Tunisiyyah li-l-Nashr), 7:417.

meaning is emphasized by the terrific crushing of the mountain on the abiding of which the seeing was conditioned, so that its disintegration could be the clearest sign to eliminate the desires of those who, in respect of Allah, are arrogant in demanding what is impossible for Him and contradictory to His Majesty. It is clear, to anyone who has eyes to see with, that the mountain did not abide, therefore there is no pretext for any desire to attain that which is impossible.

How delicate, refined and elegant are the words of M*ƒ*s~, upon him be peace, after his coming to after this incident: 'Glory be to You, to You I turn in repentance, and I am the first to believe' (*al-A`r~f*, 7.143). M*ƒ*s~, upon him be peace, hastened first to declare the transcendence of Allah, Glorified is He, the right of His being Lord, acknowledging his mistake, and honouring the right of Allah——even though his heart was devoid of the intention of what is denoted by the apparent text of his speech. For he did not ask what he asked except to silence his people, as was said earlier. He followed that with sincere repentance of what he had fallen into, expecting His forgiveness, Exalted is He. He ended his speech, upon him be peace, by stating that he is the first to believe that Allah, Exalted is He, cannot be seen. That is what Ibn Jar,r has narrated from Ibn `Abb~s, may Allah be pleased with them. In this, there is affirmation of true belief, glorifying Allah from being reached by seeing, a truth that cannot be hidden to anyone who has sight. Because he, upon him be peace, did not, in saying 'I am the first to believe', intend anything except apology for what is hinted by the outward form of his speech, though Allah was aware of his inward (intent). The likeness of that is asking forgiveness with the tongue and uttering the firm resolve not to return to dis-

obedience. For Allah is aware of all secrets, nothing of what is contained in the hearts is hidden from Him.

The particle *lan* gives emphasis to a negation, or expresses the permanence of it, or both these together. One derives from that that seeing Him, Exalted is He, is impossible, because that impossibility is something related to His Essence, Exalted is He. It is of His Essence that it is not able to be seen. The glorifying Allah with which the apology commenced in the speech of Mƒs~, upon him be peace, is indicative of that point. Had there been for anyone any hope of attaining seeing, then Allah would not have made hopeless His servant Mƒs~ whom He chose over the people by (conveying through him) His Message and by (conversing with him in) His own speech.

This reasoning has been objected to on the ground that the negation of seeing is bound with the life of this world, because man is created here in transience and that is why he cannot see the Everlasting, Exalted is He. It has been objected to also on the ground that the answer is not expressed in a way that means that Allah will not be seen ever: the seeing that is negated is referred to Mƒs~, upon him be peace, so it does not imply generality with the negation——in contrast to what it would mean if the wording had been 'I cannot be seen'.

Alƒs, says:

Some experts have referred in the meaning of the verse to the possibility (of seeing) beyond the particular incident that took place [i.e. the incident with Mƒs~]. And this is that Allah, Exalted is He, has linked the negation of seeing to the inability of the viewer [Mƒs~] and the weakness of his seeing faculty, for He said to him 'You shall not see Me'. If seeing Him had been impossible, then the answer would have been 'I am not to be seen'. Do you not see that if he had said 'Show me [Yourself]. I would look upon Your

form and Your location', then it would not have been an appropriate answer to say 'You cannot see My form and My location'. Rather, the appropriate answer would be 'I am not of form or location'.

Many who affirm the seeing have relied upon denying the permanence of negation because *lan* is used (in *lan tar~-n,*). What my memory has retained about that is what al-Suyf\, has stated in his commentary on *`Uqfd al-Jum~n*:

Then *lan* is for emphasis in the negation of something, the attainment of which is imagined. It is also said that *lan* is for permanence, though it has fallen out of use. Ibn al-Khat,b Zamalk~n, has specified the particle *l~* for permanence with negation...

Ibn al-Khat,b Zamalk~n, has been quoted as distinguishing *lan* and *l~*, both negatives. He says that with *lan* the negation does not continue, while with *l~* it does. He has derived this from the way the two particles are pronounced: *lan* is short when uttered, and *l~* is prolonged. For the negation with *lan* he has given the example of Allah's saying 'You shall not see me', and for negation with *l~* he has given the example of Allah's saying 'The faculties of sight cannot reach to Him'——on the basis of their distinction between *ru|yah* (seeing) and *idr~k* (grasping, encompassing), discussed above. From that he has understood the negation of seeing as being severed, because it will end with the ending of this world, in contrast to the negation of *idr~k*. The strongest of what they have relied on in denying the permanency of negation with *lan* is His saying about the Jews (that they claim special rights with Allah, yet will never desire death on account of their fear of punishment in the hereafter): '*wa lan yatamannaw-hu* (And they will never desire it)' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.95), together with His saying about the people of the Fire in

general: 'They will cry: ''O Malik, would that your Lord put an end to us''' (*al-Zukhruf*, 43.77).

The answer is that such restricting of the negation of seeing to the life of this world rather than the next world is an assertion——for which no evidence is established——because the attributes of Allah do not change (from one realm to another), and His Majesty does not alter (from one realm to another). The foregoing proofs and evidence to establish that seeing Him is contrary to His Majesty suffice to falsify this assertion.

The claim that the phrasing of the answer does not convey universality of negation is rejected by observing that the answer was not otherwise than in accordance with the question. What reason can grasp is that the negation of the seeing taking place for Mƒs~, upon him be peace, is decisive and final in respect of the negation of its taking place for any one else. For if it had been possible, then Mƒs~ was more deserving of that for the qualities Allah specified in him, and the virtues that He gave him, such as his being chosen with the message and (with Allah's addressing him in direct) speech. So this is the clear answer, there is no dust on it——in contrast with 'You cannot see My form' or 'You cannot see My location' as response to 'Show me Your form' or 'Show Me your location' because that requires demonstration of form and location.

As for permanence: it varies with the variation of states and of places of the addressee. Since the Jews were fond of the life of this world and fully inclined to it, and they were afraid of death because of the punishment that they expected after it——let alone their avarice to fulfill their desires in this world——the permanence of their not wishing for death was confined to this world. And since such states do not touch the Essence of Allah, and alteration and

transformation are not allowed for the attributes of Allah, the negation of seeing which is contradictory to His Majesty was eternal and permanent, whether the negation is indicated with *lan* or any other particle.

Ibn al-Khat,b Zamalk~n,'s distinction between *lan* and *l~* is no more than a matter of his personal taste. The meanings of language are not derived from individual tastes. Only those quotations are referred to, which are affirmed from the tongues of its people who are the sources of its explanation. The confirmed proofs of that indicate the opposite of what Ibn al-Khat,b has said. It is enough that the Qur|~n has used *lan* and *l~* to negate the same term, as in His saying '*lan yatamannawna-hf* (they shall not wish for it)' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.95) and His saying ''*l~ yatamannawna-hf* (they shall not long for it)' (*al-Jumf`ah*, 62.7). And the negation with *lan* of the ability of the *mushrikfn* to bring the like of any sfrah of the Qur|~n, and of the ability of their gods to create even a fly, in His saying: '*wa lan taf`alf* (and you shall not do so)' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.24), and His saying: '*inna l-ladh,na tad`fna min dfni l-l~hi lan yakhluqf dhub~ban* (indeed those whom you call upon beside Allah shall not create a fly)' (*al-™ajj*, 22.73) while it is known firmly that this negation is eternal and permanent.

3 His saying, Exalted is He: 'It is not fitting for a man that Allah should speak to him except by inspiration or from behind a veil.' (*al-Shfr~*, 42.51)

`>|ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, cited that verse in proof of the impossibility of seeing, as we saw above. The reasoning here is that Allah has negated that anyone can hear speech from Him, except in the ways He has stated. This

negation has been emphasized by placing it on *k~na* (in '*wa m~ k~na li-bashir,n*') to emphasize the impossibility of what is negated happening. This negation is not bound to a time as we have explained in regard to His saying 'the faculties of sight cannot reach to Him'. Because that is what befits the Majesty of Allah. If His seeing had been possible then His speaking too would have been possible by other means (than those indicated in the verse).

4 The severe criticism and harsh reproof that is presented in the verses of the Book against the Jews and *mushrikfn* who asked to see Allah, with a warning to Muslims against falling into what they had fallen into.

An example is His saying, Exalted is He: 'The people of the Book ask you to cause a book to descend to them from heaven. Indeed, they asked M*f*s~ for an even greater than that, for they said: ''Show us Allah plainly''. Then they were seized for their presumption by thunder and lightning' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.153), and His saying, Exalted is He: 'Those who do not hope to meet Us say: ''Why are not the angels sent down to us?'' or ''Why do we not see our Lord?'' Indeed they have an arrogant conceit of themselves and mighty is the insolence of their impiety' (*al-Furq~n*, 25.21). That is followed by the explanation of their state when they will see the angels: 'The Day they see the angels, no joy will there be for the sinners that Day, and the angels will say: ''There is a barrier forbidden to you altogether''' (25.22). And He remained silent on the seeing of Allah, Exalted is He, because of the great obduracy and terrible unbelief that is in asking for it. And His saying: 'Would you question your Messenger as M*f*s~ was questioned before? But whoever changes from faith to unbelief has

strayed without doubt from the even way' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.108). The reasoning from that is the explicit indication in this criticism that those who asked for the seeing had exceeded all bounds, and hurled themselves into the barriers until they stepped on forbidden ground and essayed an impossible thing. That is why the Children of Israel were punished with the thunder on account of this question, whereas they were not punished with it on account of all the other terrible things that they did, even their worshipping the calf.

If it is said that the criticism is not over the question itself but over obduracy (the determined refusal to obey):

The answer is that He criticized their obduracy in every matter but made their asking to see Him greater than all the rest, as in His saying: 'Indeed they asked M*ƒ*s~ for an even greater than that'. How often it happened that the nations became arrogant before their Prophets, challenging them on the matter of (miraculous) signs——as is known from *taw~tur* reports——but their punishment for this demand (for miracles) was not like the punishment of the Children of Israel for their asking for the seeing. It is enough that M*ƒ*s~, upon him be peace, was seized by thunder merely for asking it, though he did not intend but to turn them away from falsehood and convince them of the truth. As soon as he returned to consciousness from this thunder he hastened to glorify Allah, to repentance, to apology, and to declaration of the belief he held in pure transcendence.

The Children of Israel themselves——regardless of their continual obduracy and their insistence on disputatiousness and defiance——were not subjected to this terrifying punishment except over this question.

Evidence from the Sunnah

As for the Sunnah, there are the following proofs and evidence:

1

Both Im~ms al-Bukh~r, and Muslim and others have narrated from Abƒ Mƒs~ Ash`ar, that the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: 'Two gardens are of silver, their pots and whatever is in them; two gardens are of gold, their pots and whatever is in them. There will not be between the people and their looking to their Lord but the mantle of Majesty on His Face in the Garden of Eden.' The reasoning from this is its explicitness about their not seeing Allah because of the impediment of the mantle of Majesty between them and seeing. Majesty is an Essential attribute of Allah. It is not possible that He will retire from it as He does not retire from Power, Knowledge, Will, Life, Hearing and Seeing. For if He retires from it for any moment then He will be turning from it to its opposite, that is lowliness, which is contrary to His being Lord. Whoever claims His seeing in the face of this denial of it——it necessarily entails taking away from the Majesty of the High Essence.

The relation of mantle to Majesty in the *ˆad,th* is like that of direct and indirect similitude in *dhahabu l-a‰,l* and *lujayn al-m~|* in the saying of the poet:

The wind is playing with the branches of the tree
While the evening gold (*dhahabu l-a‰,l*) is flowing in the silver of the water (*lujayn al-m~|*).

There is in the *ˆad,th* a hint of likening Majesty to a mantle in the manner of similitude without 'like' (*tashb,h al-b~ligh*), as has come to us in the *ˆad,th quds,*, His saying: 'Majesty is My mantle, and Greatness is My wrap.' This does not

mean anything other than that Allah, Exalted is He, is qualified with Majesty and Greatness as we are qualified with our mantles and wraps. So it is not for anyone to be arrogant and dispute Him in either quality. This is clear from the end of the *ˆad,th*: 'Whoever disputes Me in these, I will enter him into the Fire, and it touches Me not.'

If it is said: Why do you interpret *naŒar* in support of negation of seeing, while you interpret it in support of affirmation of waiting, as you have said on the verse of *al-Qiy~mah* and the *ˆad,th* of Suhayb?

The answer is that the interpretation of *naŒar* there as waiting is because that sense is the one that agrees with rational contexts, and is in accordance with the context of the verse and the *ˆad,th*. We do not prevent the interpretation of *naŒar* as seeing if that is the sense intended by it. It is a word that can have more than one meaning. The associated contexts determine the (appropriate) meaning. The context here requires the interpretation of *naŒar* as seeing. The *ˆad,th* implies that the friends have arrived at the house of Allah's honour, because of His respecting them and making them near to Him, and elevating their ranks to the point where there is not left any kind of honour they are familiar with but they have received it——except seeing. Nor are they prevented from seeing as a form of deprivation, but because it is contradictory to the attribute of Majesty particular to the greatness of Allah. In this way the texts of negation and affirmation are harmonized. The 'faces' in the verse mean the persons, according to the experts even among those who affirm the seeing.

This *ˆad,th* has become troublesome for the believers in seeing. To defend their belief, they have made an effort to interpret it in a way that is refused by sound nature, and rejected by non-

corrupted taste, like the statement of ™~fiŒ Ibn ™ajar interpreting al-Kirm~n,'s response to the difficulty: 'There is an ellipsis in this speech which is supplied——after the words in His saying ''except the mantle of Majesty''——''so He will favour them by lifting this mantle'', so that the felicity of seeing Him will happen for them.'[67]

By Allah, following the like of these far-fetched interpretations will lead to not abiding by the meaning of any text, on account of the possibility of understanding that the negation of something can be changed into an affirmation, and the affirmation of it into a negation.

The great scholar and author of *al-Man~r* has rightly observed, after citing the interpretation just quoted: 'In it there is an artificial effort that is not proper for the *ˆuff~Œ* of the Sunnah to be paying attention to, when they reject interpretations comparable to that or better than that made by Jahmis and Mu`tazilis.'[68]

™~fiŒ has interpreted the mantle in this *ˆad,th* as the veil mentioned in the *ˆad,th* of Suhayb. After discussion of points for and against, he says: 'The implication of the *ˆad,th* of the chapter is that the requirement of the Honour of Allah and His Exaltedness is that no one can see Him. But His Mercy to believers requires that He will show them His Face as a perfection of favour. When the obstacle is removed He will treat them against the demands of Majesty (i.e. prepare them so that their faculties are capable of beholding it). Thereby He has lifted from them a veil that prevented the seeing.'[69]

The author of *al-Man~r* quotes this statement by ™~fiŒ, but makes no comment on it of any kind,

---

67 *Fatˆ al-b~r,* (al-Ma\bah al-Salafiyyah), 13:432.

68 *al-Man~r* (Maktabat al-Q~hirah, 4th edition), 9:139.

69 *Fatˆ al-b~r,* (al-Ma\bah al-Salafiyyah), 13:433.

though it is no less artificial an effort than the previous one. The *ˆad,th* does not convey that the prevention of seeing Allah is because of something within His servants, such as the fear on account of which their eyes bow down, or their hearts are awed. Rather, it conveys that the prevention of seeing is for a reason particular to the Essence of Allah, that is, His attribute of Majesty. The attributes of Allah do not contradict each other, as they are not contradicted by His actions. So ™~fiŒ's saying——'He will treat them against the demands of Majesty'——is one at which shudder the skins of those who fear their Lord. It is far-fetched indeed that Allah, Glorified is He, should do what is not required by His Essential attributes. How, while these attributes are the greatest and the most worthy to be proclaimed and praised? We do not need here to repeat the earlier discussion about the *ˆad,th* of Suhayb.

2

The *ˆad,th* that has been narrated by Muslim from Abƒ Mƒs~ Ash`ar, He says:

The Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace, stood among us with five words, he said: '[1] Verily, Allah, Exalted is He, does not sleep, and that is not appropriate for Him. [2] He lowers the Balance and raises it. [3] To Him are carried aloft the actions done in the night before the actions done in the day, and the actions of the day before the actions of the night. [4] His veil is ''light''——and in one narration——''fire''. [5] If He lifts the veil then the light of His Face will burn whatever it reaches of His creation.

The reasoning from this *ˆad,th* on the impossibility of seeing is what it requires of belief in the impossibility of the sight of His servants reaching to Him, Glorified is He. The Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, only intended by this *ˆad,th* to illustrate the im-

possibility of human intellect reaching to the reality of the Sacred Essence, or people's eyes stretching to It—and seeing is usually a means of reaching to reality. The author of *al-Man~r*—in spite of the abundance of his knowledge and the depth of his understanding—has missed this meaning, and interpreted the *^ad,th* according to a materialistic method which is not appropriate to the glorification of Allah, Exalted is He.

In summary what he says is that it has recently been proven that electricity, many of whose wonders mankind have witnessed, is the origin of the matter of the whole universe and its stages. And this electricity is light or the source of light, and the motion that creates light or is created by light. Since the Creator and Fashioner, the One Glorified above the shortcomings of His creatures, none of which is completed except by Him, has been veiled from them by the light, you can understand that electricity, and everything of the material world for which it has been made as the origin, is the veil preventing the seeing of the Lord, Exalted is He, in that material world. The lifting of this veil will not happen but in Paradise. The lifting of the veil is what will cause the people of Paradise to reach to the highest and most perfect stages of knowledge of Him. It is seeing without any understanding of how and without encompassing.[70]

This exegesis, though its author claims that it is in agreement with the way of the *salaf* and the evidence of modern science, is rejected on two grounds:

The first is that it requires that the High Essence is surrounded by His creatures, for electricity is one of His non-visible creations, and

---

[70] *H~shiyat al-Man~r* 9(1), 167-68 (, Maktabat al-Q~hirah, 4th edition).

it is existing in this earthly world. Whereas one group of those who affirm the seeing——among them the author of *al-Man~r*, according to the belief that he has held——limit the Essence of Allah, Exalted is He, to the direction 'above', and affirm His abiding over the Throne.

The second is that electricity being the origin of the universe is not a confirmed reality. Rather, it is a hypothesis. Hypotheses have no foundation except conjecture. So it cannot be allowed to interpret the confirmed texts in the light of hypotheses. Moreover, there is the danger in so doing of subjecting the texts to modification with the modification and mutation of such hypotheses.

Finally, we would say that the *ˆad,th* is an indirect expression of the impossibility of the creature reaching to the reality of the Essence of the Creator with either sense or thought. Examples of such indirect expressions are known in the speech of the Messenger, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, and indeed also in the words of Allah, Exalted is He. In the *ˆad,th quds,* is: 'When I love him I become his ear that he listens with, and his eye that he sees with, and his hand that he grasps with, and his foot that he walks with.' If we are bound with the bonds of externals and confined to the narrowness of the words, without turning our eyes and minds to wider goals and further ends, then it becomes necessary for us to affirm that Allah, Glorified is He, is Himself literally the ear of the worshipper beloved to Him, his eye, his hand and his leg. This is something rejected by the belief of everyone who believes in Allah. When you have understood this, you must know that the 'light' or 'fire' mentioned in the *ˆad,th* of Ab*ƒ* M*ƒs~* are not sensory. Rather, they are an indirect expression of the attributes of His Greatness and Ma-

jesty that are manifested for those who seek knowledge of Him, and that amaze with the beauty of His Greatness and the manifestation of Perfection, and (an indirect expression also) of what may befall those who are journeying to Him of misguidance and going astray——from which we seek refuge in Allah. If the interpretation chosen by the author of *al-Man~r* is allowed, then it will be appropriate for the believers in *waˆdat al-wujfd* (unity of being) to interpret His saying—— 'Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth' (*al-Nfr*, 24.35)——as meaning that His Essence is the lights that appear to us in the higher and lower worlds like the sun, the moon and other celestial bodies. Thereupon they will make from this verse a proof for their error, and an evidence for their unbelief. Exalted is Allah from whatever the inventors say.

3
The *ˆad,th* that Muslim has narrated from Abƒ Dharr that the Prophet, upon him be the best of peace and the blessings of Allah, when he was asked about seeing his Lord, said: 'Light. How can I see Him?'
The reasoning from this is that the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, declared the occurrence of seeing impossible by saying 'How can I see Him?'. That is proof of the impossibility of seeing Him, Exalted is He.

Conclusion:

The outcome of the Discussion

After this presentation of the subject of seeing Allah, Exalted is He, in this world and in the next world, and review of the arguments of those

who deny and those who affirm, and the objections and their answers, I do not think, respected reader, that you will doubt that those who deny have held the stronger, the more sound and prudent view. It is clear from the lucidity of their arguments and the safety of their opinion that they are free of any influence from the Jews and *mushrikfn* who asked to see Allah. Moreover, that stance is more blessed in its coherence with the original rule about the attributes of Allah, Exalted is He, namely His non-likeness to His creatures: 'Nothing is like unto Him, He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing'. If you are not convinced by what I have mentioned, then at least you should be convinced that those who hold this view adhere to the foundation of Allah's Book and His Messenger's Sunnah. Therefore, there is no reason to connect them to unbelief or misguidance and cut the relations which join them to the Muslim *ummah*. Before I leave this subject, I would like to put before you two matters, that may perhaps succeed with your thinking and reflection:

The first is that you will find in the Book of Allah those favours that He has promised the believers in the hereafter mentioned in the clearest phrases and repeated in different places so as to arouse longing for them. But you will not find any mention of seeing except what those who affirm interpret on the basis of the word 'more' or something of that sort. The seeing is not mentioned except ambiguously. Do you think it comprehensible——if the seeing were proved, and it is greater than any bounty in Paradise——that this mere slight hint should suffice, whereas food and drink, accommodation, marriages, gardens, rivers and other pleasures and agreeable things, are mentioned time after time with clear phrases that leave no scope for any other interpretation?

The second is the story of His servant and friend, Ibr~h,m, that Allah has related in His Book, while Ibr~h,m is establishing the argument against his people who worshipped celestial bodies. To declare the voidness of their divinity, he derived evidence from their actual state, because they moved from one state to the other, visible at one time and hidden at another. It is known that being hidden they had not perished, rather the horizon hid them from sight. Is there not in this a proof that what is apparent to the sight, then disappears, cannot be fit for Godhood and Lordship? Because the One Who merits being Lord and God cannot pass through states, changing from one to another. Then how will it be for us if we affirm for Allah this attribute that Ibr~h,m has rebuked in his divinely inspired and clear argument against his people? How then do we claim that He will appear for the people of Paradise who will see Him, and afterwards He will veil Himself from them until the time comes for the next seeing?

I do not think, respected reader, when you reflect on these two matters, together with what has been written in the foregoing discussion, that you will be in any doubt as to the impossibility of seeing Him, and the safety of belief of those who think it. I do not wish to prolong the matter for you, for the wise grasp the realities clearly with a little light: 'Who is not benefited by little wisdom, may be harmed by more.'

THE SECOND DISCUSSION:

ON THE QUR|>N'S BEING CREATED

This discussion consists of an Introduction, four Chapters and a Conclusion.

Introduction

This contains an introduction to (the meaning of the terms used in this Discussion) 'creation', the 'Qur|~n', the distinction between the Qur|~n and other revealed books and '*kal~m al-nafs*,'.[71]

The dictionary meaning of *al-khalq* (creation) is origination without any precedent. In the terminology of the people of religion, it means bringing the thing from not-being to being. In this sense it is one of those actions of Allah which are particular to Him and which cannot emanate from any other than Him. What has come in the Qur|~n like 'And behold, when you created out of clay, like the figure of a bird' (*al-M~|idah*, 5.110) recounts an incident that happened before the strict legal meaning of being creator was made particular to Allah, Exalted is He.

The Qur|~n is (1) the speech (2) revealed (3) in its letters and words (4) to the Prophet Muˆammad, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, which is (5) inimitable in its combinations and meanings, and (6) narrated from him through firm *taw~tur* (i.e. 'many from many') traditions.

(1) 'Speech' is the general category, and what follows it are particularizations to exclude unintended meanings. (2) Saying 'revealed' excludes normal human speech, prose or verse, for Allah creates it in their brains, and makes it flow on their tongues. (3) Saying 'in its letters and words' excludes Prophetic *ˆad,th*s, because the construction of these *ˆad,th*s in letters and

[71] [Translator's note: Literally 'speech of the Self' or 'inward speech', *kal~m al-nafs*, is used throughout in the technical sense of 'expression of the Divine Will without form, i.e. without words or sounds'.]

words goes back to the Prophets who uttered these sayings. The words thereof were not revealed to them; rather, the meanings were revealed to them. (4) Saying 'to the Prophet Muˆammad, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah' excludes all the divine books revealed to other Prophets, like the scriptures of Ibr~h,m, of M*f*s~, the Torah, the Inj,l (Gospel), and the Psalms. (5) Saying 'inimitable' excludes those divine (*quds,*) *ˆad,ths* which, even assuming their *taw~tur*, were not revealed to be inimitable as was the Qur|~n. And (6) by specifying the condition of *taw~tur*, the individual readings have been excluded, because they are not given the same status as the Qur|~n.

As for the difference between *kal~m al-nafs,* and the Qur|~n and other revealed Books: *kal~m al-nafs,* is an Essential attribute of Allah by which His perfection is affirmed, and shortcoming is negated of Him, for affirmation of speech is a negation of its opposite, namely dumbness. In the same way, affirmation of knowledge is negation of ignorance, affirmation of power is negation of impotence, affirmation of hearing is negation of deafness, affirmation of seeing is negation of blindness, and affirmation of life is negation of death.

Mu`tazilis hold that it is unnecessary to affirm Speaking as an eternal attribute of Allah, since the attribute of Power suffices to negate dumbness of Him. Perhaps some of our scholars (also) have held this opinion. Those of our scholars who have affirmed *kal~m al-nafs,* agree with Ash`aris on its differing from other kinds of speech. It is not letters, nor sounds, nor sentences, nor words, and it is abiding with the Essence of Allah, Exalted is He. The intention behind this is not other than to negate dumbness of Him, Exalted is He.

The Mu`tazilis who considered it sufficient to affirm the attribute of Power for Him rather than affirm Speaking as a distinct eternal attribute, thought that the Essential attributes always and only imply negation of their opposites. Speech is not an opposite of dumbness such that dumbness is negated by affirming it. The opposite of speech is silence. For it happens that a non-speaking person is not dumb; rather, he is not non-silent.

Im~m Ibn Ab, Nabh~n, may Allah have mercy on them, has nicely explained the meaning of speech that is void of sounds and letters in a way acceptable to reason. The summary of what he says is: If you would understand the reality of this speech, then consider the sovereign of your limbs and controller of your body, namely the nervous system which is the centre of the reasoning faculty and control. You will find it commanding and forbidding in its kingdom——the whole of your body——with a speech which is transmitted by the means that Allah has made between it and the limbs, glands and cells of the body. There is no part in the body however small where any of its commands or prohibitions can reach, but that part hastens immediately to obey. That is because of the unseen power and hidden secret that Allah has entrusted to this sovereign. When this sign is clear in Allah's creatures, then what do you think of the Creator, the All-Knowing, from whose grip nothing of the universe can flee, and from whose overwhelming and control no minor or major thing can escape? That is what is intended by His saying, 'For to anything which We have willed, We but say ''Be'' and it is' (*al-Nahl*, 16.40).

The usage of 'speech' for something like that, something not heard and not read, is known to Arabs. An example is the saying of Akh\al:

The discourse (*khutbah*) of a speaker should not delight you unless it is original with the inner lan-

guage (*kal~m*). Indeed, speech is in the heart, and the tongue has only been made a sign of the heart.

As for the revealed books: they are a speech combined from the alphabetical letters, read with the tongues, written on slates, preserved in the hearts, heard with the ears, revealed by Allah through the Angel to His chosen servants. It is distinguished from all other speech by not issuing from human faculties, though it is combined of the same letters that are the components of their speech, and compounded of the same words that are used in their addresses. Each part of it has a beginning and an end. Allah has entrusted to mankind the ability of reciting it, listening to it, writing it and memorizing it. Regardless of all that, it is not allowed to refer (its authorship) to mankind, collectively or individually. Because Allah alone brought it with His power from non-existence into existence, then He revealed it with His knowledge, from *al-law^ al-ma^ffŒ* (the Preserved Tablet) on the hearts of His Prophets, and to the intellects of those of His servants whom He has honoured with its memorization.

Allah has particularized some of it——namely, the Qur|~n——with an unseen spirit that He breathed into it, so that minds are struck with wonder at the secret of His Lordship that became manifested for them. Comparable to that is Allah's creation of man from earth, Exalted is He, in a way that amazes the mind because of the sensual and non-sensual faculties that Allah has placed in man, which is connected to this unseen secret of Allah's having breathed His spirit into this creation.

Im~m Ibn Ab, Nabh~n, may Allah have mercy on both (father and son), has explained nicely the reason for referring this Word (*kal~m*) to Allah, Exalted is He. He says:

Consider: if Allah, Exalted is He, wills to address His servants with the truest and most eloquent speech other than this which He has revealed to them, is He not powerful to create it written with the Pen of His Power on *al-lawˆ al-maˆffŒ*? Then He orders one of His angels in heaven to descend with it to the heart of one of His servants on earth who conveys it to the people, commanding them to recite it, write it, and act upon its content. Certainly, whoever believes in Allah will not be in any doubt about His power over it. Once the possibility of this has become clear to you, say to whom [else] this speech will be referred [if not to Allah]? Will it be said that it is the speech of the people who recite it, or the speech of the Messenger who has conveyed it to them, or the speech of the Angel who has descended with it, or the speech of the *lawˆ* where it has been written, or the speech of the Pen which has written it——or the speech of the Great Creator who has brought it from not-being into being? What comes directly to the mind of every thinking person is that it is impermissible to refer it, in fact, to anyone other than Him, Exalted is He.[72]

Shaykh al-Isl~m al-Muˆaqqiq al-Khal,l,, may Allah have mercy on him, has offered an explanation similar to that, at the end of which he says:

As for its being referred to Allah, Exalted is He, while it is being recited by us, uttered by our tongues with sounds, melodies, with letters and words issuing from us: here the rule is that every saying is referred to the one who [first] says it, not to the one who rehearses it, reading or chanting it. The explanation of it is that if someone says about the *mu`allaqah* of Imru| al-Qays, or about the *qa‰,da*s of Abƒ Tamm~m or al-Buˆtur, or others, that they are his own speech, referring them to himself because he reads them out, it will be a serious fault on his part. Or, as you find with compositions referred to the people of knowledge——you refer them to the one who composed

---

[72] Ibid (with some explanatory changes)??? *H~shiyat al-Man~r* 9(1), 167-68 (Maktabat al-Q~hirah, 4th edition).

them, even if you did not hear him uttering them. It is possible that the writer never spoke [aloud] what he wrote. Or, as is narrated from the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, that he said to a man: 'Recite to me your verses which you said last night, and which were not uttered by your tongue, nor heard by your ears.' Then the man said: 'I bear witness that you are Allah's Messenger. Surely I did say those verses, though my tongue did not utter them, nor my ears hear them.' Then he recited the verses to him. So the Qur|~n, however He originated it, and by which He challenged the eloquent [to produce the like of it], and made them powerless in the face of it, cannot be referred but to Him.[73]

And when we speak of the creation of the Qur|~n, we refer only to this Qur|~n that is recited by the tongue, written in the *mu%^afs*, as defined earlier. We do not speak of *kal~m al-nafs,*. There is no evidence from the Book itself or from the Sunnah naming *kal~m al-nafs,* as Qur|~n. It is only Ash`aris who have used this term for the Qur|~n. There is no dispute over adopting a particular term—but in adopting it they did not refer to any authoritative proof. That is why we have not relied on it. We affirm the attribute of speech for Allah as Im~m ~iy~| al-D,n `Abd al-`Az,z Tham,n,, may Allah have mercy on him, says in his *Ma`~lim*:

Know that speech is sometimes referred to Allah in the meaning of negating dumbness of Him, and it is then to be understood as an Essential attribute in the way of such attributes. And sometimes it is referred to Him in the sense of its being one of His actions, and it is then to be understood as such. So the meaning of His being Speaking, according to the first interpreta-

[73] *Tamh,d qaw~`id al-,m~n* (Oman: Wiz~rat al-Tur~th al-Qawm, wa l-Thaq~fah,1st edition) 2:10-11.

tion, is that He is not dumb; and according to the second that He is a Creator of speech.[74]

What it is compulsory to establish in the mind when discussing the creation of the Qur|~n is that by 'Qur|~n' is not meant Allah's knowledge of the Books that He has sent down to His Messengers, for no-one will doubt the eternity of Allah's knowledge, Exalted is He, of these Books, except those who hold the opinion of the origination and contingency of His attributes——and they are not worthy of consideration. The point is that the eternity of His Knowledge does not imply the eternity of the known. Allah, Glorified is He, has eternal knowledge of the speech of mankind, as He has knowledge of His speech, and knowledge of all His creatures, in the same way that He has knowledge of what has happened, what will happen, and of what will not happen——the how it would have been if it had happened. But that does not in any way necessarily mean the eternity of any of these objects of knowledge. That is why some of the *salaf* said that the Qur|~n is originated, and Allah's knowledge of it is eternal. In this regard al-Muˆaqqiq al-Khal,l,, may Allah have mercy on him, says:

Allah's Knowledge, which is among the attributes of His Essence, has been when there was no Torah, no Gospel, no Psalms, no Scriptures and no Qur|~n. This knowledge is now the same as it was before. Because the Essential attributes are not subject to increase, alteration or change in any way. Only the effects of, and indications to, these attributes change, grow or diminish, according to the renewal and origination of the known. All the effects are created. Allah, Exalted is He, says: 'Then behold the effects (*~th~r*) of Allah's Mercy——how He gives life to the earth after its death' (*al-Rfm*, 30.50).

---

[74] *Ma`~lim al-d,n* (Oman: Wiz~rat al-Tur~th al-Qawm, wa l-Thaq~fah, 1st edition) 2:9.

The revealed books are in reality indications to His Knowledge which is an attribute of His Essence. They are not the attribute of the Knowledge itself which is a quality of His eternal Essence. Otherwise, the Torah, Gospel, Psalms, the Scrolls of Ibr~h,m and Mƒs~, the Qur|~n and all the Revelations, would be eternal, existing in eternity with Allah, Exalted is He, with their created, originated words in abundance. So many creatures would be eternal, existing in eternity alongwith Allah the Eternal. That is invalid, because there is no eternal other than Him, and everything other than Him is originated. It is not possible that the Qur|~n should be eternal with Him without its existing in form, written or recited in its words. For that would mean believing in the existence of a reality which is not existing, which is impossible. Thus it is known, necessarily, that the Essential Eternal is His knowledge of the Qur|~n, Torah and Gospel, as His knowledge of other creatures is also eternal. Because it is an Essential attribute of the Eternal, the Ever-Living, the Necessary of Existence, Exalted and Glorified is He. That is something that can never be disputed.[75]

From the preceding discussion the respected reader will have clearly understood the difference between *kal~m al-nafs,* and the speech revealed to Allah's servants, as also the distinction between the Revelation and Allah's knowledge of it. Similarly, it will have become clear why this revealed speech is referred only to Allah and why it is impermissible to refer it to any other than Him, Exalted is He, except in a metaphorical way as Allah has referred it to Jibr,l in His saying 'Indeed this is the word of a most honourable messenger' (*al-H~qqah*, 69.40; *al-Takw,r*, 81.19).

---

[75] *Tamh,d qaw~`id al-,m~n* (Oman: Wiz~rat al-Tur~th al-Qawm, wa l-Thaq~fah,1st edition) 2:9-10.

Chapter 1

On the differences among the *ummah* on the revealed Word being eternal or created

From among the issues which preoccupied the *ummah* and created among them a great dispute, and divided its groups into different factions is the issue of the revealed speech of Allah: is it originated or eternal? This dispute has driven them to discuss *kal~m al-nafs,* and dispute about affirmation or negation of it. I have no wish in this book to gather the opinions of the disputing parties, or to present proofs and evidence for and against each opinion, except insofar as I am forced to do so in order to prepare the ground for the explanation of what the Ibadis' critics have criticized of the Ibadis' belief in the creation of the Qur|~n revealed to our master Muˆammad, upon him be the best of peace and the blessings of Allah.

