In Pursuit of Allah's Pleasure

by

Dr. Naajeh Ibrahim

Sheikh 'Aasim 'Abdul Maajid

Sheikh 'Esaam-ud-Deen Darbaalah

Supervised by:

Dr. Sheikh Umar Abdur Rahman

Translated by:

A. Ibrahim

Al-Arabi Ben Razzaq

Contents

Preface **2**

Introduction **4**

Part One: Our Ultimate Goal **8**

Part Two: Our 'Aqeedah **19**

Part Three: Our Understanding **32**

Part Four: Our Aim **44**

1. Bringing people to the worship of their Lord 45
2. Establishing a Caliphate following the guidance of the Prophet (ﷺ) 50

Part Five: Our Path **57**

1. Da'wah 62
2. Hisbah (Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil) 68
3. Waging Jihad in the Way of Allah 79
4. Working within the Framework of a Jama'ah 96
5. A Jama'ah Regulated by the Shari'ah 101
6. A Jama'ah which draws lessons from past experiences 103

Part Six: Our Provisions **105**

1. Taqwa (Piety) 107
2. Knowledge 112
3. Certainty 115
4. Total Reliance On Allah 117
5. Gratitude 122
6. Endurance 125
7. Doing without the life of this world in preference for the Hereafter 129

Part Seven: Our Walaa' (Loyalty) **134**

Part Eight: Our 'Adaa' (Animosity) **137**

Part Nine: Our Gathering **139**

Glossary of Arabic Terms **143**

Preface

All praise is due to Allah (SWT). We praise Him and seek His assistance. We ask for His forgiveness and take refuge in Him from the evil within ourselves and from the evil of our deeds. He whom Allah (SWT) guides will never be diverted yet whomever He sends astray will never find his way. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah (SWT) alone, He has no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad (ﷺ) is His servant and messenger.

On the authority of Abu Dardaa' (ra), the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

"Verily, the scholars are the heirs of the Prophets." [1]

The righteous scholars are the heirs of the Prophets; Imams of the people after the Prophets; they guide and direct the people to Allah (SWT) and teach them His Deen; and they have noble manners and praiseworthy attributes. They are the scholars of the truth; scholars of guidance and successors to the Prophets; they fear Allah (SWT) much and are constantly checking their actions, and pay great importance to what He orders and forbids. They follow in the footsteps of the Prophets: in their teaching and instructing, their character and actions, their words and conduct and, as a result, they suffer in the same way that the Prophets did. The righteous scholars suffer persecution and oppression, mockery and ridicule, torture and imprisonment and murder in the same way that the Prophets did. They speak and uphold the truth wherever they go in order that the religion of Allah (SWT) may ***"be superior over all other religions even though the disbelievers may detest it,"*** [2] and they pay for it dearly.

On the authority of Anas bin Malik, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "*Among the signs of the Hour will be the disappearance of knowledge and the appearance of ignorance."* [3]

Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalanee said, commenting on this Hadeeth: *"Indeed it will not disappear except with the deaths of the Ulama."* [4] In this day and age, how few are the scholars that are suffering for no other reason except that they are speaking the truth. Some of them have been assassinated and some of them have been imprisoned, whilst others still remain under house arrest.

This book, *"In Pursuit of Allah's Pleasure" is* the translation of a book titled: *"Al-Meethaaq Al-Aml Al-Islami"* (The Charter for Islamic Work) written by three scholars: Dr. Naajeh Ibrahim, Asim Abdul-Majid and Esaam-ud-Deen Darbaalah and released from behind the bars of Liman Turrah Prison, Egypt, in February 1984. The checking of this book was carried out by Dr. Sheikh Umar AbdurRahman, currently serving a life sentence in the USA, for no other reason than upholding the truth.

In this book the authors outlined a complete methodology for Islamic work today. From `Aqeedah to Da'wah, Jihad to Khilafah and Taqwa to Sabr (patience), they explained how all of these parts of Islam come together for the sole objective of each and every Muslim: to seek the Pleasure of Allah (SWT), the Irresistible. It was written in a manner portraying the true situation of the Muslims today and, coming from imprisoned scholars: a realistic portrayal.

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[1] Classified as Sahih by Ahmad, Abu Dawud and Ibn Maajah.
[2] Surah At-Taubah (9), Ayah 33.
[3] Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim.
[4] Fath-ul-Baaree. Vol. 1, Page 239, Hadith No. 80.

This book is an excellent read by itself and an even better guide if used as a syllabus in learning Islam in an organised, collective manner. It is ideal as a basis for study circles and acts as a comprehensive manual. Coupled with the supplementary reading of some other books in the English language and memorisation of the Holy Quran, it can consolidate the knowledge of anyone seeking to work for Islam in this day and age.

We ask Allah (SWT) to accept the efforts of these scholars and protect them. To make this book a means of reviving the glory of His religion. To make our actions sincerely for His Sake and to include them on our Scale of good deeds on the Day of Judgement.

Ameen.

Introduction

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

All praise is due to Allah (SWT). We praise Him and seek His assistance. We ask for His forgiveness and take refuge in Him from the evil within ourselves and from the evil of our deeds. He whom Allah (SWT) guides will never be diverted yet whomever He sends astray will never find his way. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah (SWT) alone, He has no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad (ﷺ) is His servant and messenger.

"O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except as Muslims." [Surah Ale-Imran (3), Ayah 102.]

"O Mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you front a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife (Eve), and from them both He created many men and women. And fear Allah through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (Kinship). Surely, Allah is Ever an All-Watcher over you." [Surah An-Nisa (4), Ayah 1.]

"O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allah and fear Him, and always speak the truth. He will direct you to do righteous deeds arid will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, has indeed achieved a great achievement." [Surah Al-Ahzaab (33), Ayah 70-71.]

To proceed:

Allah (SWT) says:

"Allah has promised those among you who believe, and do righteous good deeds, that He will certainly grant them succession (to the present rulers) in the earth, as He granted it to those before them, and that He will grant them the authority to practice their religion, that which He has chosen for them (Islam). And He will surely give them in exchange a safe security after their fear, provided they (believers) worship Him and do not associate anything (in worship) with Him." [Surah An-Nur (24), Ayah 55.]

This is a promise from Allah (SWT) to grant us victory, success, domination and glory. This promise appears to us like a luminous glimpse of hope, enlightening our way in this gloomy darkness encompassing our *Ummah.* This *Ummah,* which dominated the world for a long period of time, through which the *Khilafah* extended remarkably to protect most of the countries and govern them by Allah's (SWT) Book.

Unfortunately today, this same *Ummah is* swallowing the bitterness of humiliation and degradation. Its glory and pride have become like an old song chanted by children. Its *Khilafah* has fragmented into several petty states. Some have been seized by the Christians, some by the Jews, some controlled by atheists and idol worshippers, and the rest, so called '*Islamic States',* have been seized by secular rulers.

The enemies have flocked towards us. Enemies of all kinds. Schools and creeds, theories and philosophies, organisations and institutions, states and countries. They have all gathered to fight Islam and the Muslims. Some of them are incited by a hidden hatred and some by an old animosity.

The Twentieth Century has witnessed one of the fiercest blows inflicted upon our *Ummah* by our enemy: the collapse of the *Khilafah*. If only their conspiracy had stopped at the demise of *Khilafah*. But they went on to indoctrinate Muslims with strange, foreign ideas and concepts, in order to confuse our understanding of our *Deen.* Once we wake up and try to return to our original *Deen,* we will be confronted with an intellectual perplexity, in which evil and good is mixed. Hence, the truth will be ambiguous and we will go astray, and lose the true understanding of Islam.

This is our situation, or you can say, this is our ordeal engendered from our ignorance and negligence before the conspiracy of our enemy could inflict it upon us. However the promise of Allah (SWT) to those who believe and do righteous good deeds remains:

"...that He will certainly grant them succession (to the present rulers) in the earth, as He granted it to those before them, and that He will grant them the authority to practice their religion, that which He has chosen for them (Islam). And He will surely give them in exchange a safe security after their fear..." [Surah An-Nur (24), Ayah 55.]

In fact, Allah, had granted the first generation of this *Ummah,* the generation of the *Sahabah,* succession in the earth and domination when they succeeded to follow and submit their souls to the teaching of Islam, and adopted it, alone, as a basis for their unit and solidarity. Then they proceeded to practice it and implement it in their lives through a collective organised movement. This is the path to their domination and succession.

And it is the path to our success if we wake up one day and want to return to our Islam; if one day we accept to challenge our enemies and restore our Islam.

We have to hasten and rectify the abyss that has extended between us and our ancestors. We have to comply with their understanding of Islam and their actions, efforts and *Jihad* for the sake of Islam.

We are in great need to follow the footsteps of our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his Companions and those who followed them with righteousness.

Al-Awza'ee was right when he said:
"Be patient and follow the Sunnah. Stick to what the Salaf said, say what they said, do not get involved in what they refrained from and follow the way of the righteous ancestors then you will obtain what they achieved."

The first path to follow is to learn not to decide before Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (ﷺ), not to raise our voices above the voice of the Prophet (ﷺ), to rid ourselves of any loyalty and to devote ourselves exclusively to Allah (SWT) and His religion.

Then, it will be easier for us to start and mould our characters according to a true and sincere Islamic code as a preliminary step towards the revival of this *Deen.*

"Verily, Allah will help those who help His (cause)." [Surah Al-Hajj (22), Ayah 40.]

Therefore, we introduce this book ***"In Pursuit of Allah's Pleasure"***, as a clear message and a reminder of the principles and fundamentals of *Shari'ah* which should not be absent from any Islamic movement drawn into committing itself, in all matters, to *Shari'ah* laws.

These principles are not new or innovated, but they are established facts which cannot he ignored by any Muslim, let alone be denied. Unfortunately, most of these fundamentals have slipped from the minds of most of those working for this Deen. Some people know some fundamentals hut ignore others. Others implement some but neglect others.

While these principles and fundamentals of *Shari'ah* have been long absent and intentionally been kept away, we take it upon ourselves to introduce, or to display, them as an advice to our *Ummah* because it is a duty and an obligation. By this, we aim to elucidate the characteristics of the path, determine its objective and to indicate how to follow its course. Our endeavor is to clarify the picture for men who boldly embark upon Islamic activities so that the Islamic movement would not be deflected in the middle of its progress or divert from the right path to different paths. Furthermore, such paths are diverse and difficult. Also, we will not forget our objective, nor be confused, nor neglect our duty to commit the Islamic movement to *Shari'ah* principles, which if abandoned, will make the movement lose all hopes of victory.

This is our purpose in presenting these principles and fundamentals. Once they become clear and more deeply rooted in people's minds, we could, then, unite in a single group in order to work for the benefit of Islam. Therefore, these fundamentals will be like a compulsory introduction in order to reach an imperative intellectual unity before starting our progress.