You have seen, respected reader, in the Introduction to this Discussion, that among the groups of this *ummah* are those who deny *kal~m al-nafs,* altogether——namely, the Mu`tazilis——deeming it sufficient, in order to negate dumbness of Allah, to affirm His attribute of Power. As you have seen, our people, the Ash`aris, and the majority of the *ummah*, agree on the affirmation of *kal~m al-nafs,*. You have surely taken good note of the distinction made by our people between *kal~m al-nafs,* and the Qur|~n and other revealed books, as I have quoted from the author of *al-Ma`~lim* and Im~m Ibn Ab, Nabh~n. Likewise, I hope you will have taken clear note of the difference between the revelation and Allah's knowledge of it, as I have quoted for you from al-Muˆaqqiq al-Khal,l,.

That and the other distinctions have become confused for many people. Their confusion led them to dispute about the Qur|~n: is it created or not-created? The fire of this *fitna* was ignited by those disguised converts to the *ummah* who had adopted Islam in order to satisfy some secret desires of their hearts. The most important of these desires was to ignite the fire of *fitna* among the groups of the *ummah*, dividing it into parties and factions. 'Each party rejoices in that which is with itself' (*al-Mu|minfn*, 23.53). Perhaps at the head of these was Abƒ Sh~kir al-Di%~n,, about whom it has been said: he was a Jew who pretended Islam, in the same way as did, among his ancestors, Saul, the (former) Jew, who divided the followers of Christ, upon him be peace, by igniting the fire of dispute among them.

The first group of the righteous ancestors passed on to their Lord before their ears heard any sound of any saying on this subject. They were in consensus on the point that Allah is the Creator of everything, and that whatever is other than Him is created, and the Qur|~n——like other revealed Books——is Allah's speech, His Revelation and sending down. This was the agreed statement of Muslim scholars in Oman in the time of Im~m al-Muhann~ b. Jayfar, when a wave of dispute on this issue covered them, a dispute whose gales had swept the city of Basra, at that time rife with different ideological trends. The Omanis had close relations with Basra because of the strong cultural and economic links that bound them. I wish they had stopped at that limit, indeed I wish all Muslims had been content with this amount of belief and statement on the subject. But caprice has grown stronger on this issue, and those passions have grown stronger which kindled

the fire of this *fitna* in whose heat the Muslims are burning.

The reason for all that is extremism. The thing with extremism is that it inspires its opposite. The beginning of it was the feud of *ahl al-ˆad,th* and whoever followed their way with the rationalists (like the Mu`tazilis and others) and their inciting the authorities and the people against the latter. Later, when power shifted in favour of the Mu`tazilis——at the end of the time of Ma|mƒn, then in the time of Mu`ta‰im——they exploited their opportunity to take revenge on *ahl al-ˆad,th*, and went to extremes in killing and persecution. Hearts filled with hatred. The issue took on emotional colouring in the discussion. Each group started abusing the other, and accusing, and charging with *bid`a* (heretical innovation) and deviation.

Since our people, the people of *istiq~mah*, did not participate in any of those *fitna*s, and did not mix with those hatreds, they did not fall under the influence of passions. So their discussion of the subject was more objective, because their starting-point was proof and evidence, not the reality of hatreds and ill-will.

As for the Ibadis of the western Islamic world: on account of their being far removed from those events, they did not hold back in proclaiming the right opinion from the beginning, as a declaration of the truth accompanied by referral to evidence. As for the people of the east: among them, their greatest im~m, Muˆammad b. Maˆbƒb, may Allah have mercy on him, tried to proclaim what his brothers, the im~ms and leaders of the western regions, had proclaimed. But Muˆammad b. H~shim opposed him vigorously in that matter, so he turned away from it. Then came their agreed statement, as I mentioned above, when they gathered in the city of Dama (present-day al-Sayb).

This was: to be content with what the ancestors of this *ummah* had held, and to be silent in respect of declaring either the creation or non-creation of the Qur|~n.

I do not think they adopted this posture of keeping silent except to shut the door to, and to turn away from, oppressors. For their most conspicuous characteristic, may Allah have mercy on them, and their strongest principle, were to fight wrong-doing and to resist oppressors, without being swayed by which people were oppressing and which were victims of oppression.

May Allah reward their profound and enlightened insights and pure hearts.[76]

This dimension of their thinking remained hidden from the eyes of those who came after them. The later people thought their silence on declaring the creation of the Qur|~n was because of their belief in its eternity. Therefore, the later people declared the opposite (i.e. the non-creation of the Qur|~n) and attacked those who held its being created. That led them to a strange contradiction, as you will see (below) when you read what was written on the subject at that time, like the first volume of *Bay~n al-shar`*, the first volume of *al-Kashf wa l-bay~n* and *Diw~n al-Im~m Ibn al-Nadr*.

Very often you will feel in what they wrote the effect of a strong reaction to the *mihna*

---

[76] Im~m Nfr al-D,n al-S~lim, thinks that the early eastern Ibadi im~ms' non-declaration of the creation of the Qur|~n and other revealed books derives from their shunning the Jahmis' belief in the origination and contingency of Allah's Essential attributes, because they feared that this subject would be construed as a branch of that Jahmi belief: *Tu^fat al-a`y~n* (Oman: Wiz~rat al-Tur~th al-Qawm, wa l-Thaq~fah), 1:156-57. This does not contradict what I have said. It is not impossible that their non-declaration of the creation of the Qur|~n was for both reasons.

(persecution, inquisition)——it is manifested in what they wrote about it, in what they said about the sufferers being heroes of the *ummah*, martyrs for true belief, who protected this true belief with their blood and preserved it through their sacrifice. The impact of this heated emotional rhetoric is reflected in everything that those who supported them in that position have put together. This applies whether these supporters were from among the eastern Ibadis or Ash`aris or others. That line of thinking continued in the eastern Ibadi circle until there appeared from among the later scholars of Oman those who, through their writing, opened the locks of confusion, and through their explanation removed the veils of doubt until the eastern Ibadi position came to agree and cohere with the western Ibadi position.

I investigated the reasons for the confusion on this issue which has gone to the extent of harsh criticism by one group of Muslims against those who believe in the creation of the Qur|~n. I found this confusion to be owed to two factors:

The first is confusion in their minds of the revealed Qur|~n with *kal~m al-nafs,* by which negation of dumbness is intended.

The second is confusion of the Qur|~n with Allah's knowledge of it, Exalted and Glorified is He——whereas the attributes of Speaking and Knowledge are both eternal.

What was stated earlier in the Introduction about the distinction between the revealed speech and *kal~m al-nafs,* and between it and the Knowledge of Allah, Exalted is He, suffice to remove this confusion and dissolve this doubt. I add to it that speaking, in the dictionary sense and in conventional usage, cannot but have the meaning of producing speech. When you say '*takallama Mu^ammad*' (Mu^ammad spoke), your statement does

not convey anything except that he produced speech in the past. When you say '*yatakallamu*' (he speaks/will speak) it does not mean other than his speaking in the present or future——the (Arabic) tense of the verb here is for both present and future. When you say '*takallam, y~ful~n*' (Speak, O So-and-So), it does not mean otherwise than requiring the addressee to speak.

What you say in any of those three phrases cannot mean that the speech is a quality abiding with the person of the speaker or the one from whom the speech is sought. Otherwise, what will be the meaning of your saying to someone: 'Speak', if the sought speech is abiding with him? Is not this asking for what is already there? This does not contradict the person's recalling the speech before uttering it. The meaning of *kal~m al-nafs,* differs from that of uttered speech. Besides that, it is clearly evident that when you report of someone that he spoke on Friday, or that he will speak on Saturday, your report does not convey (in the dictionary sense and in conventional usage) that he was speaker of that speech before the (specified) occasion. Allah has addressed His servants in their language that they know, and in their senses that they are familiar with. When He has informed them that He spoke to some one of His creatures at some time, His saying that will not convey other than that He produced speech at that time. Then there is no reason to make that address which the addressed person heard or read into an eternal attribute abiding with the Essence of Allah, Exalted is He. True, it is known to Allah, Glorified is He, since forever——(in the same way) as His knowledge (is eternal) of the speech of His creatures, its letters and words, combined in sentences or standing alone, words and meanings, the voice-box

where the sounds are produced and the inflections of the words, its sounds and its qualities.

Ibn al-Qayyim says:

The Qur|~n, the clear Sunnah, reason, and the word of the *salaf* denote that Allah, Glorified is He, speaks by His Will, as denoted by the fact that His being Speaking is a quality abiding with His Essence, and is an attribute of [both] His Essence and His action. Allah, Exalted is He, says: 'For to anything that We have willed, We but say ''Be'' and it is' (*al-Nnaˆl*, 16.40); and His saying: 'When He intends a thing, His command is ''Be'' and it is' (*Y~s,n*, 36.82). When the verb [in 16.40] is strictly future in meaning, moreover has '*an*' [particle indicating an action to come] after it, and the verb-form [*naqflu*] denotes present and future, and '*kun*' is made up of two letters, one before the other——then what this verse means is exactly what is understood by clear minds and natures. In the same way His saying: 'When We decide to destroy a township, We command those among them...' (*al-Isr~|*, 17.16) '*al-amr*', the command——whether a natural or legal command is meant——is existing after it had not been. Another example is His saying: 'Indeed We created you, and gave you shape, then We bade the angels to prostrate to Adam'' (*al-A`r~f*, 7.11). He only said 'prostrate' to them after creating Adam and giving him shape. Another example is His saying, Exalted is He: 'When M*fs~* came to the place appointed by Us, and his Lord addressed him, he said: ''O my Lord show (Yourself) to me that I may look upon You.'' He said: ''By no means can you see Me…"' (*al-A`r~f*, 7.143-47). Thus, there are many proofs which denote that the speaking is the address that occurred on the particular occasion. An example is His saying: 'So when he came to the fire, he was called from the right bank' (*al-Qa‰a‰*, 28.30). He who called him is He who said to him: 'Indeed I am Allah, there is no god but Me, so worship Me' (*œ~h~*, 20.14). Another example is His saying: 'The day when Allah will call to them and say' (*al-Qa‰a‰*, 28.62, 65, 74). And His saying: 'On the day when He will gather them all together and say to the angels, ''Was it you that these used to worship?'''

(*Saba|*, 34.40). And His saying: 'The day when We will ask hell, ''Are you filled to the full?'' It will say, ''Are there any more to come?''' (*Q~f*, 50.30). It is impossible that He, Glorified is He, will say to hell ''Are you filled to the full?' and it will say ''Are there any more to come?'' before the creation of hell and before its existence. Reflect well upon the texts of the Qur|~n from its beginning to its end, and the texts of the Sunnah, especially the *^ad,th*s of Shafa`ah and the *^ad,th* of Mi`r~j and others like 'Do you know what your Lord has said this night?'; and his saying: 'In truth, Allah creates whatever He wills of His creatures, and among what He has created is this: ''Do not speak in the prayer''''; and his saying: 'There is no-one among you, but his Lord will speak to him; there will be no interpreter or doorman between him and Him.'

The true and trustworthy speaker has reported that He speaks to His angels in this world. He asks them: 'How have you left my servants?'. And He will speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, and He will speak to His Prophets, His Messengers and His believing servants on that Day, and He will speak to the people of Paradise in Paradise, and He will greet them in their destinations, and that He says every night: 'Who asks Me so that I will give him? Who seeks My forgiveness so that I forgive him? Who forwards a loan to One not in need and not unjust?' The Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: 'Indeed Allah made your father come alive and spoke to him''. It is known that He spoke to him at that time, and said to him: 'Proclaim your wish to Me.' And many many other texts from the Qur|~n and Sunnah.[77]

All that is an argument in our favour, confirming the correctness of what we have proved, that the meaning of Allah's being Speaking is producing speech on the occasion of it. Otherwise, what is the meaning of its being condi-

[77] *al-^aw~`iq al-mursalah* (Cairo: Ma\bat al-Im~m), 429-30. See also: *Fat~wa Ibn Taymiyyah* (Riyadh: Ma\abi al-Riy~ŧ), 12:239-40.

tioned with night, with day or with this world or the hereafter or other times, if this speech had been eternal?

The distinction between Allah's producing His speech and the servant's producing his speech is twofold:

Firstly, the distinction between Allah's actions and the servants' actions. The servant is not fully independent in producing his action, rather he earns it and Allah is the creator of it. Reward and punishment are based on the earning of the servant not on the creation of the Creator. The creature's speech, like the rest of his actions, is created by Allah. The creature owns nothing but earning. It is not considered strange that Allah creates for the servant, inside him, a speech, then makes it flow on the servant's tongue through his option; in the same way, it is not strange that Allah creates in the servant a motion, then makes it flow through his option on the moving part of his body. Allah's speech——like all His actions such as bringing into existence and taking to non-existence, giving and preventing, raising and lowering, expanding and narrowing, giving life and giving death——is not subject to intervention by any of His creatures.

Secondly, there is the difference between Allah's speaking and the creature's speaking, in the same way as His actions differ from His creature's actions. For example, Allah's teaching His servants. Either this is an inspiration that He places in the hearts of those He specifies therewith——for example: 'He taught Adam all the names' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.31); and 'He taught you what you did not know' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.113); and 'He taught by the Pen, taught man what he did not know' (*al-`Alaq*, 96.4-5)——or it is a revelation that He makes through His Messengers, in which is in-

cluded teaching man 'what he did not know'. As for people's teaching one another——this is by dictation and instruction.

In the same way, the meaning of 'help' when it is related to Allah differs from when it is related to the servants. The servants' helping one another is giving support directly or through their wealth or military means. The help of Allah is His creation of the causes of the servants' victory and providing it to them. For example, His saying, Exalted is He: 'Indeed He helped you at Badr' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3.123); and His saying: 'Assuredly Allah will help those who help Him' (*al-™ajj*, 22.40). Similarly, (the notion of) 'giving': it can be related to Allah and to the servants, and its meaning differs in the two relations.

From this you will realize that the difference between the two modes of speaking derives from the difference of relation. If it is related to the Creator its meaning will differ from when it is related to the creatures. If related to creatures endowed with consciousness, namely mankind, it denotes an action shared by man's external and internal senses, his brain, his lungs, his bronchial tubes, his throat, his tongue, his teeth and lips, and by the force of air issuing from the lungs and pushing out the sound. In this sense speaking is inconceivable in respect of Allah, Glorified is He. It is not permissible to interpret His being Speaking in this sense. Allah, Exalted is He, has explained for us His speaking to His servants, where He says: 'It is not fitting for a man that Allah should speak to him, except by inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a messenger to reveal, with Allah's permission, what Allah wills, for He is Most High, Most Wise'' (*al-Shfr~*, 42.51). It is sufficient for you that He, Glorified is He,

has made inspiration speak from Him; moreover, being inspiration, it is Allah who specifies with it whoever He wills from among His servants. This cannot occur between one man and another, because man has no power over inspiration. If this had occurred among people, the familiar meaning of speaking would not have been used for it, either in the dictionary or in convention.

That understood, the permissibility should be clear to you of speech from behind the veil (when the speaking is related to Allah), in the sense of creation of audible sound not emanating from any particular thing, that conveys the intention of Allah, and that is picked up by the hearing of one chosen by Allah for such address. Allah's speaking to Mƒs~, upon him be peace, is to be interpreted in this way. This is one of the two possibilities mentioned by Im~m al-œ~ˆir b.`>shƒr (who is a Maliki in *madhhab*, Ash`ari in belief) in respect of Allah's speaking to His angels. He says:

Allah's 'speaking' to the angels is used to signify that whereby they understand His Will, and is termed *kal~m al-nafs*,. Possibly this was speech that the angels actually heard, then the usage of 'speaking' is in the real sense, and its relation to Allah is that He created that 'speaking' without any of the conventional means. It is also possible that it is another pointer to His Will. In this case the usage 'speaking' is a metaphor, because the pointer is [directed to the comprehension of] intelligent beings. The metaphor in this usage is stronger than the metaphor in, for example, the saying of the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah: 'The fire complained to its Lord'; and in Allah's saying, Exalted is He: 'He said to it and to the earth: ''Come you together, willingly or unwillingly.'' They said: ''We come in willing ob-

edience.''' (*Fu%%ilat*, 41.11). There is no advantage in choosing between the two possibilities.[78]

Similar to that is Im~m al-œ~ˆir b.`>shƒr's statement on the teaching of the names to Adam:

> The teaching of the names to Adam by Allah was … by the method of dictation——presenting the named to him and, as he saw it, its name being dictated by means of a created sound audible to him.[79]

From what I cited earlier from the statements of the two Im~ms, Ibn Ab, Nabh~n and al-Khal,l,, may Allah have mercy on them, the way in which the Qur|~n and other revealed books are Allah's speech will have become clear to you, as well as its being created by Him, Glorified is He, and collapse of the doubt of those who believe in its eternity on the basis of His saying: 'If one among the associators asks you for asylum, grant it to him, so that he may hear the Word of Allah' (*al-Tawbah*, 9.6). This is what the belief of our Ibadi people is established on, and it is the opinion of many Ash`aris, so far so that al-Muˆaqqiq al-Khal,l, says: 'We and Ash`aris have agreed on (the Qur|~n's) being created. That has been declared by Shaykh Abƒ Sa`,d and Muˆammad b. Maˆbƒb, may Allah have mercy on them. Our western people have agreed to it in line with the Mu`tazilis. No-one denies it except for a few Hanbalis.'[80]

Among those Ash`aris who have declared the creation of the Qur|~n is Fakhr al-D,n al-R~z,. He has more than once narrated the consensus of the learned on it. An example is his statement in the preface of his great *tafs,r*:

---

78 *al-Taˆr,r wa al-tanw,r* (Tunis: al-D~r al-Tunisiyyah li-l-Nashr), 1:397.

79 Ibid, 1: 411.

80 *Tamh,d qaw~`id al-,m~n* (Oman: Wiz~rat al-Tur~th al-Qawm, wa l-Thaq~fah), 2:6.

The impossibility of a word which is composed of letters and sounds being eternal is self-evident to the mind for two reasons:
The first is that a word cannot be a word unless its letters are sequential. The letter [uttered] before the last [that is uttered] is originated, and if something's being originated is affirmed, its eternity is then impossible. So for the letter following the end of the first, there is no doubt that it is originated.
The second is that, if those letters from which the word is composed occurred in one go, the word cannot be. A word composed of three letters can occur in any one of six combinations. If the letters occurred all together, the word's occurring in some of those combinations will not be better than its occurring in any of the rest. [Alternatively] if the letters occurred in succession then the word is originated.[81]

He says in the *tafs,r* of *Sfrat al-A`r~f:*

People differ about the speech of Allah, Exalted is He. Some say that His Word is an expression in letters combined and composed in order. Others say that His Word is an attribute in the true sense but that it is other than letters and words. As for the first opinion: the learned agree that it is originated necessarily on account of its being after it was not. Hanbalis and Hashawis claim the Word composed of letters and sounds is eternal. That is an opinion beneath the notice of any learned person.[82]

Then al-R~z, made mention of a debate of his which we will come to below, *insh~| All~h*.

In his *tafs,r* of *Sfrat al-Shfr~,* he severely criticized those Hanbalis who hold the opinion of the eternity of the Qur|~nic letters. He says:

These people are so low as not to deserve mention among the group of the learned. It happened one day that I said to one of them: 'If Allah spoke these letters, then either He spoke them in one go, or in suc-

---

81 *al-Tafs,r al-kab,r* (Tehran: D~r al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, 2nd edition), 1: 30.

82 Ibid, 14: 228.

cession. The first is void, because the speaking of all these letters in one go will not convey orderly composition which is combination in sequence. It necessarily follows that this composition combined of these successive letters cannot then be Allah's speech. The second is void, because if Allah spoke them in succession then it will be originated.' When that man heard this statement [of mine], he said: 'It is obligatory for us to affirm and pass on', i.e. we affirm that the Qur|~n is eternal and pass by this statement that we have heard. At that point I wondered greatly at the safety of heart of this speaker.

Then Fakhr al-D,n says:

They have agreed that these letters and sounds came into existence after they were not there, they happened after they had been non-being. Thereafter, they have differed in their [choice of] expression: 'they are created'; or 'it should not be stated [that they are created]'; conversely: 'it should be stated that they are originated'; or some other phrases.[83]

We find Im~m Ibn `>shƒr in his *tafs,r* of *Sfrat al-Nis~|* saying——after talking about the Word of Allah, revealed through the Angel to the Messengers, named as the Qur|~n, Torah, Gospel and Psalms——'No-one who has any share in knowledge of the religion can entertain any doubt as to its being originated. But some im~ms of Islam prevented the declaration of its being originated or created in the assemblies of debate (which were attended by the general public or by arrogant oppressors), and (they sought to prevent mutual) abusiveness and harm, to remove the (causes of) dispute, to preserve the relation to Islam, and to avoid the noise of the lowly, mean-minded people.[84]

---

[83] Ibid, 27.187-88.

[84] *al-Ta^r,r wa al-tanw,r* (Tunis: al-D~r al-Tƒnisiyyah, 1st edition), 6:38.

The statements of these two Ash`ari im~ms clarifies what al-Mu^aqqiq al-Khal,l, has said: that the position of Ash`aris towards this Qur|~n, revealed to the Messenger, upon him be the best of peace and the blessings of Allah, recited with the tongues, preserved in the hearts, written in the *mu%^afs*, does not differ from our position and that of Mu`tazilis and others who believe in its creation. This is what Im~m al-S~lim,, may Allah have mercy on him, meant when he judged the dispute between us and them to be merely 'verbal'.[85]

However, it appears to me that the Ash`aris did not agree on this position or they did not remain with it. We find in their books and in what is narrated from them that the Qur|~n that we read, hear, memorize and write, is not itself the Word of Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He. Rather, His Word is an eternal quality abiding with His Essence. These letters and sounds are just an expression of that Word. They are created in order to connect minds to the purposes of that Eternal Word. They give the analogy of a mirror in which the images of things are reflected, so the person sees these things through the mirror, whereas what he sees is just an image of the form being reflected. We find that Fakhr al-D,n al-R~z, (who is from among Ash`ari im~ms) refers this opinion to Ash`ari and his people with a phrase which implies his disagreement with them. He makes it clear that the non-Ash`aris oppose the Ash`aris in that. The text of what he says is:

The *ummah* is in consensus that Allah, Exalted is He, is Speaking. The people other than Ash`ari and his followers agree that the Word of Allah is these heard letters and combined sounds. Ash`ari and his followers

[85] *Mash~riq al-anw~r*, 245.

claim that the Word of Allah, Exalted is He, is an eternal quality expressed in these letters and sounds.[86]

Evidently, the Ash`aris are confused on this issue. Fakhr al-D,n who indicates his renunciation of their opinion in that statement of his, has himself said in the Preface of his *Tafs,r*:

When we say about these successive letters and successive sounds that they are the Word of Allah, Exalted is He, the intention is that these words denote the quality which is abiding with the Essence of Allah, Exalted is He. The name Word has been used for that quality metaphorically.

He goes on to say:

When we say that the Word of Allah is eternal we do not mean by it but that eternal quality which is the meaning of these words and expressions. When we say that the Word of Allah is a miracle for Mu^ammad, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, we mean by it these letters and these sounds which are originated. As the Eternal was in existence before Mu^ammad, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, how can it be a miracle for him? When we say that the Word of Allah is sƒrahs and verses, we mean by it these letters. When we say that the Word of Allah is eloquent we mean by it these words. When we begin the *tafs,r* of Allah's Word we mean by it also these words.[87]

Then he says:

The Hashawis have claimed that these sounds which we hear from this man [reciting the Qur|~n] are themselves the Word of Allah, Exalted is He. This is void, because we know as self-evident that these letters and sounds that we hear from this man are a quality of his tongue and his vocalization. If we say that these are themselves the Word of Allah, Exalted is He, we will be compelled to say that the same quality exactly is abiding with the Essence of Allah, Exalted is He, and

---

86 *al-Tafs,r al-kab,r* (Tehran: D~r al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, 2nd edition), 27:187.

87 Ibid, 1:31.

incarnating in the body of this man. The corruptness of this is self-evident. Furthermore, this is exactly what the Christians say, that the *uqnfm* of the Word incarnated in a clear human. They claim that it is incarnation in the man …s~|, upon him be peace, and at the same time an attribute of Allah, not moving from Him. This is exactly what the Hashawis say: that the Word of Allah, Exalted is He, is incarnated in the tongue of this man, without its moving from the Essence of Allah, Exalted is He. There is no difference between the two sayings, except that the Christian says this thing about …s~| alone, and these fools have said this foul saying about every human being from east to west.[88]

From that discussion and the like of it in the texts of Ash`ari im~ms, it is understood that they use the name Qur|~n for *kal~m al-nafs,* which is an Essential attribute of Allah, Exalted is He. That is what they mean when they say that the Qur|~n is not-created. This is the basis upon which those rely who say that the difference between us and them does not go beyond the 'verbal'.

But this Ash`ari opinion has encountered harsh criticism from two opposing groups at the same time, namely those who believe in the eternity of the recited Qur|~n, and those who believe in its being originated. The objection of both groups may be summarized in this way: in many verses Allah, Glorified is He, has named this Word that we recite Qur|~n, Furq~n (Criterion), Kit~b (Book), and Huda (Guidance). Among these verses are: 'We relate to you the most beautiful of stories in that We reveal to you this Qur|~n' (*Yfsuf*, 12.3). And His saying: 'Indeed this Qur|~n guides to that which is most right' (*al-Isr~|*, 17.9). And His saying: 'The month of Rama‡~n in which was sent down the Qur|~n, as a guide to mankind, also

88 Ibid, 1:31-32.

clear explanations of the Guidance and the Criterion' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.185). And His saying: 'We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur|~n' (*Yfsuf*, 12.2). And His saying: 'We have made it as an Arabic Qur|~n' (*al-Zukhruf*, 43.3). And His saying: 'Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion to His servant' (*al-Furq~n*, 25.1). And His saying: 'Those are verses of the Qur|~n and a clear Book' (*al-Nnaml*, 27.1). And His saying: 'Those are the verses of the Book and clear Qur|~n' (*al-™ijr*, 15.1). And His saying: 'That Book, no doubt in it, is a Guidance for the God-fearing' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.2). Allah has described the Qur|~n as sending down, as has come earlier in some verses. Examples are His saying: 'Indeed, We have sent it down in a blessed night' (*al-Dukh~n*, 44.3); and His saying: 'A Book that We have sent down to you in order that you might lead mankind out of the depths of darkness into light' (*Ibr~h,m*, 14.1); and His saying: 'He it is who has sent down to you the Book; in it are verses clearly defined' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3.7); and His saying: 'We have indeed sent it down in the night of power' (*al-Qadr*, 97.1). Allah has described it as being explained in detail in His saying: 'For We have certainly sent to them a Book which We have expounded in detail on the basis of knowledge …' (*al-A`r~f*, 7.52). And He has described it as being detailed with clear definition in His saying: 'A Book with verses clearly defined, then explained in detail from One who is Wise and All-Aware' (*Hfd*, 11.1). And He has distinguished among its verses, describing some as clearly defined and some as allegorical in His saying: 'He it is who has sent down to you the Book; in it are verses clearly defined——they are the core of the Book——and others are allegorical (*mutash~bih~t*)' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3.7).

He has described it as being recited, where He says: 'When you recite the Qur|~n, We put between you and those who do not believe in the hereafter a veil invisible' (*al-Isr~|*, 17.45). And He said: 'Read, therefore, of the Qur|an as much as may be easy for you' (*al-Muzzammil*, 73.20); and He said: 'When you read the Qur|~n, seek Allah's protection from Satan the rejected one' (*al-Nahl*, 16.98).

He has described it as being preserved in the hearts. He says: 'Rather it is clear signs in the hearts of those endowed with knowledge' (*al-`Ankabft*, 29.49). And that it is preserved in the Tablet. He says: 'Nay, this is a Glorious Qur|~n, (inscribed) on the Preserved Tablet'' (*al-Burfj*, 85.21-22).

It is known firmly that He did not intend in any of these verses but this known Qur|~n, because there has been no narration of naming other than this as Qur|~n. The sound *ˆad,th*s of the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, have named it as the Qur|~n, like his saying: 'The best among you are those who learn the Qur|~n and teach it.' And his saying: 'Indeed this Qur|~n is Allah's banquet.' The Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, has prohibited travelling into enemy territory with the Qur|~n. He did not mean by that but the *mu%ˆaf*.

It is clear from all that, that nothing is intended by the Qur|~n, the Book, the Remembrance and the Guidance other than this Word sent down, and that it is read, preserved, written, divided into *muˆkam* (definite) and *mutash~bih* (allegorical), *mujmal* (general) and *mufa%%al* (particular), *n~sikh* (abrogating) and *mansfkh* (abrogated). Refusal to affirm these qualities with the Qur|~n is a refusal of what has been declared by the

texts, indicated by reason, and attested by reality.

Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim have quoted from Ash`ar, that for him the Word is an eternal attribute, it is not a sound, not a letter, and it is not divided. It is the very original (`*ayn*) of command and prohibition, narrative and interrogation, it is the very original of the Torah, Gospel, the Qur|~n and Psalms. Its being command and prohibition, narrative and interrogation, are qualities of that one meaning. And its being Torah, Gospel, Qur|~n and Psalms is division in its expression. If it is phrased in Arabic it is Qur|~n, if it is phrased in Hebrew it is Torah, if it is phrased in Syriac it is Gospel. The expressions are created, but the reality is eternal.[89]

If what they have quoted is accurate, its invalidity is too clear to need any explanation, on account of its conjoining opposites, like making command the same as prohibition, narrative the same as interrogation. Indeed, that is not merely conjoining two opposites; rather, it is making the opposite exactly its own contrary. It follows from it that the translation of Torah and Gospel into Arabic will make them Qur|~n, and translation of the Qur|~n into Hebrew will make it Torah, and into Syriac will make it Gospel. This is the very original (`*ayn*) of invalidity. Let it suffice you to know that in the Qur|~n are wisdom, judgements, stories, parables, knowledge and benefits that are not in the earlier books, as too the arrangement of the Qur|~n differs from their arrangement.

---

[89] *al-^aw~`iq al-mursalah*, 426. (It is repeated in the 12th volume of the collected fatwas of Ibn Taymiyyah.)

I think that Ash`aris did not have a unified position on this issue. This is Ibn Rasl~n from among them, who says in his *Zubad*:

His Word is like His eternal attributes. He did not produce the heard for the Kal,m (M*f*s~). It is written on tablets, read with the tongue, as it is preserved by the minds [who memorize it].

So we see him affirming the attribute of eternity for the Word heard, written and read. But his commentator (al-Fishan,) interprets his statement in a way that reconciles it with what has been narrated from Ash`ari. He says:

Its qualification with these four qualities is its qualification in respect of the four existent natures of existent nature [the 'humours']. It is not incarnating in *mu‰ˆaf*s and in hearts and in tongues, rather it is a meaning abiding with the Essence of Allah, Exalted is He.[90]

Before that, he says:

The truth is the word of the people of the truth that He, Exalted is He, is Speaker of an eternal Word abiding with His Essence. If it is expressed in Arabic it is Qur|~n, in Hebrew it is Torah and in Syriac it is Gospel, and other differences in the expression.[91]

And just before that he had said that 'His Word is not a letter or sound, because both those are originated qualities'.

The confusion of this statement is too clear to need any explanation or analysis. Ibn ™azm and Ibn Taymiyyah have gone to the extreme and judged the holders of this opinion guilty of unbelief. No doubt that they meant *kufr mill,* (such unbelief as expels from the community of Muslims). As for Ibn ™azm, he says:

---

90 *Maw~hib al-‰amad f, ˆall Alf~Œ al-Zubad* (Qatar: al-Shu|*f*n al-D,niyyah al-Qa\ariyyah), 1:27.

91 Ibid, 1:26.

This is mere unbelief with no other interpretation possible. Because we will ask them about the Qur|~n: is it Allah's Word or not? If they say it is not the Word of Allah they have entered unbelief by consensus of the *ummah*. If they say it is the Word of Allah, then we will ask them about the Qur|~n: is it that which is recited in the mosques, written in *mu%^afs*, preserved in the hearts, or not? If they say No, then they will be unbelievers by consensus of the *ummah*. And if they say Yes, then they will have abandoned their corrupt opinion, and acknowledged that the Word of Allah, Exalted is He, is in the *mu%^afs*, heard from the readers, preserved in the hearts, as all the people of Islam say.[92]

As for Ibn Taymiyyah, he has related of (the mass of) their people (practices such as) violating the sanctity of the *mu%^af*, sometimes stepping upon it and running over it, sometimes writing it with dung or the like. Then he says about them:

These people are worse in unbelief and hypocrisy than those who say: 'The binding and the paper are Allah's Word.' For the latter believed in the truth [mixed] with some falsehood. While these belied the Book and what Allah has sent His Messengers with. 'Those who reject the Book and what We have sent Our Messengers with: soon they shall know. When the yokes shall be round their necks, and the chains, they shall be dragged along in the boiling fetid fluid, then in the Fire shall they be burnt' (*al-Gh~fir*, 40.70-72).[93]

(Ibn Taymiyyah has presented in his refutation of them even viler phrases, from mention of which I cleanse this book. It is not understandable how what he has attributed to them could be attributed by one believing in Islam.)

I do not wish here to talk about the correctness or invalidity of this judgement that they

---

92 *al-Fi%al f, l-milal wa l-ahw~| wa l-ni^al* (Maktabat al-Sal~m al-`Alamiyyah), 3: 25.

93 *Fat~w~ Ibn Taymiyyah* (Ma\abi al-Riy~ƚ), 12:382.

have given about the people who hold this opinion. That would require widening the discussion which I do not intend to do. I only wish to say that the contradiction in which both of them have fallen into is not less bad than what they have criticized in others. As for Ibn ™azm——together with his affirmation that the Glorious Qur|~n is the Word of Allah, Exalted is He——we find him emphasizing that His Word is itself (`*ayn*) His Essence. He quotes from the Ash`aris: 'The Ash`aris have said: Allah's Word is an attribute of His Essence, eternal, not-created, and it is other than Allah, Exalted is He, not Allah, Exalted is He, and it is other than knowledge of Allah, Exalted is He, and that there is not but one Word of Allah, Exalted is He.' Then he says: 'The People of the Sunnah have put forward several arguments. Among them is that they say: that the Word of Allah, Exalted is He, if it is other than Allah, then it either will be a substance or a quality…' and so on. He also says:

> As for the Ash`aris their saying that the Word of Allah is other than Allah compels them [to acknowledge] what we have compelled them to [acknowledge] in respect of [Allah's] Knowledge and Power equally, that we have examined thoroughly before this, and the praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of mankind.[94]

No doubt it becomes necessary on this view (which Ibn ™azm is criticizing) that the Qur|~n must itself (`*ayn*) be the Essence of Allah, Exalted is He, and that He, Glorified is He, by sending it down, explaining it in detail and making its verses definite and clear did not send down, did not make detail and define but His own Essence, Glorified is He. As it necessitates that the scribe of the Qur|~n, its reciter and its me-

---

[94] *al-Fi%al f, l-milal wa l-ahw~| wa l-nni^al* (Maktabat al-Sal~m al-`Alamiyyah), 3: 4.

morizer, do not write, recite and memorize but His Essence, Exalted is He. And that the High Essence must be these letters and sounds, which will be divided by the division of the Qur|~n into surahs, verses, sentences, words, letters and sounds. Exalted is Allah and High above all such.

Ibn ™azm in his argument for the eternity of the Qur|~n has presented a sophistry so strange that the mind cannot imagine it coming from someone like him, with such abundance of knowledge and strength of understanding.[95]

I have preferred to turn away from presenting it, being content with the invalidation of it by Im~m Shams al-D,n Abƒ Ya`qƒb Yƒsuf b. Ibr~h,m W~rjil~n, at the end of his book *al-`Adl wa l-in%~f*.[96] (The only surprising thing is that Im~m Abƒ Ya`qƒb has referred what Ibn ™azm has said to Im~m Aˆmad b. ™anbal, and I did not find it in any of the books of the Hanbalis; rather, what I found in them is contradictory to it.)

As for Ibn Taymiyyah, you will see in the next chapter, *insh~| All~h*, from the texts of what he said, what will make you aware of his contradiction and confusion.

There appears another colour of meaning difference between us and Ash`aris and eastern Ibadis who hold to the eternity of the Qur|~n. It is that they have declared that what Mƒs~, upon him be peace, heard in his secret conversation with his Lord is the eternal *kal~m al-nafs*, of Allah, not-created. That is the implication of Ibn Rasl~n in his *Zubad*. They say that it (the conversation with Mƒs~) was not sound and not letters. Im~m Ibn `>shƒr has made it clear in his *tafs,r* of Allah's saying: 'And to Mƒs~ Allah

---

95 Ibid, 3:6-8.

96 *al-`Adl wa l-in%~f* (Oman: Wiz~rat al-Tur~th al-Qawm, wa l-Thaq~fah), 2:147-56.

spoke directly' (*al-Nnis~|*, 4.164). The text of his saying is:

Speaking (*taklim*) is connection of the attribute of speech with the addressee, with the meaning that speech is a distinct attribute; or [it is] connection of the [attribute of] knowledge with conveying the thing to be known to the addressee; or [it is] connection of the [attribute of] will with conveying the willed to the addressee. The Ash`aris have said: Allah's speaking to His servant is that He creates for the servant a sense from the direction of hearing, through which the knowledge of the Word of Allah is attained without letters and sounds.[97]

That, as you see, contradicts what has been quoted from him earlier of his interpretation of Allah's saying to the angels that 'I am making a *khal,fah* in the earth', and His teaching the names to Adam. I wish to know how one can reconcile what he says here with what he said there. Furthermore, after this statement which does not exceed one page he said:

His saying '*takl,man*' is a *ma%dar* (verbal root) used for emphasis. The emphatic use of *ma%dar* has to do with emphasizing the meaning [of the verb] and affirmation of it with [particles such as] '*qad*' and '*inn~*'. The emphasis is not intended to remove the possibility of metaphor [i.e. to force a literal reading]. That is why Arabs have used *ma%dar* to emphasize those verbs that are only used metaphorically. For example, His saying, Exalted is He: 'Allah only wishes to remove all abomination from you, O People of the House, and to purify you (*yu\ahhirakum*) with a through purifying (*ta\h,ran*)' (*al-A^z~b*, 33.33). He intends that He will purify them by an inward purification, that is, by inner perfection. The emphatic form does not convey absence of metaphor. [Another example:] Hind bint al-Nu`m~n b. Bash,r says criticizing her husband Raw^ b. Zinb~`:

---

97 *al-Ta^r,r wa al-tanw,r* (al-D~r al-Tunisiyyah li-l-Nashr), 6:37.

The silk shrieked at Raw^, and refused his skin, and the clouds clamoured clamorously (*`ajjat `aj,jan*) on account of his leprosy
al-`aj,j is not but a metaphor. The *ma%dar* reinforces the emphasized verb in the meaning that it had before the emphasis.
Then the meaning of His saying '*takl,man*' here is that M*f*s~ heard a speech from near Allah in a way that has no possibility that Allah sent Jibr,l to him with a word, or that He revealed [something] to him within him. As for how this word came from near Allah, that is another matter which is a point of discussion among the sects. That is why the reasoning of many Ash`aris from this verse on the speech that M*f*s~ heard being the Essential attribute abiding with Allah is a weak argument. Ibn `Arafah has narrated that al-M~zir, has said in *Shar^ al-Talq,n* that this verse is a proof against the Mu`tazilis in their opinion that Allah did not speak to M*f*s~ without medium, but instead though the medium of creating speech, because [that is what] He has emphasized with the *ma%dar*. [Ibn `Arafah has also narrated] that Ibn `Abd al-Sal~m al-T*f*nis,, shaykh [teacher] of Ibn `Arafah has rejected [Ibn `Arafah's explanation] on the grounds that emphasis with *ma%dar* is to remove doubt from the utterance, not from the uttered. Ibn `Arafah has followed this with what goes back to the refutation of Ibn `Abd al-Sal~m.[98]

We may perhaps draw from what he has said here and there that his opinion on this issue did not rest on any definite thing. And perhaps he acknowledges too the permissibility of each of the two opinions.

As for us, the Ibadis, who believe in the creation of the Qur|~n, and whoever holds this opinion from among Mu`tazilis and others——we agree with Hanbalis (who believe in the eternity of Qur|~nic texts) that M*f*s~, upon him be peace, heard from Allah's Speaking a speech composed of

[98] Ibid, 38-39.

letters and that it had sound. But we differ on its eternity or origination. They believe in its eternity, and we believe in its origination. We have said only this: that it was a real speech from Allah to Mƒs~, in that it was not through any medium, but Allah created it where He willed, then He caused him to hear it without its being uttered by any angel or any other creature. Many have said that Allah, Exalted is He, created it in the tree and caused him to hear it from the tree. This is what Fakhr al-D,n al-R~z, has referred to Im~m Abƒ Man‰ƒr M~turid,.[99]

That (the speaking being in the tree) is not definite because there is nothing (in the Qur'an) indicating it. It is but one of the possibilities mentioned.

We draw for what has passed that the Ash`ari position on this issue differs from the position of both opponent groups. This is clear in what (as quoted earlier from) Fakhr al-D,n has referred to al-Ash`ar, and his followers in respect of their opposition to the others on the issue of the Word.

He has narrated from them saying: 'As it is not impossible that the Essence of Allah will be seen while It has no body and is not in a space, then what impossibility is there in hearing Allah's Word while it has no letters and no sound'.[100]

The force of this argument is specifically directed at those who affirm the seeing. As for us, it does not——the praise belongs to Allah——touch us.

---

[99] *al-Tafs,r al-kab,r* (Tehran: D~r al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah) 14: 238 and 27:188.

[100] Ibid, 27:188.

Chapter 2

On the clash of opinions of those who believe in the Qur|~n's being eternal (not-created)

The belief in the eternity of the Qur|~n——though its meanings differ and its ways are diverse because of the differences among its supporters——emanates from one source, namely not differentiating between Speaking as an Essential attribute of Allah and its effects, the Books that Allah has sent down to His Messengers. All who hold this opinion must necessarily believe in the eternity of all originated things, because these (also) are effects of Allah's attributes. Because the creatures, regardless of their differences (from each other), are not other than effects of His Power, Will and Knowledge. Each of these is an eternal Essential attribute because of the impossibility of Allah's qualification with their opposites.

In spite of the unity in the source of this opinion, you will be surprised to find among its supporters such dispute and controversy that their statements neither agree on one path nor lead to one goal. The matter did not stop there but went further to mutual accusations of ignorance, innovation, going astray, and unbelief——indications of which you have seen (in the foregoing).

If we are silent as to their different groups, and attend to only one group——the Hanbalis——we are surprised to find that they have taken different approaches to establish and interpret their belief or teaching. The supporters of each approach among them claim that they are more right and better in following the opinion of

their im~m, Aˆmad b. ™anbal. Among examples of what they differ on are:

a The voice of the reciter of the Qur|~n and his recitation.
b The letters of the alphabet from which the words of the Qur|~n and other are composed.
c Allah's being Speaking, whether it is by His Will or not (by His Will).

Since their differences about the letters, sounds and recitation overlap, we have considered them together in reviewing and criticizing their opinions about them.

One group among them hold that the voice of the reciter is eternal, and believe that it is abiding with the Essence of Allah, Exalted is He. From these are Muˆammad b. D~wƒd Bi‰‰,‰,, Ibn ™~mid, Abƒ Na‰r Sijz, and Q~‡, Abƒ Ya`l~. Abƒ Bakr al-Marwadh, and others have criticized them for that, narrating from Aˆmad his statement: 'Whoever says My utterance of the Qur|~n is created, he is a Jahmi, and whoever says it is not-created, he is an innovator.'[101]

In this text that they have narrated, there is a contradiction that cannot be obscure to any intelligent person. There is no intermediary between creature and non-creature. The thing is either created or non-created. If it is created then why does he accuse of error those who speak of its creation? If it is not, then why does he attribute innovation to those who speak of its non-creation?

Ibn Taymiyyah has said:

When they——Hanbalis——spoke about the letters of the alphabet they held two opinions. One group, differentiating between two likes, say that letters are of two types, one being eternal and the other being created——as Ibn ™~mid, Q~‡, Abƒ Ya`l~, Ibn `Aq,l and others have said. The majority have criticized them for that

[101] *al-ˆaw~`iq al-mursalah* (Cairo: Ma\bat al-Im~m), 440.

and said: This is in opposition to sense and reason. The reality of this letter is the [same as the] reality of that letter, and, they say, letters are of one type. Q~‡, Ya`qƒb al-Barz,n, has written a book on that, in which he has opposed his shaykh Q~‡, Abƒ Ya`l~.

Ibn Taymiyyah goes on to say:

Q~‡, Ya`qƒb has said in his book that what he has said is the opinion of Abƒ Bakr Aˆmad b. al-Musayyab al-œabar, who narrated it from a group of the best people of Tabaristan. [He recorded also] that he has heard Faq,h `Abd al-Wahh~b b. ™alabah, the q~‡, of Harran, saying: This is the doctrine (*madhhab*) of al-`Alaw, al-™arr~n, and a group of the people of Harran. Abƒ `Abdull~h b. ™~mid has said from a group of the people of Tabaristan from among those who relate to our school (*madhhab*)——like Abƒ Muˆammad al-Kashfal, Ism~`,l al-K~wdhar, and a party of their followers—— that the letters are eternal.

Q~‡, Abƒ Ya`l~ made a statement to that effect and narrated for me from a group of [the people of] Sham that they hold that opinion; among them are al-N~bulas, and others. Q~‡, ™usayn has said that his father, at the end of his life, came back to this opinion. They have said it from Shar,f Abƒ `Al, b. Ab, Mƒs~, and were followed in that by Shaykh Abƒ al-Faraj al-Maqdis,, his son `Abd al-Wahh~b, Abƒ al-™asan b. al-Z~ghƒn, and people like him.

Q~‡, Ya`qƒb has said that the statement of Aˆmad can support both opinions, which are based on his response when informed that Sar, al-Saqa\, had said: 'When Allah created the letters, they prostrated to Him except *alif* which said ''I will not prostrate unless I am commanded''.' Then Aˆmad said, 'This is unbelief.' And these [opinions] have relied on Aˆmad's saying: 'Anything of the creatures on the tongue of the creatures is created.' And on his saying: 'Had it been so, then his prayer with the Qur|~n will not be completed as it is not completed with other words of human origin.' And on Aˆmad's saying to Aˆmad b. ™asan al-Tirmidh,: 'Are you not-created?' He said: 'Why not?' Then Aˆmad said: 'Is not everything of you created?' He said:

'Why not?' [Aˆmad] said: 'Then your speech is part of you and it is created.'[102]

In these narrations there is infinite contradiction——though Ibn Taymiyyah claims the inexistence of contradiction. Study them, respected reader, with the eye of intellectual freedom which reveals the truth and discloses the minutest thing, not with the eye of blind following which makes sand as water, and imagination as reality. (If you do so,) you will find the first of those citations indicates the most extreme criticism of the opinion that the letters of the alphabet, of which speech is composed and with which the people address one another, is created——to the point that the one who says this is accused of unbelief. I seek refuge in Allah. The implication of that (criticism) is that these letters in eternity are like the High Essence. You will find in the second something that indicates that everything of the creatures on the tongue of the creatures is created. Which, then, of the two opinions is more deserving of (being called) true and correct? If it is the first one, then it means necessarily that the second one is unbelief. And if it is the other, then also the same, because of the *ˆad,th* of Abƒ Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, in the *ˆa*ˆ,ˆ of Muslim: 'Whoever accuses a man of unbelief or calls him an enemy of Allah, and this man is not so, then it (the accusation) comes back to him (the accuser).'

As for the excuse Ibn Taymiyyah offers by saying:

Aˆmad rejected the statement of the one who says that when Allah created the letters… Aˆmad said: 'Whoever says that any letter of the alphabet is created, he is

[102] *Fat~wa Ibn Taymiyyah* (Ma\abi al-Riy~‡, 1st edition), 12:83-85.

Jahmi, because he has walked on a path of innovation, and whoever says that the alphabet is created, then he [also] says that the Qur|~n is created.' (*Fat~wa Ibn Taymiyyah*, 12:83-85)

That is an excuse of no use. To deny the being created of what is known by reason and *taw~tur* tradition to be created, and to attach it to Allah, Exalted is He, in eternity, avoiding the firm Qur|~nic texts that everything other than Allah is created——such as Allah's saying: 'Creator of every thing' (*al-An`~m*, 6.102; *al-Ra`d*, 13.16; *al-Zumar*, 39.62; *al-Gh~fir*, 40.62), and His saying: 'He created all things and ordered them in due proportions' (*al-Furq~n*, 25.2)——is in no way permissible. How so, when the driving force behind this is only the fear of the rising of the sun of reality, and evaporation of the fog of fancies, which they intended as a veil between reason and their grasp of the realities. Not content with mere refusal of reality, they went further to pass judgement on those who proclaim the reality as being Jahmi, innovators and unbelievers. *Fa in-n~ li-l-l~hi wa in-n~ ilayh, r~ji`fn*: so surely we belong to Allah and to Him surely we are returning. In how wretched a state Islam is left when interpreted in these contradictory directions! How far astray are the people of Islam if they do not recognize Islam but through these things.

If you would have more of their contradiction then listen to what Ibn Taymiyyah also says:

As for saying that the written ink is eternal: we do not know of any well-known person who has said it, nor have we seen that in the books of any writer, neither from the followers of Abƒ ™an,fah, or M~lik, or Sh~fi`,, or Aˆmad. Rather, we have seen in the books of a group of writers from among the followers of M~lik, Sh~fi`, and Aˆmad criticism of the opinion that the ink is eternal, and of the belief of those who narrated that. In the opinion of some of them is this,

that in the *mu‰ˆaf* there are eternal letters which are not the ink.
Then, among them are those who say that the ink is apparent in the *mu‰ˆaf* but not incarnating, and some say that it is incarnating. In the sayings of some of them is what implies that for the form——the form of the letter and figure——[but] not [for] its material substance which is its ink. This opinion is also invalid. Just as the saying, that anything from the voices of human beings is eternal, is an invalid opinion. It is an opinion put forward by a group from among the followers of M~lik, Sh~fi`, and Aˆmad, the majority of whom reject it. The saying of Aˆmad and the majority of his followers rejecting this opinion is well-known. There is no doubt that whoever says that the voices of the servants are eternal, he is an innovator and inventor. In the same way as whoever says that this Qur|~n is not the word of Allah, he is an innovator and inventor…(Ibid, 12:179)

Look at this clash and factionalism in the opinions, without any evidence to rely on, except justification of what each of these people imagine to be the truth. Otherwise, what is the proof of that, from the evidence of narrated and sound tradition?

Add to what he has said earlier, his saying—— after mentioning the statement of those who affirm the Qur|~n to be created——

Then they were faced by some people who intended to straighten the Sunnah but fell into innovation, and rejected one falsehood with another falsehood, and countered the corrupt with the corrupt. They said that our recitation of the Qur|~n is not-created, and our utterance of it is not-created, because this is the Qur|~n, and the Qur|~n is not-created. They did not differentiate in the denotation between the unqualified noun and the qualified noun, nor between the state of the named when it is unaccompanied and its state when accompanied. [That's why] Im~m Aˆmad criticized also those who say the recitation of the servants, their reading, their words and their voices,

are not-created, and commanded the abandonment of them, just as he related the first group to the Jahmis and innovation. The narration of that from him is through the narration of his son `Abdull~h, ^~li^, al-Marwadh,, Fawr~n, Abƒ œ~lib, Abƒ Bakr b. ^adaqah and a considerable body of his students and followers.

His closest follower, Abƒ Bakr Marwadh, took that stand after [A^mad's] death, and compiled [A^mad's] opinions and those of the leaders from among his followers and others like `Abd al-Wahh~b al-Warr~q, al-Athram, Abƒ D~wƒd al-Sijist~n,, Fa‡l b. Ziy~d, Muthann~ b. J~m,` al-Anb~r,, Mu^ammad b. Is^~q al-San`an,, Mu^ammad b. Sahl b. `Askar, and other scholars of Islam. And he explained the innovation of those people who say that the recitation of the servants and their utterance of the Qur|~n are not-created.

Al-Khall~l has mentioned that in *Kit~b al-Sunnah*, and detailed his opinion on that. Al-Khall~l says: 'Reported to me Abƒ Bakr al-Marwadh,, that it reached Abƒ `Abdull~h from Abƒ œ~lib that he wrote to the people of Na‰ib,n: ''My utterance of the Qur|~n is not-created.'' Abƒ Bakr says: Then ^~li^ b. A^mad came to us, and said: ''Come, all of you, to my father.'' Then we came and entered upon Abƒ `Abdull~h. He was very angry, the anger having become apparent on his face. He said: ''Go and bring Abƒ œ~lib to me.'' So I fetched him, and he sat in front of Abƒ `Abdull~h, and he was trembling. [A^mad] said: ''Have you written to the people of Na‰ib,n telling them on my behalf that I said: 'My utterance of the Qur|~n is not-created'?'' He said: ''I only expressed my [own] opinion.'' [A^mad]: ''This is not allowed, neither from you nor from me. I never heard any scholar saying this.'' Abƒ `Abdull~h said: ''The Qur|~n is the Word of Allah, not-created.'' Then it was said to Abƒ œ~lib: ''Go and tell the people that Abƒ `Abdull~h has prohibited saying My utterance of the Qur|~n is not-created.'' Then Abƒ œ~lib came out, and he met a group of *ahl al-^ad,th* and told them that Abƒ `Abdull~h had forbidden him to say My utterance of the Qur|~n is not-created.' In spite of these [reports], each of those groups—— [those] who say that our utterance of the Qur|~n is

not-created and those who say that our utterance and our recitation are created——invent their relation to Abƒ `Abdull~h, narrating their [own] opinion from him and claiming that he held it, because he was an im~m accepted by all the people, and because the truth that is with every group was spoken by Aˆmad, and the falsehood for which every group criticize the others was rejected by Aˆmad. Muˆammad b. D~wƒd al-Mi‰‰,s,—— one of the scholars of *ˆad,th*, and one of the shaykhs of Abƒ D~wƒd——and some contemporaries, such as Abƒ ™~tim al-R~z, and others, say: Our utterance of the Qur|~n is not-created. And a number have followed them in this matter, like Abƒ `Abdull~h b. ™~mid, Abƒ Na‰r al-Sijz,, Abƒ `Abdull~h b. Mandah, Shaykh al-Isl~m Abƒ Ism~`,l al-An‰~r,, Abƒ al-`Al~ al-Hamad~n,, Abƒ l-Faraj al-Maqdis, and others, [and they also] say: Our utterance of the Qur|~n is not-created. They narrate that from Aˆmad, and that Aˆmad came back to that [position], as Abƒ Na‰r has said in his book *al-Ib~nah*. These are weak narrations with unknown chains of narration; which cannot oppose what has been [transmitted] *mutaw~tir* from him, to his close students, people of his family, and reliable scholars. Especially so, when it is known that in his lifetime he explained the mistake of Abƒ œ~lib in narrating from him, so far so that Aˆmad stopped him from that and became very angry with him.

I have seen some of these [people] criticizing those narrations that are proved [to be] from him [Aˆmad]. Some of them have altered their words, and some have altered their meanings. As for those who have affirmed the narration from him, and agreed with him in criticizing both positions——they are the majority of the people of Sunnah, and the theologians related to him like Abƒ l-™asan al-Ash`ar, and people like him. He has said in *Maqal~t Ahl al-Sunnah wa l-™ad,th* that they reject the one who says My utterance of the Qur|~n is created, and the one who says My utterance of the Qur|~n is not-created, and that is the position he holds.

But among them are those who have interpreted the statement of Aˆmad and others as meaning that he has prohibited saying that the Qur|~n is uttered. This is

what al-Ash`ar,, Ibn al-B~qill~n,, Q~‡, Abƒ Ya`l~ and his followers, like Abƒ l-™asan al-Z~ghun, and people like him, have said.
Now, some of the people who have interpreted his statement in that way, say: the meaning is that Aˆmad has criticized the one who says My utterance of the Qur|~n is created——al-Ash`ari and his followers have said this. Others of them say: the meaning is, rather, that Aˆmad has criticized the one who says My utterance of the Qur|~n is not-created——Q~‡, [Abƒ Ya`l~], Ibn al-Z~ghƒn, and people like them have said this. Because Aˆmad and all the im~ms reject [the notion] that any thing of the speech of Allah, the letters or the meanings, is created, or that the meaning of the Torah is the same as the meaning of the Qur|~n. They reject likewise [the notion] that the word of Allah when expressed in Arabic is Qur|~n, and when expressed in Hebrew is Torah. They reject [the notion] that the Qur|~n which is revealed is not the Word of Allah, and [reject the] claim that the Word of Allah is created. Aˆmad and other im~ms criticize those people who would make out that any thing of the actions and voices of the servants is not-created, let alone its being eternal. Aˆmad's statement on the issue of recitation, belief and the Qur|~n is of one [consistent] style: he prohibited saying that it is created because that implies, of some of the attributes of Allah, that they are created and [saying the like of that] is a pathway [leading to error]; and he prohibited saying that it is not-created, because that [way] has innovation and error in it. (Ibid, 12:359-63)

Respected reader, I have quoted for you these phrases exactly from the discourse of Ibn Taymiyyah, so you may be aware, firstly, of their dispute in this issue which leads to resorting to (accusations of) innovation; and, secondly, of the absence in their discourses of any evidence from the Qur|~n, or Sunnah, or of rational proofs——excepting what they have narrated from Im~m Aˆmad, and they alter the interpretation of that according to what suits each party of interpreters. You will find them, while presenting ar-

gument, comparing the word of Im~m Aˆmad with the Word of Allah and the word of His Messenger, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah. They make the word of Im~m Aˆmad the fundamental to which each group of them refers, although they always claim with their tongues and pens not to be imitating or following the opinions of the im~ms without evidence. Consider what has come at the end of these passages about (a person's) recitation and belief, let alone the Qur|~n itself, being with the attributes of Allah, Exalted is He. How can the mind of anyone whose intellect is enlightened accept that the belief which is in the hearts of believers, and the recitation which flows on the tongues of reciters, is with His eternal attributes, Exalted is He?

We find Ibn Taymiyyah narrating from Aˆmad, al-Bukh~r, and a group of the followers of Aˆmad——like `Abd al-Wahh~b al-Warr~q, al-Athram, al-Marwadh,, Muˆammad b. Bashsh~r, Abƒ l-™usayn al-œfs, and others——that they strongly criticized whoever says that the servant's utterance of the Qur|~n or his voicing it, or (any) other qualities of the servants which are attached with the Qur|~n, are not-created, and they commanded any such to be abandoned (ibid, 12:422).

Ibn Taymiyyah follows this by citing certain events which befell the followers of Aˆmad because of their referring to him (the judgement) that the utterance of the servant of the Qur|~n is not-created (ibid, 12:423-27).

Thus, you see how it becomes possible to place recitation sometimes among attributes of the servant so that belief in its eternity is prohibited, and at other times among attributes of Allah so that belief in its creation is prohibited. However, all existing things, substances and qualities, are either created and originated——and every thing originated is created——or they are

eternal. And that is what none other than Allah can be described with——Allah who is the First, the Last, who has created every thing, then proportioned it. Being originated and eternity are two opposites, they cannot be removed from any particular existent, just as they cannot be combined. How can both be negated of any particular thing, and the one who holds either opinion be regarded as going astray?

Their state of shock went so far that they prohibited labeling ink, when the Qur|~n is written with it, as created or eternal (ibid, 12:167).

Then Ibn Taymiyyah turned back from declaring its creation where he says: 'Just so is what is written in the *ma%~^if* of His speech: it is His speech written in *ma%~^if*. His Word is not-created, and the ink with which His Word and the word of others is written is created.' (Ibid, 12:54-55)

Then Ibn Taymiyyah made a distinction between those letters from which the Qur|~n is composed, and those letters from which other words are composed, where he says:

Whoever says that the letters of the alphabet are all created, and that the word of Allah is created, has said something that is contradictory [both] to clear intelligible discourse and sound narration. Whoever says that the voices of the people or their ink or anything of that is eternal has opposed the sayings of the *salaf*, and the corruption of his opinion is evident to all, and he will be inventing something not said by any [individual] Muslim, nor by any major grouping of Muslims. Rather, all four im~ms and their major followers are free from that. Whoever says a real-particular letter or a real-particular word is eternal has invented an opinion invalid both in Law and in reason. And whoever says that the genus of those letters spoken by Allah in the Qur|~n and other Books are not-created, and the Arabic speech that He

has spoken is not-created, and that the letters composing it are part of it and adhere to it, that Allah has spoken them and that they are not-created——he is right. (Ibid, 12:55)

You find in that discourse what is most strange. On the one hand, you find in it that whoever says that a real-particular letter or real-particular word is eternal in itself has invented a saying that is invalid in Law and reason——that in itself is true——then (on the other hand) you find after it what refutes it, namely that those letters of which the Qur|~n is composed and those words of which it is combined are not-created. How can the same thing be created and not-created? Besides that, Ibn Taymiyyah himself quotes from Im~m Aˆmad that whoever says that any of the letters of the alphabet are created is a Jahmi (ibid, 12:85). No doubt the apparent meaning of what he says is to distinguish between the letters and words if they occur in the Word of Allah and if they occur in the word of creatures. According to this apparent meaning, those in the Word of Allah are not-created, and those in the word of His creatures are created. Now that necessitates that the names of the Prophets and others and other names that are mentioned in the Qur|~n, if they occur in the Qur|~n are eternal, and if they occur elsewhere are originated. And it follows therefrom that each of them will have two contradictory statuses.

Clearer than what Ibn Taymiyyah says is the saying of his student Ibn al-Qayyim: ‘If it is said——that the letters of the alphabet are created or not-created. The answer to it is——that the letters are of two types: the letters occur-

ring in the word of creatures are created, and the letters of the Qur|~n are not-created.'[103]

In sum, what has been quoted of what Ibn Taymiyyah says makes it clear that the stand of Im~m Aˆmad and most of his followers is that they strongly criticized those who say that the recitation of the servants and their utterances of the Qur|~n are not-created, and they passed on them the judgement of innovation, and commanded their abandonment. (Yet,) we find in Ibn Taymiyyah's own statement what opposes that where he says:

As for the letters, are they created or not-created? The dispute about that is well-known among the later generations. As for the early generations, it is not narrated from any of them that the letters, words and recitation of the Qur|~n are created, and there is nothing which denotes that. Rather, rejection of whoever says that our utterances of the Qur|~n are created is affirmed from more than one of them, and they say that he is a Jahmi; some of them have declared his unbelief. In the sayings of some of them it is recitation of the Qur|~n, and in the sayings of others it is the letters of the Qur|~n. Those from whom that is affirmed are Aˆmad b. ™anbal, Abƒ al-Wal,d al-J~rƒd, the student of Sh~fi`,, Isˆ~q b. R~hwayh, al-™umayd,, Muˆammad b. Aslam al-œƒs,, Hish~m b. `Umar and Aˆmad b. ^~liˆ al-Mi‰r,. (Ibid, 12:571)

There is no reason to comment on this statement. If the recitation of the reciter of the Qur|~n is not-created, even though it is an action like his other actions, and the reciter himself is created, and all his actions are existing after they did not exist——then Allah is sufficient for me. I believe in Him, Glorified is He, He is Lord, there is no partner with Him in His creation, none equal to Him in His Lordship, and none similar to Him in His attributes.

---

[103] *al-Saw~`iq al-mursalah* (Cairo: Ma\ba`at al-Im~m), 435.

Ibn Taymiyyah also says:

There are three matters:
The first: the letters of the Qur|~n which are His Word before Jibr,l came down with it, and after he came down with it. Whoever says that these letters are created has opposed the consensus of the *salaf*. Because there was no-one in their time who said this except those who said that the Qur|~n is created. Those are the people who believed in the creation of the words of the Qur|~n. Except for that, [the *salaf*] do not acknowledge any poof for its being created or not-created. More than one of the great theologians have recognized this. From among these theologians is `Abd al-Kar,m al-Shahrist~n, with his awareness of the religion and of opinions. He has said unconditionally that the *salaf* held that the letters of the Qur|~n are not-created. He also said: the opinion of the Qur|~n's being originated is new. He has approved the opinion of the *salaf* in his book entitled *Nih~yat al-kal~m*.
The second: the actions of the servants. They are those motions of the people in which the recitation appears. Now, there is no dispute among the *salaf* that the actions of the *salaf* are created. That is why it is said that most of them judged as an innovator [heretic] whoever says My utterance of the Qur|~n is [not-]created[104] because that is qualified as his action.
The third: the apparent recitation from the servant following the motion of the verse. Some of them describe this as created. The first person who said this——according to what has reached us——is ™usayn al-Kar~b,s,, his student D~wfd al-A‰bah~n,,[105] and a [certain] group. The scholars of the Sunnah at that time criticized them for that, and said harsh sayings about them. The majority of them——the *salaf* called them *al-lafziyyah*——are those who say that our utterance of the

---

[104] The printed text of *Fat~w~* has 'created'; the sense obviously is 'not-created' which fits with the context and with what has been said elsewhere.

[105] That is as the name is given in *al-Fat~w~*; 'Abf D~wfd' is what is correct.

Qur|~n is created, or the Qur|~n in our words is created, and the like of that.

A group of the people of *ˆad,th* and Sunnah, and they are many, have opposed them, saying that our utterance of the Qur|~n is not-created. What the texts of Im~m Aˆmad and his class of the people of knowledge are based upon is [as follows]: whoever says My utterance of the Qur|~n is created is a Jahmi; and whoever says that it is not-created is an innovator [heretic]. This is the correct opinion to the majority of the people of the Sunnah——that neither of these sayings is to be said——as it is the teaching of Im~m Aˆmad and the majority of the *salaf*. For each of these [saying created or saying not-created] entails the suggestion of an error. For the voices of the servants are originated, no doubt about that, albeit some of those who supported the Sunnah deny that the sound of the Qur|~n heard from the servant [uttering it] is created.

The majority of the people of the Sunnah have rejected that and have criticized it following the approach adopted by Aˆmad and other im~ms of guidance. The Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: 'Adorn the Qur|~n with your voices.'

As for the recitation in itself which is letters and words of the Qur|~n, it is not-created. The servant only reads out the Word of Allah with his voice. In the same way if he says that the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: 'The actions are with the intentions…' This saying is uttered by him [but] its meaning is the saying of the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, and [the servant] has conveyed it with his motion and voice. Likewise, the Qur|~n its word and meaning are the speech of Allah, Exalted is He. There is nothing of the creature in it except his conveying, rendering and voice. For no intelligent person can the distinction be obscure between the recitation itself, before the creature's utterance of it and after the creature's utterance of it, and between the action and work of the servant in recitation of the Qur|~n. Both some of those who argued for and some of those who argue against got involved in the mistake only because they treated two separate matters as one, and they sought

to argue the origination of the letters of the Qur|~n by those evidence which proves the origination of the actions of the servants and whatever derives from them. This is the worst mistake. There is no rational or traditional argument which can prove the origination of the letters of the Qur|~n, except the general class of those arguments which would [also seek to] establish the origination of its meanings. The answer to such arguments is like the answer to [the quest] of those who seek guidance from Allah, and He guides them. (Ibid, 12:572-74)

This statement of Ibn Taymiyyah does not differ from the rest of what has been quoted earlier, which indicates the clash of their opinions and contradiction of their arguments. In that respect it does not need any comment. I would only put before the respected reader the following points:

1 Ibn Taymiyyah has narrated in the beginning of this quoted speech that whoever says that the letters of the Qur|~n are created is an opponent of the consensus. What is this consensus? The righteous early generations of the Companions and the Followers did not raise the issue of the creation of the Qur|~n. They were content with belief in its being sent down from the All-Wise, the All-Praised, and that Allah is the Creator of everything, that whatever is other than Him is created. Since the issue has been raised, and the dispute appeared, among the (later) groups of the *ummah*, there is no reason to regard the opinion of one of the groups as the consensus. Yes, the opinion of those who refer to the firm evidence of the Book, the sound *mutaw~tir* Sunnah, and those basic fundamentals which are agreed upon (—that has the right to be called the consensus). This only can be known by examining the opinions and looking into their evidence. And of that, soon, *insh~| All~h*, will

be presented to you in this Discussion what will satisfy you and explain it with indubitable truth.

2 Ibn Taymiyyah has differentiated between the actions of the servants (namely their motions in which the recitation appears)——he narrated that there is no dispute among the early generations that the actions of the servants are created——and the recitation appearing from the servant after the motion (which produces the recitation of) the verse. He has narrated from the scholars of the Sunnah that they have criticized those who believe in its creation. Yet it is known for sure that the motion that appears from the servant when reciting the Qur|~n is not other than his action which is expressed in recitation. How can the action of the servant be not-created while the actor himself is created?

3 Ibn Taymiyyah has differentiated between the recitation before the utterance of the creature, and after the utterance, and between the action and work of the servant in the recitation of the Qur|~n. He has claimed that the difference between the two cannot remain obscure to any intelligent person. Yet the recitation——as I said just now——is not otherwise than an action of the reciter. So how does he differentiate between the action of the servant and his work in it? Is this not but like differentiating between the hitting emanating from the hitter and the fasting coming from the faster and between the work of the servant in them? In reality it is only differentiating between the thing and itself.

4 Ibn Taymiyyah has claimed that there is no rational or traditional argument which proves the origination of the letters of the Qur|~n. There is no answer to this except to say

'Nothing can be right to the mind when daylight needs evidence'.

Insh~| All~h, these arguments will soon be presented to you in the last Chapter of this Discussion. Here, another text from Ibn Taymiyyah in their dispute on this issue. He says:

The opinion that the utterance is not-created has been referred to Muˆammad b. Yaˆy~ al-Dhuhal, and Abƒ ™~tim al-R~z,. Some people refer it also to Abƒ Zur`a saying that he (Abƒ Zur`a) and Abƒ ™~tim abandoned al-Bukh~r, when he was abandoned by Muˆammad b. Yaˆy~ al-Dhuhal,. The story of it is well-known.

After the death of Aˆmad it happened among some of his students and others and among other groups for this reason. The leading people with Muˆammad b. D~wfd and al-Mi‰‰,‰,, the shaykh of Abƒ D~wfd, believed in this. When ^~liˆ b. Aˆmad became the leading judge, Abƒ Bakr al-Marwadh, asked him to clarify for the leading people the issue of Abƒ œ~lib, because this incident was witnessed by ^~liˆ and `Abdull~h, sons of Aˆmad, al-Marwadh,, Fawr~n and others. Al-Marwadh, wrote a book in rejection of the one who says My utterance of the Qur|~n is not-created. He sent it to the scholars in Makka, Madina, Kufa, Basra, Khurasan and others. Abƒ l-Khall~l has mentioned that in *Kit~b al-Sunnah* and explained it in detail.

In spite of this, some groups among those who relate to the Sunnah and the following of Aˆmad, like Abƒ `Abdull~h b. Mandah, Abƒ Na‰r al-Sijz,, Abƒ Ism~`,l al-An‰~r,, Abƒ al-`Al~ al-Hamad~n, and others, say that our utterance of the Qur|~n is not-created, and they say this is the opinion of Aˆmad. They reject—— or, some of them reject——the narration of Abƒ œ~lib, and they say this was invented against him. Or they say that he turned back from that, as Abƒ Na‰r al-Sijz, has said in his famous book *al-Ib~nah*.

The matter is not as these say. The people most knowledgeable about Aˆmad and closest of all to him and the truest in narration from him are those who have narrated [that] from him. But the people of Khurasan did not have such knowledge of the opinions of Aˆmad as the people of Iraq had, who were closer to him. The

worst *fitna* about [the issue of] utterance happened in Khurasan——where there was prejudice against al-Bukh~r,——without regard for his greatness and im~mah, albeit though those who stood against him were also great im~ms. (Ibid, 12:207-08)

This text conveys that they were not content with dispute on opinion and belief, but went beyond that to belying each other in the narrations which they connect to Aˆmad and refer to him.

Ibn Taymiyyah has said after this text that he found, written in the very hand-writing of some of those shaykhs who have knowledge and religion, this saying: 'al-Bukh~r, died in the village of Khartank, then Aˆmad sent to the people of the village commanding them not to perform the funeral prayer over him because of his opinion on the issue of utterance.'

Ibn Taymiyyah has commented by saying that this is a most blatant lie against Aˆmad and al-Bukh~r,, and that the fabricator of it is ignorant of their states, because the death of Aˆmad preceded the death of al-Bukh~r, by 15 years: Aˆmad died in the year 241, while al-Bukh~r, died in the year 256. (Ibid, 12:208-09)

This is a clear picture of the hateful prejudice that existed among them over this issue. It is enough that Ibn Taymiyyah refers this lie to those who had knowledge and religion among them. What then of those who were void of either or both (knowledge and religion)? What of religion remains for one who allows himself to tell a lie in matters of the religion? I cannot comprehend this allowing a lie except as a consequence of the belief in the forgiveness of those who commit major sins, or that they will be punished for a certain period of time, then released from the Fire.