Whoever overlooks this intellectual unity which we pursue, and exceeds it to give first priority to the people's assembly is making a grave mistake, because his movement contains, without his knowledge, elements of its disintegration. An assembly with no compatibility among its members is a disorganized collection of heterogeneous ideas and concepts, which, in the first real test, will break up and may even fight each other.

Any assembly which aims to work for the welfare of Islam but whose members have not yet agreed about the legal fundamentals (based on *Shari'ah)* which should govern this assembly, the members of this assembly, leaders and soldiers, must ask these questions:

- What is our Ultimate Goal?
- What is our Aqeedah?
- What is our Understanding?
- What is our Aim?
- What is our Methodology to achieve this aim?
- What is our Provision?
- To whom shall our Loyalty be?

- Who is our Enemy?

- Whom shall we accept in our assembly?

- Whom shall we Dismiss and refuse and why?

We do not need to mention that answers to these questions must be sprung from Islam alone. Islam as revealed by Allah (SWT) to His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) as the Companions of the Prophet understood it and as our worthy ancestors taught us.

If we do what is right, it is only from Allah (SWT) :

"Whatever good reaches you is from Allah," [Surah An-Nisa (4), Ayah 79.]

All praise is to Him. If we do what is wrong, it is from ourselves :

"But whatever evil befalls you is from yourself," [Surah An-Nisa (4), Ayah 79.]

Was Salamu alaikum wa Rahmatullah.

Liman Turrah Prison

25 Jamadi ul-Awla 1404

27 February 1984

Part One: Our Ultimate Goal

To attain the Pleasure of Allah (SWT) by:

1. Directing our sincere devotion to Him alone.
2. Achieving the true following of His messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ).

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudree (ra) relates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Allah, the Lord of Honour and Glory, will call the inmates of Paradise, 'O Residents of Paradise!' They will respond, 'Here we are, our Lord, and all good is in Your Hands. 'He will ask them: 'Are you now pleased?' They will answer: 'Why should we not be pleased, our Lord? When You have bestowed upon us such bounties which You have not bestowed on any of Your other creation. 'He will then say to them: 'Shall I not bestow upon you something even better than that?' The inhabitants of Paradise will inquire: 'What could be better than that?' Allah will say, 'I bestow upon you My Pleasure and shall never thereafter be displeased with you.'" [5]

Verily, our Lord, Your Pleasure is more exalted and precious than any felicity. We put Your pleasure above and before all else. By doing so we follow in the footsteps of our Prophet (ﷺ) who sought Your pleasure before asking for Paradise in his supplications: "*O Allah, I ask You for Your Pleasure and Paradise."*

Allah (SWT) is indeed more precious to us than anything else, and He is Greater than all else. His pleasure is also more valuable than any other objective:

"But the greatest bliss is the good Pleasure of Allah: that is the supreme success." [Surah At-Taubah (9), Ayah 72.]

Allah, Exalted is He, is the First: there is nothing before Him; and He is the Last: there is nothing after Him. He is the Most High: there is nothing above Him, and He is the Most Near: there is nothing nearer than Him. He is the Ever-Living and the One who sustains and protects all that exists. He is the All-Mighty; the All-Wise; the All-Aware; the All-Knowing; the All-Seeing; the Owner of Power; the Most Strong. He has power over all things; everything is in need of Him; all actions are easy for Him; and He is in need of nothing whatsoever:

"There is nothing like unto Him; and He is the All-Hearer, the Ever-Watching." [Surah Ash-Shura (42), Ayah 11.]

It is He who creates all things from nothing and provides after destitution. He gives life and causes death. He resurrects the dead from their graves; and to Him will be the final return on the Day of Judgment, when He forgives whom He wishes to forgive, out of benevolence, and punishes whom He wishes to punish, out of justice:

"Such is Allah, your Lord. His is the Sovereignty. None has the right to be worshipped but He. How then are you turned away?" [Surah Az-Zumar (39), Ayah 6.]

[5] Bukhari and Muslim.

All save Him, Exalted is He, will perish:

"Whatsoever is on it [the earth] will perish; but the Face of your Lord, full of Majesty and Honor will abide forever."[Surah Ar-Rahman (55), Ayah 26-27.]

So how could we not consider the Pleasure of Allah: to be our ultimate goal for which we strive and break away from whatever opposes it, so that we can have recourse to its protection and delight in it?

"So flee to Allah (front His Torment to His Mercy) Verily, I (Muhammad) am a plain Warner to you from Him." [Surah Az-Zariyat (51), Ayah 50.]

Our Prophet (ﷺ) taught us that the Pleasure of our Lord is our refuge and shelter:

A'isha said: "I missed the Messenger of Allah in bed (one night) so I looked for him and (suddenly) my hand perchance felt the sole of his feet in the mosque. They were upright (in sujud position) and he was saying: ***Allaahumma innee A'udu biridhaaka min Sakhatika, wabimu 'aafaatika min 'Uqoobatika, wa A'udhu bika minka, Laa Uhsee Thanaa'an 'Alaika, Anta kamaa Athnaita 'Alaa Nafsika."*** *("O Allah! I seek refuge in Your Pleasure front Your Wrath, and in Your Pardon from Your Punishment; and I seek refuge in You from You. I could never praise You enough (as You deserve], You are as You have praised Yourself.")* [6]

The Pleasure of Allah, Mighty is He, is an objective before which all other objectives diminish in importance:

"And Allah is better [as regards reward in comparison to your reward], and more lasting [as regards punishment in comparison your punishment." [Surah Ta-Ha (20), Ayah 73.]

Whoever finds and attains it has indeed found everything could possibly need; and whoever loses it or is misguided away from has lost everything. This is the person that Allah, has left astray,***"...and sealed his hearing and his heart, and put a cover on his sight. Who, then, will guide him after Allah?*** [Surah Al-Jaathiya (45), Ayah 23.]

One of the mercies that Allah has granted His creation is His undertaking to realize this aim (of pleasing Him) for all those who seek it with sincerity:

"Allah chooses for Himself those whom He wishes, and guides unto Himself those who turn to Him in repentance and in obedience." [Surah Ash-Shura (42), Ayah 13.]

Allah, Exalted is He, never turns away anybody seeking His guidance. Instead, He assists and guides them to it:

"As for those who strive hard in Our cause, We will surely guide them to Our Paths (Allah's religion)." [Surah Al-'Ankabut (29), Ayah 69.]

On the authority of Abu Hurairah (ra) who said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Allah the Almighty says: 'I am as My servant expects Me to be. I am with him when he

[6] Muslim.

makes mention of Me. If he makes mention of Me to himself, I make mention of him to Myself and if he makes mention of Me in an assembly, I make mention of him in an assembly better than it. And if he draws near to Me a hand's span, I draw near to him arm's length; and if he draws near to Me an arm's length, I draw near to him a fathom's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed.' " [7]

How could we not then make Allah's (SWT) Pleasure our ultimate goal?

On the authority of Abu Dharr al-Ghifari (ra) from the Prophet (ﷺ) is that among the sayings he relates from his Lord, Exalted is He, is that He said:

"O My servants, I have forbidden oppression for Myself and have made it forbidden amongst you, so do not oppress one another.

O My servants, all of you are astray except for those I have guided, so seek guidance of Me and I shall guide you.

O My servants, all of you are hungry except for those I have fed, so seek food from Me and I shall feed you.

O My servants, all of you are naked except for those I have clothed, so seek clothing of Me and I shall clothe you.

O My servants, you sin by night and by day, and I forgive all sins, so seek forgiveness of Me and I shall forgive you.

O My servants, you will not attain harming Me so as to harm Me, and you will not attain benefiting Me so as to benefit Me.

O My servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you to be as pious as the most pious heart of any man amongst you, that would not increase My Kingdom in anything.

O My servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you as wicked as the most wicked heart of any man amongst you, that would not decrease My Kingdom in anything.

O My servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you, to rise up in one place and make a request of Me, and were I to give everyone what he requested, that would not decrease what I have, any more than a needle decreases the sea if put into it. [8]

O My servants, it is but your deeds that I reckon up for you and then recompense you for, so let him who finds good (in the Hereafter) praise Allah and let him who finds other than that blame no-one but himself." [9]

How could we not seek His Pleasure and aspire to be amongst His beloved friends whom he defends and assists:

"Truly Allah defends those who believe." [Surah Al-Hajj (22), Ayah 38.]

Allah also says in the *Hadeeth Qudsi: "Whoever shows enmity to someone devoted to Me, I shall be at war with him... "* [10]

And can we not aspire to be among His beloved about whom He says in the same *Hadeeth Qudsi:*

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[7] Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Ibn Maajah.

[8] This refers to the minute amount of water adhering to a needle if dipped into the sea and then withdrawn.

[9] Muslim, Tirmidhi and Ibn Maajah.

[10] Bukhari and Muslim.

"My servant draws not near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with optional works so that I shall love him. When I love him I am his sense of hearing with which he hears, his sense of sight with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him; and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it.. "[11]

We hope to attain His Pleasure and we wish that our Lord will admit us in Paradise on the Day of Resurrection along with the righteous people:

"My worshippers! No fear shall be on you this Day, nor shall you grieve, (you) who believed in Our Signs and were Muslims. Enter Paradise, you and your wives, in happiness. Trays of gold and cups will be passed round them, [there will be] therein all that one's inner-self could desire, all that the eyes could delight in, and you will abide therein forever. Such will be the Paradise which you have been made to inherit because of your deeds which you used to do [in the life of the world].Therein for you will be fruits in plenty, of which you will eat [as you desire]." [Surah Az-Zukhruf (43), Ayat 68-73.]

In light of all of the above, does our set goal equal other goals?
"Say: Is the blind one equal to the one who sees? Or darkness equal to Light?" [Surah Ar-Ra'd (13), Ayah 16.]

"Is he who walks on his face without seeing, more rightly guided, or he who [sees and] walks on a Straight Path [Islam]?" [Surah Al-Mulk (67), Ayah 22.]

A Muslim's objective illuminates his path, outlines his endeavours, regulates his footsteps, actions and positions. You find him walking on the ground while his heart is set on the Heavens. He goes forth one instance and holds back another; sometimes hastens and sometimes slows, speaks on one occasion and holds his tongue on another. During all this he is proceeding confidently towards his ultimate goal.

This objective makes the Muslim intolerant of neglecting the commands of his Lord or disobeying film in any way. For doing so would come between him and his exalted aim. It also makes him waste little of his time, lest it should come to nothing. He is cautious not to spend the fleeting moments of his life on anything that does not please his Lord.

One of the merits of a Muslim's ultimate goal is that it controls the means by which it is achieved. The goal does not serve to justify the means for those who wish to attain it, nor does it allow them to justify any means with a view to achieving that goal. Rather the goal controls the means which, in its turn, is controlled for it. The goal would not be attained by any words or actions unless these are done with sincerity towards Allah and in accordance with the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ).

The early Muslims confined their objectives to seeking only the Pleasure of Allah (SWT). One of them would say: "I will make all my worries, one," that is, my only worry in this life is to please Allah (SWT), the Almighty. Their only concern in this life was to achieve His pleasure. Therefore they overcame any hindrance or obstacle on

[11] Bukhari and Muslim.

the road leading to this exalted aim and dispensed with all their desires and worldly aspirations. Their aim was to achieve all that Allah (SWT) commanded of them. Thus they became the most pious, most knowledgeable and most just of all people. Their Lord, consequently, granted them guidance and support and made them the mightiest of all people.

The majority of present-day Muslims, however, have strayed in choosing and determining their objectives. Some have put the Pleasure of Allah behind them and set off in pursuit of their own worldly desires; paying no attention to anything else.

Some even think that they can have other objectives alongside seeking the pleasure of Allah (SWT). Such people have become, as Allah (SWT) said (which means):
"A man belonging to many partners disputing with one another." [Surah Az-Zumar (39), Ayah 29.]

But Allah (SWT) the Most High is Self-Sufficient : He has no need of an associate. Thus, he who does an action for someone else's sake as well as Allah's (SWT) will be renounced by Allah (SWT) in favour of those whom he has associated with Him.

This is why today's Muslims, despite their large numbers, have become like the foam of a torrential stream. They have fallen into myriad vices. They are divided by whims and heresies. The Muslim nation has become, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said, a large bowl to which all the nations of the world call upon one another.

The situation is very grave. As a result of abandoning the sole objective for which they had been created, Muslims will not only live in humiliation upon this earth, as is the case today. They will also face a greater danger on the Day of Judgement, each in proportion to his negligence of and alienation from the true objective.

Abandoning the Pleasure of Allah (SWT) means nothing other than choosing Allah's (SWT) wrath as an objective. Let people delude themselves as they please. Let them call their erroneous objectives any modern name they like. It will never amount to any more than the wrath of Allah (SWT). Let them call their objective a struggle to achieve true socialism, or dress it with the false glitter of democracy, or capitalism, or Arab nationalism, or secularism. Let them say whatever they please as long as they have rejected the Truth :

"So after the Truth, what else can there be except error?" [Surah Yunus (10), Ayah 32.]

"Those are they who have purchased error at the price of Guidance, and torment at the price of Forgiveness. So how bold they are [for evil deeds which will push them] to the Fire!" [Surah Al-Baqarah (2), Ayah 175.]

"And how bad indeed was that for which they sold their souls, if they but knew!" [Surah Al-Baqarah (2), Ayah 102.]

We therefore warn our people saying to them: return to the right path:
"Answer the call of your Lord." [Surah Ash-Shura (42), Ayah 47.]

Return to the Pleasure of Allah(SWT) let your devotion be sincere and your struggle continuous:

"O our people! Respond [with obedience] to Allah's caller [i.e. Muhammad [pbuh], and believe in him." [Surah Al-Ahqaaf (46), Ayah 31.]

And know that achieving this great and noble goal is extremely easy for those assisted by Allah (SWT), and that the road leading to it is extremely clear for those blessed by Allah's (SWT) Guidance, for He (SWT) ***"...guides unto Himself those who turn to Him in repentance and obedience."*** [Surah Ash-Shura (42), Ayah 13.]

Those who choose to travel this road need only two things to achieve their objectives:

1. Sincerity to Allah, the Almighty by seeking His Pleasure alone, and;

2. Following the example of the Prophet (ﷺ).

l. Sincerity

Allah (SWT), Exalted is He, accepts no work whatsoever, be it great or small, unless it is intended solely for His Pleasure.

On the authority of Abu Hurairah (ra), who said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He, said: 'I am Self-Sufficient. I am in no need of having an associate. Thus he who does an action for someone else's sake as well as Mine will have that action renounced by Me in favour of him whom he associated with Me.'" [12]

A Muslim is required to dedicate all his endeavours to Allah (SWT) in all his actions and words, remembrance and thinking, sleep and waking, worship and daily living, love and hatred, giving and withholding.

"Say [O Muhammad (pbuh)]: 'Verily, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. He has no partner.'" [Surah Al-An'am (6), Ayat 162-163.]

A servant should be sincere to Allah (SWT) in all his activities:

"Say: [O Muhammad (pbuh)]: 'Verily I am commanded to worship Allah (alone) by obeying Him and doing deeds sincerely for Allah's sake only and not to show off, and not to set up rivals with Him in worship;'" [Surah Az-Zumar (39), Ayah 11.]

Sincerity is isolation of the intent in obedience to the Worshipped - Glorified is He - singling Him out alone in worship, restraining the heart from turning towards creation during conduct with the Lord, and cleansing the action from every flaw.

And one who knows the reality of the perfection of the Lord Most High, His Exaltedness, His majesty, His power, His wisdom, His blessings, His shielding, His gentleness, His kindness, His gracefulness, His generosity, and believes that He is:

[12] Muslim and Ibn Maajah.

"the First [nothing is before him] and the Last [nothing is after Him], the Most High [nothing is above Him] and the Most Near [nothing is nearer than Him]." [Surah Al-Hadeed (57), Ayah 3.]

and at the same time know the truth about created beings, namely that they ***"...cannot create [even] a fly, even though they combine together for the purpose! And if the fly should snatch away anything from them, the y would have no power to release it from the fly."*** [Surah Al-Hajj (22). Ayah 73.]

and that they

"...possess neither hurt nor benefit for themselves, and possess no power [of causing] death, nor [of giving] life, nor of raising the dead." [Surah Al-Furqan (25), Ayah 3.]
and that they

"...own not even a qitmeer (the thin membrane over a date-stone.)***"*** [Surah Faatir (35), Ayah 13.]

Those who know all these things cannot possibly dedicate their work to anyone except Allah. How could they possibly attach their hearts to any but Him?

On the authority of Umar bin Al-Khattab (ra), the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Actions are but by intention and every man shall have but that which he intended. Thus he whose migration was for Allah and His Messenger, his migration was for Allah and His Messenger; and he whose migration was to achieve some worldly benefit or to take some woman in marriage, his migration was for that which he migrated." [13]

Indeed, every action not done sincerely for Allah (SWT) is futile and wasted. The greatest works turn into calamity for their doers in both this life and in the next if they are devoid of sincerity to Allah. The prophet (ﷺ) informed us that:

"The first three people against whom Judgement will be pronounced will be a man who has died a martyr. He will be brought forward and Allah will make known to him His favours and he will recognise them. [The Almighty] will say: 'And what did you do about them?' He will say: 'I fought for You until I died a martyr'. He will say: 'You have lied, You did but fight that it might be said [of you], he is courageous. And so it was said.' Then he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into the Hell-Fire.

[Another] will be a man who has studied [religious] knowledge and has taught it and who used to recite the Qur'an. He will be brought forward and Allah will make known to him His favours and he will recognise them. [The Almighty] will say: 'And what did you do about them?' He will say: 'I studied [religious] knowledge and I taught it and I recited the Qur'an for Your Sake'. He will say: 'You have lied, you did but study [religious] knowledge that it might be said [of you], he is a reciter. And so it was said.' Then he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into the Hell-Fire.

[13] Bukhari and Muslim.

[Another] will be a man whom Allah had made rich and to whom He had given all kinds of wealth. He will be brought forward and Allah will make known to him His favours and he will recognise them. [The Almighty] will say: 'And what did you do about them?' He will say: 'I left no path [untrodden] in which You like money to be spent without spending it for Your Sake.' He will say: `You have lied, you did but do so that it might be said [of you], he is open-handed. And so it was said.' Then he will be ordered to be dragged along on his face until he is cast into the Hell-Fire."[14]

This Hadeeth shows us how the greatest and noblest of deeds turn into catastrophe due to the lack of sincerity.

The opposite of sincerity is showing off *(ar-Riyyaa').* It is the practice of performing any of the various forms of worship through words or actions in order to be seen and praised by people. It could take a pure form, as is the case of the hypocrites about whom Allah, the Almighty said:

"And when they stand up to pray, they stand with laziness and to be seen of men." [Surah An-Nisa (4), Ayah 142.]

It could also be by devoting works to Allah as well as to other than Him; or it could be the case where the work starts off by being devoted to Allah alone but later becomes hypocritical, when it is done with the intention of showing off.

Muslims are commanded to struggle against their selves and ensure sincere devotion in every action they undertake and to rid themselves of all forms of showing off. It is wrong to abandon good works for fear of showing off. One should do good deeds and be sincere to Allah at the same time:

"So whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him do righteous work, and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord." [Surah Al-Kahf (18), Ayah 110.]

Sincerity is both necessary and required in order that every soul may rid itself of whims and desires and make its objective whatever Allah (SWT) requires of it.

2. Realising the true following of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Sincerity, as mentioned above, constitutes but one of two conditions for the action to be accepted by Allah, the Almighty. The second condition is to follow the example of the Prophet (ﷺ). Ibn Al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah says about those who observe sincerity in their words and actions and follow in the footsteps of the Prophet (ﷺ): "They are the true people of the saying: ***'You [Alone] we worship'***[15]*.* All their works, words, giving, withholding, loving, hating and apparent and hidden interactions are devoted to Allah alone. They do not seek the reward or thanks of the people, nor do they seek the high status in society. They neither seek to be commended, nor avoid being defamed, because they consider people as the buried dead who can neither benefit nor harm, nor do they have power over life or death, or the raising of the dead."

[14] Muslim, Tirmidhi and An-Nasaa'ee on the authority of Abu Hurairah (ra).

[15] [Surah Al-Fatiha (1), Ayah 5.]

Only those ignorant of their Lord and of the conditions and nature of human kind would seek the pleasure and praise of people and aspire to high position and influence in society. Those who are aware of Man's nature and know Allah, prefer to devote themselves and their actions to seeking Allah's Pleasure and ignore the self-interested reactions of other people. All their acts of worship are concordant with Allah's commands and what He likes and dislikes. This is the type of work which Allah accepts.

Allah, Exalted is He, says (which means):

"Blessed be He in Whose Hand is the Dominion, and He is Able to do all things. Who has created death and life that He may test you which of you is best in deed." [Surah Al-Mulk (67), Ayah 1-2.]

He also says (which means):

"Lo! We have placed all that is in the earth as an ornament thereof that we may try them; which of them is best in conduct." [Surah Al-Kahf (18), Ayah 7.]

Al-Fudhayl bin ‘Iyyaad said: "The excellent deed is that which is the most sincere and the most correct." He was then asked: "How is that, O Abul - Hasan?" He said: "The deed which is sincere but not correct will not be accepted. Likewise, the deed which is correct but not sincere will not be accepted, until it is both sincere and correct." The sincere deed is that which is intended for Allah's Pleasure alone; the correct deed is that which follows the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ). This is exactly what Allah (SWT) says in the following verses (which means):

“And whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him do righteous work, and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord.” [Surah Al-Kahf (18), Ayah 110.]

and also

"And who can be better in religion than one who submits his face (himself) to Allah while doing good." [Surah An-Nisa (4), Ayah 125.]