Moreover, Ibn Taymiyyah has mentioned that he saw in the hand-writing of Q~‡, Abƒ Ya`l~ (this) saying: 'I have quoted from the end of *Kit~b al-Ris~lah* of al-Bukh~r, about the reading being not the read. He says: This has come to me from Aˆmad b. ™anbal by 22 ways, some of them opposing the others. For me what is correct is that [Aˆmad] said: I did not hear any scholar saying My utterance of the Qur|~n is not-created. He says: The followers of Aˆmad b. ™anbal have divided into about fifty.' (Ibid, 12:366)

In this dispute they do not go back to any basis in the Book or Sunnah. Their reliance is only what they narrate from Im~m Aˆmad and what they interpret of his sayings. As if they have made his speech as one of those foundations of the religion which are to be referred to (as decisively authoritative). Where are they in respect of His saying, Exalted is He: 'If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger if you do believe in Allah and the Last Day: That is best and most suitable for final determination' (*al-Nnis~|*, 4.59). They have shut their eyes to whatever has come from Allah and the Messenger that reveals the face of the truth and opens the curtains of ignorance of the reality of the truth in this issue, which, *insh~| All~h*, will be presented to you in the last Chapter. You will, nevertheless, go on hearing from them their claims not to be following and not to be abiding by anything except what has been affirmed from Allah and the Messenger. Where is the reality in respect of the claim?

Persistence has, with some of them, gone to the extent of requiring everything that follows from belief in the eternity of the Qur|~n, to the point that some of them have insisted that the word of the creatures is not-created because it is similar to the Word of Allah in its letters

and words. As Q~ŧ, Ibn `Aq,l of the Hanbalis has said. Ibn Taymiyyah has narrated that from him (ibid, 12:88) and says after it:

This that Ibn `Aq,l has narrated is from some already mentioned students. Among them is Q~ŧ, Ya`qƒb Birz,n,, who has mentioned it in his book, saying: 'The tenth evidence: it is that these letters, in themselves, their properties, meaning and virtue, are those which are in the Book of Allah, Exalted is He, in His attributes. And the Book with its letters is eternal. The same is here.'

He says: 'If it is said——we do not accept that because that [in the Qur|~n] has certain dignity, whereas this [outside the Qur|~n] has not. The answer will be——We do not accept that; rather, this [outside the Qur|~n] also has [the same] dignity. If it is said——If it had the [same] dignity then it would be necessary to forbid a woman in the state of impurity touching it and reading it. The answer will be——sometimes she is not forbidden to touch it and read it though it has that dignity (for example, a portion of a verse). She is stopped from reading it because of the dignity of it and it is eternal. Yet, she is not prohibited to read and touch it because of the need to teach it. In the same way, it is said of the child that touching the *mu‰^af* without purity is allowed for him, because of the need to teach.

'If it is said——Then it necessities that an oath [on these letters outside the Qur|~n] will become final, and when the man breaches his oath it will be considered as such [as a breach of an oath on the Qur|~n]. The answer will be——As it is in respect of the letters of the Qur|~n, in the same way, it is our opinion, here.

'If it is said——Is it not true that when certain letters conform in meaning to the same letters in the Qur|~n, it denotes that they are those? Do you not see that when a speaker speaks a word intending to address a man, and its properties conform to what is in the Book of Allah, Exalted is He (for example, a man's saying, ''O D~wƒd, O Nƒ^, O Ya^y~, etc.), that though these names conform to what is in the Book of Allah,

and they are eternal in the Book of Allah, yet when addressed among mankind they are originated?
'The answer will be——Everything that is in agreement with the Book of Allah in its words, order, and letters, then it is from the Book of Allah, even though it has been intended to address a man thereby. If it is said——That implies that if he intends with these names a man while he is in the prayer, that his prayer will not be invalid. The answer will be——That is our opinion. An example has been narrated from `Al, and others. When one of the Kharijis called him [while he was in prayer] ''If you were to join gods with Allah, truly fruitless will be your work and you will surely be among the losers'' ' (*al-Zumar*, 39.65). He says: 'Then `Ali answered him while he was in the prayer: ''So patiently persevere: for surely the promise of Allah is true: nor let those excite you who have no certainty of faith'' (*al-Rfm*, 30.60). It has been narrated from `Abdull~h b. Mas`ƒd that when some of his companions asked permission to enter to him, he said: ''Enter Egypt in safety if Allah wills'' (*Yfsuf*, 12.99).'
He says: 'If it is said——Is it not the case that when one says ''O Yaˆy~ hold the Book with strength'' and intends a boy whose name is Yaˆy~, the address will be created, and if he intends the Qur|~n then it will be eternal? The answer will be——In both cases it will be eternal. Because the eternal is an expression meaning what has existed since forever, and the originated is an expression meaning what happened after it did not exist. The intention does not make the originated eternal, and the eternal originated. He says: And whoever says that, then he has gone far in ignorance and error.'
He also says: 'Everything that is similar to another it is only similar to it in something, and it cannot be similar to it in all states. Because if it is like it in all its states then it is it, not other. We have explained that these letters are similar to the letters of the Qur|~n, therefore they are not the same.' (Ibid, 12:86-91)

Ibn Taymiyyah follows this quotation by saying: 'This is the statement of Q~ƚ, Ya`qƒb and his likes, though he is the greatest of those who spoke on this issue. Since his answer consisted of what opposes the clear text [of Qur|~n and Sunnah], consensus and reason, Ibn `Aq,l and other im~ms of the school who had more knowledge of it have opposed him.' (Ibid, 12:91)

Ibn Taymiyyah continues, after quoting the refutation of Ibn `Aq,l: 'This that Ibn `Aq,l has said has less error in it than what Birz,n, has said. For that is in plain opposition to the clear text [of Qur|~n and Sunnah], consensus and reason.' (Ibid, 12:326)

See, how Ibn Taymiyyah records of one of their great im~ms——he esteems him the greatest of all those who spoke on this issue——plain opposition to the clear text (of Qur|~n and Sunnah), consensus and reason. Ibn Taymiyyah did not exempt Ibn `Aq,l——whom he esteems as having more knowledge of the *madhhab* than himself——from error, though he regards his error as less than that of Birz,n,. The matter did not stop there. Rather, we find Ibn Taymiyyah quoting his im~ms accusing of unbelief those who follow the opinion of Birz,n,. He has narrated from ™amm~d b. Zayd that he was asked about one who says that the word of mankind is not-created, and said: 'This is the opinion of the people of unbelief.' So too he has narrated from Mu`tamir b. Sulaym~n that he said: 'This is unbelief.' Ibn Taymiyyah did not comment on these except with what implies support of them (ibid, 12:93). From this heated difference that you find among them on this issue such that it is made impossible to reconcile them, you can understand that they did not restrict themselves with rules. That is why some of them became very lax—— claiming that the leather of the *mu‰^af*, the pin upon which it is hung, and the wall behind it——

all that is from the Word of Allah, therefore is not-created according to their claim. Although Ibn Taymiyyah has referred (the like of) this to the ignorant ones among them (ibid, 12:381), it is possible that they regard their opponents as themselves the ignorant ones, and claim, as they do, that they are more worthy of the *madhhab* of Im~m Aˆmad.

From this, respected reader, you can understand the danger of this belief and the problem that it caused to Islam. Ascribing the quality of eternity (for, as long as they deny the creation of these things, there is no doubt that these are eternal to them) to that whose being originated no intellect can doubt and no sense dispute——such as leathers, pins and walls——is a thing after which nothing remains but to affirm eternity of the whole world and to deny divinity altogether. Otherwise, how is it possible to acknowledge the attributes of Godhood, Lordship and Oneness for Allah, Glorified is He, at the same time as affirming eternity for things other than Him, Exalted is He, by negating their being created by Him, Exalted is He, whereas He alone, Exalted is He, has the attribute of eternity just as He alone has the attribute of Godhood. If it is allowed for another to share with Him in either of the two attributes, it will be allowed in the other as well. In that (reflection) there is what will unveil for every eye that raising this issue within the circle of Islam was no other than a plot by the enemies of Islam to turn Muslims away from the strict belief of *taw*ˆ*,d*, and to tear up their unity by means of these contradictory sayings and opposed doctrines.

That was felt by one of those later scholars who were influenced by the belief of Hanbalis, a degree of influence that led him to such prejudice as it is compulsory on every Muslim re-

searcher to avoid. He is Im~m al-Shawk~n,, who gave up his Zaydi belief, and embraced what is given the name Salafi belief. He says in his famous *tafs,r*:

The im~ms of the Sunnah were right in restraining [people] from accepting the belief in the creation of the Qur|~n and its origination, and Allah protected by them the *ummah* of their Prophet from innovation . But they, may Allah have mercy on them, exceeded that to affirm its eternity. They did not confine themselves to that affirmation, [but went further] to the point that they accused of unbelief those who believe in its origination. Moreover, they went to excess so that they accused of unbelief those who say My utterance of the Qur|~n is created, and even accused of unbelief those who were undecided. I wish they had not exceeded the limit of being undecided, and referring [perfect] knowledge to the Knower of the unseen. Nothing of speculative theology (*kal~m*) was heard from the early generations of the Companions and the Followers and those who came after them, until the time of the *mihna* and the appearance of discussion on this issue, nor was any saying quoted from them about that. Now, restraining [people] from acceptance of what they were invited to, holding fast to the being undecided, and referring [perfect] knowledge of the matter to its Knower was the ideal way. In that lay security, and freedom from accusation of unbelief against groups of the servants of Allah. The matter is for Allah, Glorified is He.[106]

It will not be obscure to any intelligent person what in this statement of his admits the reality, together with the prejudice in respect of those, of whom he has related that by them Allah protected this *ummah* from the evil of innovation. Yet——what he has said of their presenting this without any proof and evidence, and their daring to accuse of unbelief groups of the servants of

---

[106] *Fat^ al-qad,r* (Ma\ba`at Mu‰\afa al-B~b, al-™alab, wa Awl~dih) 3:384.

Allah without correctness and evidence——what innovation is more dangerous for the *ummah* than that?

As for their dispute about the connection of the Will of Allah with His (attribute of) Speaking, Ibn Taymiyyah has made it clear where he says:

Aˆmad and other im~ms have declared that Allah has been Speaking since forever when He wills. Aˆmad has declared that Allah speaks with His will. But the followers of Ibn Kull~b, like Q~‡, and others have interpreted His being Speaking [as follows]: His Will in respect of His being Speaking is to enable hearing——for, according to them, He does not speak by a [distinct act of] His Will and Power.

Aˆmad and other *salaf* have declared the Qur|~n is the Word of Allah, not-created. No-one from among the *salaf* has said that Allah spoke without His Will and Power. And none of them has said that the real-particular speech (such as the Qur|~n or His calling to M*ƒ*s~ or other than that of His speech) is eternal, pre-eternally and sempiternally, and that with Allah abide real-particular letters, or real-particular sounds, which are eternal pre-eternally and sempiternally. Aˆmad and other im~ms of the Muslims have not said that and their sayings do not denote that. Rather, what Aˆmad and other im~ms have said is clear in its opposition to that. [What they say is] that Allah speaks with His Will and Power, and He has been Speaking since forever when He wills, alongside their saying that the Word of Allah is not-created, and that it has emanated from Him, not-created, [not] emanating from other than Him. Their texts about that are many and well-known in the books that are established as indeed theirs. As, for example, what has been written by Ab*ƒ* Bakr al-Khall~l in *Kit~b al-Sunnah* and other books, and what has been compiled of the sayings of Aˆmad and others by `Abd al-Raˆm~n b. Ab, ™~tim, and what has been written by his students like his sons ^~liˆ, `Abdull~h and ™anbal, Ab*ƒ* D~w*ƒ*d al-Sijist~n, the author of *al-Sunan*, al-Athram, al-Marr*ƒ*dh,, Ab*ƒ* Zur`a, Ab*ƒ* ™~tim, al-Bukh~r, the author of *al-^aˆ,ˆ*,

`Uthm~n b. Sa`,d al-D~rim,, Ibr~h,m al-™arb,, `Abd al-Wahh~b al-Warr~q, `Abb~s b. `Abd al-AŒ,m al-`Ambar,, ™arb b. Ism~`,l al-Kirm~n,, and those whose number is not counted among the great ones of knowledge and religion, and the students of [Aˆmad's] students from those who have compiled his sayings and his narrations like `Abd al-Raˆm~n b. Ab, ™~tim, Abƒ Bakr al-Khall~l, Abƒ l-™asan al-Bun~n, al-A‰bah~n,, and like these, and those who followed him and other im~ms like him in the roots and branches [of the Law], like Abƒ `…s~ al-Tirmidh, the author of *al-J~mi`*, Abƒ `Abd al-Raˆm~n al-Nasa|, and people like them, and like Abƒ Muˆammad b. Qutaybah and people like him. (Ibid, 12:85-87)

You know that those among them who hold that Allah's being Speaking is without His Will base their opinion on what is necessitated by making His worldly speech an eternal attribute abiding with His Essence. For the Eternal, no will can precede His Eternity, as also for Knowledge, Power, Life and other attributes of Allah, Exalted is He. Just as it cannot be said that Allah is Powerful by His Will, Alive by His Will, Knower by His Will lest minds should infer origination (and contingency) in respect of these attributes, in the same way it becomes necessary for those who believe in the eternity of His being Speaking to say that it is not bound by His Will. When Ibn Taymiyyah sensed falling into this trap, he hastened to demolish all that he had built, and to break up what he had made as the foundation in this issue. He says: 'And none of them (i.e. the *salaf*) has said that Allah spoke without His Will and Power. And none of them has said that the real-particular speech (such as the Qur|~n or His calling to Mƒs~ or other than that of His speech) is eternal, pre-eternally and sempiternally, and that with Allah abide real-particular letters, or real-particular sounds, which are eternal pre-eternally and sempiternally. Aˆmad and other im~ms of the Muslims have not said that and their

sayings do not denote that. Rather, what Aˆmad and other im~ms have said is clear in its opposition to that.' (Ibid, 12:86)

When the matter is as he has affirmed here, why this clamour? And why is it said that the Qur|~n is not-created? When he rejects that any of the *salaf* has spoken of its being since forever?

If it is said——That by refusing the creation of the Qur|~n and criticizing those who believe in that, they did not intend but rejection of its being emanating from other than Him, Exalted is He——as is conveyed by the saying of Ibn Taymiyyah (which has been quoted earlier) 'alongside their saying that the Word of Allah is not-created, and that it has emanated from Him, not-created, (not) emanating from other than Him.' (Ibid.)

Then the answer is——That description of something as being created does not at all imply that it is emanating from other than Allah, Exalted is He. The heavens, the earth and whatever and whoever is in them did not emanate from other than Him, Exalted is He. Must the description of being created be negated of them because of that? As the starting point of the Qur|~n is from Allah——as Ibn Taymiyyah has made clear——in the same way the starting point of the universe is from Him, Exalted is He. 'Or, who originates creation, then repeats it, and who gives you sustenance from heaven and earth? Can there be another god besides Allah? Say, bring forth your argument if you are telling the truth' (*al-Naml*, 27.64).

How astonishing is the contradiction and confusion in Ibn Taymiyyah's saying: 'that the Word of Allah is not-created, and that it has emanated from Him, not-created, (not) emanating from other than Him.' There he has negated creation of the Word, and affirmed the initiation of it. Is initiation not but creation? And his saying at the

end: 'not-created, (not) emanating from other than Him.' If his intention is that every thing that is created has started from other than Allah, it is rejected by the evidence of reason and narration as is clear from what I said just above. And if his intention is negation of conjoining both qualities in the Word of Allah—namely its creation and its starting from other than Him—then there will be no meaning in that except if its starting from other than Him is interpreted as being an adjective binding the negated creation. This is—by the Lord of the Ka`bah—exactly what is believed by the believers in the creation of the Qur|~n. Because none of them says that it started from other than Him, Glorified is He. All of them agree that it is His Word, His Revelation and His sending down.

If it is said—Perhaps in this text that you have quoted from Ibn Taymiyyah there is a printing mistake which has led to this confusion?

The answer is—There are other texts which denote the same meaning. Thus the possibility of mistake in it is a remote possibility, close to impossible. From these texts:

A

The *salaf* say: the Qur|~n is the revealed Word of Allah not-created. They say that He has been Speaking, since forever, when He wills. They have explained that the speech of Allah is eternal, i.e. its genus is eternal, existing since forever. None of them has said that the particular concrete word is eternal, and none of them has said that the Qur|~n is eternal. Rather, they have said that it is the revealed Word of Allah not-created. Since Allah has uttered the Qur|~n by His Will, the Qur|~n is His Word, descended from Him not-created. Moreover, it is not eternal, it has not been since forever with the eternity of Allah, though Allah has been Speaking since forever when He wills. So only the genus of His speech is eternal. (Ibid, 12:54)

B

As no-one from among the *salaf* has said that it is created, [so too] none of them has said that it is eternal. Neither of these two has been said by anyone among the Companions, their Followers in sincerity, those after them like the four im~ms and others. Rather, the narrations are *mutaw~tir* from them that they used to say that the Qur|~n is the Word of Allah. When those people appeared who said that it is created, they said, refuting them, that it is not-created. (Ibid, 12:301)

C

The *salaf* have said that Allah, Exalted is He, has been since forever Speaking when He wills. If it is said that the Word of Allah is eternal, it will be with the meaning that He did not become Speaking after He had not been Speaking, and that His Word is not-created. [It will] not [be with the] meaning that an eternal is abiding alongwith His Essence. Rather, He has been Speaking since forever when He wills. None of the *salaf* has said that the particular concrete word itself is eternal. They used to say that the revealed Word of Allah is not-created, has started from Him, and will return to Him. No-one among them has said that the Qur|~n is eternal. They did not say that His Word is one meaning abiding with His Essence. Neither did they say that the letters of the Qur|~n, or its letters and sounds, are eternal, since forever, abiding with the Essence of Allah. However, the genus of the letters have been uttered by Allah since forever when He wills. Rather, they said that the letters of the Qur|~n are not-created. They have criticized those who say that Allah created the letters. (Ibid, 12:56)

From his sayings is extracted what follows:

1 Interpreting the eternity of His speech as (meaning) that He, Glorified is He, has been Speaking since forever——i.e. never unable in respect of speaking. That is not a disputed matter between us and them. We all affirm for Him, Exalted is He, the attribute of Speaking since forever in this sense. It is understood from many texts of our scholars. We have pre-

sented above, from the author of *al-Ma`~lim*, may Allah have mercy on him, his quotation of the consensus on it.

2 Ibn Taymiyyah and all the early scholars on whom he relies do not say about the Qur|~n sent down to our Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, that it is eternal in itself. As they do not say that about any revealed Book, or any (other) speech referred to Him, Exalted is He, such as His speaking to Mƒs~. They do not say, about any of that, that it is an eternal attribute, or that it is abiding with the Essence of Allah, Exalted is He. There is no dispute in this matter between us and them. Rather, it is contrary to what has been declared by many Ash`aris, Kullabis (the followers of `Abdull~h b. Sa`,d b. Kull~b). Ibn Taymiyyah has said that he was the first who declared the eternity of the Qur|~n (ibid, 12:301), and he has said that the Kullabis were in clear dispute, or (even the) Hanbalis themselves, in respect of describing the Qur|~n itself with eternity and (saying) that it is an attribute of Allah abiding with His Essence——and so too for all the revealed Books, and for every speech referred to Him, Exalted is He. (Some of these texts were quoted earlier.)

3 Regardless of their acknowledgement of the non-eternity of the Qur|~n and the other revealed Books, they deny of them the quality of being created. And they accuse with error or unbelief whoever holds the opinion of their being created. This is a point of some surprise and wonder. For all existing things——either they are eternal, since forever, their non-being did not precede their being; or they are originated, came into being after they did not exist——in this world are in need of one

who brought them from non-being to being. That is the meaning of creation——as was said earlier in the Introduction to this Discussion. There is no better evidence of the existence of the Creator, Exalted and Glorified is He, than the origination of His creatures. That is why the Qur|~n arouses us to be surprised at the state of those who deny Him, Exalted is He, or doubt about Him regardless of the availability of the evidence that demonstrates His being. As you clearly find in His saying, Glorified is He: 'Is there a doubt about Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth?' (*Ibr~h,m*, 14.10). It is impossible that what is non-eternal and inexistent since forever should by itself come from non-being to being, because of the impossibility of non-being having power or will or other qualities on which this coming depends. If that had been permitted of the Qur|~n or speech like that composed of letters and conjoined words and sentences denoting meanings, then it would have been possible for all other qualities. If it had been possible for qualities, then it would have been possible also for substances, because (in this respect) there is nothing to distinguish them.

If the door is opened to permitting the being of a thing after non-being without creation, then nothing can stand in the face of those atheists who claim that the origination of the universe and its order are not but products of blind chance, without having been originated by a creator, or planned by a planner. The most amazing thing is that someone should admit the being of a thing after its not-being and yet, regardless of that admission, deny that Allah, Exalted is He, has created it. But there are definite Qur|~nic texts that Allah has created all things, like His

saying: 'Allah is the Creator of every thing' (*al-Ra`d*, 13.16), and His saying: 'He created all things and ordered them in due proportion' (*al-Furq~n*, 25.2). The denial (of creation) necessitates either the rejection of the being of the thing whose creation is denied——this is the exact belief of those who say: 'Nothing has Allah sent down to man' (*al-An`~m*, 6.91)——or the rejection of these (Qur|~nic) texts. The explanation of that will be presented, *insh~| All~h*, in the fourth chapter of this Discussion.

May it be that the dispute between us and them does not go beyond a matter of choice of words, as long as they admit the origination (of the Qur|~n)——they have merely refrained from saying it is created, which we have gone forward to——?

The answer is: It is possible that it might have been so, had they been content with restraint, and not accused of error and unbelief those who speak according to those texts of the Qur|~n which have been pointed to. But because of the accusation of unbelief, innovation and error that has come from them against the people of insight——those who did not dare to enter into those openings, nor make bold to walk in those paths, except with a clear evidence from the texts of the Qur|~n which showed them the footsteps, and protected them from the points where intellects can slip——there remains no reason to regard the dispute as merely verbal. Moreover, there is no reason to impede what the Qur|~n has made clear, for the Qur|~n is a proof in the (matters of) expression, just as it is a proof in (matters of) worship. However, we are content in this issue with belief in the Qur|~n being the Word of Allah, His Revelation, and His sending down, and that whatever is other than Allah is created, even though the Qur|~n's being created is not identified as a point of belief, as that is in-

cluded generally. This is (the ground) on which the *salaf* walked, from among the Companions and those after them, before the *fitna* of dispute arose in this issue. On that (ground too) passed the early scholars of Oman, as was stated earlier. Ibn Taymiyyah himself has made it clear, as above, that no-one among the Companions and the Followers spoke of its eternity (ibid, 12:301).

If they did not speak of its eternity, then on what basis is it that they speak of the denial of its creation? For the discussion of this issue only arose after the fading away of the epoch of the *salaf*. It is known firmly that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would never deny the quality of being created from anything other than Allah, Exalted is He, together with all those Qur|~nic texts which affirm that Allah is the Creator of every thing, and together with the consensus of the learned that whatever is not eternal is originated, and that every thing originated must have one who originated it, i.e. brought it from non-being into being. That precisely is creation.

In sum, when you comprehend what they have written on this issue, you will find them falling into what they flee from, and becoming entangled in what they would wish to be excused of.

This is a little from much of the confusion into which the believers in the eternity of the Qur|~n and other Words of Allah sent down to His Prophets and Messengers have fallen. I did not intend by it but to awaken. Whoever wants a more comprehensive understanding (of their position) should refer to the books of the holders of this belief, such as the twelfth volume of the *Fat~wa Ibn Taymiyyah*, which exceeds 600 pages. You will not move from one topic therein to another without witnessing the contradiction of what he says, such as will suffice to demonstrate that the

foundation on which they have laid down this belief is crumbling from its bases. They would have been in no need to enter into these wildernessses, if they had confined themselves to that (solid ground of) sound belief in the Qur|~n and the creation upon which the *salaf* walked——namely, that the Qur|~n is the Book of Allah, His Revelation and His sending down, and that all that is other than Allah is created. If it (really) was necessary to go beyond this general (statement) into detail, then responsibility makes it certain that the foundation to refer to must be what is demonstrated by the Book and the authenticated Sunnah——which you will encounter, *insh~| All~h*, in the last chapter of this Discussion——and not to rely upon the opinion of any particular individual and make him the basis of the argument. Since every individual can be right and wrong, it is not allowed (in such matters) to follow anyone without evidence, except the one whose saying itself is evidence. He was the one who is encompassed with the protection described by the Most High: 'Nor does he say out of his own desire. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him' (*al-Najm*, 53.3-4). As for anyone other than him—— however great he may be——acceptance and rejection (of what comes) from him, both (are permitted).

Chapter 3

On the evidence of those who deny the creation of the Qur|~n

We presented at the beginning of this discussion an account of the uncertainty from which belief in the non-creation of the Qur|~n and other (in-

stances) of the revealed Word has sprung, namely the confusion, among the people who hold this belief, of the attribute of Speaking (by which is intended the negation of dumbness) with Essential Knowledge. And Allah's Knowledge is all-encompassing, eternal and not originated. In the foregoing, this confusion has been lifted in a way that cannot leave room for doubt. And praise belongs to Allah. Besides what I have already mentioned, the people who hold this belief have relied on a number of things:

1 The first is that Allah has shown His favour to His servants by teaching them the Qur|~n, not by creating it, where He says: 'The Most Merciful has taught the Qur|~n' (*al-Raˆm~n*, 55.1-2).

That is, as you see, a negative argument from what does not clearly tell of non-creation, nor can that be understood from it in any way. If the favouring through teaching were evidence of non-creation, it would imply that the whole explanation (*bay~n*) was not-created, because of His saying after it: 'He has created man. He has taught him intelligent speech' (*al-Raˆm~n*, 55.3-4). He did not say that He created the *bay~n* for him. Rather, in both places the favouring is by teaching not by creation, because the point (of emphasis) is the benefiting from them. Allah has reminded of His favour to His servants in subjecting the creation to them, where He says: 'He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth' (*al-J~thiyah*, 45.13). Following this argument, will it be said that this is a proof of the non-creation of whatever is in the heavens and in the earth, that Allah has subjected it to His servants?

2 The second is His saying: 'His are the creation and the command' (*al-A`r~f*, 7.54). The argument here turns on the conjunction (*atf*)

between 'the creation' and 'the command'. Thus they say that 'the creation' is the created, and 'the command' is His Word which is not-created. (The command) is His saying 'Be': 'Indeed when He intends a thing, His command is ''Be'' and it is' (*Y~s,n*, 36.82). There is (they argue), in this differentiation between the creation and the command, evidence of the corruption in the thinking of those who believe in the creation of the Qur|~n. For, if His Word which is command had been created, then He would have said 'His are the creation and the creation'. That has been narrated from Ibn `Uyaynah, and has been mentioned by many exegetes of the Qur|~n like Ibn Ab, ™~tim, al-Qur\ub, and al-Q~sim,.

The corruption of this opinion is too clear to need further clarification. They have argued from non-evidence, and they have relied upon what cannot be relied upon. It indicates, if any thing, the poverty of their argument, and their being dazed by reality. Indeed, I am in serious doubt of the soundness of the relation of this argument to Ibn `Uyaynah——(for he is renowned) for his depth of knowledge and greatness in understanding. He was famous among his contemporaries for beauty of narration and profundity of comprehension. If this (opinion) is proved from him, then it was a falling-down so serious that one would not say 'May you rise again'. The reasoning fails on several counts:

1 The first is that the context of this statement is nothing other than Allah's being alone in originating the originated things and turning them according to His will. The text of whole verse is: 'Your Guardian Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then He settled Himself on the Throne. He draws the night as a veil over the day,

each seeking the other in rapid succession. And the sun, the moon and the stars are subservient by His command. Indeed His are the creation and the command. Blessed is Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds' (*al-A`r~f*, 7.54). The most that this verse tells us is that, just as Allah, Glorified is He, is alone in bringing the universe out of non-being (into being), in the same way He is alone in the management of it. He has no partner in its creation and in its management. None other than Him has anything of the creation and management. Rather, to Him alone belong the creation and the command. The meaning here, clearly, is management. And there is nothing in that which even remotely points either to the eternity of the Qur|~n or to its contingency.

2 The second is that conjunction does not necessarily mean difference (between the conjoined elements) in every respect. Rather, it is enough that the difference is relatively, like the difference between specific and general, unconditioned and conditioned, or the difference of qualifiers with sameness of the noun. Among examples of that are His saying, Exalted is He: 'Guard strictly prayers, and the middle prayer' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.238). The middle prayer is not (separated) out of the genus of the prayers, the guarding of which has been commanded. And His saying: 'Whoever is an enemy to Allah, and His angels, and His Messengers, and Jibr,l and M,k~l' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.98). No-one says that Jibr,l and M,k~l are (separated) out of the genus of angels. And His saying: 'These are the verses of the Book and of a Qur|~n that makes the things clear' (*al-Hijr*, 15.1), and His saying: 'These are the verses of the Qur|~n and of a Book that makes things

clear' (*al-Naml*, 27.1). In both verses the Book is the same as the Qur|~n. The difference between them is not but relative. And His saying: 'Allah commands justice and the doing of good' (*al-Nahl*, 16.90). No intelligent person will argue about justice being the doing of good, and the doing of good being justice.

3 The third is that the command of Allah, Exalted is He, has been mentioned in the Qur|~n jointly with what denotes its creation. He says: 'And Allah's command must be fulfilled' (*al-Aˆz~b*, 33.37), and He says: 'So Allah might accomplish a matter (*amr*) already decided' (*al-Anf~l*, 8.42), and He says: 'And the command of Allah is a decree determined' (*al-Aˆz~b*, 33.38). How can the (matter that is) decided be since forever? He says, Glorified is He: 'He directs the command from the heavens to the earth' (*al-Sajdah*, 32.5). The directed is originated. He says: 'and Our command is but a single word, like the twinkling of an eye' (*al-Qamar*, 54.50). And He says: 'Do they wait but for the angels to come to them or there comes the command of your Lord' (*al-Nahl*, 16.33). That is evidence that this command had not happened at the time of revelation of the verse, since its happening is expected. He says, Exalted is He: 'Until when came Our command and the fountains of the earth gushed forth' (*Hud*, 11.40). The intention with this command is the drowning that the people of Nƒˆ were punished with: reason and tradition alike affirm its being originated.

4 The fourth is that His command means in one place in the Qur|~n something different from what it means in another. In His saying, 'Until when came Our command and the fountains of the earth gushed forth', it is not the same as

in His saying, 'Has come the command of Allah, seek not then to hasten it' (*al-Nahl*, 16.1), and His saying: 'Do they wait but for the angels to come to them or there comes the command of your Lord?'

5 The fifth is that interpretation of 'the command' in these verses which we have cited as (meaning) the Qur|~n is not correct. It is known with certainty that the Qur|~n is not meant (by 'command') in His saying: 'or there comes the command of your Lord', and His saying: 'Has come the command of Allah', and His saying: 'Until when came Our command', and His saying: 'So Allah might accomplish a matter already decided', and His saying: 'And the command of Allah is a decree determined'. So how can 'command' (*amr*) in His saying 'His are the creation and the command' be interpreted as the Qur|~n, whereas the text denotes the opposite of that?

The leading experts of *tafs,r* have realized the corruption of this opinion, so they rejected the very basis of it, even those among them who believe in the eternity of the Qur|~n. Some of them did not even pay any attention to it, and were content to mention in the *tafs,r* of this verse only what is right, like Ibn Jar,r, who says in *tafs,r* on *al-amr* in the verse:

Allah commanded them, then they obeyed His command: Listen, to Allah belongs the whole creation, and the command that is not opposed. And His command is not rejected, but not [the command of] all things other than Him, and not [the command of] those gods and idols worshipped by the associators, which do not harm and do not benefit, do not create and do not command. Blessed is Allah our God, to whom belongs the worship of every thing, the Lord of the Worlds.[107]

---

[107] Ibn Jar,r al-œabar,: *J~m,` al-bay~n`an ta|w,l al-Qur|~n* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr Lebanon), 8:206.

Muthann~ narrated to me, saying that Isˆ~q narrated to us, saying that Hish~m Abƒ `Abd al-Raˆm~n narrated to me, saying that Baqiyyah b. al-Wal,d narrated to us, saying that `Abd al-Ghaff~r b. `Abd al-`Az,z al-An‰~r, narrated to me from `Abd al-`Az,z al-Sh~m,, from his father——who was a Companion——saying that the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: 'Whoever does not praise Allah for the good deed that he has done, and praises himself, his thanks will be little, and his action will be invalidated. And whoever claims that Allah has set aside for the servants any portion of the command, he has rejected faith in what Allah has sent down to His Prophets, because He says: ''His are the creation and the command. Blessed is Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds''.'

Some of them have pointed to this and rejected it like Alƒs,. After mentioning the opinion referred to Ibn `Uyaynah, Alƒs, follows it by commenting: 'and it is nothing'.[108]

Fakhr al-D,n Al-R~z,——after quoting the argument of his people from this verse on Allah's word being eternal——says:

Q~‡, has said: The exegetes of the Qur|~n agree that the meaning of this command (*amr*) is not the revealed word, rather the meaning is execution of the Will of Allah, Exalted is He. For the intent of the verse is glorification of His Power. Others say it is not farfetched to say that the command, though included in creation, nevertheless denotes, in being a command, another kind of Perfection and Majesty. His saying: 'His are the creation and the command' means that His is the creation and origination in the first instance, then after the origination and creation His is the command and laying of obligations (*takl,f*) in the second stage. Do you not see that, if He had said that 'His is the creation and His is the *taklif*, and His are reward and punishment', it would have been good and communicative. And, [just as] the reward and pu-

[108] al-Alƒs,: *Rfˆ al-ma`an,* (D~r Ihy~| al-Tur~th al-`Arab,), 8:183.

nishment are included in creation, so too here. Others say: The meaning of His saying: 'His are the creation and the command' is that if He wills He creates, and if He wills He does not create. In the same way, the meaning of 'and the command' will be that if He wills He commands, and if He wills He does not command. If accomplishment of the command is connected with His Will, then it necessarily means that the command is created. As, when the accomplishment of the created was connected with His Will, it was created. If the command of Allah had been eternal, then it would not have been according to His Will, rather it would have been [one] of the necessary concomitants of His Essence. In that case it would not have been true to say that if He wills He commands, and if He wills He does not command. That negates the apparent meaning of the verse.[109]

However, al-R~z, objected to that (argument), saying:

If 'the command' had been included in 'the creation', then mentioning of 'the command' alone would have been mere repetition. The rule is 'No repetition'. The last thing on the subject is: we have tolerated that in some instances out of necessity, but the norm is 'No repetition'.[110]

His objection collapses in the face of his (own) statement already cited, and in the face of what I have said during refutation of this argument.

Abƒ Hayy~n has referred this argument from the verse to al-Naqq~sh and others, and has followed it by saying: 'This is weak reasoning because to interpret the word as what he has mentioned is not certain; the opposite of that is rather more obvious.'[111]

---

109 *Maf~tiˆ al-ghayb* (D~r al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah) 14:123-24.

110 Ibid, 14:124.

111 *al-Baˆr al-muˆ,t* (Dhahran/Riyadh: Maktabah wa Ma\abi` al-Na‰r al-™ad,thah), 4:310.

Ibn Kath,r says in the *tafs,r* of this verse: 'i.e. all are under His control, subjection and Will, that is why He said [with the] alerting [imperative]: ''Listen! His are the creation and the command'' i.e. His are the Kingdom and …'[112]

Jam~l al-D,n al-Q~sim, has quoted from All~mah al-Biq~`, that he has divided all things whose existence is possible (i.e. not necessary)—namely (everything) other than Allah—into two types. One type is grasped with the external senses, and called in the terminology of the people of law as the witnessed, the created or the owned. The other type is that which is not grasped by the external senses, and it is called the unseen, the commanded or the celestial. The first (meaning) is understood by the general public. The second is understood by those intellectuals whose intellects are free from suspicions and speculations.[113]

S. R~shid Ri‡~ has interpreted 'the command' by saying: 'it is making law or making nature or (having) disposal or direction'.[114]

Im~m Ibn >shfr says: '*al-khalq* ('the creation') is bringing the existents into being, and *al-amr* ('the command') is subjecting them for the action for which they are created.'