Any work which does not follow these criteria will be rejected, much as he is in need of its acceptance. It is related by 'A'isha (raa) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: *"Any deed which is not in agreement with our teachings will be rejected."* [16]

And any deed which does not follow the example of the Prophet (ﷺ) only serves to increase the distance between the worshipper and his Lord. For Allah (SWT) can be worshipped only in the way that He had commanded, not in accordance with someone's whims and opinions.

Realising the true following of the Prophet (ﷺ) is the evidence a servant presents to prove his true love for Allah, and by which he can acquire Allah's love:

"Say [O Muhammad to Mankind]: `If you [really] love Allah, then follow me. Allah will love you and forgive you your sins." [Surah Ale-Imran (3), Ayah 31.]

[16] Bukhari and Muslim.

The true following of the Prophet ﷺ can only be achieved if a Muslim rejects innovations and customary practices which people have introduced into religion. A Muslim must completely adhere to the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ in his creed and practices, piety and conduct, his judgement and adjudications, his war and peace, his daily life and striving, his speech and silence, his remembrance and thoughts and his sleep and waking. Allah, Exalted is He, says (which means):

"Indeed in the Messenger of Allah [Muhammad ﷺ] you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in [the Meeting with] Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much." [Surah Al-Ahzaab (33), Ayah 21.]

"And whatsoever the Messenger [Muhammad ﷺ] gives you, take it. And whatsoever he forbids, abstain [from it]. [Surah Al-Hashr (59), Ayah 7.]

"O you who believe! Obey Allah and His Messenger, and turn not away ¸from him while You are hearing." [Surah Al-Anfal (8), Ayah 20.]

Obedience to the Prophet ﷺ is associated with obedience to Allah in forty different instances in the Qur'an.

All the paths are blocked for Man except for those Muslims who follow in the footsteps of the Prophet ﷺ. For such true followers, all the roads of good are open.

Instances of contradicting the true following of the Prophet ﷺ are numerous. Some of these instances are as follows:

l. Adopting doctrines and theories and trying to reshape Islam to suit themselves.

2. Considering men to be a criterion by which to judge the *Shari'ah* and a measure of truth; and referring to them instead of referring to *Shari'ah.*

3. Putting words and actions before the Qur'an and the Sunnah. ***"O you who believe! Be not forward in the presence of Allah and His Messenger. O you who believe! Lift not your voices above the voice of the Prophet."*** [Surah Al-Hujuraat (49), Ayat 1-2.]

4. Following the example of the Prophet ﷺ only in certain aspects of Shari'ah and neglecting others. An instance of this is to follow the Prophet's example in ways of praying and fasting, for example, and not in ways of rule and government. Allah, Exalted is He, says: ***"Do you believe you in part of the scripture and disbelieve in part thereof?"*** [Surah Al-Baqarah (2), Ayah 85.]

Attaining true following is the sole guarantee of rectification on the road of guidance and success and avoidance of wrong and stray roads.

"And this is My Straight Path, so follow it. Follow not other ways, lest you be parted from His Way." [Surah Al-An'am (6), Ayah 154.]

In the past the Muslim nation became divided and dispersed due to the failure to act according to the Sunnah. Furthermore, the appearance of invention in religion and heresies which tear our people apart, ultimately leading seventy-two sects to the Hell-Fire are due to the absence of such true following. True guidance and salvation are only achieved through the following of the Prophet ﷺ alone. Every heresy and

innovation in religious matters is ugly. Its initiators are hated, their work is rejected, and their assistance is cut off.

This, Muslim brothers, is your objective which you should do your best to achieve. The means to this are to dedicate devotion to Allah alone with complete sincerity and to strive to attain the true following of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Were you to strive to this end and travel this path, you must expect to live among people as a stranger because most of them have lost the true path. It is inevitable for the people of truth to feel estranged in the midst of people of falsehood like the estrangement of light in complete darkness. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "*Islam began as something strange and will be strange once again: may felicity be the lot of the estranged (its followers).*"[17]

People of this life compete for money and influence, fame and power. They consider this world their only abode and the end of their journey. It is their sole objective which they strive hard to attain. As for the people of the Hereafter, they are strangers in this life. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: *"Be in the world as though you were a stranger or a wayfarer."* [18] The heart of a stranger or wayfarer can hardly pay attention to anything other than his home and final destination.

"For Al-Muttaqun (the pious), there are Gardens with their Lord, underneath which rivers flow. Therein (is their) eternal (home)...". [Surah Ale-Imran (3), Ayah 15.]

[17] Muslim.
[18] Bukhari on the authority of Abdullah bin Umar (ra).

Part Two: Our ‘Aqeedah

Our ‘Aqeedah is that of as-Salaf-as-Salih, in general and in detail.

While the objective of a Muslim is his Qiblah (or direction) towards which he turns his face in any action, word or intention; his *‘Aqeedah* is the engine that drives him from inside himself towards that objective. It urges him to move forward and prevents him from retreating or quitting.

Whenever *‘Aqeedah* regresses or its influence wavers in the heart, attempts to work righteousness come to an end or at least suffer a relapse. The servant, as a result, moves away from his objective and sets about doing things which keep him away from attaining it. For a servant is either travelling towards Allah, driven forward by faith, or away from Him if he is tempted away by the devils.

‘Aqeedah is neither a claim nor a set of linguistic issues in which only linguists and those skilled in rhetoric excel. Paying lip service to it, talking about it in an ornate style, writing pages and even volumes about it is not sufficient, indeed it is futile and of no avail.

‘Aqeedah is certainly which takes root in the heart and is immediately reflected in the actions of the body. The Qur’an is extremely careful to emphasise this fact by reiterating the connection between faith and good conduct in so many contexts. This insistence clearly points to the fact that *‘Aqeedah* must be associated with good conduct, for good conduct is a proof of the presence of *‘Aqeedah* in the heart.

To prove that the claim of *Iman* (faith) is genuine, the effect of *‘Aqeedah* on the actions of the body must materialise; otherwise, this claim remains unfounded:

Verily, those who believe [in the Oneness of Allah, and in His Messenger Muhammad (Peace be upon him) including all obligations ordered by Islam] and do righteous good deeds, they are the best of creatures. [Surah Al-Bayyinah (98), Ayah 7.]

"But as for him who believes and works righteousness, he shall have the best reward (Paradise), "[Surah Al-Kahf (18), Ayah 88.]

Whosoever believed in Allah and the Last Day, and worked righteousness, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. [Surah Al-Ma’idah (5), Ayah 69.]

Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and do righteous good deeds shall have their reward with their Lord, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. [Surah Al-Baqarah (2), Ayah 62.]

Whosoever believes and does righteous good deeds, upon such shall come no fear, nor shall they grieve. [Surah Al-An’am (6), Ayah 48.]

And verily, I am indeed Forgiving to him who repents, believes (in My Oneness, and associates none in worship with Me) and does righteous good deeds, and then remains constant in doing them, (till his death). [Surah Ta-Ha (20), Ayah 82.]

Except those who repent and believe (in the Oneness of Allah and His Messenger Muhammad ﷺ), and work righteousness. Such will enter Paradise and they will not be wronged in aught. [Surah Maryam (19), Ayah 60.]

But as for him who repented (from polytheism and sins, etc.), believed (in the Oneness of Allah, and in His Messenger Muhammad SAW), and did righteous deeds (in the life of this world), then he will be among those who are successful. [Surah Al-Qasas (28), Ayah 67.]

And it is not your wealth, nor your children that bring you nearer to Us (i.e. pleases Allah), but only he (will please Us) who believes (in the Islamic Monotheism), and does righteous deeds; as for such, there will be twofold reward for what they did, and they will reside in the high dwellings (Paradise) in peace and security. [Surah Saba (34), Ayah 37.]

And give glad tidings to those who believe and do righteous good deeds, that for them will be Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise). [Surah Al-Baqarah (2), Ayah 25.]

And those who believe and do righteous good deeds, they are the dwellers of Paradise, they will dwell therein forever. [Surah Al-Baqarah (2), Ayah 82.]

The mosques of Allah shall be maintained only by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, offer prayers perfectly, and give Zakah and fear none but Allah. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance. [Surah At-Taubah (9), Ayah 18.]

What has Allah to do by punishing you if you thanked [Him] and believed [in Him]? And Allah is ever All-Appreciative [of good], All-Knowing. [Surah An-Nisa (4), Ayah 147.]

These are explicit indications which recur in many verses of the Qur'an in such a way that only those with a blurred vision or blind hearts would ignore them:

"Verily, it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts which are in the breasts that grow blind." [Surah Al-Hajj (22), Ayah 46.]

The Prophet's ﷺ statements are also replete with indications to the effect that good conduct is part and parcel of *Iman.* The Prophet ﷺ said:

"Faith (or Iman) has over seventy branches; the most excellent of which is the declaration that there is no god worthy of worship but Allah, and the humblest of which is the removal of what is injurious from the road; and modesty is a branch of faith." [19]

"Whoever amongst you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand; if he is not able to do so then with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart, and that is the weakest form of faith." [20]

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[19] Muslim.
[20] Muslim, on the authority of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudree.

"…He who strove against them with his hand was a believer. He who strove against them with his heart was a believer, and he who strove against them with his tongue was a believer, and beyond that there is no faith even to the extent of a mustard seed." [21]

Not everyone who claims to have *Iman* with the tongue is sincere. Such a claim is false unless the signs if *Iman* are evident. The difference between hollow words and true belief is that between East and West. Let us present two chapters of two generations of our *Ummah*: the generation of the Sahabah, the best of generations, and that of the present time.

The generation of the Sahabah on which we are trying to model a similar generation in beliefs and practice was a generation which the Islamic *'Aqeedah* had rescued from the claws of Jaahiliyyah, cleansed from the squalor of Shirk and instilled in their hearts the truth of faith in order to illuminate their lives with the light of Tawheed.

'Aqeedah alone was the decisive factor in forming this generation, and moulding the character of its members. We would like to take a closer look at the different aspects through which this *'Aqeedah* manifested itself and see how it affected their lives. There are so many examples to survey that we do not know which one to choose. Shall we talk about the Muhaajiroon or the Ansaar? The elderly, the young or the children? The men or the women? Shall we talk about them whilst they were in prosperity or in adversity?

Shall we talk about them as horsemen by the day or as monks by night? Shall we talk about selling lives (to Allah) or the sacrifice of wealth? Or shall we talk about the light of obedience or the truthfulness of repentance?

In each of these illustrations – without exception – evidences and manifestations of true *Iman* sparkle, adorn with light and brightness. They dazzle the onlooker and make him wonder and ask: "What is it that took all these out – with such speed – from darkness to light, and made them the best o generations?"

We will wander in the vastness of these scenes, listening and observing…

This is Bilal defying Umayyah bin Khalaf, his master, saying *'Ahad, Ahad,'* (He, Allah, is one), despite the burning sand under his back and the heavy stone on his chest. And this is Khabbab adhering faithfully to the religion of Allah despite being tortured by red hot iron being applied to every part of his body. And this is the family of Yasir being tortured, and Sumayyah killed, but yet their *Iman* did not weaken; they steadfastly believed in the promise of the Prophet (ﷺ): *"Be patient and endure, O family of Yasir, for Paradise awaits you."*

Witness the Muhaajiroon who forsook their wives, children and possessions, and crossed the desert from Makkah to Madeenah with no provisions apart from their faith, emigrating to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ).

And look at Abu 'Ubaydah slaying his father on the day of the Battle of Badr, And Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq almost killing his own son; and Mus'ab killing his own brother, 'Ubayd bin 'Umair.

[21] Muslim.

Let us go back a little and see the Ansaar reaching out their hands with a pledge of allegiance to the Prophet (ﷺ) on the night of al-'Aqabah. They knew full well that the Arabs would unite against them and attack them from all directions and that the best of their men would be killed as a result of this. Yet they considered their new allegiance profitable and swore to fulfil their promises whatever happened to them.

Let us see them sharing their homes, money and possessions with their migrating brothers, the Muhaajiroon and, as Allah (SWT) said about them (which means):

"Love those who emigrate to them, and have no jealousy in their breasts for that which they have been given (from the booty of Bani an-Nadir), but give them (emigrants) preference over themselves even though they were in need of that." [Surah Al-Hashr (59), Ayah 9.]

Let us listen to them on the day of the Battle of Badr, saying to the Prophet (ﷺ): *"Go forth, O Messenger of Allah, to your desired destination, for we are with you. We swear by Him who sent you with the Truth that [even] you decided to cross this sea, we would all follow you into it, not a single man from us will fall behind. Go forth with the blessing of Allah."*

And here they are on the day of the Battle of Uhud, defending the Prophet (ﷺ), and seven of them were martyred in the process. And on the day of the Battle of Hunayn, when 12,000 fighters turned away from Prophet (ﷺ), 80 of the Ansaar rushed to the rescue and clenched victory from the tribe of Hawazin and gathered the booty. The Prophet (ﷺ) then divided the booty among the members other than the Ansaar, giving it to the first to flee and the last to return: those whose hearts have been inclined towards Islam. The Ansaar then asked the Prophet (ﷺ): *"What is our portion, O Messenger of Allah?"* He (ﷺ) said: *"Are you not satisfied that others return home with [the booty of] sheep and camels, while you return with the Messenger of Allah?"* They wept and said: *"We are pleased with the Messenger of Allah as a share and portion."*[22]

Let us return to Madeenah, to see Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq donating all his money to equip the Muslim army, leaving for his children nothing other than Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ). And this is 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab giving half his fortune, and Uthman equipping the whole army at his own expense.

Let us stand behind the trench, when the Ahzaab (the Confederates) besiege Madeenah for a month until ***"the eyes grew wild and hearts reached to the throats.",***[23] and suddenly the faithful, driven by the power of *Iman,* cried out: ***"This is that which Allah and His Messenger had promised us."*** [Surah Al-Ahzaab (33), Ayah 22.]

Watch with admiration the thousands of believers who marched out towards Tabuk with the Prophet (ﷺ) in the year of difficulty and distress ('Usrah), leaving behind the comfort of their homes and the ripe fruits, crossing the barren desert with

[22] Bukhari.

[23] Surah Al-Ahzaab (33), Ayah 10.

no more than meagre ration of water and dry dates, happy to accompany the beloved Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

Now let us return to Madeenah and weep along with those who did not find anything to spend [on *Jihad*], nor could Prophet (ﷺ) provide them with any mounts:

"They turned back, while their eyes were overflowing with tears for sorrow that they could not find anything to spend." [Surah At-Taubah (9), Ayah 92.]

Let us search through the ranks waiting to meet the enemy on the day of the Battle of Uhud. Hiding among them we find 'Umair bin Abi Waqqaas, keeping out of sight of the Prophet (ﷺ) lest the Prophet (ﷺ) would see him and send him back because of his tender age.

Let us walk in the streets of Madeenah, awash with spilled alcohol immediately after the revelation of the command to forbid its consumption:

"O you who believe! Intoxicants[24], gambling, al-ansab[25], and al-azlam[26] are an abomination of Shaitan's (Satan) handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful. Shaitan (Satan) wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you by means of intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and from As-Salat (the prayer). So, will you not then abstain?" [Surah Al-Ma'idah (5), Ayah 91.]

Let us listen to al-Khansaa' on the day of the Battle of Qaadisiyyah when her four sons were martyred: *"Praise be to Allah who blessed me with the honour of their killing."* It was she who said before embracing Islam in a verse of poetry,

"Were it not for the many mourners around me,
I would have killed myself."

And these are the Sahabiyat covering their faces because the Qur'an commanded them to:

"Draw their veils over their juyubihinna[Bodies, necks, bosoms and so on]***,"*** [Surah An-Nur (24), Ayah 31.]

And here is a woman from the tribe of Bani Dinar who, having been told the deaths of her husband, father and brother in the Battle of Uhud, said: *"How did the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) fare?"* The answer was that he fared well. When she saw him [alive] she said: *"Every catastrophe, compared to your well being, is easy to bear."*

And we see al-Ghamidiyyah who committed adultery and, although no-one found out about it and Allah protected her, she insisted on confessing her sin and placing herself between the hands of the Prophet (ﷺ), pleading with him to purify her

[24] Including all kinds of alcoholic drinks.
[25] Stone altars whereupon sacrifices are slaughtered on certain occasions in the name of idols, jinn, angels, saints, and so on, in order to honour them or to expect some benefit from them.
[26] Divining arrows used for seeking luck or decision.

through stoning. She sacrificed herself to please her Lord and to undergo a repentance so pure that it would suffice to grant Allah's forgiveness to seventy of the people of Madeenah.

And here is the noble companion Abu Dharr who placed his cheek on the ground and insisted on Bilal to step on his other cheek, in repentance for having sinned against him by calling him: *"O son of a black woman!"*

Standing before all these, and many other examples of the greatness of the first generation of Muslims, all we can say is to repeat what Allah said in the Qur'an (which means):

Muhammad (ﷺ) is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and falling down prostrate (in prayer), seeking Bounty from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure. The mark of them (i.e. of their Faith) is on their faces (foreheads) from the traces of (their) prostration (during prayers). This is their description in the Taurat (Torah). But their description in the Injeel (Gospel) is like a (sown) seed which sends forth its shoot, then makes it strong, it then becomes thick, and it stands straight on its stem, delighting the sowers that He may enrage the disbelievers with them. Allah has promised those among them who believe (i.e. all those who follow Islamic Monotheism, the religion of Prophet Muhammad SAW till the Day of Resurrection) and do righteous good deeds, forgiveness and a mighty reward." [Surah Al-Fath (48), Ayah 29.]

This was a page of the past, and it is rather hard for us to turn it over and be faced with that of the present. We leave it reluctantly and meet the present unwillingly. We look at our reality to find darkness everywhere; people's faith weak and shaky. Our present situation requires no elaboration, for we all see it and live its tragic circumstances. It is agonising to see our *Ummah* disintegrating, its *'Aqeedah* oscillating between Irjaa' and Takfeer and obsessed by heresy, whims and superstitions. Our rulers are openly and obnoxiously allied to either the infidel West or the atheist East, reserving all their love for the Jews and the Christians and directing all their hatred and enmity towards Islam and the Muslims. They have abandoned the laws of Allah and substituted man-made laws with His *Shari'ah*, and yet they claim to be Muslims; they are supported in this profanity by corrupt *Ulama* who confer on them such titles as "Khalifah" and "One who rules by Allah's commandments."

The Muslim people are forced to pledge their allegiance to the rulers, to approve their infidelity and go for judgement to their laws. Secularism has become a new religion, spreading amongst the people, propagated by the media and inculcated by the educational systems in the minds of the young. This new creed calls for the separation of religion and politics; that the mosque is for Allah and legislation is for the rulers. The corrupt *Ulama* teach people the creed of Irjaa'; namely that the acts are not required as long as "*Iman* is in the heart" and that all the people are believers, including the rulers. Sufiism, Baha'ism, Qadianiyya, Nusairiyyah and other misguided creeds are given free rein to spread their venom into the true *'Aqeedah* and propagate superstitions and heresy. On the other hand, as a chaotic response, the sect of Khawaarij with its various schools of thought, emerges anew with new vitality to brand all Muslims with disbelief.

We search amongst all these misguided sects for the *'Aqeedah* of our meritorious predecessors and can hardly find it. For it disappeared from the hearts and minds leaving no trace in the lives of societies or individuals, except him on whom our Lord has bestowed His Mercy, and they are very few!

All the examples we see around us are clear evidence that true belief is absent from our community and that *'Aqeedah* has lost its way in the hearts of our people, or at most occupies a small place therein. This is today's page bewailing the deplorable state of affairs to which we have been reduced. The darkness of today's page obscures the light we momentarily enjoyed while surveying our glorious past and the best generation of our *Ummah*.

Despite the wild, unbridgeable, gulf between the present and the past and the big differences between these two generations, they both claim to be true believers. True faith is a banner raised by both generations. One generation raised it with sincerity and conducted itself and its affairs in accordance with tenets of true faith. The other generation raises it as an inheritance and a tradition, but acts in a such a way as to conceal its true nature.

So, have we learned the lesson that an attestation of faith is of no avail if it is not accompanied with corresponding conduct and sacrifices? May Allah have mercy on Imam ash-Shafi'ee who said: "*If people were to study Surah al-'Asr, it would be sufficient for them."* Allah says in this Surah (which means):

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. By al-'Asr (the Time). Verily! Man is in loss, except those who believe, and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth and exhort one another to patience." [Surah Al-'Asr (103).]

We talk about our *'Aqeedah,* that of at-Tawheed. The *'Aqeedah* of the Prophets and Messengers from Adam to Muhammad ﷺ. The *'Aqeedah* of our meritorious predecessors, As-Salaf-us-Salih' and of those who followed in righteousness from amongst the Muslim scholars and the lay-people alike. We talk about our *'Aqeedah* not for the sake of theological arguments or philosophical debates, but to rectify the beliefs of our *Ummah* and cleanse their *'Aqeedah* of the heresies and errors that have been planted.

We reiterate this so that it may take root in the hearts and act in accordance with its obligations. We declare before Allah our innocence from any heresy contradicting the *'Aqeedah* of our meritorious predecessors and we seek His assistance to prevent our actions from contradicting our words.

This is Our *'Aqeedah*

- Iman is a proclamation with the tongue, action with the limbs and belief with the heart. Iman increases with acts of obedience and decreases with acts of disobedience, and accordingly, believers are of varying levels.