Then he says: 'the article in *al-khalq* and *al-amr* is generic. The sentence conveys the restriction of the genus of creation and the genus of command as being in the [exclusive] ownership of Allah, Exalted is He. There is nothing [of either] for anyone other than Him. The meaning is

---

[112] *Tafs,r Ibn Kath,r* (D~r Ihy~| al-Kutub al-`Arabiyyah), 2:121.

[113] al-Q~sim,: *Ma^~sin al-t~|w,l* (D~r Ihy~| al-Kutub al-`Arabiyyah), 3:2357.

[114] *al-Man~r* (4th edition), 8: 454.

that there is nothing of the creation and the command for their [the associators'] gods.'[115]

3 The third is His saying, Exalted is He: 'We created not the heavens, the earth and all between them, but for just ends (*bi-l-ˆaqq*)' (*al-™ijr*, 15.85). The way they argue is that the '*ˆaqq*' with which Allah has created them is His saying to them 'Be'. If this saying (of 'Be') had (itself) been created, then it would not be correct to (say that) the creations were created by it, because the creation is not created by a creature.[116]

The answer to that is by the following (arguments):

A We do not accept that the meaning of *bi-l-ˆaqq* is what you have said. The best *tafs,r* of the Qur|~n is by the Qur|~n itself because of the firmness of its proof, the power of its explanation, and unity of its source. His saying, Exalted is He, 'Our Lord, not for nothing have You created all this'' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3.191), firmly denotes that the meaning of *bi-l-ˆaqq* in the verse is in opposition to *al-b~til* (i.e. creation for nothing, vainly). The intention of describing Allah's creation of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them as *bi-l-ˆaqq* is to negate futility of Allah, Exalted is He, in His actions.

It is refutation of the futility that the unbelievers thought of His actions, as is clear in His saying, Exalted is He: 'Not without purpose did We create heaven and earth and all between. That was the thought of the unbelievers. But woe to the unbelievers because of the Fire' (*ˆ~d*, 38.27); and His saying: 'We did

---

115 *al-Taˆr,r wa l-tanw,r* (al-D~r al-Tfnisiyyah li-l-Nashr), 8:169.

116 al-Qur\ub,: *al-J~m,` li Aˆk~m al-Qur|~n* (Cairo: D~r al-K~tib al-`Arab, li-l-œiba`ah wa l-Nashr), 7:222.

not create the heavens and the earth and all that is between for sport (*l~`ib,n*). If it had been Our wish to find a pastime, We should surely have taken it from what is nearest to Us, had We done so (had We so wished) (*al-Anbiy~|*, 21.16-17); and His saying: 'We created not the heavens and the earth and all between them merely in sport. We created them not except for just ends, but most of them do not know' (*al-Dukh~n*, 44.38-39).

B The meaning of 'Be' in the like of His saying, Exalted is He, 'For to anything which We have willed, We but say ''Be'' then it is' (*al-Na^l*, 16.40) relates to the execution of His Will, Exalted is He, in respect of anything of the *mumkin~t* in the context of giving it existence or completing it. It is explained by His saying, Exalted is He, 'when We have willed' i.e. when Our Will has conjoined with it in the way of execution (of the command). Because 'when' is for time in the future, and this is emphasized in His saying *an naqfla la-hu* (that We say to it), which is in the imperfect tense which, when it is with *an*, means the future. It is known with certainty that whatever is since forever——like His Knowledge, His Power and His Life——the Will cannot be conjoined with it, because nothing can precede (what is eternal). And this is emphasized by His saying *fa-yakfn* (then it is), the connecting particle *fa-* meaning order and sequence. From this you know that His saying, Exalted is He, *kun fa-yakfn*, is, wherever it occurs, nothing but an indirect expression of the speedy response of things to Him, Glorified is He, in accordance with the conjunction of His Will with these things. Otherwise, there is no utterance of *k~f nfn* (*kun*) in the concrete sense (of utterance).

C If we accept that, then we will say that our discussion is about the Word revealed, such as the Qur|~n, not the Word unrevealed.

4 The fourth: seeking refuge in Allah's complete words as has come in the *ˆad,th*: 'I seek refuge in Allah's complete words from the evil of what He has created.' The argument here is that if His words had been created then seeking refuge in them would not have been allowed.

The answer to this is: that this seeking refuge in fact is with Allah, Glorified is He, because He is the Lord of the words. The words are included in (the sense) because of the blessing and goodness that Allah has put therein. It is a kind of metaphor.[117] And in the sound *ˆad,th* has come seeking refuge in His actions, Exalted is He, as in the prayer of the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah: 'in Your forgiveness from Your punishment'. Forgiveness is one of His actions, Exalted is He, and it is (therefore) definitely originated. Seeking refuge in it was allowed because (forgiveness) does not emanate from other than Allah.

5 The fifth is what Abƒ l-Q~sim al-L~lk~|, has narrated from `Al, b. Ab, œ~lib that he said—— when it was said to him that you made two men as your judges——'I did not make a creature as a judge, I did not make a judge but the Qur|~n.'

The answer to that is this: his negation of making a creature as judge by making the Qur|~n as judge is because the Qur|~n is from Allah, Exalted is He. All that is in it——command, prohibition, permission, restriction, approval, rejec-

[117] See, on that, the answer of al-Muˆaqqiq al-Khal,l, to the question about the *ˆad,th* 'O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger' in *Tamh,d qaw~`id al-,m~n* (Oman: Wiz~rat al-Tur~th al-Qawm, wa l-Thaq~fah), 3.

tion——is from Allah, Exalted is He. So making the Qur|~n as judge is referring for judgment to Allah who has sent it down with His Knowledge, and has related its judgements to Himself. He says: 'Who is better than Allah in judgement?' (*al-M~|idah*, 5.50)

6 The sixth is what has been narrated from `Abdullah b. `Abb~s, may Allah be pleased with them, that he criticized a man who said: 'Lord of the Qur|~n'.

The answer is: that this narration, (even) if it were sound, does not constitute evidence because it is referred only to a Companion (and not linked back to the Prophet). Moreover, evidence as to its not being sound is in abundance. An example is that Allah, Glorified is He, has joined 'Lord' with an Essential attribute, namely '*al-`izzah*' where He says: 'Glory to your Lord, the Lord of Majesty, He is free from what they ascribe to Him' (*al-^~ff~t*, 37.180). So how can Ibn `Abb~s, may Allah be pleased with them, prohibit the joining (of 'Lord') to the Qur|~n, even if we assume the authenticity of the opinion resorted to? And an instance (of evidence that the narration is unsound) is what has come in a *^ad,th* related to the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah: 'O Allah, Lord of *œ~h~* and *Y~s,n*….' And an example (of evidence that the narration is unsound) is that Arabs refer to the master or owner of a thing as its *rabb* ('lord'), as they say 'lord of the family', 'lord of the house'. So how can (expressions) like that be prohibited in respect of the Qur|~n, when it is referred to the Lord of the worlds? From all this, the unsoundness of this narration from Ibn `Abb~s, may Allah be pleased with them, becomes clear. Even assuming its soundness, it is possible that his criticism was based on his opinion that the names of Allah are *tawq,f,*, that He is

not to be addressed except with names that have been narrated (i.e. names that are in the Qur|~n itself or in the Prophetic *^ad,th*). This is an opinion well-known to the *ummah*.

Chapter 4

On the evidence of those who believe in the Qur|~n's being created

The foregoing presentation of the dispute on this issue will have made clear to you, respected reader, through painstaking comparative study, the manifest confusion in the statements of those who affirm for the Qur|~n and other revealed Books of Allah, the attribute of eternity. Now that the weakness of their argument has become clear to you, I now present to you the arguments of the other group——those who believe in the Qur|~n's being created.

This evidence is of two types: rational and traditional. We begin with the rational evidence, and this is as follows:

Rational evidence

1 Permitting multiplicity of the eternal is contradictory to the unicity which is the most special of the attributes of Allah, Exalted is He. (It is rejected) because it leads to permitting multiplicity of gods. Because the True God, Glorified and Exalted is He, only deserved Godhood in connection with His precedence over everything in existence. If there were any equal to Him in being eternal, then it would be correct for that equal to be His

partner in Godhood, for there is nothing to prevent its being creator, sustainer, manager and wise.

If it is said——that Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He, is distinct from the Qur|~n and other (instances of the) eternal Word, because of attributes other than eternity——such as Knowledge, Power, Hearing, Seeing——by which He alone merits Godhood and Lordship.

The answer to it is——that specification of Allah, Glorified is He, with these attributes, as against His equal in being eternal, is giving a preference to Him over it, and this giving preference must have a justification.

If it is said——that the (attribute of) being Speaking is itself one of those attributes by which Allah merits being alone in the creation and command.

We say——that those attributes are not separated from Him, Glorified is He. The present discussion is only about that speech which is preserved in the hearts of those who have been given the knowledge (of it), and which is heard by the ears, recited with the tongues, written with pens, inscribed on tablets. And that is contrary to all those attributes.

2 Everything whose eternity is affirmed, its non-existence is impossible because the existence of the eternal is Essential Necessary Existence, which does need justification——in contrast to the existence of (that which) is only permissible (not necessary). It is impossible that anyone should have any authority over it in establishing, or removing, sending down or raising up, maintaining or taking away. While Allah, Exalted is He, says bout the Qur|~n: 'If it were Our Will We could take away that which We have revealed to you' (*al-Isr~|*, 17.86)

3 The effects of art (i.e. of having been produced) are apparent in the Qur'~n. Each letter of it needs the other in sequence, its words being composed from them. And each word needs other words to combine as a sentence. The letters are different, and none of them is not in need of the other. '*b~*' is different from '*s,n*', and '*s,n*' is different from '*m,m*' and with the combination of these three letters (in a particular sequence) is composed the phrase '*bi-sm*'. Composition is an artwork that points to the artist, and the artist must precede in existence the made art. From what has been said of the distinctness of these letters, and their being absorbed in the composition, (it is clear) that someone has made this distinctness, and has made each of them different from the other, and composed them with this art of composition, and made of it this eloquent speech.

4 The permissibility of reasoning about the Qur|an in the same way that all His actions are reasoned about. Thus, it is said that Allah spoke with M*f*s~ in order to choose him over other people by this favour (to him). Allah spoke to His servants by the Qur|~n in order to establish His argument over them, and to guide them to His paths. He made the Makkan Qur|~n more attentive to matters of belief than to rituals and judgements because of the insolence of the Quraysh and their ignorance. And He made the Madinan Qur|~n more attentive to rituals and judgments because (by then) the faith had become rooted by the part of the Qur|~n revealed in Makka. That (kind of seeking out reasons) is not allowed in respect of any of His attributes, Exalted is He, just as reasoning about His Essence is not allowed. Thus, (in respect of His attribute of Power)

it will not be said that Allah got power over this because of this, and (in respect of His Knowledge) that He knew this because of this, and (in respect of His being All-Seeing) that He saw this for this reason. And the same in respect of the other attributes.

5 The Qur|~n's being conjoined with occasions of time like one's saying, 'Allah spoke with Mƒs~ when he went to the mountain.' At the beginning of this Discussion we presented from the texts of the Qur|~n and Sunnah what indicates this. His attributes have precedence over occasions of time, so their being joined with them is impermissible.

6 The letters of the Qur|~n are the same letters from which is composed the speech of the Arabs, prose and poetry, rhymed prose, ex tempore (verses), battle odes, praise odes (and so on). And it is shared in by the speech of all mankind. If the Qur|~n is eternal it will mean necessarily that the speech of mankind as a whole is eternal since their speech is also composed from the same letters. Also it implies that the speech precedes the speakers. Otherwise how can that which is eternal be composed from that which is originated?

If the eternity of the letters is believed in for the Qur|~n and all the rest of the Word of Allah, (but) not for the speech of mankind, then that implies necessarily that, in each of these letters, there are two contradictory qualities: being originated and being eternal. Is this anything other than compounding two opposites?[118]

---

[118] These arguments are summarized——with some addition and clarification——from the *Ris~lah* of Im~m Muˆammad b. Aflah b. `Abd al-Wahh~b al-Rustam,, may Allah have mercy on him, on the creation of the Qur|~n. They are also available in *Kit~b al-Jaw~hir* of Im~m al-Barr~d,. See

If it is said——that this argument is not compelling because Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim have differentiated between (on the one hand) the letters of the Qur|~n and others of the Word of Allah, Exalted is He, and (on the other) the letters of the speech of mankind, so that even if they are the same, their sameness is in genus (i.e. general kind), not in particularity.

The answer to it is——their opinion is rejected on two grounds. The first is that we do not accept that this sameness is not particular. Because if it were (not particular), then that necessitates plurality of the same letter to the degree of the plurality of those who utter it and write it. The second is that there cannot be identity of genus between the originated and the eternal.

As for traditional evidence, some of it is from the Qur|~n and some from the Sunnah. The evidence from the Qur|~n is in many verses. I confine myself to only the following:

Evidence from the Qur|~n

1 His saying, Exalted is He: 'the Creator of all things.' (*al-An`~m*, 6.102; *al-Ra`d*, 13.16; *al-Zumar*, 33.62, *al-Gh~fir*, 40.62)

The way of reasoning from this verse is that the Qur|~n is either a thing or nothing. If it is nothing then why this dispute——if the disputed does not exist? And what has Allah sent down, detailed it and strengthened it in the composition, if that does not pertain to some thing. But then, if the Qur|~n is a thing, what excludes it from

al-Jaw~hir al-muntaq~h (Cairo: al-Ma\abi` al-Barfniyyah, 1302) 183-85, 191-92.

the generality (of the 'all things' mentioned in the verse)?

If it is said—that applying the generality of the verse to every thing necessitates that Allah is the Creator of His Essence and attributes. The answer to it is—that it is impossible in reason and tradition to include the High Essence in this generality. The experts of *u%fl* have regarded this as belonging to the class of rational specification. His attributes in that respect are like His Essence, because of the impossibility of their non-existence, because that requires the putting together of opposites. Exalted is Allah.

If it is said—that the Word is an attribute among these attributes, so why do you not exempt it from the generality of the verse as you have exempted (the other attributes)?

The answer is that our discussion is not about *kal~m al-nafs,* which is an Essential attribute of Allah, and by the affirmation of which is affirmed His power over speaking. Our discussion is about a revealed Word composed of letters, recited by the tongues, heard by the ears, understood by the minds, stored by the brain, compiled in the *mu%^af*. Is there anything like that among His Essential attributes?

2 His saying, Exalted is He: 'And He created all things, then made them in order.' (*al-Furq~n*, 25.2)

This quality is apparent in the Qur|~n. Because its chapters, verses, sentences, words, letters, vocalizations, recitation and meanings, wisdom and judgements, reports and parables, are (all) in order.

3 His saying, Exalted is He: 'Indeed, We have created every thing with an order.' (*al-Qamar*, 54.49)

This is as the previous item.

4 His saying, Exalted is He: 'We have made it an Arabic Qur|~n, so you will understand.' (*al-Zukhruf*, 43.3)

The reasoning with this verse in respect of its creation is by two ways. The first is its saying about the Qur|~n that it is made. The made is that which is transferred from one state to the other, which cannot be except in that which is created. The second is the reasoning of its being made in the Arabic language with the intention that the addressees may understand it.

Like that verse are all the verses which make it clear that it is made, for example His saying, Exalted is He: 'But We have made it a light, We guide by it whomever We will from among Our servants' (*al-Shfr~*, 42.52).

Im~m Mu^ammad b. Aflah, may Allah be pleased with him, has commented on the evidence of 'making' as affirmation of its being created; he says:

> The *ummah* is in consensus that every doer is before his doing, and the maker is before the making, and the artist is before the art, and that the maker is other than the made. When the difference and precedence between them has been affirmed, then it is true that they are two things, and that the first and precedent is the Eternal Maker, and the second, the made, is the originated, being after it had not been.[119]

He has argued from 'making' when referred to Allah, in many verses which denote it——such as His saying, Exalted is He: 'He made the darknesses and the light' (*al-An`~m*, 6.1); and His saying: 'He made from it, its pair' (*al-A`r~f*, 7.189); and His saying: 'He it is that has made for you the night that you may rest therein, and

[119] Ibid, 186.

the day to make things visible to you' (*Yfnus*, 10.67); and His saying: 'Or who has made the earth firm to live in; made rivers in its midst; set thereon mountains immovable; and made a separating barrier between the two seas' (*al-Naml*, 27.61); and His saying: 'Of the hills He made some for your shelter' (*al-Na^l*, 16.81); and His saying: 'and has made for you ships and cattle on which you ride' (*al-Zukhruf*, 43.2); and His saying: 'And made the sun as a lamp' (*Nf^*, 71.16); and His saying: 'and We made the night and the day signs' (*al-Isr~|*, 17.12).[120] Similar to those (verses is the meaning of 'making') in His saying: 'Have We not made the earth as a place to draw together' (*al-Mursal~t*, 77.25); and His saying: 'Have We not made the earth as a wide expanse; and the mountains as pegs; and created you in pairs; and made your sleep for rest; and made the night as a covering; and made the day as a means of subsistence' (*al-Naba|*, 78.6-11); and other verses.

Im~m Abf l-YaqaŒ~n Mu^ammad b. Aflah, may Allah have mercy on him, says:

The meaning of 'made' in these places that we have cited is 'created'. And so it is for the one who opposes [our argument], but not, he claims, in the context of the Qur|~n, because 'making' in the Qur|~n is other than creation. If that is allowed for him, then it must be allowed [also] for another to oppose that and say some similar saying about [something] other than the Qur|~n——that the 'making', about which we [Ibadis and Hanbalis] agree has the meaning 'creation', has [for him] another meaning than 'creation'. But what is the difference between the two 'makings'? For [if there is a difference] it means that Allah has addressed the Arabs with what they do not understand of their speech, and what they do not know of their language, and with what therein it is allowed for them

[120] Ibid, 187.

to be in doubt and uncertainty about. In one place 'making' is in the meaning of 'creation', 'origination' and 'management'. And in another place [it has] another meaning that we do not understand and we do not know. The All-Wise is not described with such.

When we and they agree that 'making' in His saying—— 'And He made the sun a lamp' (*Nfˆ*, 71.16); and His saying: 'Indeed, We have made what is on the earth an adornment for it' (*al-Kahf*, 18.7); and His saying: 'He made for you from yourselves pairs' (*al-Shfr~*, 42.11), and His saying: 'And He made darknesses and light' (*al-An`~m*, 6.1)——is in the meaning of 'creation', then all 'making' when it is by Allah is in the meaning of creation. In that will be included the Qur|~n and other than the Qur|~n. Otherwise, debating will become pointless and any evidence [for the argument] will not be valid.

If they oppose——relying on the saying of Allah: 'It was not Allah who made a slit-eared she-camel or a she-camel let loose in pasture… (*al-M~|idah*, 5.103). It will be said——Yes, Allah did not create a slit-eared she-camel as a slit-eared she-camel, as you claim, nor a she-camel let loose in pasture as a she-camel let loose in pasture, as you claim. Rather, He negated from Himself what He did not do as the associators claimed [that He did]. So He criticized them because of their innovation. Its meaning is that We did not create as you have described, rather We created against that which you have described. The negation here is of the particular qualifier, not of the particular creation.

Like that is His saying: 'Surely, I will make you a leader for mankind' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.124) i.e. I will create in you the quality that was not in you, and the meaning that was not found in you, and I had not done so in you before that. The meaning of 'made' wherever it is found is 'created', 'managed', '... ' and all that is in the same meaning, though the words are different.[121]

---

[121] Ibid, 187-88.

That is Muhammad b. Aflah's statement about 'making'. I add to it that I investigated (occurrences of) 'making' in the Qur|~n referred to Allah, and I found it to fall in either of two classes. The 'making' is either natural or legal. In both there is creation of what did not exist (before). In the natural making——for example in His saying: 'He made from it its pair' (*al-A`r~f*, 7.189); and His saying: 'and has made for you ships and cattle on which you ride' (*al-Zukhruf*, 43.12); and His saying: 'He made the sun a lamp' (*Nf^*, 7116)——the meaning of origination and contingency is clear.

The legal 'making' is as in His saying: 'Surely I will make you a leader for mankind' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.124), and another example of the same is the negated making in His saying, Exalted is He: 'It was not Allah Who made a slit-ear she-camel or a she-camel let loose in pasture…'(*al-M~|idah*, 5.103), i.e. He did not legalize the slitting of its ear. An(other) example of the legal 'making' is His saying, Exalted is He: 'and We made the *qiblah* to which you were used only to test those who followed the Messenger from those who would turn on their heels' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.143).

The difference between the two 'makings' is that the first of them is bringing into existence the essence of the made thing or an abiding quality of it which did not exist before. That implies bringing the made from one state to another state, or from one quality to another quality. That (turning from one to another state) is accomplished when the 'making' is referred to mankind, and it is in the meaning of turning from one state to another, as (when) I made the dough bread, the flour dough. In both cases there is turning of the made from one state to another in which it was not before. The flour before being

made dough was not dough, and the dough before being made bread was not bread. It is not understood from this other than that the thing made is moving with the making from what it was before (to the changed state).

The second is inventing a law that turns (the object of the action) from one verdict to another one, like the Ka`bah being made the *qiblah* of the Muslims after Bayt al-Maqdis had been their *qiblah*.

Making the Qur|~n Arabic is natural making, because it is inventing a meaning abiding with the Qur|~n, namely its being Arabic. That will either be transforming it from one quality to the other——that is, it was first not-Arabic then Allah invented in it this quality (of being Arabic). Or (it will be) creating it with this quality from the beginning——as Allah created the sun joined with the quality of being a lamp, and as Allah created the night with the quality of being a covering, and created the day with the quality being a space for seeking livelihood. That is definitely the sense (here) in the (case of the making Arabic of the) Qur|~n, because of the non-existence of anything to indicate that it was non-Arabic before, and then Allah transformed it into Arabic. As for its being the Arabic Word since forever: relating the verb 'making' to it in this way is impermissible in reason and in the dictionary, because 'making' is an action and action precedes what is enacted, so 'making' definitely precedes the made.

The same will be said about His saying, Glorified is He: 'But We made it a light, We guide by it whoever We will from among Our servants' (*al-Shfr~*, 42.52)s

This will appear as self-evident to whoever reflects on the meaning of 'making', and thinks about the Eternal Necessary attributes of Allah,

Exalted is He, and the impossibility of relating 'making' to these attributes. For it is impossible in Law that one should say that Allah has made His Knowledge all-encompassing, or His Power all-containing, or that Allah has made His Existence pre-eternal and sempiternal, or that He has made His Hearing catch all sounds, or made His Seeing encompass all that is visible——because these phrases imply Allah's production of these attributes.

An objection has been offered to the argument for the creation of the Qur|~n from its being made Arabic——that 'making' is sometimes other than creation, as in His saying: 'They make for Allah daughters, Glorified is He' (*al-Na^l*, 16.57) and His saying: 'They made the angels who are servants of the Most Gracious females' (*al-Zukhruf*, 43.19), and His saying: 'You make it your provision that you lie' (*al-W~qi`ah*, 56.82).

The answer to it is——that the distance between the two 'makings', and makers is immense. The making in the context of what we are here discussing is an affirmed action referred to Allah, Exalted is He. Whoever rejects it or rejects its effect (namely, the Qur|~n), has unbelieved. That which is made——namely, the Qur|~n in its Arabic, its giving light and its guidance——is an established reality. Whoever rejects it, he has certainly unbelieved. The 'making' in what they have objected with is a falsehood referred to the unbelievers. The made——namely, the angels being feminine——is a nothing. Whoever affirms that will be regarded as an unbeliever. There is no problem with the sameness of the letters of the verb (*ja`ala*) in both references——namely, *j,m*, *`ayn*, *l~m*——because the verb in reference to Allah has one meaning, and in reference to someone else has another meaning regardless of there being no difference in the word. Like that is His saying, Ex-

alted is He——'He is who created you and those before you' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.21); and His saying: 'And Allah created you and whatever you do' (*al-^~ff~t*, 37.96); and His saying: 'Indeed We created man from a quintessence of clay' (*al-Mu|minfn*, 23.12); and His saying: 'We have indeed created man in the best of moulds' (*al-œ,n*, 95.4)——and other similar verses where the creation is referred to Allah. It is in all cases with the meaning of bringing from non-being into being. You will find this same verb, the same word and the same letters, referred to the unbelievers. It has (in those references) a sense that is not proper to the righteous servants Allah, let alone its being permissible in respect of Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, Exalted is He. That (meaning) is (explicit) in His saying: 'And you create falsehood' (*al-`Ankabft*, 29.17). Is there any way to interpret that in one place according to the meaning of the other? Or is the comparison between the two verbs as impossible as the impossibility of the comparison between the two doers?

5 His saying, Exalted is He: 'Never comes aught to them of a renewed message (*dhikr*) from their Lord, but they listen to it as in jest' (*al-Anbiy~|*, 21.2). Similar is His saying: 'But there comes not to them a newly-revealed message from the Most Gracious, but they turn away therefrom.' (*al-Shu`ar~|*, 26.6)

The argument from both verses is description of the message therein as being originated, which is being created. Without doubt, in both verses the meaning of 'message' is not but the Qur|~n because of the evidence of His saying: 'It is not but a message for the worlds' (*al-Qalam*, 68.52; *Yfsuf*, 12.104; *^~d*, 38.87); and His saying: 'Surely We have sent down the message' (*al-™ijr*,

15.9); and His saying: 'Surely it is a message for you and your people' (*al-Zukhruf*, 43.44); and His saying: 'By the Qur|~n possessed of the message' (^~*d*, 38.1), and His saying: 'It is not but a message and clarifying Qur|~n' (*Y~s,n*, 36.69), and His saying: 'This is a blessed message, We have sent it down' (*al-Anbiy~|*, 21.50)

The believers in the eternity of the Qur|~n have followed two approaches in their rejection of the argument, from the verses of *al-Anbiy~|* (21.2) and *al-Shu`ar~|* (26.6), of the believers in its creation. Those among them who believe in the eternity of its letters and words hold that, in both verses, the meaning of being originated applies to sending down (of the Qur|~n) when Allah wills that as is the demand of His wisdom. The meaning is that that which is originated is the sending down of the Book, not the Book itself. Some of them have expressed this by saying that the meaning of being originated is in the renewal (of the sending down of the Book). Those among them who differentiate between the Qur|~n and those letters and words which are recited and compiled, say: that which is originated is the letters and words, which are expressions of the Qur|~n——which is an eternal attribute abiding with His Essence——and narration thereof. Both these opinions are rejected.

As for the first argument——it is invalidated by the fact that the thing-originated is what the action of originating falls upon. The condition of it is that it is preceded by the doer and the action. Origination is bringing from non-being into being. To interpret origination as meaning the sending down is to leave the apparent meaning for no reason——except that the holder of this opinion has made it the basis to which the texts are referred and (by which) the evidence is interpreted. How great the hardship (that this kind

of reasoning introduces) in the religion! Moreover, we say that the sending down itself is transferring that which is sent from one state to another. And that indicates origination for two reasons——the first is that the eternal does not shift from its root, and that which is (merely) accidental cannot happen to it; the second is that there is no authority of anyone over the eternal, because the eternal is not caused to be (i.e. the eternal is not caused to be in one place or time or form rather than in a different place or time or form, therefore it cannot be transferred from one place or time or form to another).

As for the second argument——it is rejected by the fact that to affirm something (namely the Qur'an) as an attribute for Allah, Exalted is He, which is other than what has been sent down to the truthful Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, is a claim without proof.

Im~m Abƒ l-YaqaŒ~n, may Allah have mercy on him, has objected to this claim of theirs by saying:

A narration is either contrary to what is being narrated or according to it. If it is according to it, then how can two conforming things be, one 'created' and the other 'not-created'. The *ummah* is in consensus that whatever is permitted for a thing, is [also] permitted for its like. Otherwise, what the *ummah* has agreed on is void. If one says that the narration is other than the narrated, and it is contrary to it, then that is stranger [still] and further away from being right. And that is going against the normal usage of the *ummah* and [indeed] of all nations. Because a narration cannot be narration of something except when it is like the narrated, expressing it. If the opposite of what we hold is possible——that the narration is [indeed] contrary to what is narrated——then it is necessary of all false reports that they are true, and of all true reports that they are false.

And poetry will be narration of the Qur|~n, and the Qur|~n narration of poetry, and praise [will be] narration of blame, and blame narration of praise. And it will not be proper for us to reject a report, or call a reporter false, or that we refuse a narration or deny a saying. When this is possible and permitted then how can the truth be truth and the lie a lie? By my life, if the narration is opposite to the narrated, then the truth should be falsehood, and the falsehood should be truth. As this is void and falsified, then it is correct [to hold] that the narration cannot be opposite to the narrated.

Also: [if you are right], tell us where the narration is opposite to the narrated. And, what is the Qur|~n? Is it the narration or the narrated? If the Qur|~n that Allah sent down on the heart of Mu^ammad, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, and which the Trustworthy Spirit came down with, is the narration, and this ['the narrated', the Qur|~n that we recite] is other than that, then our discussion with them [the Hanbalis] is in respect of the Qur|~n that the Trustworthy Spirit came down with on the heart of Mu^ammad, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, the Qur|~n about which He has said: 'When We recite it, then follow its reciting, then surely it is up to Us the explanation thereof' (*al-Qiy~mah*, 75.18-19). If the Qur|~n [that we recite] is the narrated, and the Qur|~n is abiding with the Essence of Allah, then it has not yet come down. They have followed in that the saying of Ibn Sfriy~ when he said to the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah: 'Allah has not sent down anything to any of mankind.' In that way they have rejected the Qur|~n's having come down. That is most astonishing.

There is consensus among us and among them that the Qur|~n that is in this world and that we read is like what was read by the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, and that we have read it according to his reading. If it had been opposite to it——in the way that they say the narration is opposite to the narrated——then the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, would have brought [something] opposite to what Jibr,l, upon him

be peace, brought. Similarly, Jibr,l would have brought [something] opposite to what Mik~l brought, and Mik~l the opposite of what Israf,l brought——and thus all of them would have brought [something] opposite to the other.

If you say that the narration is opposite to the narrated then what do we say about what Muˆammad has narrated from Jibr,l? Is it this? Or is it opposite to this? Then there is no escape from saying this is this, or this is like this. How can [a quality] in a thing be permitted that is not permitted in the like of it? Or [are we to say that] in a thing [a quality] is not permitted that is permitted in the like of it? Is there any contradiction greater and worse than this? We seek refuge in Allah from blindness and being left helpless, and we beseech Him for help and guidance.[122]

6 His saying, Exalted is He: 'This is a Book, with verses established, further explained in detail from One who is All-Wise and All-Informed.' (*Hfd*, 11.1)

The argument from this verse is that Allah has described the Qur|~n as being established and detailed. Both of these are an effect emanating from an effect-giver. It is not possible that the effect should be eternal since forever, because of the necessity of its effect-giver having precedence over it. The preceded is originated because——evidently——it is after it was not.

This Qur|~n, either it is joined with being established and detailed from its beginning, or these are qualities that Allah has created in it, after it had been void of them. Both possibilities imply its creation and origination.

The first, because the existence of a thing joined with an originated quality from its beginning is evidence of its being originated. Since

[122] Ibid, 189-90.

establishing and detailing are two actions emanating from Allah, Glorified is He, there is no doubt as to their being originated——otherwise, their reference to Allah would not have been allowed. Its establishing and detailing are not but in the meaning of bringing it into existence as established and detailed.

The second, because being established and detailed are two effects falling upon it. The effect emanates from the effect-giver, attesting to the transferring from one state to the other of that upon which the effect has fallen. That is impossible for the eternal, because of the impossibility of anyone having authority over it. That is the reason why it is impossible to say that Allah has established His Power, or detailed It, or that He has established His Knowledge or detailed It. Because that phrase necessarily implies origination of His Power and His Knowledge, Exalted is He. Therefore, it becomes certain that we turn to the first (possibility, namely that the qualities of being established and detailed are joined with the Qur'an from the beginning), because of the non-existence of anything that indicates that the Qur|~n was established after it had lacked being established, or was detailed after its lack of that.

7 His saying, Exalted is He: 'Indeed, We brought to them a Book, We detailed it knowingly.' (*al-A`raf*, 7.52)

The argument from this verse in respect of the origination of the Qur|~n concerns three matters:

The first is that being 'brought' is transferral from one state to another state. That is impossible for the eternal as was explained above.

The second is the report about it that it is detailed. As in the foregoing.

The third is that its detailing emanates from His Knowledge, Glorified is He. The emanating from a thing must be preceded by it.

8 His saying, Exalted is He: 'None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something better or similar.' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.106)

The argument from this verse is that Allah, Glorified is He, has informed us of abrogation of some of its verses by some others. Abrogation is omission and removal, and that is impossible for that which is eternal. Its impossibility is greater in respect of something that is in words. The majority of the scholars have affirmed this—among them are the believers in the eternity of the Qur|~n.

9 His saying, Exalted is He: 'The month of Ramaƚ~n, in which the Qur|~n was sent down.' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.185)

The argument from this verse is that it is sent down. Sending down is moving from one place to the other, which is impossible for the eternal, because of the impossibility of anything having authority over it, or its being changed in its state. Similarly, in His saying, Exalted is He: 'He sent down on you the Book with truth, confirming what is before it, and He sent down the Torah and Gospel before' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3.3-4); and His saying: 'He it is who sent down to you the Book, from it are established verses' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3.7); and His saying: 'and We have sent down on you the message, so that you explain for the people what has been sent down to them' (*al-Na^l*, 16.44); and His saying: 'Indeed, We have sent it down in a blessed night' (*al-Dukh~n*, 44.3). In its sending down there is a further evidence of its origination, namely that it has

been sent down in parts, so it is divided. And division is impossible for the eternal.

10 His saying, Exalted is He: 'Surely We have sent down the message, and surely We will preserve it.' (*al-™ijr*, 15.9)

The argument (from this verse) is that Allah has reported about it that it is preserved by Him. The preserved cannot but be the created, because the eternal does not need preserving by those that preserve. For it is impermissible to say that Allah preserved His Life, or His Existence, or His Power, or His Hearing, or His Seeing, or His Knowledge, whereas it is permissible to say that Allah has preserved His Word, if the Word revealed is intended by that, and not *kal~m al-nafs,*. The verse is a proof of its permissibility. As for the *^ad,th* 'Preserve Allah, He will preserve you'——it means to preserve one's obedience to His command and prohibition. So it presents no objection to what I have said.

11 His saying, Exalted is He: 'in it are verses clearly defined——they are the core of the Book——and others are allegorical (*mutash~bih~t*).' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3.7)

The argument from this verse is that the verses of the Qur|~n are divided into two types: the clearly defined and the allegorical, and that the clearly defined verses are the base for the allegorical which should be referred to the former in interpretation. That is impossible in respect of what is eternal.

12 His saying, Exalted is He: `Rather: it is clear verses in the hearts of those who are given the knowledge.' (*al-`Ankabft*, 29.49)

The argument from it is that the hearts of scholars are originated. The originated cannot be

a vessel for the eternal. No-one among the creatures of Allah can be a place for the Life of Allah, or His Power, or His Knowledge, or His Existence, or His Hearing, or His Seeing, or any attribute of His attributes. Rather, the creatures can be vessels of the things known to Allah, and things in the power of Allah, and things seen by Him, because these, like them, are creatures.

13 His saying, Exalted is He: 'But it is a Glorious Qur|~n, in a Preserved Tablet.' (*al-Burfj*, 85.21)

The argument from it is by two ways. The first is that the Tablet is created, and the created cannot be a vessel for the non-created, as above. The second is that these verses are presented in praise of the Qur|~n, and explain its glory and greatness and exalted rank. No-one can doubt that it would be a clearer and stronger argument (for that) if He had said that the Qur|~n is abiding with His Essence, Exalted is He. If it had been since forever abiding with Him, Glorified is He, then it would have been more appropriate to say: 'But it is a Glorious Qur|~n, abiding with the All-Mighty, the All-Praised', or some such that denotes what I have said.

14 His saying, Exalted is He: 'We have sent down to you the Book with the truth, confirming the Book before it, and mastering it.' (*al-M~|idah*, 5.48)

The argument (from this verse) is that He has affirmed its being preceded by other (than it). The preceded cannot but be originated. And He has said that it is mastering its predecessor. The mastering is an evidence that the mastered is originated. If the one before it is originated,

then the quality of being originated is quite appropriate for it also.

15 His saying, Exalted is He: 'It is a Qur|~n which We have divided in order that you might recite it to men at intervals: We have revealed it by stages.' (*al-Isr~|*, 17.106)

The argument is that Allah has said of it that it is divided. The divided is made. The made cannot but be originated.

The foregoing are examples of the Qur|~nic evidence for its being originated. As for the evidence from the Sunnah, there are many narrations. We confine ourselves here to the following:

Evidence from the Sunnah

1

Im~m Aˆmad, al-Bukh~r,, and Abƒ D~wƒd have narrated from Abƒ Sa`,d b. al-Mu`all~ that he said:

I was praying in the mosque, then the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, called me, but I did not respond. Then I said: 'O Messenger of Allah I was praying.' He said: 'Has not Allah said: ''Respond to Allah and the Messenger when they call you''?' Then the Prophet said: 'Indeed I will teach you a chapter which is the biggest chapter in the Qur|~n, before you come out from the mosque.' Then he held my hand. When he intended to go out I said to him: 'Did you not say: ''Indeed I will teach you a chapter which is the biggest chapter in the Qur|~n?''' He said: 'It is ''*al-ˆamdu li-l-l~hi rabbi l-`~lam,n*...[*al-Fatiˆah*, 1.1-7]''——the ''seven oft-repeated'' verses, and the greatest Qur'an that I have been given.'

2

Im~m Rabi` b. ™ab,b has narrated in his *Musnad* from Abƒ Ubaydah, from J~bir b. Zayd, from Abƒ Sa`,d Khudr,, may Allah be pleased with them, that a man heard another man reciting: '*Qul: huwa l-l~hu aˆad al-l~hu l-%amad*…(Say: He is Allah, the One, the Eternally Absolute… (*al-Ikhl~%*, 112.1-4))' and repeating it. When the morning came he entered upon the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah. He mentioned that to him, in a way as if he were underrating that surah. The Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: 'By the One in whose hand is my life, it equals the third of the Qur|~n.' Im~m al-Bukh~r, has recorded it by way of Abƒ Sa`,d in the words: 'By the One in whose hand is my life, it equals the third of the Qur|~n.'

3

Im~m al-Bukh~r, has narrated also from Abƒ Sa`id the saying:

The Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said to his Companions: 'Is any one of you unable to read the third of the Qur|~n in a night?' It became difficult for them and they said: 'Who could be capable of that, O Messenger of Allah?' upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah. He said: ''*All~hu aˆad, All~hu l-%amad*, Allah the One, the Absolute'' is the third of the Qur|~n.'

4

Im~m Aˆmad has narrated from Abƒ Sa`,d the like of that (previous *had,th*), saying that Qat~dah b. Nu`m~n spent the whole night reading the sƒrah '*Qul: huwa l-l~hu aˆad*'. It was mentioned to the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah. Then he said: 'By the One in whose hand is my life, it equals the half of the Qur|~n,' or he said 'the third of the Qur|~n'. Muslim and al-

Tirmidh, have narrated the like of that through Abƒ Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him. And like that is (also) with Im~m Aˆmad, al-Tirmidh,, al-Nasa|,, by way of Abƒ Ayyƒb An‰~r,. Im~m al-Tirmidh, says: On this subject there are narrations from Abƒ l-Dard~|, Abƒ Sa`,d, Qat~dah b. al-Nu`m~n, Abƒ Hurayrah, Anas, Ibn `Umar, and Abƒ Mas`ƒd. Im~m Aˆmad and al-Nasa|, have narrated the like of it from Ubayy b. Ka`b. Im~m Aˆmad and al-Nasa|, have also narrated something like it by way of Abƒ Mas`ƒd and Umm Kulthƒm b. `Uqbah b. Ab, Mu`ay\ referring it to the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah. They have narrated with Im~m Muslim from the *ˆad,th* of Abƒ l-Dard~| from the Prophet, peace be upon him.

5
Aˆmad, Muˆammad b. Na‰r and œabar~n, have narrated with a sound chain from Ma`qil b. Yas~r, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: '[*Sfrat*] *al-Baqarah* is the high-point of the Qur|~n, and its peak; with every verse of it came down eighty angels; The *~yat al-Kurs,* (2.255) was taken down from under the Throne, then was joined with this surah.'

6
Abƒ Ya`la, Ibn ™ibb~n, œabar~n, and Bayhaq, have narrated from Sahl b. Sa`d al-S~`idi saying that the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: 'Indeed every thing has a high point, and the high point of the Qur|~n is *Sfrat al-Baqarah*; whoever reads it in his house during the day, Satan will not enter it for three days.'

The argument from these *ˆad,th*s for the creation of the Qur|~n is that they are clear texts

that some (part) of the Qur|~n is greater and better than the other, and that some of it is a high point in relation to the rest of it, and that some of it was separated, then was joined with it. All that is impossible for the eternal. Do you not see that preference of some attributes of Allah over the others is not allowed? It will not be said that His Knowledge is better than His Power or *vice versa*. It will not be said that His Life is greater than His Hearing, or His Seeing, or His Power, or His Will. If it is prohibited for the attributes as a whole, then it is more appropriate for it to be prohibited for one and the same attribute. Allah's Knowledge is not divided, then some of it preferred over the other. His Power is not divided to make some of it greater than the other. Similarly, it is not possible that a part of the attribute is separated, then joined with itself.

Conclusion

The outcome of the foregoing:

I do not doubt, respected reader, that after your acquaintance with the arguments and debates presented in this Discussion on the issue of the creation of the Qur|~n, you will have realized that correctness and safety lie in the belief that it is, like all other existing things, other than Allah. It came into existence after it had not been. Whatever is like that, it is definitely created. You will have realized also that the belief in its being eternal opens the door for those who believe in the possibility of a multiplicity of the eternal to the extent that it leads

to belief in the world's being eternal. You have seen the effect of that in what I quoted of the sayings of those who support the eternity of the Qur|~n and are harsh in criticizing the proponents of belief in its origination. The situation has led some of them to believe in the eternity of all of the Words, because of their similarity in the letters and words from which they are composed. It led some of them to believe in the eternity of (even) the leather, the peg and the wall around the Qur|~n. What is there to prevent, beyond that, going on with this unending continuous chain until it ends with belief in the eternity of everything, or to the philosophy of the oneness of all existents. I seek refuge in Allah.

You will also have realized the weakness of the uncertainties that they have relied upon, and the contradiction in their sayings, and confusion in their argument. The strongest of what they have referred to in denying the creation of the Qur|~n is that it is a Word related to Allah, Exalted is He, as in His saying: 'Grant asylum to him so that he may hear the Word of Allah' (*al-Tawbah*, 9.6). They have failed to note that by this argument they are providing the Christians with a proof for their belief that the Messiah, upon him be peace, is a 'son' of Allah or 'part' of Him, because Allah says about him: 'His word which He bestowed upon Mary and a spirit proceeding from Him' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.171).

Regardless of all this, I would have preferred not to go over this issue, in favour or against, because of my desire to restrict myself to what is narrated from the first generation of this *ummah*, and not to raise any debate that disturbs any Muslim. But what could I do when the tongues would not stop, and the pens would not refrain from raising this subject without any guidance or

evidence. The affair did not stop at that, but went to the extreme of accusing of unbelief those who say the word of truth or invite to it. Then I saw myself, because of that, compelled to say a deliberated and quiet word——I have no intention behind it but to please Allah, Glorified is He—— which can remove, by the hand of proof, the veil of doubt from the face of the dazzling reality, asking Allah for His guidance in both word and deed.

Whoever reads what I have said in a fair-minded way will find it far from being influenced by selfish motives, egotism or uncontrolled emotion, for I have given place to only reasoned argument, nor have I let myself be satisfied with anything other than strict objectivity. And Allah is behind the intention, and He is sufficient for me. And how good He is to be relied upon!

THE THIRD DISCUSSION

ON THE PERMANENT STAYING IN THE FIRE OF THOSE WHO COMMIT MAJOR SINS

This discussion contains an Introduction, three Chapters and a Conclusion.

Introduction

On the definition of *al-khulfd* (permanency) and *al-kab~|ir* (major sins):

As for *al-khulfd*: it means permanent, everlasting stay. The author of *Lis~n al-`Arab* says:

al-khuld: permanent staying in a place, not coming out of it; *khalada, yakhludu, khuldan wa khulfdan*: remain and stay; *d~r al-khuld* (lit. the house of permanency): the hereafter, because of the permanent staying of its people therein. *Wa khalladahu l-l~hu wa akhladahu takhl,dan;* [for example:) *wa qad akhlada l-l~hu ahla d~r al-khuldi f,-h~ wa khallada-hum*——'And Allah made to stay the people of the house of permanency therein and made them permanent'.[123]

An example is His saying, Exalted is He: 'We granted not to any man before you everlasting life; if then you should die, would they live for ever?'' (*al-Anbiy~|*, 21.34)

The statement of the author of *al-Lis~n* denotes that *al-khuld* is used in the language to mean everlasting permanence. That is the opinion of al-Zamakhshar,, Ibn `A\iyyah, al-Qur\ub,, al-Shawk~n, from among the *mufassir,n*. It has been fully supported by `All~mah al-Ba\\~sh,, may Allah have mercy on him.

And the use of *al-khulfd* to mean long duration is done by interpreting it metaphorically. As in this expression of Lab,d in his *Mu`allaqah*:

%umman khaw~lida m~ yab,nu kal~mu-h~——[stones] dumb, long-enduring, their speech unintelligible

Again in this expression of al-A`sha:

lan taz~lf ka-dh~likum thumma l~ ziltu la-kum kh~lidan khulfda l-jib~li——you remain like that, then I'll remain constant for you with the constancy of the hills

[123] *Lis~n al-`arab* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma`~rif Kurnish al-N,l), 2:1225.

Fakhr al-D,n al-R~z,, Abƒ ™ayy~n, Abƒ al-Sa`ƒd and Qu\b al->|immah hold that it is used to mean long duration, and do not look to its meaning permanence or non-permanence. In their view, this is one of those ambiguous nouns whose meaning is determined by context. They have argued the permanence of the reward and punishment from other evidence from the Book and Sunnah, not from the word *al-khulfd*. For example, its use together with the word *al-abad* in His saying, Exalted is He, about those who believed and did good deeds: 'Their reward is with Allah: gardens of eternity, beneath which rivers flow; they will dwell therein for ever' (*al-Bayyinah*, 98.8); and His saying: 'For any that disobey Allah and His Messenger, is the Fire of hell: they will dwell therein for ever' (*al-Jinn*, 72.23); and what is gathered from the clear, sound *ˆad,th*s about the permanent staying therein of the people of both places, and the consensus of the *ummah*——except those who are not counted——on the non-perishing of these two places.

These people considered the use of *al-khulfd* to mean non-permanent duration in the usage of the Arabs, such as the verses of Lab,d and al-A`sha, and decided that the real meaning is the normal usage (not the poetic, figurative one).

`All~mah al-Ba\\~sh, has criticized them by saying:

As the Arabs have derived from *al-khuld* their expression *khaw~lid* for stones, in the same way they have derived from *al-abad* their expression *aw~bid* for wild [not domesticated therefore unbounded] animals.[124]

He also says that:

---

[124] Shaykh `All~mah Sul\~n b. Muˆammad al-Ba\\~sh,, *Ris~lah f, l-khulfd* in *Tamh,d qaw~`id al-,m~n* (Oman: Wiz~rat al-Tur~th al-Qawm, wa l-Thaqafa), 2:19.

As the Arabs have derived from *al-khuld khaw~lid al-aˆjar*, from *al-abad* they have derived *aw~bid wuˆfsh al-qafar*, whereas these non-domesticated animals [of the desert] have a life less [enduring] than those *khaw~lid*.[125]

`All~mah al-Ba\\~sh, has interpreted the use of *al-khulfd* for long-lasting stones as the belief of the J~hiliyyah in the non-perishing of the universe. He has cited the saying of Zuhayr b. Ab, Sulm~ as evidence: 'Listen: I do not see in [physical] events anything that endures or is permanent except the great mountains, and except the sky, the stars, and our Lord, and His days are counted and the nights.'

Al-Ba\\~sh, says:

If his intention [in using] *khulfd* had not been the meaning of permanency, then he would not have exaggerated so far as to associate [the rocks] in permanence with Allah, Glorified is He; on the contrary of the saying about *al-ta|b,d* (continuance, abiding), there is no escape from its discontinuation when related to the world.[126]

It is in respect of this sense——everlasting permanence——that the dispute arose among the *ummah* about the permanent staying in the Fire of sinners, as will be explained below, *insh~|All~h*.

As for *al-kab~|ir*: it is the plural of *kab,rah*, it means what is grave in disobedience, and about the commission of which there follows a warning in the Qur|~n or the sound Sunnah. Either a punishment for it in this world has been determined——as for adultery, theft and false accusation of chaste women——or no punishment for it in this world is described——as for consumption of interest, the dead, blood and the meat of the pig.

---

125 Ibid.

126 Ibid, 20.

Chapter 1

On the dispute of the people about permanency of the Garden and the Fire

The Will of Allah, Glorified is He, determined that the life in this world is a finite life, so no one can share with the Creator in the quality of being eternal. No one has disputed that; the finitude of the ages in this world is something about the conception of which people do not differ. Allah, Glorified is He, has made it one of the stages that mankind must traverse. In this world the people are different in what they have of comfort or hardship, good fortune or ill-fortune. This difference among them does not relate to the degree of their differences in the good or harm that they do, their steadfastness or their deviancy, their obedience or disobedience. Many people of pure heart, steady character, and who compete to do good deeds, spend their whole lives in misfortune and suffering and deprivation. And many people of foul heart, bad character and evil dealing are provided with what they seek, and the means of comfort are supplied to them, and different kinds of pleasures are gathered for them. In this is what makes man believe firmly that the good or ill-fortune in this world are not the reward of the good and bad deeds that are sent forward by the servant, alongwith the certainty that the Assayer is All-Seeing, and the Judge is just. That is why the souls are innately disposed to look to a life after this life, in which every servant will garner what he has grown and harvest what he has farmed,

and he will get what he has sent forward. The Divine Messages came one after the other continually giving good tidings and warning about that life. The believers in that life did not dispute about its being different from this transient worldly life. That life is the life of permanence and eternity. Only some odd people have claimed that the life hereafter is transient, albeit more enduring and extensive than the first life.

These odd people are of two groups. The first are a sect of this *ummah*, namely the Jahmis, related to Jahm b. Safw~n. The second have no relation to the *ummah* of the Prophet, because they do not believe in the Book, and build their ideas on wholly materialistic foundations.

As for the first group, the Jahmis, they have relied on two doubts:

The first is that the permanence of something created contradicts the description of Allah as being the Last. Among the names of Allah are: the First and the Last. The meaning of His being the First is His precedence over every existent. In the same way, necessarily, His being the Last will mean His remaining after every existent.

The second is that the number of the breaths of the people of the two places (i.e. Paradise and hell) will either be known to Allah, Exalted is He, or not. If known, it means that that number is finite, and its being finite does not conform with being permanent. If not known, that does not conform with His attribute that He is Knower of every thing.

The answer to the first is that the permanence of the life of something created in the hereafter does not contradict His being the Last, Exalted is He, because of the difference of its permanence from His permanence. For, whereas His permanence is Essential, its permanence depends on

His bestowal of it: that is why He deserved the attribute of the Last, and not it.

The answer to the second is that the continuity of their breaths does not contradict their being encompassed by His Knowledge. For His Knowledge is Essential Knowledge which cannot be compared with the knowledge of the creatures.

As for the second group they have argued their opinion from within a materialistic philosophy based on examining the natures of perceived things. The short of it is that the permanence of bodies is impossible, because they are composed of elements opposed in function and so are subject to alterations in state which culminate in disintegration.

The answer to this is that belief in Allah's power over every thing negates this doubt at its root. For it is not impossible that the bodies will be returned in another, different nature such that they will not be disintegrated or, when some part of them is disintegrated, it is replaced.

The firm belief of the believers that Allah has power over every thing does not leave of this doubt any trace in their hearts. Allah, Glorified is He, who has created bodies in this world in the way He has created them with opposition among their component elements, is not unable to create them on the Day of Resurrection in another nature different from what they are in this world. For the world of the unseen has special natures which differ completely from the natures of this world. So the comparison of one with the other is not permitted. Infinite permanence has conditions which distinguish it from finite existence.

When you realize that the life in the hereafter does not perish, because it is the life of destination, not the life of station, the life of reward, not the life of earning, you will know

that the reward of that life is an eternal reward, either success or failure. There is no difference (in this respect) between its reward and its punishment. However, some groups of people hold the view of differentiating between them (in respect of permanence). At the head of these groups are Jews, from whom Allah has narrated this opinion in the context of recounting a series of their errors, and He has criticized this in them, and has asked them to present whatever proof they refer to on the matter. Allah has explained in a clear phrase that the truth is against what they say, where He says: 'And they say: ''The Fire shall not touch us but for a few numbered days.'' Say: ''Have you taken a promise from Allah, for He never breaks His promise? Or is it that you say of Allah what you do not know?'' No; those who seek gain in evil, and are surrounded by their sins, are companions of the Fire: they shall abide therein for ever' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.81-82).

From this you will know, respected reader, that belief in the transferral of evil-doers from the punishment to the reward is only an effect of Jewish penetration into Islamic thought. The great scholar, Sayyid Muˆammad R~shid Ri‡~ became aware of that. He says in the Preface of his *tafs,r* of *Sfrat al-Baqarah* in *al-Man~r*:

> The sixth rule is that the reward in respect of faith and deeds is conjoined, because the religion is faith and deeds. It is a delusion for one related to the religion of any Prophet to think that he will be delivered from permanent staying in the Fire merely by [that] relation. The testimony to this is what Allah has narrated to us about the Children of Israel of their deluded pride in their religion, and what He has refuted in them so that we do not follow their ways in [that], namely [His saying:] 'And they say: ''The Fire shall not touch us but for a few numbered days.'' Say: ''Have you taken a promise from Allah, for He never

breaks His promise? Or is it that you say of Allah what you do not know?'' No; those who seek gain in evil, and are surrounded by their sins, are companions of the Fire: they shall abide therein for ever' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.81-82)., and what He has narrated from the Jews and Christians of their saying: 'And they say: ''None shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian.'' Those are their vain desires. Say: ''Produce your proof if you are truthful.'' No; whoever submits himself wholly to Allah and is a doer of good, he will get his reward with his Lord; on such shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.111-12). But we have followed their ways inch by inch, handspan by handspan, in confirmation of what has come in the sound *ˆad,th*. We are distinguished from them only in that the followers of [the Jews and Christians] are some of the *ummah*, not all of the *ummah*, and in the preservation of the text of the whole of our Book, in the safeguarding of our Prophet's Sunnah in detail, and that the proof of the people of knowledge and guidance from among us is standing till the Day of Resurrection.[127]

Though we are pleased with the removal from the eyes of this great scholar of the veil of *taql,d* until he saw the reality clearly, and let his pen record it, as here, in clear terms——and he confirms this reality repeatedly in his *tafs,r* of verses from surahs *al-Baqarah*, *>l `Imr~n*, and *Hfd*——we regret his letting himself fall into the trap so that he is undecided on the issue. Sometimes, as in his *tafs,r* of *Sfrah Yfnus*, he expresses a distinction between the disobedient among the *muwaˆˆid,n* (those who believe in the Oneness of God) and others; and at other times, as in his *tafs,r* of *Sfrat al-An`~m* he holds to the ending without condition of the punishment of the Fire——under the influence of the opinion of Ibn al-Qayyim which, on that point, is in accord with the Jahmis'. (I will quote, respected read-

[127] *al-Man~r* (D~r al-Man~r, 4th edition), 1:112.

er, extracts from the latter's texts wherever it is possible and appropriate.)

From what I have said here, you will know, respected reader, that Ibn al-Qayyim has accepted on this issue some part of the belief of the Jahmis, as will be explained below, *insh~| All~h*.

Ash`aris, and those who follow them from the groups relating to the Sunnah, hold the opinion of eternity of both places and the not-ceasing of both the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the non-*muwaˆˆid* disobedient. As for the *muwaˆˆid* disobedient, the Ash`aris' opinion is that they will be punished for a while, then they will be taken out of the Fire and will enter Paradise and will enjoy it and stay there permanently with the righteous.

The belief of us Ibadis is that whoever enters the Fire from among the *muwaˆˆid* disobedient and the associators (*mushrik*s) will remain therein permanently, not for a finite period. In the same way, those who enter Paradise from among the righteous servants of Allah will not come out of it. For both places are places of permanent stay. The Mu`tazilis and Kharijis agree with us on this point, regardless of the diversity of their groups. The Kharijis have opposed us only in that they judge of every punishable act of disobedience as *shirk* entailing expulsion from the *millah*: in that they opposed the texts of the Book, the Sunnah and the consensus of the *ummah*.

Chapter 2

On the arguments of those who believe in the end of the punishment

You have seen that the people who hold this view are two groups. One group believe in the ending of the punishment of all those who are in the Fire from among *muwaˆˆid,n* and associators. They are Jahm, his followers, and whoever holds their opinion, like Ibn al-Qayyim. The other group hold the opinion of the ending of the punishment of *muwaˆˆid,n*, but not of associators.

As for the first group they have relied (1) on certain verses from the Qur|~n, (2) on a narration from the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, and (3) on certain philosophical ideas.

1 The verses from the Qur|~n

As for the verses, they are as follows:

> His saying, Exalted is He: 'He will say: The Fire be your dwelling-place. You will dwell therein for ever, except as Allah wills. For your Lord is full of wisdom and knowledge'. (*al-An`~m*, 6.128)
>
> And His saying: 'Those who are wretched shall be in the Fire: there will be for them therein the heaving of sighs and sobs. They will dwell therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as thy Lord wills: for your Lord is the sure accomplisher of what He plans.' (*Hfd*, 11.106-07)

The way of reasoning from both these verses turns on the exception (from permanent stay) by the Will of Allah, Exalted is He. Also, in the

verse of *Hfd*, their enduring in the Fire has been tied to the enduring of the heavens and earth. It is known that the heavens and the earth are perishing; and whatever is attached to what is perishing is itself perishing also.

To the first there are several answers. The strongest answer is that the exception does not denote the ending (of the punishment). Because the exception by the Will of Allah comes in the Word of Allah to emphasize that what is reported happens by His Will (not otherwise). If He wills the opposite of that, it will be so. That is like in His saying, Exalted is He: 'By degrees shall We teach you, so you shall not forget, except what Allah wills' (*al-A`l~*, 87.6-7) with the assurance that the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, does not forget anything from what Allah has revealed to him and has taught him. Like that too is the conjoining of Allah's firm promise with His Will as in His saying, Glorified is He: 'You shall enter (*la-tadkhulunna*) the Sacred Mosque, *in-sh~| All~h* in security' (*al-Fat^*, 48.27), where, as is well known, the '*in-*' introduces an unfulfilled condition. That (the non-fulfillment of the condition) is definitely not allowed here because of its contradiction to the emphasis of the promise of entering (the Sacred Mosque) which is emphatic with the *l~m al-qasam* and *nfn al-tak,d* (in *la-tadkhulunna*), and is taken together with what precedes (the above words) in His saying, Glorified is He: 'Surely Allah did make true the vision of His Messenger' (48.27).

There are several answers to the second as well. The most deserving to be relied on is that the heavens and earth intended in these verses are not the heavens and the earth of this world. The intended meaning is the heavens and the earth of the hereafter that will then be shading and

carrying them. The entering of Paradise that the righteous people have been promised, and the entering of the Fire that the disobedient people have been warned of will not happen while the heavens and the earth of this world endure. For their time ends after the collapse of parts of the universe in its first existence. And that will happen which Allah has promised in His saying: 'The Day when the earth will be changed to other than the earth, and the heavens (likewise), and men will be marshalled forth before Allah, the One, the Irresistible. (*Ibr~h,m*, 14.48).

It will not be difficult for anyone to see that arguing for the ending of the punishment of the people of the Fire from the exception that is in the verses of *al-An`~m* and *Hfd*, and its being conditioned on the enduring of the heavens and the earth, compels them to say the same about the reward of the believers in Paradise, because the verse of *Sfrah Hfd* is followed by His saying, Exalted is He: 'And those who are blessed shall be in the Garden: they will dwell therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord wills' (*Hfd*, 11.108) The exception here is like the exception there and this condition is like that condition. This compelling answer is specifically for Ibn al-Qayyim and whoever follows him from among those who differentiate (in this respect of permanence) between the reward and the punishment; it is not for the Jahmis—— because they believe in the non-permanence of both.

There is no escape for them in His saying, Exalted is He, at the end of the verse of 'those who are blessed': 'a gift without break' (11.108), alongwith His saying before it 'for your Lord is the sure accomplisher of what He plans' (*Hfd*, 11.107), because each verse of the Qur|~n——even though its verses may be far apart

in the order or in order of revelation——testifies to every other. As His saying 'a gift without break' denotes the continuity of the blessing, in the same way His saying in these verses——'Nor will there be a way for them out of the Fire' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.167); and: 'No term shall be determined for them so they should die, nor shall its chastisement be lightened for them' (*al-F~\ir*, 35.36); and: 'Every time they wish to get away therefrom they will be forced thereto' (*al-Sajdah*, 32.20); and His saying: 'For its wrath is indeed an affliction grievous. Evil indeed is it as an abode and as a place to rest in' (*al-Furq~n*, 25.65-66); and: 'Their wish will be to get out of the Fire, but never will they get out therefrom, their chastisement will be one that endures' (*al-M~|idah*, 5. 37); and: 'and they will not be able to keep away therefrom' (*al-Infit~r*, 82.16); and: 'Nor will they enter the Garden, until the camel can pass through the eye of the needle' (*al-A`r~f*, 7.40)——denote the continuity of the punishment and the deprivation of its people from the blessing of the Garden. These texts are sufficient to prove that Allah has not willed for them but the punishment.

The will of Allah in these verses is undefined not defined. The verses which declare the permanence of the punishment like those which I have presented, are clear, there is no uncertainty as to what they denote. The matters of the faith are confined to explicit texts; they are not derived from ambiguous evidence. So how can reference be made to what is ambiguous when what is definite is available? Abrogation is never permitted in the reports of the Law-Maker because His Knowledge is not refreshed, and He is not ignorant of anything that happens, and He does not reveal but the truth. Then there is no sense in what Ibn Jar,r and others have narrated from J~bir b. `Ab-

dull~h, may Allah be pleased with him, that he said about this verse——the verse of *Hfd*——that it has overriding force in the Qur|~n. For one part of the Qur|~n cannot belie another part of it. It is not for J~bir——the great Companion educated from the school of Prophet——to dare to say this. Rather, it is something from the contrivances of the people of caprice and the fabrications of the people of deception.

Now, in what the author of *al-Man~r* has written in his *tafs,r* of the verse of *Hfd*, he has explained the clear and definite (verses) with other clear and definite (verses). His text is:

'They will dwell in it as long as the heavens and earth endure'——i.e. they will stay in it permanently and for ever; they will not move from it as long as the heavens which shade them and the earth which bears them remain. This is in [line with] the meaning of His saying in other verses 'they will dwell in it permanently for ever'. Because the Arabs use this expression in the meaning of permanence. Those are mistaken who say that what is intended is the period of the duration of the heavens and the earth in this world. For this earth will be changed and perish with the coming-to-be of the Resurrection. The heaven of the people of the Fire and the people of the Garden is what is above them. Their earth is what they are established upon, and it is underneath them. Ibn `Abb~s has said that for every Garden there is an earth and a heaven. Sudd, and ™asan have narrated the same.

'Except what your Lord wills'——i.e. this permanent dwelling is that which is prepared for them in the hereafter, which is appropriate to the quality of their ignorant and wrong-doing souls surrounded by the darkness of their sins and the corruption of their characters, as we have explained time after time. 'Except what your Lord wills' of the change of this system in another phase [of creation]. Allah has made it only by His Will, and it will remain in the grasp of His Will. The like of this exception is known in the context of firm verdicts to denote that its being everlasting is

conditional only upon His Will, not to denote the negation of it (being everlasting] in general——like His saying, Exalted is He: 'Say: I have no power over any good or harm to myself except as Allah wills'' (*al-A`r~f*, 7.188), i.e. I do not own any of that by my power and will, except what Allah wills to enable me to have power over, by subduing its means and guidance. Like it is in His saying: 'Say I have no power over any harm or good to myself except as Allah wills' (*Yfnus*, 10.49) where [it is the same except that] 'harm' is mentioned first. And His saying: 'By degrees shall We teach you, so you shall not forget except as Allah wills' (*al-A`l~*, 87.6-7)——the meaning is that the exception here is to emphasize the negation, i.e. He, Exalted is He, has guaranteed for His Prophet the preservation of the Qur|~n that He teaches to him by His Power, and has protected him so that he does not forget anything of it out of human weakness. That will not happen except *insh~| All~h*, if Allah wills, because He alone has power over it.
'Indeed your Lord is the accomplisher of what He wills'——if He wills other than that He will do it. Whatever He wills, it happens, and whatever He does not will, it does not happen. His will is connected with His Fore- knowledge and in accordance with His Wisdom. Since it is like that, [what He wills] will not be contrary to any of His promises or warnings——like the permanent dwelling of the people of the Fire therein. This warning is conditional upon His Will. His Will goes in accordance with His Knowledge and Wisdom.[128]

His saying, Exalted is He, 'They will dwell therein for ages' (*al-Naba|*, 78.23).

The way they argue from this is that 'ages' come to an end. As long as their dwelling in the Fire is counted by this amount, then it too is coming to an end.

The answer to this is that, just as the breaths in the hereafter do not end while there

[128] Ibid, 12:160-61.

is no relation between them and the ages of time that they cover, so the 'ages' are far indeed from ever coming to an end. The word *aˆq~b* (ages) is derived from *aˆqaba*: *ar‡afa-* 'followed'; so it means the continual following which (is a term that) has no end.

Fakhr al-D,n al-R~z, has done well when he says in the *tafs,r* of this verse:

If it is said: His saying '*aˆq~ban*' (ages) [means that] even if the ages are long they are coming to an end, whereas the punishment of the people of Fire is not ending. If He had said '*al-aˆq~b*' [with the defining article], then this question would not have arisen. The example of this question is in His saying about the people of the *qiblah*: `except what your Lord wills'. In our view the answer [to that] can follow several ways:

The first is that the word 'ages' does not mean passing of an age which has an end. Only one age is ending. The meaning is that they will dwell in it for ages; when one age has passed, another will follow it.

The second is that al-Zajj~j has said that the meaning is that they will dwell in it for ages. They will not taste during these ages any cool thing or any drink. These ages are the time for one kind of punishment, namely that they will not taste any cool thing or any drink, except a boiling fluid and a dark, murky fluid. After these ages of this punishment they will be given another kind of punishment.

Suppose that *aˆq~ba*' (ages) does convey the meaning of [the punishment's] ending. But this denotation of release is [at best] an implicit denotation. The explicit denotation is that they will not be released. He says, Exalted is He: 'Their wish will be to get out of the Fire, but never will they get out therefrom; their chastisement will be one that endures' (*al-M~|idah*, 5.37). There is no doubt that the explicit has preference.

The author of *al-Kashsh~f* has mentioned another way [of interpreting] this verse. It is that the usage of *aˆq~ban* is related to *ˆaqiba `amu-n~* [an expression used] when there has been little rain or good in a

year, and *ˆaqiba fulanun* [an expression used] when someone has lacked provision, so that he is *ˆaqib*, and its plural is *aˆqab*. It functions as a clause descriptive of 'them' with the meaning that 'they' will dwell in the Fire suffering from scarcity of water, and His saying——'They will not taste in it any cool thing nor any drink'——will be its *tafs,r*.[129]

What al-R~z, has referred to al-Zajj~j has been said by many *mufassir*s. Its argument is that the words 'they will not taste' are a dependent clause qualifying the subject of 'they will dwell'. The *mufassir*s have explained that these people will dwell in the Fire for ages, not tasting in it any cool thing or drink except what has been mentioned. After that, they will be transferred to another kind of punishment, namely their punishment with the cold of al-Zamhar,r, where they will wish to come back to hell. We seek refuge with Allah. With this sense there is no difficulty, even with the meaning that the ages are coming to an end. In any case they have not argued from any text which means what they claim. They have only presented some interpretations which can be opposed by what invalidates them. And matters of the faith——as I said above——must rely upon the firm texts.

2 A narration from the Prophet

As for the narration, it is the *ˆad,th* of `Abdullah b. `Amr b. al-`>%: 'Indeed will come to hell a day when its doors will be shut up, there will be no one in it.' The argument from this *ˆad,th* is not decisive because, to begin with, it is an *aˆad ˆad,th* (a solitary report of the kind) that cannot be relied upon for deciding firm matters——

[129] al-Fakhr al-D,n al-R~z,, *al-Tafs,r al-kab,r* (Tehran: D~r al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, 2nd edition), 31:13-14.

to say nothing of the fact that its text and chain of narration are in disagreement with stronger evidence. Even if we assume the authenticity of this *^ad,th*, it is obligatory to interpret it so that it conforms with firm texts, namely that the people of the Fire will move from it to al-Zamhar,r. But, given the weakness of the *^ad,th*, there is no need for that interpretation.

3 The philosophical ideas

As for the philosophical ideas, some of them have already been quoted from the Jahmis. Some of them have been presented by Ibn al-Qayyim in his books, *al-^aw~`iq al-mursalah* and ™*adi al-arw~^*.[130]

The summary of this argument is that the Most Merciful, the Most Generous and Wise is greater than that He should create a people for evil, not for good, for punishment, not for mercy. And the primordial nature in which Allah has created man is *taw^,d*, piety, sincerity, but this nature is polluted by the various pollutions of disobedience. Some of these pollutions are cleansed by *da`wah*, some by punishment for a short period, and the cleansing of others needs a longer period of punishment. The purpose of that is that man should realize his weakness before his Lord, his need of His mercy, his indebtedness to His favour, his inability to bear His punishment, alongwith realization of the Power of Allah and His grasp, and that His favour and blessing to His creatures are vast. When the servant realizes that, his nature becomes clear from the rust of disobedience and his faith comes back after the bird of disobedience had flown with it. At that

[130] See *al-^aw~`iq al-mursalah* (Ma\ba`at al-Im~m), 22-240, and ™*adi al-arw~^* (D~r al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah), 252-77.

stage there remains no sense in his being punished (further); and Allah's actions are purified from any lack of purposive wisdom, and there is no wisdom in permanent punishment. Ibn al-Qayyim has arranged what he has derived of this philosophy, interpreted from the Qur|~n and the *~th~r* he has relied upon, in twenty-five points.

The author of *al-Man~r* has presented the text of Ibn al-Qayyim's statement in ™*ad, al-arw~ˆ*, and followed it with words of appreciation and praise which indicate that he is inclined towards it. That is in his *tafs,r* of the verse of the Will from *Sfrat al-An`~m*.[131] It contradicts what has been quoted from him earlier in the *tafs,r* of the exception by the Will of Allah in the verse of *Hfd*, as also his statement in the Preface of his *tafs,r* of *Sfrat al-Baqarah* which we have quoted, and other texts of his that we will quote below, *insh~| All~h*.

These ideas are refuted by the fact that Allah's actions are not bound by systems decided by human reason, nor are they to be related to norms derived from human imagination. Rather He, Exalted is He, does what He wills, and judges what He plans: 'He is not questioned about what He does, and they are questioned' (*al-Anbiya|*, 21.23). We must believe that our limited intellects are too disabled, wearied and powerless to encompass His wise purposes in His actions, or to penetrate His secrets in His creation: 'you are not given of the knowledge but little' (*al-Isr~|*, 17.85)

Our duty is only to surrender to what Allah informs us about, and what He tells is not subject to change, and an instance of that is what He has told us of the warning. That is because of our certainty that Allah, Exalted is He, does not

---

131 *al-Man~r* (D~r al-Man~r, 4th edition), 8:98-99.

speak but the truth, just as He does not command but to the truth: 'Who is more true in speaking than Allah?' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.122)

If we open that door and we refer to our intellects for judgement, (giving them authority) above what Allah has informed us of, there can be no other outcome of that than rejection of many, indeed most, texts. For Satan keeps widening these gulfs, and continues to aim attacks of doubt at the texts, to incite people to reject them or to interpret them with various invalid interpretations which are contrary to what is intended by those texts. Furthermore, the texts that tell of the permanence of the punishment of the Fire are like the texts that tell of the permanence of the blessing of the Garden. When the interpretation of one is permitted, what prevents (the same) interpretation of the other?