- Sins and acts of disobedience diminish Iman but do not invalidate its essence, while greater disbelief *(al-Kufr al-Akbar)* completely eradicates it.

- *Kufr* (disbelief) is of two types: major (*akbar*) and minor (*asghar*). The first excludes one completely from the fold of Islam, thus branding him a disbeliever. The second is an act of disobedience given an exaggerated name for purposes of warning and repelling. The same categories of 'major' and 'minor' equally apply to *Shirk* (polytheism), *Nifaaq* (hypocrisy), *Dhulm* (oppression), and *Fisq* (evil-doing).

- A Muslim does not become a *kaafir* (disbeliever) by committing acts of disobedience, even if they were many and he did not repent from them, as long as he does not approve of them with his heart. The *Faasiq* who believes in the prohibition of the sins and vices he commits is not considered a *kaafir*, even if he insists on continuing with his wrong actions and does not repent and dies on such a state of affairs. His fate in the Hereafter is left to Allah who may forgive him or may punish him in the Hell-Fire for a time then take him out of it into Paradise.

- When Islam and Iman are mentioned together, the former means believing with the heart and the latter refers to the physical conduct. When mentioned seperately they both refer to the *Deen* of Islam as a whole.

- We do not judge as *Kaafir* someone who commits acts of *'kufr'* (disbelief) unless clear, undisputed evidence has been established against him by those qualified to do so, so that it would become clear to us that he has comitted such acts knowingly, intentionally and by his own free will.

- We believe that Allah, Exalted is He, is the Creator and Provider, the Life-Giver and Life-Taker, the Resurrector, the Inheritor, the Doer of all good and harm. We seek no lord besides Him, ***"Say: 'Shall I seek a Lord other than Allah, while He is the Lord of all things?' "*** [al-An'am (6), Ayah 164.]

- He is Glorified and High, Exalted above having a consort, son, partner or rival, ***"Say: 'He is Allah, (the) One. Allah as-Samad[27]. He begets not nor is He begotten; and there is none comparable unto Him."*** [Surah al-Ikhlaas (112).]

- Allah, Exalted is He, is rightly worshipped and the One worthy of worship. His slaves should direct everything to Allah Alone: fear, hope, rememberance, supplication, love and submission; assistance and salvation; entreaty; reliance; sacrifices; vows and all other forms of worship.

- We seek blessings from neither trees, nor stones, nor graves. We entreat Allah only by using one of His Names or Attributes, through good works we have done or through the supplication of a living, meritorious person. We neither walk around a grave seeking blessings from the dead, nor present sacrifices to a Jinn or to a dead saint, nor make a vow anyone apart from Allah. Whoever does one of these things has indeed committed *Shirk*.

- We accept no source of laws or judgements other than Allah, as we accept no other Lord beside Him. Since Allah is the Creator, He has the sovereignty, and thus rules, commands, prohibits, judges and legislates. Allah is the All-Knower, All-Aware.

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[27] As-Samad: *The Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need; He neither eats nor drinks.*

- Whoever legislates different laws to those of Allah and replaces His Laws with others, has gone against Allah's sovereignty. Such a person has made himself a partner and equal in jurisdiction with Allah, thus (he has) stepped outside the circle of Islam. If this person is a ruler, he should therefore be rebelled against and deposed.

- We confirm all of Allah's Names and Attributes which Allah has stated in His Book (the Qur'an) or mentioned through His Messenger Muhammad ﷺ without changing them or ignoring them completely or twisting their meanings or giving resemblance to any of the created things. We do not even claim knowledge of what His Attributes are like, because ***"There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer."*** [Surah Ash-Shura (42), Ayah 11.]

  There is none like Him, whether in His Being, His Names, His Attributes or Actions.

- We confirm those Attributes of Allah which He Confirmed for Himself and which His Messenger Muhammad ﷺconfirmed for Him, such as Knowledge, Capability, Hearing, Seeing, the Face, Hands and other Attributes which are not like any of those of His creatures.

- We say as our Lord said (which means):
  "The Most Beneficent (Allah) rose over the [mighty] Throne." [Surah Ta-Ha (20), Ayah 5.]

  Allah is therefore present on His Throne, over and above His creation. The fact that He is present over the Throne is known, but the manner of it is not. Believing in it is an obligation (*wajib*), and asking about such a manner is an innovation in religion (*bid'ah*).

- Allah does whatever He wills, whenever He wills and in the manner He wills. He delights, laughs, loves, hates, shows approval and wrath (in a manner that suits His Majesty), as has been stated in the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions. In His actions He is like none of His creation and none from mortals knows how those actions take form.

- The Qur'an is the true uncreated word of Allah, not similar in any way to the speech of Mankind; it was spoken by Him in a way that we know nothing about.

- We believe in the Angels, the Prophets and the Messengers.

- We believe in the books revealed to the Messengers and we make no distinction between any of His Messengers.

- We believe that Muhammad ﷺ is the servant of Allah and His Messenger; he is the best and leader of all Mankind, the seal of all the Prophets and the leader of the pious.

- We believe that Muhammad ﷺ was taken by night in his bodily form while awake from al-Haram mosque [in Makkah] to al-Aqsaa mosque [in Jerusalem], and ascended through the heavens to whatever heights Allah willed for him.

- We have no doubt that the awaited Mahdee (or rightly-guided Imam) will come forth from among the *Ummah* of the Prophet ﷺ at the end of time (on earth).

- We believe in the Signs of the Hour. The appearance of ad-Dajjal (false Messiah, or Antichrist). The descent from heaven of 'Isa, son of Mary. The sun rising from the West. The emergence of the Beast from the earth. And other signs mentioned in the Qur'an and the authentic Hadeeth of the Prophet.

- We believe in the questioning in the grave by the two angels. Munkar and Nakeer, about one's Lord, one's religion and the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

- We believe in the punishment in the grave, may Allah save us from it, for those who deserve it. The grave is either one of the meadows of Paradise or one of the pits of the Hell-Fire, and each servant gets what he deserves.

- We believe in the resurrection of Mankind from the graves on the Day of Judgement to be set before Allah. We believe in the Reckoning, the reading of the book (account of deeds), the Scale (on which the deeds will be weighed), as-Sirat (the bridge set over Hell-Fire), and punishment and reward.

- We believe that the Intercession which the Prophet (ﷺ) reserved for his *Ummah* on the Day of Judgement is true.

- We believe in Al-Hawd, the Pool which Allah will grant the Prophet (ﷺ)as an honour to quench the thirst of his *Ummah* on the Day of Judgement.

- We believe that Paradise and Hell are both true. They are created and will never vanish.

- We believe that the people of Paradise will see their Lord directly, without their vision being all-encompassing and without the manner of their vision being known. As Allah, Exalted is He, said (which means):
  "Some faces that Day will be shining and radiant, looking at their Lord (Allah)." [Surah Al-Qiyaamah (75), Ayah 22-23.]

- We believe in al-Qadar (Divine Decree), the good of it and the bad of it, and say as Allah said (which means):
  "Say: All things are from Allah." [Surah An-Nisa (4), Ayah 78.]

  Good and evil are therefore both from Allah's Decree. Everything in the universe occurs by His Will.

- We believe Allah, Exalted is He, does not command His slaves to be disbelievers or to be disobedient, nor is He pleased with them being so:
  "He likes not disbelief for His slaves." [Surah Az-Zumar (39), Ayah 7.]

  And if He, Exalted is He, preordains infidelity for the infidel, He does so for reasons only He knows: out of justice from Allah, transgression from the servant against his own soul, and as a punishment for previous sins he had committed: ***"Whatever of good reaches you (is from Allah), but whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourself."*** [Surah An-Nisa (4), Ayah 79.]

  All this happens in accordance with Allah's Will. Whatever Allah wills will be, and whatever He does not will, will not be. And Allah is never unjust to any of His servants:

"Surely, Allah wrongs not even of the weight of an atom (or small ant)." [Surah An-Nisa (4), Ayah 40.]

- We believe Allah created the actions of His slaves: ***"Allah has created you and what you make."*** [Surah As-Saaffaat (37), Ayah 96.] and the slaves execute their own actions in reality, not metaphorically.

- We love the companions of the Prophet ﷺ, may Allah be pleased with them all; they are the best of all generations. We remember their merits, hold them in high esteem and display *Walaa'* to them. We also abstain from the things they disagreed upon. Love of them is part of Islam, part of *Iman* and part of *Ihsan* (excellent behaviour). Hatred of them is disbelief and hypocrisy.

- We confirm the Caliphate first to Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq, due to his excellence and superiority over the rest of the *Ummah*; then to 'Umar bin al-Khattab; then to 'Uthman bin 'Affan; then to 'Ali bin Abee Taalib, may Allah be pleased with them all. They are the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and upright leaders about whom the Prophet ﷺ said: *"So you must keep to my Sunnah and to the Sunnah of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs; cling to it stubbornly."*[28]

- The scholars of *as-Salaf* (the first generation of this *Ummah* and those who followed in their footsteps) must only be spoken about in the best way. Anyone who speaks ill of them is surely not on the right path.

This is our *'Aqeedah* which is more precious to us than our own lives. It has stood the test of time and remained firm for fourteen centuries. It will continue to remain so in the face of all the onslaughts of the disbelievers, the spreading of doubt by the hypocrites and the innovations of the heretics. It has also been steadfast despite the remiss and negligence of many Muslims.

The survival and endurance of our *'Aqeedah* is in itself proof that is from Allah, the Mighty and Exalted. All creeds have become extinct and all religions have been altered, but Islam alone remained pure and true because it is the only Truth which cannot be affected by falsehood or shaken by doubt. Allah, Exalted is He, says (which means):

"Verily We: it is We Who have sent down adh-Dhikr [the Qur'an] and surely We will guard it [from corruption]." [Surah Al-Hijr (15), Ayah 9.]

It is a creed which provides us with a strong, correct base from which we can go forth towards our objective; confident that Allah Alone is the true God worthy of worship. This is so because He is the Owner who rules with authority in what He owns and because He has all the Attributes of perfection. Behind or above Him there are no objectives for us, nor is there any objective greater than this, for He is the Greatest.

It is a creed which gives total authority to Allah, makes attesting and submitting to this authority one of the conditions of *Iman*, and makes adhering to one of its prerequisites and a sign of its sincerity:

[28] Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi on the authority of Abu Najeeh al-'Irbaadh bin Saariyah. (Hadeeth Hasan Sahih).

"It is not befitting for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His messenger have decreed a matter that they should have an option in their decision." [Surah Al-Ahzaab (33), Ayah 36.]

"But no, by your Lord, they can have no faith, until they make you (Muhammad ﷺ) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept them with full submission." [Surah An-Nisa (4), Ayah 65.]