It is somewhat surprising that Ibn al-Qayyim should resort to the rationalist doctrine in seeking to reason His actions, relying on reason to decide good and evil, when he is the strict traditionalist who strongly prohibits the interpretation of *mutash~bih* verses in a way that conforms their meanings to the meanings of the *mu^kam* verses. In fact, affirming the transcendence of Allah, His being other than His creatures, requires such interpretation, and doing so is permitted by the language and its conventions, and demanded by the evidence of reason and tradition. How great is the distance between the two positions!

I have avoided quoting Ibn al-Qayyim's words and following them with refutation, being content here with the summary above and my comment following it——in order to save time and relieve the reader of further trouble with an issue which has now become for the *ummah* one of the accepted matters. There is no one——to the best of my under-

standing——who holds the opinion of Ibn al-Qayyim in differentiating between the permanence of the blessing and the punishment.

As for the second group——those who differentiate, in respect of duration of punishment, between the *muwaˆˆid* disobedient and others of the people of the Fire——they refer, for their opinion, to verses of the Book, narrations from the Sunnah, and rational argumentation. As for the verses: they have relied upon the same as the first group——the foregoing refutation of the latter's argumentation is sufficient to refute the claims of these also——although there is nothing in those verses which indicates in any way the differentiation between the *muwaˆˆid* disobedient and the others. Rather, those verses are about the warning of all the people of the Fire. We seek refuge with Allah. We except what is in *Sfrat al-Nab~|*. But what follows that, in the criticism of the warned people, determines that they are rejecters of the Resurrection. That is in His saying, Exalted is He: 'For that they used not to look to any accounting for their deeds. Rather, they treated Our signs as false.' So if any hope of their release does appear in His saying 'they will dwell in it for ages', then the more deserving of that hope are those who reject the Resurrection and belie the Book. But how can that be, when He has concluded that warning by saying: 'So taste, for no increase shall We grant you, except in chastisement' (*al-Nab~|*, 78.30).

They have also relied upon what does not from far or near point to it, like His saying, Exalted is He: 'Often will those who disbelieve wish that they had been Muslims' (*al-™ijr*, 15.2). Their argument is that those people will so wish when they see the disobedient Muslims getting out of the Fire, whereas they still remain in it.

This is an interpretation not supported by the wording of the verse, and there is no evidence for it from anywhere else. Their wishing that (they had been Muslims) may happen when they see the power of Islam prevailing in the earth, and its authority overwhelming the nations, and its word penetrating the (hearts and minds of the) people. Then they will wish that they had hastened to accept Islam. Their wishing that might also happen when their souls are seized and they witness the first indications of the terrors of the hereafter that they did not imagine. Or when they are raised from their graves, and they face the greatest terror, and they realize that there is no escape that day except for those who hold fast to the rope of Islam, and take refuge with its support, and hold on to its stay. All of these interpretations are narrated from a group of both the early and later *mufassir,n*. Then there is no scope to argue from this verse to what is unclear.

As for the narrations (that they refer to): there are several, but they are countered with other narrations which are not fewer in number or less in authenticity. I will mention, *insh~| All~h*, some of them at the end of the coming chapter. However, given that the narrations of release from the Fire are contrary to the texts of the Qur|~n, whereas the narrations of dwelling permanently in the Fire are in conformity with the texts of the Qur|~n, it is certain that we must refer to what conforms with the Qur|~n, not to what opposes it.

As for the rational argument: this is that, if the *muwa^^id* disobedient are equal to associators in dwelling permanently, then there will be no effect of the word of *taw^,d*, and no advantage from pious actions.

The answer to this is that they, though equal in permanence, are not equal in punishment——in the same way as the righteous will not be equal in the reward, rather they will differ according to their actions. The Fire has stages as the Garden has grades.

Chapter 3

On the evidence of those who believe in the permanent dwelling in the Fire of those who commit the major sins

This evidence is of two types, some from the Book and some from the Sunnah.

Evidence from the Book

As from the Book, the evidence is in many verses. We mention some examples of them below:

1 His saying, Exalted is He: 'And they say: ''The Fire shall not touch us but for a few numbered days.'' Say: ''Have you taken a promise from Allah, for He never breaks His promise? Or is it that you say of Allah what you do not know?'' No; those who seek gain in evil, and are encompassed by their sins——they are companions of the Fire, therein shall they abide for ever.' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.80-81)

It denotes the permanence (of the punishment) in several ways:

Firstly, this belief (in the non-permanence of the punishment) is of Jewish origin, as is apparent from this text. It has been mentioned in the context of rebuking the Jews and publicizing their error.

Secondly, the criticism of this belief has been expressed in the style of interrogation, the intention of which is a challenge. The Jews did not, in what they said, rely on any promise from Allah. Rather, it is part of what they invent about Him, Exalted is He, without knowledge. That is sufficient to prevent one from imitating them in what they say, and indulging with them in what they indulge in, and wasting one's time with them.

Thirdly, there is a clear explanation in this verse that the destiny of everyone who commits evil, and whose sin has encompassed him because he has not rid himself of it through sincere repentance, is that he will dwell in the Fire for ever with other dwellers in it, permanently. It refutes any claim to the contrary, and demolishes the wishes of those who wish for salvation while persisting in sin.

How much more appropriate it is for the intelligent to take caution and not be deceived by the wishes that are entertained by the People of the Book. Allah has warned this *ummah* from clinging to that (wishfulness) as the People of Book clung to it, where He says: 'Not your desires, nor those of the People of the Book: whoever works evil, will be requited accordingly, nor will he find, besides Allah, any protector or helper' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.123).

Two objections have been made to this argumentation:

The first is that 'evil' here means polytheism (*shirk*), as has been narrated from a group of *mufassir,n*. Since (they say) this warning is for associators, it does not include the *muwa^^id,n*.

The second is that *al-khulfd* does not mean permanence here; rather, it means long duration.

The first objection is rejected in that the interpretation of 'evil' as only *shirk* is moving

away from the verse, from what is demanded by its wording. The word 'evil' is undefined, unconditioned, in the context of a conditional sentence. Undefined terms when used in a condition denote generality, because the condition is like negation, and the outcome of the undefined in the context of negation is generality.

By way of further explanation, consider the expression of one who says to his servants: 'Whoever brings me a coin in currency will be set free.' In line with this wording, whoever brings him anything that can be called 'coin in currency' will be set free: dirham, or dinar, or riyal, or pound or whatever other currency. Similarly if he says to them: 'Whoever brings me a cloth will be set free.' The outcome (the setting free) will be true for whoever brings anything that can be called 'cloth': shirt, or trousers, or turban, or whatever else. If someone swears that he has not committed an evil act, whereas he has committed adultery or theft or drunk wine, or disobeyed his parent, or consumed usury, will he not be regarded as one who has perjured himself?

There is no assurance for them in His saying, Exalted is He, 'his sin has encompassed him', although they claim that the committer of a major sin, if he is *muwaˆˆid*, is not encompassed by his sin——because he has some good deeds he will not be deprived of their reward. There is no assurance for them in that because, in our view, not getting rid of disobedience through sincere repentance makes it encompass its doer, overwhelm him——like one who is gripped by the forehead or the neck, in contrast to one who escapes from that by taking refuge in sincere repentance. This is the meaning of what has been narrated from the *salaf*. Here are some of the texts narrated in this context:

Im~m Ibn Jar,r says: Narrated to us Abƒ Kurayb, saying: narrated to us Ibn Yaman from Sufy~n, from A`mash, from Abƒ Rawq, from ~aˆˆak: [commenting on] 'and his sin encompassed him', he said [it means]: he died with his sin.

Narrated to us Abƒ Kurayb, saying: narrated to us J~bir b. Nƒˆ, saying: narrated to us A`mash, from Abƒ Raz,n, from Rab,` b. Khuthaym: [commenting on] 'and his sin encompassed him', he said [it means]: he died in it.

Narrated to us Ibn ™umayd, saying: narrated to us Salamah, saying: informed me Ibn Isˆ~q saying: narrated to me Muˆammad b. Ab, Muˆammad from Sa`,d b. Jubayr or `Ikrimah, from Ibn `Abb~s: [commenting on] 'and his sin encompassed him', he said [it means]: his disbelief encompasses all his good deeds——the disbelief includes all the major sins, because they are a part of ingratitude for [Allah's] favours——.

Narrated to me Muˆammad b. `Amr, saying: narrated to us Abƒ `>‰im, saying: narrated to me `…s~, from Ibn Ab, Naj,ˆ, from Muj~hid: [commenting on] 'and his sin encompassed him', he said: [the 'sin' is] that on which Allah has made the Fire compulsory.

Narrated to us Bishr, saying: narrated to us Yaz,d saying: narrated to us Sa`,d from Qat~dah: [commenting on] 'and his sin encompassed him', he said: the meaning of 'sin' is the major sin which makes [entering into the Fire] compulsory.

Narrated to us ™asan, saying: informed us `Abd al-Razz~q from Qat~dah: [commenting on] 'and his sin encompassed him', he said: the 'sin' is the major sins.

Narrated to me Muthann~, saying: narrated to us Isˆ~q saying: narrated to us Wak,` and

Ya^y~ b. >dam from Sall~m b. Misk,n saying: a man asked ™asan about His saying: 'and his sin encompassed him'. ™asan said: Do you know what 'sin' is? O my son, recite the Qur|~n, everything on which Allah has put the warning of the Fire is sin.

Narrated to us A^mad b. Is^~q al-Ahw~z,, saying: narrated to us Abƒ A^mad al-Zubayr,, saying: narrated to us Sufy~n from Man%ƒr, from Muj~hid on His saying, 'and his sin encompassed him', [that he] said: every encompassing sin is that about which Allah has warned of the Fire.

Narrated to us A^mad b. Is^~q, saying: narrated to us Abƒ A^mad al-Zubayr,, saying: narrated to us Sufy~n from A`mash, from Abƒ Raz,n: [commenting on] 'and his sin encompassed him', he said [it means]: he died with his sin.

Narrated to me Muthann~, saying: narrated to us Abƒ Nu`aym, saying: narrated to us A`mash saying: narrated to us Mas`ƒd Abƒ Raz,n from Rab,` b. Khuthay on His saying 'and his sin encompassed him', he said: he is one who dies in his sin before repenting.

Narrated to us al-Q~sim, saying: narrated to us al-™usayn, saying: Wak,` said: I heard al-A`mash saying on His saying, 'and his sin encompassed him': he died with his sins.

It has been reported to me from `Amm~r saying: narrated to us Ibn Ab, Ja`far from his father from Rab,`: [commenting on] 'and his sin encompassed him', [he said it means]: the major [sin] that makes [the Fire] compulsory.

Narrated to me Mƒs~, saying: narrated to us `Amr b. ™amm~d, saying: narrated to us Asb~\ from al-Sudd,: [commenting on] 'and his sin

encompassed him', [he said it means]: he died and did not repent.[132]

This that Im~m Ibn Jar,r has quoted from the early generation of this *ummah* on the meaning of this majestic verse, has been adopted by Im~m al-Mu^aqqiq Mu^ammad `Abdƒh following profound study of the meaning of 'sin' and 'encompassment' by sin. This is what has been quoted from him in *al-Man~r*:

The [word] 'sin' here is under no condition. Our *mufassir* Jal~l al-D,n al-Suyƒ\, and some other *mufassir,n* have specified it as *shirk*. If that were correct then there would be no meaning to His saying, Exalted is He: 'and his sin encompassed him'. For *shirk* is the greatest of all sins, meriting that warning on its own in any case. The meaning of the sin's 'encompassing' is confining the doer of it and gripping his sense as if he were arrested in it, having no escape from it. He thinks himself free, released, whereas [in fact] he is a captive of desires and imprisoned by destructive things and in the hold of darknesses. The encompassing happens only by free involvement in sins and persisting [in them]. He says, Exalted is He: 'No; but on their hearts is the stain of what they earn' (*al-Mutaffif,n*, 83.14) i.e. of [their] evils and sins. In the wording 'they earn' there is the meaning of free involvement and persistence. '*R~na `alayh*' means to cover, i.e. their hearts have grown covered by the darknesses of [their] disobediences, until there is no room left for the light to enter therein. Whoever renews [himself] for every sin that he falls into, [by] a sincere repentance and correct returning, [his] sins do not encompass him, and do not leave stains on his heart. Im~m A^mad, al-Tirmidh,, ™~kim (these two say it is a sound *^ad,th*), Nasa|,, Ibn M~jah, Ibn ™ibb~n and others have narrated from the *^ad,th* of Abƒ Hurayrah that the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: 'In truth when the servant commits a sin, a dark stain is stuck on his heart. If he

---

132 *J~mi` al-bay~n `an ta|w,l al-Qur|~n* (D~r al-Fikr), 1:386-87.

repents, turns away [from the sin] and asks forgiveness his heart is cleansed. But if he repeats the sin the stain is added until it covers his heart.' That is the '*r~na*' that Allah, Exalted is He, has mentioned in the Qur|~n: 'No; but on their hearts is the stain of what they earn.' For like that the people of early generation used to say: the sins are mail of the disbelief.[133]

The second objection is rejected in that the interpretation of *al-khulfd* as meaning long duration, without permanence, requires the adoption of the same interpretation in other similar places, namely *al-khulfd* as promised to those who believe and do good deeds in Paradise. For there is no evidence on the basis of which to distinguish between them.

Im~m Mu^ammad `Abdfh has spoken of that:

From among the *mufassir,n* are those who have left the 'sin' in the verse without conditioning it, and they did not interpret it as *shirk*. But they did interpret the punishment of it and said: the meaning of *khulfd* is long duration, because the believer will not dwell in the Fire for ever, though he spends his whole his life in sins, and the sins encompass him and he remains sunk in them all his life. They have made this interpretation to get away from the belief of the Mu`tazilis that the people of major sins will dwell in the Fire for ever, and in support of their view which is against that of the Mu`tazilis. The Qur|~n is above all *madhhab*s; it guides to [the position] that whoever is encompassed by his sin will not be or will not remain a believer.

S. Mu^ammad R~shid Ri‡~ says after that:

Indeed, opening the door to the interpretation of *al-khulfd* [as long duration] will embolden the people of independent thinking of this time to enter into it, and [encourage] to say [further] that the meaning of *khulfd* in respect of disbelievers in punishment is their staying in it for a long time [not for ever] ——

[133] *al-Man~r* (D~r al-Man~r, 4th edition), 1: 363.

the Most Merciful, the Most Gracious, whose Mercy has exceeded His anger, cannot punish some of His creatures with a punishment that has no end, because they are not guided by the religion that He has made for their benefit, not for His benefit. But they did not understand the benefit. When the imitation is accepted by Allah, as the openers of the door hold, then the excuse of most people has become clear because they are imitators of their scholars…and so on to the end of what people are able to say, especially in this time. The issue is old, and it is the greatest problem of the religion. Yes the scholars will argue against them by the consensus, albeit silently. But the interpretation is a door [such that] nothing can shut it up, once it has been opened.[134]

This statement points to what I said earlier, that the interpretation of *khulfd* as long duration, not as permanence, if accepted in the warning of one group, necessarily entails that *khulfd* mentioned in the warning of other groups must be interpreted in the same way. Moreover, it entails allowing that interpretation in respect of the promise to the believers of *khulfd* in the Garden. Ri‡~ has pointed to the like of that in the *tafs,r* of *Sfrat al-Nab~|*.[135] This invalidates the opinion of those who confine release from the Fire to the *muwaˆˆid,n*, because it necessarily entails saying the same about the *mushrik,n*, and saying that there is a term (an end) to the blessing of Paradise.

2 His saying, Exalted is He: 'Those who after receiving admonition from their Lord, desist, shall be pardoned for the past; their case is for Allah; but those who repeat are companions of the Fire, they will abide therein for ever. (*al-Baqarah*, 2.275)

---

134 Ibid, 363-64.

135 Ibid, 5:343.

The reasoning from this verse is that it is a warning for the consumers of usury, and they are not associators, because the verse is in the context of warning against the consumption of usury after its prohibition.

It has been objected——on the evidence that at the beginning of the verse is mentioned the people's opinion about usury which is contrary to the verdict of Islam: 'Trade is like usury' (2.275)——that this warning is not against consuming usury, but against considering it to be lawful. The one who regards as lawful what, like usury, Allah has forbidden in a firm, explicit text is a *mushrik* by consensus. Then the verdict of permanent dwelling will not include those who commit the major sins other than *shirk*.

The answer is: the interpretation that the warning is directed at considering (usury) lawful, rather than consuming it, will lighten the effect of the commands and prohibitions of Allah, Exalted is He, in the hearts of the servants, and will minimize the importance of the verdict of unlawfulness on the forbidden things. However, the context of what is before and after this verse is prohibition of usury, and increasing the gravity of the matter in the minds of the people. What those say, who restrict the meaning to considering lawful, cannot hold this warning back from what is demanded by its context. Otherwise, there is no point to any of what is said before or after that.

Im~m Muˆammad `Abdƒh has realized this, so he presented in *Kashf al-lith~m `an mukhaddir~t ma`~n, al-~yah li-l-afh~m* what has been summarized by the author of *al-Man~r* where he says:

i.e. those who return to the forbidden usury that they had been consuming, after its prohibition——they are far from following the advice of their Lord who does not prohibit them except from that which causes them

harm individually or collectively; they are the people of the Fire, they will be attached to it as a friend is attached to his friend, therefore they will dwell in it permanently.

Mufassir,n have interpreted *khulfd* to make it conform to what is decided in theology and Law that sins do not necessitate permanent dwelling in the Fire. Most of them say that the meaning [of permanence in the Fire] is for whoever reverts to making usury lawful and believes its permissibility. Some of them have rejected this by saying that the discourse is about consuming usury, and what is said of their considering it to be like commerce is an explanation of their opinion on the matter before the prohibition; it does not have the sense that they considered the forbidden as lawful. If the warning is confined to believing usury to be lawful, then there will be no warning in respect of consuming it.

The truth is that the Qur|~n is above what the theologians and jurists say. Every matter of the religion should be referred to the Qur|~n. It is not allowed to interpret anything of the Qur|~n so as to make it conform with what people have said. The warning here of dwelling permanently [in the Fire] is like the warning of the same in the verse about intentional killing. And there is no ambiguity in the wording [to justify forcing it] to mean the making lawful [of what is forbidden].

It is most surprising that al-R~z, should make the verse here a proof against those who believe in the permanent staying in the Fire of those who commit the major sins, in support of the doctrine of his fellow Ash`aris. Better than this interpretation is the interpretation of some of them that *khulfd* means long duration.

As for us, we say that whatever is called faith, it will save the one who has it from permanent dwelling in the Fire. Faith is of two kinds. The faith which does not go beyond an uncertain acceptance of the religion that the man has grown up in, or has belonged to, and going along with its people, and without opposing what they are in. And the faith that is an expression of sound knowledge of the religion, with cer-

tainty of conviction that has overwhelmed the intellect with clear evidence, influencing the self in accordance with surrender, governing the will which controls the limbs in actions, in such a way that the one who has this faith bows to its authority in every condition, except where he has no freedom because of the power of ignorance or forgetfulness. Usury is not one of those sins that can be done forgetfully, or provoked by ignorance, or done on [irresistible] impulse, or when its doer has fallen into the depths of oblivion——as [may happen with sins like] backbiting or staring at the forbidden. This is the faith which, by the Will of Allah, saves the one who has it from resting permanently under the anger of Allah. But this faith cannot fit with going forward to the major and grave sins, in deliberate preference for the love of wealth and pleasure over the religion of Allah and its wise purposes. As for the first faith, it is merely formal. It has no value to Allah, Exalted is He, because He, Exalted is He, does not look at the forms and words. Rather, He looks at the hearts and actions——as has come in the *ˆad,th*. The evidence of this that we have affirmed is [in] many [verses] in the Book of Allah. It is the doctrine of the pious *salaf*, though it is not known by many of those who claim to follow the Sunnah. So far so that they have emboldened the people to demolish the religion on the basis that being blessed depends upon acknowledgement of the [truth of] religion, even if one does not act upon it. So far so that the people take pride in committing destructive sins while acknowledging that [what they are doing] are major forbidden things——as has been reported to us of some of our leaders saying [the like of]: 'I do not deny consuming usury, but I am a Muslim and acknowledge that it is forbidden.' The one who says this has failed to observe that this statement necessitates acknowledging that he is among the people of this warning, and that he is pleased to be in war against Allah and His Messenger, and unjust to himself and to the people, as comes in another verse. Does he acknowledge the necessitated or does he refuse the clear warning of the text? So, then, does he believe

in a part of the Book and reject the other part? We seek refuge with Allah from being deserted by Him.[136]

From what Ri‡~ has said, it is clear that the doctrine of the pious *salaf* is what the people of *istiq~mah* adhere to. The praise belongs to Allah.

3 His saying, Exalted is He: 'That is because they say: ''The Fire shall not touch us but for a few numbered days.'' For their forgeries deceive them as to their own religion.' *(>l `Imr~n*, 3.24)

The reasoning from this is, as above, to affirmation that this belief (in the non-permanency of the punishment) is from the beliefs of the Jews, and that it emboldened them to disobedience of Allah, and led them to abandon His Book; moreover, this has been mentioned in the context of refuting their error, and rebuking their faults. The *tafs,r* of this verse by the author of *al-Man~r* includes this statement:

Perhaps the meaning of the verse is that they believed that when the Israelite is punished, his punishment will not be but little, as is the belief of most Muslims today. Because they say that the Muslim who commits the major and serious sins, either the intercession [of whoever may intercede] will reach him, or expiation will save him, or he will be granted pardon and forgiveness out of mere grace. If all that misses him, then he will be punished to the degree of his sin, then he will be taken out of the Fire and entered into Paradise. As for those who relate to the other religions they will abide permanently in the Fire whatever be their state, and whatever be their actions. [However,] the Qur|~n does not grant any weight to belonging to any religion. Rather, it hangs the matter of salvation from the Fire and the success of the permanent blessing in the place of abode [of the blessed] on the faith that it has described and the signs that it has mentioned of its people and their

[136] Ibid, 3:98-99.

qualities, and on righteous actions and good morals, with piety and renouncing all evils, manifest and secret.
As for forgiveness, it is in the judgement of the Qur|~n made specific to those who are not encompassed by their sins. As for the one encompassed by his sin: [it is that he is deep in his sin] until it obscures his sense and stains his heart, so that his care becomes confined to satisfying his desire, and no authority over himself has remained for the religion. 'Those are the companions of the Fire, they will live in it permanently.' That is why this wise Book judges that whoever makes of religion a sort of national identity and hangs salvation from the Fire on belonging to it, or [who] relies on those of the early generation who established [the religion], is deceived by fancy, an inventor who says of Allah [something] without knowledge, as He said here: 'for their forgeries deceive them as to their own religion' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3.24), that is, because of their limitation of the term of the punishment for the *ummah* as a whole. This is of the slander that was the foundation of their delusion in their religion. [A matter] like that cannot be known by opinion or by speculation, because it is from the command of the Knower of the Unseen, so it cannot be known except by a revelation from Allah. There is nothing in the Revelation which supports [that]. And it can not be relied upon except by a covenant from Allah, Exalted is He, and there is no covenant about this. Rather, Allah's covenant is what has passed in *Sfrat al-Baqarah*. 'And they say: ''The Fire shall not touch us but for a few numbered days.'' Say: have you taken a promise from Allah, for He never breaks His promise? Or is it that you say of Allah what you do not know? No; those who seek gain in evil, and are encompassed by their sins, they are companions of the Fire, therein shall they abide for ever. But those who have faith and do righteous deeds, they are companions of the Garden, therein they shall abide' (*al-Baqarah*, 2.80-82).[137]

[137] Ibid, 267-68.

Then R~shid Ri‡~ discussed the *tafs,r* of His saying, Exalted is He ''But how when We gather them together against a Day about which there is no doubt, and each soul will be paid out just what it has earned, and they will not be wronged' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3:25). And when he reflected on the words 'and they will not be wronged', he wrote:

Mufassir,n have said about this sentence a statement that I would like to draw attention to. They have said that in it there is evidence that the act of worship is not destroyed, and that the believer will not stay in the Fire permanently, because paying in full the reward of his faith and action cannot be in the Fire [only], nor [yet] before entering [the Fire]. Therefore it must happen after salvation from the Fire. This word of comment is from al-Bay‡~w,, and Abƒ l-Sa`ƒd has copied it as usual. I say that earning here is not made specific to the acts of worship and faith. Rather, it includes all the good and bad that the servant has done. If they mean that the verse indicates the necessity of the reward over the earning as is apparent from the verse, then it requires for them [to hold] that the unbeliever when he does some good actions——and there is no man who has never done a good action——must necessarily be rewarded for that. But they do not say that. That is why they have narrowed the [meaning of the] verse and taken it away from its apparent meaning. When we bring this verse, which has come as a refutation of the belief of those who claim that the Fire will not touch them but for numbered days, together with the verse of *al-Baqarah* which has also come about that, then we will know that the intent of Allah is man's earning of reward according to [his earning]. In other words what is considered is the influence of the action upon the soul [*nafs*]. If its bad effect has encompassed the soul's knowledge and sense and overwhelmed its sense, then the soul will remain forever in the Fire because the evil action did not leave in the soul any good effect from faith which can prepare it for the place of honour. Rather, it has made it one of the people of the place of humiliation because of its sealed nature. And if

this evil action does not reach to that extent in a way such that the influence of the good action outweighs [the evil], or the two are in balance, then this soul will be between [the two], and it will be rewarded according to its state——as we have earlier established.[138]

That is his statement. It cannot be understood from what precedes or follows it that any of the actions of a non-believer in the religion of Islam can save him from the punishment of the Fire. For, by lacking the faith which is the foundation of action, he will be deprived of picking the fruits of his good action. Faith is a condition of the correctness and acceptability of actions. He says, Exalted is He: 'Whoever does any deed of righteousness and is a believer, his effort will not be rejected: We shall record it for him (*al-Anbiy~|*, 21.94). And He says: 'And whoever does deeds of righteousness, and is a believer, will have no fear of harm nor of any curtailment (of reward)' (*æ~h~*, 20.112). Thus you see that the faith is a condition for the authenticity of the action.

The argument, of those who believe in the release from the Fire of the people who commit major sins, from His saying, Exalted is He, 'and they will not be wronged'——besides its necessitating, as R~shid Ri‡~ has said, that unbelievers will share in that with the believers, also implies that the Jews will be more deserving of this command, because the verse came down about them.

The reality more precisely is that the consideration is of the last actions. Whoever has ended with sound faith and righteous actions he will be in bliss with Allah regardless of whatever he might have done before. For repentance blanks out

---

138 Ibid, 268-69.

sins and purifies the person of them. Whoever's life ends with persistence in sins, his previous (good) actions will not avail him, because they have been invalidated by his persistence (in sins). Allah, Exalted is He, says: *inna-m~ yata-qabbalu l-l~hu mina l-muttaq,n* 'Allah only accepts from those who are God-fearing, righteous' (*al-M~|idah*, 5.27). And righteousness cannot be reconciled with persistence in sin.

4 His saying, Exalted is He: 'But those who disobey Allah and His Messenger and transgress His limits will be admitted to a Fire, to abide therein: and they shall have a humiliating punishment.' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.14)

The argument from this is that this verse has come after explaining the rules of inheritance and that these rules are among the *ˆudfd* (bounds) of Allah, and it promises those who obey Allah and His Messenger permanent stay in Gardens underneath which rivers flow. From that it is affirmed that whoever exceeds any judgement of the judgements of Allah, this warning will be true upon such a person. On the *tafs,r* of this verse both Im~m Muˆammad `Abdƒh and S. R~shid Ri‡~ say what supports their previous statement.[139]

5 His saying, Exalted is He: 'Whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell, to abide therein for ever, and the wrath and the curse of Allah are upon him, and a dreadful chastisement is prepared for him.' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.93).

The argument from this verse is that in it Allah, Exalted is He, has warned the one who kills a believer of permanent stay in the Fire, and killing is a major sin, less than *shirk*.

[139] Ibid, 4:432-33.

They have tried to escape the denotation of this verse by contriving various kinds of interpretation which have been opposed among themselves so that they could not agree on any of them.

Fakhr al-D,n al-R~z, says:

Al-W~ˆid, has claimed that the people have walked, in responding to this verse, many different paths. Al-W~ˆid, goes on to say: And I do not like any of these because what they have said is either narrowing [the sense], or opposing [the meaning of other verses], or obscure (*i‡m~r*). The wording does not indicate any of that. Al-W~ˆid, goes on to say: What I rely upon are two ways. The first is the consensus of the *mufassir,n* that the verse came down about an unbeliever who killed a believer. (Then al-W~ˆid, recounted that story.) The second is that His saying: 'his recompense is hell' is future in meaning, i.e. that He will punish him with hell. This is a warning. Al-W~ˆid, says: and not fulfilling the warning is a grace and generosity. In our view it is permissible that Allah does not fulfil the warning [given] to believers. That is the summary of al-W~ˆid,'s opinion that he has claimed to be better than what others have said.

After saying this Fakhr al-D,n begins refuting it, regardless of his prejudice in favour of the belief in the release from the Fire of the people who commit major sins. This is the text of his statement:

As for the first way, it is weak. Because it is affirmed in jurisprudence that the consideration is of the generality of the wording, not of the specifics of the [occasioning] cause. When it is affirmed that the wording denoting generality is attained, then applying it to the unbelievers does not harm that generality. Then this [first way] completely collapses. After that, we say that the generality of the wording implies its being inclusive of every killer described with the above-mentioned qualities. Similarly, there is another way which prevents making this verse spe-

cific to the unbeliever. The explanation of it is by several ways:

The first is that He, Exalted is He, commanded the believers to make *jih~d* against the unbelievers, then He told them what they needed at the time of their affair with the *jih~d*. He began by saying: 'Never should a believer kill a believer, except by mistake' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.92). He has mentioned in that verse three expiations: the expiation for killing a Muslim in the domain of Islam; the expiation for killing a Muslim while he is living with the people [against whom the Muslims are] at war; and the expiation for killing of a Muslim while he is living with the people [with whom the Muslims have] a treaty and protection. Then, after that, He mentioned the ruling on the intentional killing accompanied with the warning. Since the explanation of the ruling on unintentional killing is explanation of a ruling specific to the Muslims, it then becomes necessary that the explanation of the ruling on intentional killing, which is the contrary of killing by mistake, will also be specific to the believers. And if it is not specific to them, then, at least it should include them.

The second is that He, Exalted is He, says after this verse: 'O you who believe, when you go out in the cause of Allah, investigate carefully, and say not to any one who offers you a salutation, You are not a believer' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.94). The *mufassir,n* are in consensus that these verses were only revealed about a group of Muslims who met some people who accepted Islam, but they [the Muslims] killed them. And they [the Muslims] claimed that they [the others] had accepted Islam out of fear. On this assumption, this verse came about prohibiting the believers from killing those who pretend the faith. It also implies that His saying, 'and whoever kills a believer intentionally', was revealed to prohibit the believers from killing [other] believers, in order to reconcile [the verses with each other]. So, from what we have said, it is affirmed that whatever is before this

verse and after this verse prevents its being made specific to the unbelievers.

The third is that it is established in jurisprudence that basing a [legal] ruling on the property most fitted to it, indicates that property's being a cause for that ruling. Thus we have known that, in His saying: 'As to the thief, male or female, cut off their hands' (*al-M~|idah*, 5.38), and His saying: 'The woman and the man guilty of fornication, flog each of them' (*al-Nfr*, 24.2), the reason for the cutting is the theft, and the reason for flogging is the fornication. Similarly here, it becomes necessary [to hold] that the reason for this warning is the intentional killing, because the property is appropriate to that ruling. So it becomes compulsory that the ruling is caused by it. That being so, it is necessary to say that wherever this meaning is affirmed, this ruling will be applicable. In this way there can be no justification for [al-W~^id,'s] saying: 'the verse is specific to the unbeliever'.

The fourth is that the reason for deserving this warning is either unbelief or this killing as specified. If the reason for this warning is unbelief, then the unbelief is accomplished before the killing. So there will be no consequence of this killing anyway in respect of this warning. On this assumption, [the] verse will be as if it had said that whoever kills a soul intentionally, then his reward is hell, abiding in it, and Allah will be angry with him. For, if intentional killing has no effect in this warning, then it will be like the soul and all those matters that have no effect in this warning, and it is known that that is void. If the reason for this warning is the killing being intentional, then it is necessary to say that wherever the [intentional] killing occurs, the warning will occur. Then this difficulty collapses. Thus, from what we have said, it is affirmed that the way liked by al-W~^id, is nothing.

As for the second way of the two ways that he has chosen, it is the extreme of corruption. For, [giving] warning is one kind of the kinds of giving informa-

tion. If he allows opposition to [the warning], then he has allowed for Allah telling a lie [giving false information]. And that is a great error, rather it is close to being unbelief. For the intelligent are in consensus that Allah is purified from telling a lie. Also, if he allows telling a lie for Allah in the warning on the ground that opposing the warning is a grace, then why is the opposition not allowed to the warning of unbelievers? Further, if the opposition to the warning is allowed for the purpose of grace, then why is opposition not allowed in the stories and reports for the sake of interest? It is known that opening this door will lead to raising objections to the Qur|~n, and the whole Shar,`ah. Thus it is affirmed that each of these two ways is baseless.

Al-Qaff~l has narrated in his *tafs,r* another way that is [presented as being] the answer [to the whole difficulty]. He says: the verse indicates that the recompense of the intentional killing is what has been mentioned. But there is nothing in the verse to tell that He, Exalted is He, causes this recompense to reach him. Sometimes a man says to his servant: Your recompense is that I will do with you this and that, but I will not do it. This answer is also weak. For it is affirmed with this verse that the recompense of the intentional killing is what has been mentioned, and with other verses has been affirmed that He, Exalted is He, causes the recompense to reach the deserving. He, Exalted is He, says: 'whoever does evil will be requited accordingly (*al-Nis~|*, 4.123), and He says: 'That Day will every soul be requited for what it earned' (*al-Gh~fir*, 40.17), and He says: 'Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it. And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it' (*al-Zilz~l*, 99.7-8). Rather, He, Exalted is He, has mentioned in this verse what indicates that He will cause this reward to reach [the deserving], namely His saying: 'and He has prepared for him a great punishment'; because the explanation that this is his recompense is obtained from His saying: 'then his reward is hell, dwelling in it for ever'. If His saying: 'and He has prepared for him a big punishment' had been a report of deserving, then it would have

been a repetition. If we interpret it as reporting that He, Exalted is He, will do it, then there is no repetition, so it is [the] better [interpretation].[140]

After this affirmation here Fakhr al-D,n has turned from the clear to the ambiguous, and from certainty to doubt where he says:

And you should know that we say: this verse is made specific in two points. The first is when the intentional killing is not an aggression, as in the *qi%a%* [legal retaliation]. Because this warning will not fall on [that] at all. The second is [the] aggressive intentional killing of which [the doer] repents, so this warning will not fall upon it. When specification is affirmed in these two ways, then we will make this generality specific when forgiveness happens, in accordance with the evidence of His saying, Exalted is He: 'and He forgives anything else, to whom He pleases' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.48). Also in this verse there is a generality of promise, and the generalities of promise are more effective than the generalities of warning.[141]

We do not dispute with Fakhr al-D,n that this warning does not include the non-aggressive killer like the one who takes *qi%a%*, nor the one who repents of his killing so long as the conditions of repentance are met. But we do dispute with him in its specification in respect of the attainment of forgiveness for the non-penitent. The voidness of that is clear in two ways:

The first is that this specification either necessitates invalidating the warning to the intentional killer of abiding in hell——from which follow what Fakhr al-D,n himself has said, that it introduces falsification in the reports of Allah. He himself has stated that the intelligent are in consensus on the impossibility of that. Or

---

140 *al-Tafs,r al-kab,r* of Fakhr al-D,n al-R~z, (Tehran: D~r al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, 2nd edition), 1: 238-39.

141 Ibid, 342.

it necessitates the attainment of forgiveness for some killers, and not others. From this it necessarily follows that some *muwaˆˆid,n* will abide in the Fire for ever. Acknowledgement of that will cause them (i.e. those who argue that the *muwaˆˆid,n* are released) to fall into what they seek to escape. For they did not intend by all their various efforts to interpret this verse and others like it but to flee from what it indicates of the non-penitent among disobedient *muwaˆˆid,n* abiding forever in the Fire. Furthermore, the forgiveness of some of the disobedient, not others, while their crime is one and the same, is contradictory to the justice and wisdom of Allah, Exalted is He. Likewise, it necessitates acknowledging what Fakhr al-D,n has negated of Allah opposing His own report, because the warning did not specify some not others.