It is a creed which refers all matters, even at times of disagreement, to Allah and His Messenger:

"O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those of you [Muslims] who are in authority; and if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination." [Surah An-Nisa (4), Ayah 59.]

Our *'Aqeedah* thus unifies understanding and eliminates any possibility of discord. It provides us with the objective and the path, thereby unifying the believers and placing them on the same path. One can see them seeking the same objective despite their being of different countries, nationalities and colours.

Our *'Aqeedah* is a creed which sets up the individual as a watchful guardian over his own conduct in the world, responsible and accountable for it. For he knows that on the Day of Judgement it will be said to him (which means):

"Read your book, your soul is sufficient as a reckoner against you this Day." [Surah Al-Israa' (17), Ayah 14.]

By so doing, this *'Aqeedah* instils in the heart of the believer that which prevents him from disobeying the commands of Allah and His laws and judgement. It also helps him return to the right path if he wanders away from it or oversteps the limits. It also drives him to continual and sustained striving in the way of Allah and endeavour to attain His pleasure.

This is the great difference between our *'Aqeedah* and all the other ideologies and philosophies, and this is what makes it rise above them all. Islam raises this *'Aqeedah* up to a high position which all the other doctrines and ideologies eagerly wish to attain. And due to the huge gulf between their creeds and our *'Aqeedah*, they do not even cherish the hope of approaching its pinnacle, let alone reach it.

The creed of Islam gives its followers certainty that Allah (SWT) is with them, hearing and seeing, and that He knows what their breasts conceal and that He will resurrect them on the Day of Reckoning for Judgement and reward or punishment.

Saa'saa' bin Mu'aawiyyah came to the Prophet ﷺ and recited to him the following ayah (which means):

"So whosoever does good equal to an atom's weight will see it then; and whosoever does evil equal to an atom's weight will see it then." [Surah Az-Zalzalah (98), Ayat 7-8.]

To this the Prophet (ﷺ) said: *'It is enough for me not to listen to any other [verse] than this.'* [29]

Ours is an *'Aqeedah* which makes our Walaa, directed entirely to Allah, His Messenger and the believers. Apart from these, all others are looked upon with enmity and hatred subject to the degree of their remoteness from and opposition to Allah. It is an *'Aqeedah* which brings its followers out of the narrowness and insignificance of the life of this world to the expense and splendour of the hereafter. People of this *'Aqeedah* are always seen walking on the ground but their hearts are fixed on Paradise; they take their provisions for both this life and the next. They do not strive for a transient, base life, for they want to take from it only what will help them on their journey towards Allah and the Next Life:

"And the life of this world in nothing but play and amusement. But far better is the abode of the hereafter for those who keep their duty (to Allah). Will you not then understand?" [Surah Al-An'am (6), Ayah 32.]

"And Allah is better [as regards reward in comparison to your reward], and more lasting [as regards punishment in comparison to your punishment]." [Surah Ta-Ha (20), Ayah 73.]

It is an *'Aqeedah* which makes those who hold fast to it lead an honourable life, knowing no humiliation or disgrace. Though their condition swings between ease and hardship, victory and defeat, nothing affects their lofty and dignified life through their faith, for they draw their dignity and honour from their Lord Who is:

"the Most High, the Most Great." [Surah Al-Baqarah (2), Ayah 255.]

and

"the All-Mighty, the All-Wise." [Surah As-Saff (61), Ayah 1.]

They do not draw honour from wealth or influence, nor any other power on this earth. In fact, they are a living image and the real encapsulation of the following verses:

"But honour belongs to Allah, His Messenger and to the believers." [Surah Al-Munafiqoon (63), Ayah 8.]

"So do not become weak [against your enemy] nor be sad, as you will be superior [in victory] if you are indeed [true] believers." [Surah Ale-Imran (3), Ayah 139.]

It is an *'Aqeedah* which gives its followers confidence and peace of mind in this world and peace and glad tidings in the Hereafter. It also makes them eager to meet with their Lord, savouring, for His sake, all the difficulties and hardships.

[29] Related by Imam Ahmad. An-Nasaa'ee also relates the same account in At-Tafseer.

Part Three: Our Understanding

We hope to understand Islam in its entirety in exactly the same way in which it was understood by the leading trustworthy scholars of the Ummah, who follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) and that of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs (May Allah be pleased with them).

We would like our being called `Muslims' to suffice, indicating that we understand Islam as understood by the scholars of our *Ummah* and our meritorious predecessors. However, the word `Muslim' is no longer enough to express what we actually want. In this day and age, the word `Muslim' no longer indicates how a 'Muslim' person understands his religion, nor even to know what Islam is!!

Indeed, it has become commonplace these days to find a `socialist Muslim', a `liberal Muslim', a `progressive Muslim', a `secular Muslim', a Muslim who does not approve of ruling in accordance with *Shari'ah* or is not happy with some of its penal laws, and others who do not believe in *Hisbah*[30] and *Jihad.*

This is a clear indication that Muslims no longer understand Islam as was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). For numerous sinful forces have, over many centuries, been busy at work, intent on distorting Muslims' understanding of their religion. Their aim is to make the Muslims' confidence in Islam loose and shaky. They also want to bring Muslims out of the fold of *Iman* to total disbelief or at least to a deviation from the main course of Islam in fundamental beliefs and practices. They have succeeded in disfiguring the facts about Islam and in obscuring many Muslims' understanding of it, with a few exceptions.

Our enemies learnt many lessons from what they had seen during their long wars against us, which spanned fourteen centuries. They learnt a lesson when they witnessed the Roman and Persian empires fall under the blows of Muslim swords. They learnt when they witnessed the return of the Muslim armies inflicting a crushing defeat on the Tartars in the wake of their invasion of its capital city and their reaching the eastern borders of Egypt after they had crossed Syria, Iraq and Asia Minor. They learnt when they saw Islam defeating the Crusaders' forces which mounted their attacks on Egypt and Syria for two centuries. They learnt when they saw Islam expanding eastwards to collect *Jizyah* from the People of the Book in China and westwards to annex Spain, the heart of Europe, and reach the gates of Vienna.

Our enemies learnt that Islam will triumph as long as it has staunch followers who believe in it. Followers who are convinced that it is the only religion which has the power to rule the world and regulate Mankind, be they Arabs or non-Arabs, black or white!

"And on that day, the believers will rejoice with the help of Allah. He helps whom He pleases; and He is the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful." [Surah Ar-Rum (30), Ayat 4-5.]

[30] Hisbah: To enjoin the good, and forbid the wrong.

Our enemies lost their minds when they realised this immutable and recurrent law of Allah. Namely that Allah's succour always comes as long as Islam has staunch followers who believe in it and are determined to live by it, no matter how powerful and well-equipped their enemies are! That is why they not only ***"bite their finger tips in rage"***[31] but they also ***"made their plans; but their plans were with Allah. And even though their plans were such as to make the mountains move, [they did not succeed]."***[32] But Allah protected His religion and rendered their efforts futile. ***"This is of Allah's grace upon us and upon Mankind."*** [Surah Yusuf (12), Ayah 38.]

To distort the image of Islam in the minds of the Muslims, our enemies have been waging a desperate and relentless ideological campaign. This started with Qur'aish's slandering of the Prophet (ﷺ), saying that he was a poet, a diviner, a magician and a madman.

Nevertheless, the *Jahiliyyah* is still waging war on Islam and the Muslims. Sometimes attacking and at other times retreating, they stab this religion in the chests of its followers. As a result of this many Muslims staggered and fell victim to this vicious attack. To make matters worse, groups of Muslims from amongst ourselves joined the ranks of the enemy. They became callers at Hell-Fire's gates, advertising the products and commodities of our enemies and casting their arrows for them. They are supported by the governments of our countries who, on their part, wish neither rewards nor thanks from the enemies!

So who now can defend this religion when the overwhelming majority of Muslims maintain a confused idea about it. Muslim intellectuals have turned into mouthpieces of enemy propaganda and advertisers of heretic ideologies. Governments of Muslim countries extend their protection, with force at times, to the enemy agents. Only a small minority have held onto the true faith. But even among these privileged few, most have surrendered and declared their inability to resist this torrential stream and fierce hostility. As a result, they have accepted the distorted, amputated Islam planted in our lands, and gone along with the majority of Muslims in their heresies and wrong ideas about Islam.

Consequently, instead of prescribing the medicine, most of those working for Islam have fallen victim to the disease. Some have come to regard it as merely a matter of worship rites and rituals, and refuse to take *Da'wah* outside the confines of prayer and supplication. It is as if *Jihad, Hisbah* and ruling by the *Shari'ah* have become abrogated for them. Some others talk only about purifying *'Aqeedah* from fables and superstitions, while they turn a blind eye to the secular rulers who have substituted man-made laws for the *Shari'ah* of Allah, and are thus outside the circle of Islam.

Others concentrate on learning and teaching Islam and do not approach the questions *of' Da'wah* and *Jihad.* Others call people to the obvious Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) with regard to eating, drinking, dressing and marriage, but never to his teachings concerning *Jihad,* government and jurisprudence. Others collect weapons and raise their voices calling to *Jihad,* but they have forgotten to prepare the men who will carry those weapons and later rule over the land. The true followers of this religion, however, cannot make any progress with it, thus curtailing its activity as a result of their lack of understanding it.

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[31] Surah Ale-Imran (3), Ayah 119.

[32] Surah Ibrahim (14), Ayah 46.

Blow after blow, Islam and its followers suffer setbacks and defeats. The masses passively watch this happen; governments and enemy agents give their support and assistance, while the few working for Islam are standing by helplessly, unable to defend themselves or their *'Aqeedah.*

To take Islam from defeat to victory, it is necessary to diagnose the disease and prescribe the cure. We must start to take the medicine, no matter how bitter it may be,

"But it may happen that you hate a thing which is good for you." [Surah Al-Baqarah (2), Ayah 216.]

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Before tackling the issue of our understanding of Islam, it is perhaps important to point out the Muslim's misunderstanding of their religion. We must find out who is behind this `poisonous' misunderstanding, and expose all those who attempt to support it or defend it. This step should be taken in order to know the position from which we have been targeted. We need to take precautions against committing the same mistakes as those before us did. We must warn Muslims to be alert, and get ready to confront this `expert' ideological invasion. This humble effort will serve as a contribution, to the best of our ability, towards producing a generation along the lines of the early generation of Muslims. A generation which understands Islam as the early generation did and adapts their methods, as a prelude to the position of leading Mankind which seems to have gone forever.

Islam means subservience, obedience, and total submission to the Will of Allah, Lord of the Worlds. It involves following the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ, which consist of commands, prohibitions, rules and regulations which govern our lives. Teachings which provide for all the needs of Mankind everywhere and at all times, in order to attain success in this life and the Hereafter.

This is, briefly and simply, the meaning of Islam with which came Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and as understood by our meritorious predecessors and as we have learnt it from the scholars of this *Ummah.*

This is what our *'Aqeedah* confirms in our hearts, namely that ***"Allah is the Creator of all things."***[33] He is aware of everything. He knows what was and what *will* be, and how what was not could have been. He ***"knows the unseen. Not an atom's weight in the heavens or in the earth or anything less than that or greater, escape Him, but all is recorded in a Clear Book."***[34] He is the Wise in actions, words and laws. He is the Expert who knows what is good for His servants today and tomorrow. The Message revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the seal of all divine revelations. This final religion has come to all Mankind from the day the Prophet ﷺ received it to the Day of Judgement. All of Mankind is commanded to follow it,

[33] Surah Az-Zumar (39), Ayah 62.
[34] Surah Saba (34), Ayah 3.

"Say, `0 Mankind! Truly I am the Messenger of Allah to you all." [Surah al-A'raaf (7), Ayah 158.]

"And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers." [Surah Ale-Imran (3). Ayah 85.]

This conviction obliges us to believe that this final Message came to encompass all Mankind within the confines of its Divine order. This message includes everything that people need in their lives. It came to show them what they need to do in order to head for the better. It came to decide people's *'Aqeedah,* worship, moral conduct, government, international relations, the leading of society, the settling of disputes and judging between people.

This is how the Prophet (ﷺ) conducted his life. He was the Messenger, the preacher, the ruler, the judge, the tutor, the army commander and the leader in prayer. The Rightly-Guided Caliphs who came after him followed this example.

On the authority of Abu Najeeh al-'Irbadh bin Sariyah (ra) who said: *"The Messenger* of *Allah* (ﷺ) *gave us a sermon by which our hearts were filled with fear and tears came to our eyes. We said: 'O Messenger of Allah, it is as though this is a farewell sermon, so counsel us.' He said: 'I counsel you to fear Allah, Glorious is He, and to give absolute obedience even if a slave becomes your leader. Verily, he among you, who lives (long) will see great controversy, so you must keep to my Sunnah and to the Sunnah of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. Cling to them, stubbornly. Beware of newly invented matters, for every invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is a going astray and every going astray is in the Hell-Fire."* [35]

Our Prophet (ﷺ) received all his teachings from Allah alone. The Rightly-Guided Caliphs followed nothing but the example of our Prophet (ﷺ). This is ample evidence that the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) is sufficient for Man to manage the affairs of this life in all its aspects, as did our predecessors.

Allah says (which means), ***"This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion."*** [Surah Al-Ma'idah (5). Ayah 3.]

This is part of a verse which consists of three statements, each of which provides ample evidence that Islam is perfect and all comprehensive and serves to be implemented everywhere and at al times.

'Perfection of religion' means that Islam has not ignore anything, be it great or small, incorporating everything one way or the other. This also means that no-one, at any time and anywhere, can add something new and claim that he has perfected Islam, whether this new addition is in the domain of *'Aqeedah,* economics, politics, peace, war or government.

'Completion of favour' means that there is nothing complete or better than this religion, for it contains no defects and nothing.

[35] Hasan Sahih Hadith, related by Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi.

'Choosing Islam as our religion' shows us that Allah does not accept a deficient religion for His servants. He was satisfied that Islam should be the religion of Mankind, from the time He revealed the Message to His messenger, until the Day of Judgement. Let no-one now say that Islam was complete and satisfactory in the past but is no longer so.

It is not acceptable, therefore, to say that Allah created Mankind but then was unable to find a complete, all-encompassing way of life through which they could run their lives and manage their affairs. Nor is it acceptable to say that the passage of time and the changing of circumstances challenged the Will of Allah, The Mighty, The All-Knowing, by creating conditions, events and issues which He did not take into account and regarding which He did not make His rulings. This is a religion that He commanded all Mankind to follow until the Day of Judgement, ***"Glory to You [O Allah]; this is an awful calumny."*** [Surah An-Nur (24), Ayah 16.]

Allah said (which means), ***"The decision rests with Allah only."***[36] and ***"And in whatsoever you differ, the decision thereof rest with Allah."***[37] How then could it be claimed that there are issues and cases that are impossible to deal with through Islam and that we should step outside its tenets and relieve ourselves of its restrictions, in order to run our lives effectively?

Can anyone claim that he can come up with a doctrine or system better or more complete than Islam, in matters relating to economics, politics, peace, war, *'Aqeedah* or worship? No-on can claim so except those who are insane. Even if someone were to claim that he can produce a way of life better than Islam, would we believe him and abandon our religion and way of life to follow these heretical and unfounded claims?

The fact of the matter is that Mankind has never known, and will never know, of a system which is better than Islam in its comprehensiveness, completeness, exaltedness, perfection, wisdom, justice, precision, ease, and practicality.

Islam is all-comprehensive: it is a Qur'an and a sword; knowledge and worship; *`Aqeedah* and *Shari'ah*; moral conduct and government; action and reward; the life of this world and the Hereafter:

"We have neglected nothing in the Book." [Surah Al-An'am (6), Ayah 39.]

Islam comprises everything: the correct *'Aqeedah:*

"Worship Allah and associate none with Him [in worship]." [Surah An-Nisa (4), Ayah 36.],

the humble and heartfelt worship:

"Guard strictly the [five obligatory] prayers, especially the middle prayer, and stand up with devotion to Allah." [Surah Al-Baqarah (2), Ayah 238.],

the command to struggle against Satan and desires:

"Do not follow the footsteps of Satan." [Surah Al-Baqarah (2), Ayah 168.]

[36] Surah Yusuf (12), Ayah 40.
[37] Surah Ash-Shura (42), Ayah 10.

"Have you seen him who chooses for his god his own lust?" [Surah Al-Furqan (25). Ayah 43.],

the command to be kind to one's parents:

"And show kindness unto parents." [Surah An-Nisa, (4), Ayah 36.],

the encouragement to seek knowledge:

"And say, `My Lord! Increase me in knowledge.'"[Surah Ta-Ha (20). Ayah 114.],

"Say (unto them, O Muhammad): `Are those who know equal with those who do not know?'"[Surah Az-Zumar (39), Ayah 9.],

the command to adhere to good conduct:

"And speak kindly to Mankind." [Surah Al-Baqarah (2), Ayah 83.],

the command to govern by the Law of Allah:

"So judge between them by that which Allah has revealed." [Surah Al-Ma'idah (5), Ayah 49.],

the command to engage in Da'wah and call people to the way of Allah:

"Call unto the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way." [Surah An-Nahl (16), Ayah 125.],

the command to enjoin good and forbid evil:

"And let there arise from amongst you, a nation which invites to goodness, enjoins what is right and forbids what is evil. Such are they who are successful." [Surah Ale-Imran (3), Ayah 104.],

the command to fight in the way of Allah:

"Fighting [Jihad] is ordained for you, though it is hateful unto you." [Surah Al-Baqarah (2), Ayah 216.],

the command to accompany the righteous deeds with the good intention:

"And whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him do righteous work and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord." [Surah Al-Kahf (18), Ayah 110.],

the description of actions and their rewards:

"And whosoever does good equal to an atom's weight will see it then; and whosoever does ill equal to an atom's weight will see it then." [Surah Az-Zalzalah (99), Ayat 7-8.],

the command to obey the Muslim ruler:

"O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in authority." [Surah An-Nisa (4), Ayah 59.],

the command to those in charge to judge with justice:

"Verily! Allah commands you that you restore deposits to their owners, and, if you judge between Mankind, that you judge justly." [Surah An-Nisa (4), Ayah 58.],

And to those in charge to seek counsel:

"And consult with them upon the conduct of affairs." [Surah Ale-Imran (3), Ayah 159.].

Islam regulates the relation between the individual and his neighbours as well as that between the Muslim nation and its non-Muslim neighbours. It regulates the small family in matters of marriage, nursing and divorce as well as that of society as a whole. It regulates the relationship between the governing and the governed. It regulates the circulation of money in society, its sources and the areas where it is spent. It sets individuals as guards upon their own conduct in this life because they will be accountable for it in the Hereafter. It instils in the heart of the individual, deterrents which will prevent him from disobeying his Lord. It also codifies punitive measures in case he transgresses the set limits. In a word, it is a religion which regulates the needs of Mankind within the framework of an all-inclusive system.

How could any other doctrine challenge such a complete system? Allah (SWT) says (which means):

"Should He not know what He created? And He is the Most Kind and Courteous [to His slaves], All- Aware." [Surah Al-Mulk (67), Ayah 14.]

Any attempt to break up Islam is therefore an unpardonable sin, for doing so could only destroy the whole system. Islam cannot be established as worship without an *'Aqeedah,* or an *'Aqeedah* without worship. Neither can it be merely a set of beliefs and rituals without laws and codes to govern human relationships and interaction. We Muslims must not take part of it to the exclusion of other parts; doing so undoubtedly leads to loss and disaster both in this life and in the Hereafter. Allah says (which means):

"So judge between them by that which Allah has revealed, and follow not their desires, but beware of them lest they seduce you from some part of that which Allah has revealed unto you." [Surah Al-Ma'idah (5), Ayah 49.]

Islam succeeds and triumphs because it is a complete, integral, religion. If any part of it is omitted, amended or altered, then it will never be able to triumph.

Furthermore, the world in which we live confronts us with many demands which we will not be able to meet unless we take Islam as a whole and base our actions entirely upon it alone.

Indeed, we are in need of a sound *'Aqeedah so* that our faith may become strong and our hearts confident. This will by all means lead us , to rely completely on Allah and to carry out our duties against all adversities. Such is the *'Aqeedah* to which we call and in which we educate people.

We need all acts of worship and rituals, be they obligatory or voluntary, because they are the only provisions we can take from this life to the Next. For how

can we travel without provisions? They purify our intentions and hearts, and cleanse our limbs. They are our weapons against our desires and against Satan. We strive hard to establish them and call people to observe them.

We need Islamic knowledge in order to worship Allah in the way He instructed us, to avoid deviation from the right path and become like ***"Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds."***[38] Our goal is to acquire knowledge of our religion and to teach it to the people.

We need good character in order that our interactions may be correct and our behaviour elevated. We must treat everyone as they deserve, in accordance with the *Shari'ah,* and protect our own words and actions against falling into the `mire' *of Jahiliyyah.* We always endeavour to refine our character and that *of* the people around us.

We need to communicate the message of Islam to all Mankind: to the disbeliever so that he may embrace Islam; to the believer so that he may stand firm and advance; and to the disobedient so that he may repent. If we fail to do so, Islam will become extinct and its Message will be overwhelmed by the deviant creeds that pervade everywhere. We go forth calling people to this religion, bringing good news and warning of terrible punishment.

We need to enjoin virtue and forbid evil; otherwise, vice will spread and destroy our *Da'wah.* We strive hard to remove from our path, every vice we find and enjoin every virtue we lackjoinryb9aracter .c41 T3h39ishmenea8chh[(o)1(vvsy vi9Td[(dge8 0 0 6y vi39 Tc