The second is that His saying 'and He forgives anything else, to whom He pleases' (4.48) does not in any way indicate forgiveness of the people who commit major sins other that *shirk*, irrespective of their persistence in them. This verse has come in two places in *al-Nis~|* in the context of specifying the entering into Islam of those who did not accept Islam. In the first place it is preceded by His saying, Exalted is He: 'O People of the Book, believe in what We have revealed confirming what was with you, before We destroy the countenances so as to confound or to curse them as We cursed the Sabbath-breakers. And the decision of Allah must be carried out' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.47). Then it is followed by His saying: 'Allah does not forgive that partners be set up with Him; and He forgives anything else, to whom He pleases' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.48). It is understood from this context that the meaning of the verse is that Allah does not forgive whoever remains in his *shirk*, not turning from it to *tawˆ,d*, even if

he repents from the rest of his sins. For the repentance of the *mushrik* is not otherwise than by *taw^,d* which is the basis of all good deeds, the axis of all virtue, just as shirk is the matrix of sinning. And His saying, 'and He forgives anything else, to whom He pleases', i.e. whatever is other than *shirk*, that is, all the disobediences of the *mushrik*s other than their *shirk*, for whoever He wills to guide to repentance from his *shirk*. That is because Islam eradicates whatever is before it; whoever accepts Islam with sincerity for Allah, Exalted is He, will come out from His sins like the day his mother gave birth to him, and none of the sins that he committed in his *j~hiliyyah* (ignorance before Islam) will reach him. That is the meaning of His saying, Exalted is He: 'Say to the unbelievers, if they desist, their past will be forgiven' (*al-Anf~l*, 8.38). There is no dispute among the *ummah* about that. The interpretation of this verse as meaning other than this will take it out of its context.

As for the second place, it is preceded by His saying: 'If anyone contends with the Messenger even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that becoming to men to faith, We shall leave him in the path He has chosen, and land him in hell. What an evil refuge!' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.115). So, interpreting it to mean other than what I have mentioned of its *tafs,r*, will take it out from its context. His saying, Exalted is He: 'Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him' (4. 48) is an affirmation carrying the meaning of being the reason for His saying: 'If anyone contends with the Messenger even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that becoming to men to faith, We shall leave him in the path He has chosen, and land him in hell. What an evil refuge!' And His saying, 'and He

forgives anything else, to whom He pleases', is a promise to those *mushrik*s who embrace Islam of forgiveness for all their past sins, after what has preceded it of warning to those who persist in their *shirk*. From this, the reason clearly emerges of repeating the wording of the verse another time with no difference other than the end-rhyme. At first occurrence it is separated by His saying, Exalted is He: 'to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin most heinous indeed' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.48), and at second occurrence it is separated by His saying: 'One who joins other gods with Allah, has strayed far, far away from the right' (*al-Nis~|*, 4.116). With this (reading) it is possible reconcile these two verses and the verses confirming His fulfillment of the warning, as of the promise.

As for what Fakhr al-D,n has said of the verse of intentional killing being one of the general, inclusive warnings, and the general, inclusive promises being more (effective) than those of warning:

The answer to it is that there is no contradiction between the two such that one must be preferred over the other. The general warnings are about those who persist, and the general promises are about those who repent. And each of them is from Allah who does not oppose His promise, and does not change His words. There is no sense in preferring some reports of Allah over others, given the impossibility of falsehood in all the reports from Him, Exalted is He. Rather, it is obligatory to put everything in its place, and interpret it in its way.

The author of *al-Man~r*——after discussing the *tafs,r* of the verse——says:

The majority of the scholars have found the abiding of the killer in the Fire a big thing. Some of them have interpreted it to mean a long [not permanent] staying

in it. This will open the door to the [same] interpretation for the abiding [in the Fire] of the unbelievers. It could be said that it also means long duration. Some of [the scholars] say that this is his recompense that he deserves if Allah recompenses him. He can forgive him without requiting. Ibn Jar,r has narrated [that] from Abƒ Mijlaz. The rule for every recompense is that it will happen because of the impossibility of falsification in the warning [of Allah] as in the promise. The forgiveness happens for some individuals for reasons known to Allah. On this interpretation there is no escape from the abiding in the Fire of some killers. The apparent [sense] is that they would be in the majority, since exception mostly comes for the fewer. Some of [the scholars] say that this warning is conditional upon [the doer's] considering [such killing] to be lawful. The meaning is that whoever kills a believer intentionally, considering it to be lawful, his recompense will be hell, abiding in it for ever. But this condition is not mentioned in this verse. If Allah, Exalted is He, had intended it, He would have mentioned it as He has mentioned the condition of intention, and [mentioned] that considering [killing to be] lawful is unbelief, then the recompense will be related to that not to the killing [itself]. The context rejects this. Some of [the scholars] say that this was revealed for a definite individual, so it is specific to him. This is the weakest of all the interpretations, not because consideration is [given] to the generality of the wording not to the specific occasion, but rather because the text of the verse with an expression of generality ('whoever') has come with the future tense 'whoever kills' and does not say 'whoever has killed'. Others say that this recompense is assured except [for one] who repents and does good deeds by which he deserves the forgiveness from the whole of this recompense or part of it. In that is an acknowledgement of the eternal abiding of the non-penitent in the Fire.[142]

---

[142] *al-Man~r* (D~r al-Man~r, 4th edition), 5:341-42.

After spending some time discussing the repentance of the intentional killer, R~shid Ri‡~ cites from Im~m Muˆammad `Abduh (a statement) which emphasizes that his belief about the intentional killer is that if he does not repent, he will abide in the Fire forever. And we seek refuge with Allah.[143]

6 His saying, Exalted is He: 'To those who do right is a goodly reward, indeed more. No darkness nor abasement shall cover their faces. They are companions of the Garden, they will abide therein forever. But those who have earned evil will have a recompense of like evil: ignominy will cover their faces. No defender will they have from the wrath of Allah. Their faces will be covered, as it were, with pieces from the depth of the darkness of night. They are inhabitants of the Fire: they will abide therein forever.' (*Yfnus*, 10.26-27).

The reasoning from this is by several ways:

The first is that Allah has promised the Garden to those who do right. He has restricted the Garden among them by saying: 'they are companions of the Garden'. He has made the subject (*ul~|ika*) and predicate definite, and placed between the two the pronoun of separation to emphasize the restriction of it to *them*.

The second is that He has informed us about them that no darkness or abasement will touch them. It cannot be understood that if someone is entered into the Fire, even for a few moments, that darkness and abasement will not cover him therein.

The third is that He has warned those who do evil of the Fire, abiding in it forever. This

[143] Ibid, 344-45.

ruling is correct for the one who does any evil. Because 'the evil' mentioned is general, not limited to individual instances. Whatever is like that, the ruling upon it, affirmative or negative, applies to each individual. Do you not see that if someone says 'I have married women', it does not mean that he has married all individual women. Rather, the statement is true, even if he marries only one of them. And if he swears that he did not marry women, he will be a perjurer even if he married only one.

If it is said that Allah has promised Paradise to the doers of right, and whoever does a good deed has done right——although some *mufassir,n* have interpreted *muˆsin,n* (doers of right) to mean the *muwaˆˆid,n*, because *tawˆ,d* is the basis of good deeds.

The answer to that is: had it been so, there would have been no cause of any command or prohibition in the Book and Sunnah, as long as what is required had been *tawˆ,d* by itself. Then, (the point) would have collapsed of all the verses of warning about what is less than *shirk*, like renouncing prayer, stopping payment of the *zak~h*, consuming usury, disobedience to parents, cutting off one's relations, killing the forbidden soul without legal right, fornication, and all the other acts of disobedience. Further, it would have required that killers, adulterers, thieves and all the people of major sins be counted among doers of right as long as they move the formula of *tawˆ,d* about in their mouths with their tongues. It is a most surprising thing that he interprets doing right in the way that he does (i.e. interpreting it as proclaiming *tawˆ,d*), even with the commission of all those evil acts and the like of them. By contrast, the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, interprets doing right in his saying: 'that you

worship Allah as if you see Him, because if you do not see Him, He sees you.'

7 His saying, Exalted is He: 'Those who say: Our Lord avert from us the wrath of hell, for its wrath is indeed a grievous affliction (*ghar~m~*).' (*al-Furq~n*, 25.65).

Its description with *ghar~m* indicates its permanence. This is in the *Lis~n al-`arab*: '*al-ghar~m* is permanent punishment, continuing evil and trouble, the love and anything that cannot be escaped.' Al-Zajj~j says: 'it is the worst punishment in the dictionary. Allah says: 'its wrath is indeed a grievous affliction (*ghar~m~*).' And al-œirimm~ˆ says: 'The battle of Nis~r and the battle of Fij~r were a punishment and they were *ghar~m* (grievous)'. And His saying: 'its wrath is indeed a grievous affliction (*ghar~m~*)', i.e. persisting, continuing and permanent. Abƒ `Ubaydah says: 'i.e. destruction and [its] continuing for them.[144]

The commentator of *al-Q~mfs* says:

al-ghar~m: what cannot be reverted from, and also the persisting, continuing and permanent.[145]

8 His saying, Exalted is He: 'Those who invoke not, with Allah, any other god, nor slay such life as Allah has made sacred, except for just cause, nor commit fornication; and any that does this meets punishment. The chastisement on the Day of Judgement will be doubled for him, and he will dwell therein in ignominy. (*al-Furq~n*, 25.68-69)

Here Allah has warned the killer of the sacred soul without legal right, and the committer of fornication, of eternal dwelling in the Fire, as He has warned whoever invokes another god beside Allah.

---

144 *Lis~n al-`arab* (Beirut: D~r ^~diq li-l-œiba`ah wa l-Nashr; D~r Bayrƒt li-l-œiba`ah wa l-Nashr), 12:436.

145 *T~j al-`arfs* (Dar Maktabat al-Hayat), 9:4.

It has been objected that this warning is specific to those who conjoin the three major sins (mentioned), not those who commit one of them.

The answer to this is that this means that if someone sets up another god with Allah, and does not combine that with killing a sacred soul and fornication, then this warning will not be true for him. No one among you holds this opinion. If it is said that the eternal abiding (in the Fire) of the *mushrik* is confirmed by other texts which demonstrate that his *shirk* is enough for his deserving this punishment. The answer is that the texts do not differentiate between *shirk* and other sins in the matter of eternal abiding (in the Fire). Rather, the texts indicate the eternal abiding (in the Fire) of other than *mushrik*s, with clear naming of some major sins like killing, and warning of the punishment for disobedience without condition, as in the verses following:

9 His saying, Exalted is He: 'Anyone who disobeys Allah and His Messenger——for them is hell: they shall dwell therein forever.' (*al-Jinn*, 72.23).

No one who believes in what Allah has revealed will doubt that committing the major sins is disobedience to Allah and His Messenger. If it is said that this warning is specific to the greatest act of disobedience, namely setting up associates with Allah, then we say that this opposes the clear wording for no reason. If it is said that the reason (for doing so) is to interpret this warning in a way that reconciles it with what has come as the warning of this punishment for the *mushrik*, we say that the coming down of the general verdict about some of the individuals to whom it applies does not narrow its generality. And as *mushrik*s have been warned of this punishment, in the same way the people who commit

other major sins have been warned of this punishment in other texts already cited.

10 His saying, Exalted is He: 'The righteous will be in Bliss, and the wicked will be in the Fire, which they will enter on the Day of Judgement, and they will not be able to keep away therefrom.' (*al-Infit~r*, 82.13-16)

The argument from this is that here the people are divided into two groups: the righteous and the wicked; and their reward is divided into two ends, Bliss and Fire, with a clear statement that the people of the Fire will not be removed from it. That is on the pattern of His saying: 'a group is in the Garden, and a group in the Fire' (*al-Shfr~*, 42.7).

It has been objected that the meaning of 'the wicked' is those people who are complete in wickedness, those whom Allah has described by His saying: 'They are the rejecters of Allah, the doers of iniquity' (`*Abasa*, 80.42). So far so that Fakhr al-D,n al-R~z, says: 'We do not accept that the committer of a major sin is one of ''the wicked''.'[146]

This objection is rejected in that, on the basis of this opinion of theirs, they must then say that the committers of fornication, those who do the deed of the people of Lƒt, the consumers of usury, the killers of souls without right, the preventers of the payment of *zak~h*, and the rest of the people who commit major sins other than *shirk*, will be counted among the righteous who have been promised Bliss, and a greater contentment from Allah. By Allah, there is no more effective means to demolish the foundations of the religion, to abase the rituals, to diffuse the

[146] *al-Tafs,r al-kab,r* (Tehran: D~r al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, 2nd edition), 31:84.

evil, than this opinion. It demolishes all the commands and prohibitions of Allah, and blows up everything that has come in His Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger, of the warning for the people who commit major sins. It is sufficient that fornication, homosexuality, drinking wine, indifference to being cuckolded, and all the prohibited things will be among acts of righteousness, because their committers are in the ranks of the righteous.

Evidence from the Sunnah

As from the Sunnah there are many sound narrations which I could not gather except after much effort. I restrict myself to the following:

Bukh~r,, Muslim and others have narrated from Ibn ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, that the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: ‘The people of the Garden will enter into the Garden, and the people of the Fire will enter into the Fire. Then an announcer will stand among them saying: O People of the Fire there is no death, and O People of the Garden there is no death. Everyone dwell eternally in what he is.’ Bukhari has narrated the like of that from Abƒ Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him; and œabar~n,, and ™~kim (declaring it a sound *ˆad,th*) have narrated from Mu`~dh, may Allah be pleased with him. Its evidence on the soundness of the faith of those who believe in the eternal abiding in the Fire of those who commit major sins, is very clear. It conveys that it will happen after both groups have entered into their places.

œabar~n,, Abƒ Nu`aym and Ibn Mardƒyah have narrated from Ibn Mas`ƒd, may Allah be pleased

with him, that the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah said: 'If it is said to the People of the Fire that you will dwell in the Fire the amount of each small stone in the world, they will be pleased with it. And if it is said to the People of the Garden that you will dwell in it the amount of each small stone, they will be grieved. Rather, Allah has made for them eternity.'

Aˆmad, Bazz~r, ™akim and Nasa|, have narrated from Ibn `Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, that the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: 'No one disobedient to his parents nor the drinker will enter the Garden.' In another narration: 'Allah has forbidden the Garden on three people: the drinker, the one disobedient to his parent, and the one indifferent to being cuckolded who accepts the evil in his family.'

Bukh~r, and Muslim have narrated from the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, that he said: 'Whoever drinks wine in this world, he will be deprived of it in the hereafter.' This is an indirect expression of his deprivation from entering the Garden because the People of the Garden will have what their souls desire, and content their eyes, so that they are not deprived of anything.

Bukh~r, has narrated from the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, that he said: 'Whoever has been given responsibility of a matter by Allah, and then does not take due care thereof with sincerity, Allah will forbid the Garden to him.'

Im~m Rab,` has narrated in his sound *Musnad* from Abƒ `Ubaydah from J~bir b. Zayd, from Anas b. Malik, may Allah be pleased with them, that the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and

the blessings of Allah, said: 'Whoever cuts off the right of a Muslim with his oath Allah will forbid the Garden to him, and will make the Fire compulsory for him.' Then a man said: 'Even if it is a small thing, O Messenger of Allah?' The Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: 'Even if it is a twig from an oak tree.' That has been narrated by Im~m Malik in his *Muwa\\~*, by Muslim in his *^a^,^*, by Nasa|, in his *Sunan* from Abƒ Um~mah, may Allah be pleased with him.

Bukh~r,, Muslim and others have narrated from Abƒ Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: 'Whoever kills himself with a sharp instrument, then this sharp instrument will be in his hand and he will be stabbing himself in the stomach in the Fire of hell, dwelling in it for ever, and whoever kills himself with a poison, then his poison will remain in his hand forcing it into him in the Fire of hell, dwelling in it for ever, and whoever throws himself from a mountain and kills himself, so he will keep throwing himself down in the Fire of hell, dwelling in it for ever.'

Muslim has narrated in his *^a^,^* from the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, that he said: 'Two types of the People of the Fire, I have not seen them: people having whips like the tails of the cow, they strike the people with them; and women wearing clothes [that show them] naked, seductive and seducing, their heads pointed like the humps of camels——they will not enter the Garden and will not get its fragrance, while its fragrance is felt for such a distance.'

Bukh~r, and Muslim have narrated from ™udhayfah b. Yaman, may Allah be pleased with them, that the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: 'The gossip [spreader of rumours] will not enter Paradise.'

Bukh~r, and Muslim have narrated from Sa`d and Abƒ Bakrah, may Allah be pleased with them, that the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, said: 'Whoever relates himself to someone other then his father knowing that he is not his father, then the Garden is forbidden to him.'

The narrations, as I have said, are abundant about this. Sometimes they indicate the eternal abiding explicitly, and sometimes they say what conforms to eternal abiding. Some narrations warn of deprivation of the Garden or of smelling its fragrance. The result is the same, though the wording is different. For deprivation of the Garden contradicts entering into it at any time since the negation of entering it includes all times. The explanation of that was given above.

Conclusion of the Discussion

I have no doubt, respected reader, that after this tour of the evidence and studying it with the eye of understanding you will have realized that the belief of those who say that the people of major sins will dwell in the Fire for ever—— which has been rejected by those who have rejected it and, moreover, they have judged those who hold it to be unbelievers——is the belief spoken by the Qur|~n and supported by the clear sound *ˆad,th*s from the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah. It is the belief that the Muslim must hold fast to, and meet Allah on

that belief. How (could it be otherwise) when the Noble Qur|~n has joined the contrary belief to the Jews, and criticized them for it, and has affirmed that it is the reason for their missing the right, where it says: 'This because they say: ''The Fire shall not touch us but for a few numbered days''' (*>l `Imr~n*, 3.24)?

It will become clear to whoever studies the conditions of mankind with care that the belief in limiting the punishment of the disobedient to a limited term, and their turning after it to the Bliss, emboldened this *ummah*——as it emboldened the Jews before them——to dishonour the sacred authority of the religion, to turn back from the discipline of the virtues, and turn to that laxity behind desire and plunge into the deep waters thereof.

Nothing is more indicative of that than that demeaning literature which depicts different varieties of vices, and parades them before readers and listeners in the worst forms and ugliest appearances. This literature has become popular in the circles of those who believe in the forgiveness of the people who commit the major sins, or in the limitation of their punishment to a term. It has spread in a way which harms the values of the *ummah* of the Qur|~n, and has overwhelmed the literary works, the long as well as the short among them, like *al-Agh~n,*, *Mu^a‡arat al-udab~|* and *al-`Iqd al-far,d*, to the extent that literature has become a sign of bad manners.

Allah has protected from that the literature of the people of right belief, who hold firmly in their hearts to the eternity of the punishment of the people who commit major sins and persist in them, which has been mentioned in the Qur|~n, as has the eternity of the reward of the obedient and the doers of right. So also Allah has protected their behaviour, purified their senses and

saved their hearts from abusing all that is sacred with Allah, and from lightening His prohibiting commands. If you turn the pages of their literature you will find them——as Aˆmad Am,n says——'They do not know either wine or debauchery, so you do not find in their literature any wine...'[147]

Allow me, respected reader, to say a word——though, as I do so, pain presses my heart and grief burns my sense——that what multiplies the problems and intensifies the situation is that certain forms of shamelessness and debauchery are found in the biographies of people who are counted as the peaks in the *ummah* of Islam. They were the ones most deserving to embody the virtues of the religion, and to be adorned with its characteristics and the nobility of its manners. I have turned away from pointing to some of them by name or title in a desire to be safe from speaking slanders.

I hold myself aloof from even acknowledging what has been said of them. Because it is among our principles to respect the dignity of all Muslims, the elite and the generality, let alone their scholars to whom Allah has accorded, in addition to the honour of Islam, the honour of knowledge. Moreover, I say that even the impudence to refer these mean things to the masters of Islam is a crime and not to be regarded as a light matter. It did not emanate but from lightening the commands of Allah through lightening His warning as represented in the claim that the *muwaˆˆid* will not be punished or, if he is punished, he will not dwell in the punishment forever.

I will not forget what I was told by the great *da`*, the just and most learned Shaykh `Abd al-

147 *˜uˆ˜ al-Isl˜m* (Maktabat al-Nahdah al-Mi%riyyah), 3:342.

Mu`izz `Abd al-Satt~r: 'If the *ummah* would accept your belief in the eternal dwelling in the punishment of the committers of major sins, then there would have been a great station for it in righteousness, purity, chastity——quite otherwise than what we see today.'[148]

CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK

I apologize to you, respected reader. I never imagined that I should meet you on these pages around these subjects which have kept my pen busy and taken up your time. I would wish to have met you while talking with you through the lines on subjects which are more appropriate for the attention of writers and readers to turn to. For standing up to face the various attacks united in the single purpose of penetrating Islam and disuniting the *ummah* of Islam politically and ideologically, is more appropriate for every *da`*, Muslim than to become preoccupied with a dispute of faith among the groups of one and the same

[148] Something similar has been said to me by Shaykh Muˆammad b. Zak, b. Ibr~h,m, the leader of al-Ash,rah al-Muˆammadiyyah in Egypt: 'I wish we had taken their [the Ibadis'] opinions on backbiting and spreading rumours as causes of nullifying the fast and breaking the ablution——and I have pointed to the same in my book *al-Wil~yah wa l-bar~|ah*.'

Muslim *ummah*, a dispute over which centuries upon centuries have passed, and which has been discussed and studied by different pens deeper in knowledge, more profound in understanding, more eloquent in explanation, and stronger in proofs and evidence. But I found my silence in this position to worsen the problem. The propaganda of the biased people might please (and persuade) those who have not studies all dimensions of the disputed issues from which that propaganda proceeds in order to pass a judgement that would sever one part of this *ummah* from its body. For those (who hear that propaganda) do not know the evidence from which this group of the *ummah* must take light when taking their positions on these issues. Since ancient times this wise saying has been transmitted both orally and in writing: 'Man is the enemy of what he does not know'. And in the same meaning, this poetic verse which has been said recently: '…ignorance of a thing in the eye of the wise is blindness'. It is from this standpoint that I came to write these pages, explaining in them what is right with evidence, strengthening the argument affirmed from the Book and the Sunnah and from rational proof——not by (merely following) certain people.

Whoever reflects upon my discussion putting sentiments aside will find it does justice to the different groups (mentioned). I have striven to present the proof of each group, the evidence for each opinion, and to discuss these arguments in an objective way, removed from predisposing influences. Through that, I hope that my readers will realize the truth of my intention and the sincerity of my heart.

I would not wish to miss here——while we are before an issue concerning the unity of the whole Muslim *ummah*——to make an appeal to those Muslim scholars who receive my book, to study it with

care, with sincerity for Allah, then proclaim the word of truth, without fear of anyone, and without flattery done at the expense of truth and fact. I do not mean by this that I require people to retreat from their beliefs, and to agree with me in what I hold——indeed, no one can impose beliefs upon minds——beliefs are a result of contentment with the idea, either after study and reflection, or out of imitation. Rather, my meaning is that it is an obligation upon Muslim scholars——as they are responsible for this pristine religion, and the *ummah* of Islam——that they should adopt in situations like these which threaten to scatter the *ummah*, a positive position in the face of those who like to raise unrest and abuses which cannot but result in problems and distress for our Muslim *ummah*, and that they should guide the majority of the people towards tolerance, conciliation and co-operation among Muslims.

I declare to those who do not see any other way than to settle the dispute on these issues until the belief of the *ummah* is unified on them, that I do not refuse peaceable, objective and constructive dialogue, through which is not sought but the truth, and which does not lead but to the clarification of the reality and the appearance of its proof, for such dialogue cannot lead but to intimacy and harmony among Muslims. The only condition that I put is that this dialogue be studied from all angles, to avoid narrowness and sentiments which do not lead but to a bad outcome, which only deform the face of the reality, and extinguish the light of the truth, and labour to veil its beauties and place a bar between the truth and the seeing of it.

THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am duty bound to remember, and loyalty demands of me that I should not forget——in the midst of this clamour that has been raised by those voices crying loudly against the Ibadis——those quiet voices coming out of truth-speaking tongues and clear intentions to record their sincere praise of this group who have preserved the true Islam, and defended it with the most precious souls and wealth in their possession, and remained steadfast on the right path on which walked the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, his rightly guided caliphs, and his guided Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and the world with its tempting attractions did not distract them while the greater number of the people were falling into them and being caught in their traps.

Allah has raised these voices in order to enlighten the path of the reality for those who seek it, and to tear down those slanders——which did not stand upon any foundation of reality but were woven by hatred——against this believing group known among the believers and others by the name of Ibadis. I am not now in a situation to be able to enumerate these voices and their sources——time does not allow me to do that. I must be content to record for the people of these voices the best praise and finest prayer. And I want to point to some of these fair-minded persons, to present before the respected reader the forms of their justice towards this school and its people. (Here, then,) for the readers, are some scenes from these forms of justice:

The great scholar `Izz al-D,n al-Tannƒkh,, former member of the Scientific Society of Damascus, who has recorded with his fair pen shining

pages of the virtues of the people of *istiq~mah*, to the extent that he says about those who accuse them of misguidance:

Whoever accuses the Ibadis of misguidance and error is from among those who have divided their religion and become sects, and from among ignorant wrong-doers.[149]

The great scholar Sayyid `Abd al-™~fiŒ `Abd Rabbih, from among the scholars of al-Azhar al-Shar,f. In his writings about the Ibadis has come this:

They have derived their doctrine (*madhhab*) from the noble Qur|~n, and they have acquired it from the authenticated Sunnah, and they have walked in their direction to the worship of Allah the same path that was walked by the Companions and accepted by the consensus. They have striven that their steps should be on the same path, the same track, on the paved road, along the way that the Messenger, peace be upon him, passed in his long journey and distant travelling, his blessed procession, coming and going with his blessed Message throughout 23 years, with their striving for the truth, firmness in the right, their discipline of the self (*nafs)*, until the matter became clear for them, and the path became enlightened, and it became clear for all the world——or the fair-minded, sincere people in it——that these are the people of *istiq~mah*, or they are in reality that saving group of which the true Prophet was informed, and Allah commanded His Messenger to choose it and adopt it as the way leading to His worship, and His pleasure, in His saying, Exalted is He: 'Say: ''This is my way; I do invite to Allah, with certain knowledge, I and whoever follows me. Glory to Allah, and never will I join gods with Allah''' (*Yfsuf*, 12.108).

The Ibadi school is not a strange thing in this world, or an alien to the life; rather, it is the right currency which should be dealt with in different areas,

---

149 `Izz al-D,n al-Tannfkh,: *Khul~sat al-wa‰~|il f, tart,b al-mas~|il* (Damascus: al-Ma\bat al-Umfmiyyah, 1st edition), 'Muqaddimah', H.

and in all environments. It is, with the help of Allah, a currency in which admixture [of false metal], counterfeit and forgery are impossible, and in its logic the practice of false compromises is not allowed, nor walking on two ropes, because for them the truth is one and whole, indivisible.[150]

He also says:

In general——and after investigation, research, study, analysis and reasoning——it has become clear that the Ibadi way is the best path in Islamic performance, in the dealings of life. Its leaders and preachers are those who have countered the groups of hypocrisy, and opposed the gales of *shirk* and atheism, and challenged——with firmness, power and toughness——those stupid, evil, strange actions that appear in the behaviour of false or shameless rulers and oppressors on the religious level, or in the worldly affairs, individual or collective——in accordance with the logic of the religion.

How needy is the world today of this distinctive colour in Islamic *fiqh*.

How needy is the world of the preachers and leaders of the Ibadis, whose responsibility, and among whose primary duties, it is to reform the religious trend, to establish accountability in place of laxity [before the Law], to hold firmly the neck of shamelessness, misguidance and immorality, and to bring abiding by the Law into different spheres of life.[151]

He also says:

In reality the Ibadis have become the true, eloquent language and enlightened structure between Allah and the people. They are those who distil the truth of the religion for mankind, and present on the tables of humanity the agreeable food of the truth. They are the saved group that the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, has told [us] about in all his *ˆad,th*s and narrations. The presence of this kind of people was a firm necessity which gathered the mercy

---

150 Sayyid `Abd al-™~fiŒ `Abd Rabbih: *al-Ibb~‡iyyah: madhhab wa sulfk* (Cairo, 1st edition 18.11.1985) p. 22-23).

151 Ibid, 237.

of Allah to His servants, and demanded from them to meet this mercy with different kinds of rites of worship and devotion. The first among these is sincere gratitude, sincere worship, and to celebrate His favours, and to translate all that into the behaviour that is loved by Allah and His Messenger.

Among the manifestations of the generous mercy of Allah was that He did not leave His servants like this——in this world——as wasted, scattered, degraded, fallen amidst heaps of doubts, and the debris of *fitna*, and the broken wreckage of civilization destroyed, amidst the ruins of confusion and uncertainty. For it was a necessary condition of man's existence——in order to assure his impact, the evolution of his existence and the continuity of life with him——that he should cross the way and traverse the bridge of history from past to present, that he should travel all the stages of that history in the company of the most prominent elements of influence upon him, for affirmation and negation. It was necessary that he should be accompanied in this history by that guided group who have carried their souls in their open hands [ready to give], placed their lives on their weapons, and walked in time of fear demanding humanity for man within the framework of the Law of Allah and what has been designed by His Power, woven by the hand of the Shari`ah, and nurtured by care for Islam and the life of the Prophet, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, and who have helped man to interpret and implement the Law.

Are there people more pious, more clean, more loyal and more obedient in playing this role, and living out this great and important message, other than the Ibadis?

Is there any school which conforms with this spiritual development and harmonizes with that legal stature, other than the school [of the Ibadis]?

Is there on the face of the earth or within the embrace of life one who can encompass these divine teachings, or who can gather those divine universal sentiments, other than an Ibadi man——a true Ibadi——whose emanation is from Allah and whose return is to

Allah, and his life is between this emanation and return, and he is always with Allah?[152]

The fair writer and Zaytƒn, scholar Professor `Abd al-`Az,z al-Majdhƒb says in his statement about Ibadis:

The most obvious characteristic of Ibadis is their firm holding to the religion, by performing its duties and avoiding what it forbids——to the extent of exaggeration——and their extreme hatred for people of injustice and corruption. Because of these two qualities, they were able to realize for themselves a religious dignity and political supremacy that has made their name eternal in history.[153]

He also says:

They preserved the purity of the Muˆammadan message in the principles of their school, and did not retreat from the straight path on which walked the Messenger of Allah, upon him be peace and the blessings of Allah, and his pious Companions in their behaviour and affairs of life. They did not commit any sin, and in leadership they did not commit any injustice nor any kind of oppression such as is not [true] except for a few rulers other than them.

Rather, injustice for them was impossible——not because they were protected, but because the man of religion and the man of politics to them is the same. To the Ibadis, the one responsible for the affairs of the people is the im~m himself. That is the foundation of Islam in respect of government on which stood the guided caliphs. [The Ibadis] preserved it and defended it. It is natural that a school like this should spread and the people inclined to follow it in the western Islamic world, so that they could get security and honour in its shades, when they had become fed up with the life of anarchy and injustice under the hands of many `Umayyad and `Abbasid governors.[154]

---

152 Ibid, 246-47.

153 *al-S,rah al-madhhab, bi-Ifr,qiyyah il~ qiy~m al-dawlah al-Zubayriyyah* (al-D~r al-Tunisiyyah li-l-Nashr), 104.

154 Ibid, 104-05.

Then he says:

Perhaps the first Ibadi preacher who came to these cities… was Salmah b. Sa`d who knew how to move the country, and which valleys to walk in order to be safe from the oppression of the oppressors, and have security for his work to spread. So he chose the hillways, far from desert and arid lands and far from coastal areas under the power of the rulers, in the mountains of Naffsah and Damm~r, Nafz~wah and the heights and mountains around them. All these are populated areas. Here it was possible for him to stay, and establish da`wah among the Berbers, explaining to [their] minds the true form of Islam in belief, worship and business. It was a form other than what the people had witnessed in the rulers and their followers at that time. Then the people gathered around him, responding to his invitation. He started moving from one place to the other. He did not leave any place without leaving behind there followers whose number increased by days and years until they came to have a position, and represented a power which is given much weight [lit. a thousand considerations].

From Africa two Ibadis walked——after they had received the basic fundamentals of the religion and schooling at the hand of Salmah b. Sa`d——to Iraq, in a deputation including a number of Ibadis beside these two. They spent some years seeking knowledge at the hand of the Im~m of the school at that time, Abf `Ubaydah Muslim b. Ab, Kar,mah. The first student was from Qayraw~n, `Abd al-Raˆm~n b. Rustam, and the other was Abf D~wfd from the South. When they completed their education, and their im~m was satisfied with them for their awareness, he commanded them [to do] good and saw them off to their land. Abf D~wfd had a position in the world of reform. He freed himself for the religious and educational struggle. He created in the direction of Nafz~wah and other areas of the South a Muslim generation distinctive in its religion and character. This generation was a pious seed for the following

generations which held fast to the Sunnah and piety, and opposed heresies and evil.[155]

Speaking about the opposition of Ibadis in the leadership of their Im~m Abƒ l-Kha\\~b al-Ma`~fir,, Majdhƒb says:

This is Abƒ l-Kha\\~b `Abd al-A`l~ b. al-Samˆ al-Ma`~fir,, to whom `Abd al-Raˆm~n b. Rustam sent a messenger to convey to him the evil happenings in Qayrawan. On this Abƒ l-Kha\\~b advanced to carry out the duty imposed upon him by the affection of brotherhood, and necessitated by one of the most important principles of his school, namely confronting the rulers with the sword, and shedding their blood when they exceed the bounds of Allah, and incline to the [private] desire in their judgements. Abƒ l-Kha\\~b came with a great army volunteered to establish justice and efface the corruption and injustice committed by `>‰im al-Warfjƒm, and his followers. He met with success.
Then, after he had provided security to the people, protecting their provisions and dignities, he appointed `Abd al-Raˆm~n b. Rustam as the governor over al-Qayrawan, and got back to Tripoli. The governership of Ibn Rustam lasted two years, during which the Muslims in the whole of Qayrawan and Africa tasted security and realized the meaning of justice, and got, perhaps for the first time, the taste of the honourable life in the shade of pure Islamic rule.[156]

Then Majdhƒb says about the role of the Ibadis in general in the lands of the Maghreb:

The reality is that the Ibadis were able to impose their historic existence; they achieved an important religious honour. Its effects have remained till today in his followers who live among us. They are committed to the service of the religion, and to resistance to heresies and evil, firm in their commanding of good and prohibiting of evil. For, they actualized a polit-

[155] Ibid, 105-06.

[156] Ibid, 108-09.

ical honour which has its place in the history of Islam in the Arab west.[157]

Great professor, Shaykh Muˆammad Shahh~\ah Abƒ l-™asan says:

I do not favour anyone in this, my position. Rather, I say that the followers of this school [the Ibadis] against whom some people have acted meanly, are more tolerant than us, and more responsive to the command of Allah by being friendly. I have lived among them for more than twelve years, teaching the subject of *tafs,r* in the Institute of Shar`, Judgement:. I did not find [during that time anything that] might have polluted the sincerity of the relationship and what might have made me say something without evidence, regardless of the differences on some issues. We, I and my students, and the great scholars of the school, followed the stronger evidence.[158]

After this survey that you have made with me, respected reader——in these pages among these issues——because of the situations imposed upon us, I hope that the reality would have appeared to you and you have seen it as manifest. I entrust you to Allah, Exalted is He, supplicating Him to provide us with the opportunity to meet again and again under the shade of pristine Islam when Muslims are united, their word become one, and their disputes vanished that now disfigure the purity of their being one. As I pray to Allah to guide our hands, and the hands of all this *ummah*, to righteous and sincere action, to true and pure speech that pleases him, and to enlighten our inward sights, to purify our hearts, to write blessings for us, and to prevent us from the ways of misfortune. May Allah bestow peace and mercy on our master Muhammad, his descendants and all

---

157 Ibid, 110.

158 A booklet entitled 'Explanation for the people' (unpublished manuscript in its author's own hand), 4.

his Companions. ‘Glory to your Lord, the Lord of Honour and Power. (He is free) from what they (falsely) ascribe to Him. And be peace upon the Messengers. And praise belongs to Allah, the Lord and Cherisher of the worlds.’

And peace be upon you, respected reader, the mercy of Allah and His blessings.

Your brother in the path of Allah
Aˆmad b. ™amad al-Khal,l,.
Masqat, Sultanate of Oman.
29 Sha`b~n, 1407 AH.