By Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab ibn Sulayman al-Tamimi Al Najd

(1703–1792 C.E., 1115–1206 A.H.) May Allah have mercy on him.

Fadl al-Islam means The Merit of Islam. This is an important matn because it teaches the great value of Islam and the importance of holding firmly to it. It explains why we must follow the Quran and Sunnah, stay away from Bidah and avoid paths that oppose Islam. It also teaches us to follow Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his Companions. Learning these lessons helps a Muslim understand the value of Islam, protect their religion, remain firm upon the truth and worship Allah upon correct guidance. These lessons are taught upon the Quran and Sunnah as understood by the Salaf (Pious Predecessors) of this Ummah.

## Introduction to Tawheed

Tawheed is the most important knowledge we can learn. It is the greatest and noblest subject to study because it teaches us about Allah and how to worship Him correctly. A person who truly believes in Tawheed and lives according to it will be saved from Jahannam by the mercy of Allah. Allah created the jinn and mankind for Tawheed which means that we were created to worship Allah alone. Tawheed is a cause of success in this life and in the Hereafter. The scales were created, the sky was raised and the earth was spread for Tawheed and the worship of Allah alone.

## What Is Tawheed?

The Arabic root letters of Tawheed are:

و ح د

The word وَحَّدَ means to make something one or to single something out.

Linguistically: Tawheed means to make something one without giving it any equal and to single something out.

Technically: Tawheed means to single out Allah alone in everything that belongs only to Him. This includes His Lordship, worshipping Him alone and His Names and Attributes. So Tawheed means believing that Allah alone is our Lord, Allah alone deserves all worship and Allah has His perfect Names and Attributes.

## Three Categories of Tawheed

1. Tawheed of Lordship (تَوْحِيدُ الرُّبُوبِيَّةِ): This means believing that Allah alone is the Creator, Provider and Controller of everything. For example, Allah alone created the heavens and the earth. Allah alone gives life and death and Allah alone provides for His creation.

2. Tawheed of Worship (تَوْحِيدُ الْأُلُوهِيَّةِ): This means singling out Allah alone in all acts of worship. For example, we pray to Allah alone, make Dua to Allah alone, rely upon Allah and worship Him alone. We do not direct acts of worship to anyone besides Allah.

3. Tawheed of Allah's Names and Attributes (تَوْحِيدُ الْأَسْمَاءِ وَالصِّفَاتِ): This means believing in the Names and Attributes of Allah that are mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah in the correct way. For example, Allah is Ar-Rahman (الرَّحْمَنُ), the Most Merciful and Allah is As-Sami (السَّمِيعُ), the All-Hearing. Tawheed was not invented by later scholars. It is the message that Allah sent all the Prophets with. Scholars use these three categories to organize and explain what is already taught in the Quran and Sunnah. Therefore Tawheed and Shirk must be understood from the Quran and Sunnah and not from personal opinions.

## Is Tawheed Mentioned in the Quran?

Ibn al-Qayyim explained that every Surah in the Quran contains Tawheed. In fact every verse in the Quran contains Tawheed, gives proof for Tawheed or calls people to Tawheed.

1st Type: Some verses give us information about the Names and Attributes of Allah or the Actions of Allah. This is called Tawheed of knowledge and information. We must believe everything Allah has told us about Himself.

2nd Type: Some verses call us to worship Allah alone without giving Him any partners and to leave everything that is worshipped besides Allah. This is the Tawheed of worshipping Allah and seeking Him alone.

3rd Type: Some verses contain commands and prohibitions. They teach us to obey Allah's commands and stay away from what Allah has prohibited. These are from the rights of Tawheed.

4th Type: Some verses tell us about the people of Tawheed and the rewards Allah has prepared for them.

5th Type: Some verses tell us about the people of Shirk, what can happen to them in this life and about their punishment in the next life.

Therefore the whole Quran includes these types of Tawheed. [Madaarij As-Salikeen, Vol. 3, Page 450]

## Words That Show Tawheed

Words in the Quran such as أَحَدٌ and وَاحِدٌ teach us about Allah being One.

First Verse: Allah says:

"Or were you witnesses when death approached Jacob, when he said to his sons, 'What will you worship after me?' They said, 'We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, one God. And we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.'" [Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 133]

Ibn Katheer explained the words إِلَٰهًا وَاحِدًا, "one God", to mean that Allah is made One in worship. In simple words, Allah alone must be worshipped.

Second Verse: Allah says:

"And Allah has said, 'Do not take for yourselves two deities. He is but one God, so fear only Me.'" [Surah An-Nahl, verse 51]

Imam At-Tabari explained the words إِلَٰهًا وَاحِدًا, "one God", to mean that Allah is made One in His worship and His Lordship. This means Allah alone is our Lord and Allah alone deserves our worship. [Jami' al-Bayaan fi Ta'weel Al-Quran]

Third Verse: Allah says:

"They have certainly disbelieved who say, 'Allah is the third of three.' And there is no god except one God. And if they do not desist from what they are saying, there will surely afflict the disbelievers among them a painful punishment." [Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 73]

This verse teaches us that Allah is One. Allah has no partners and no one else deserves to be worshipped with Him.

## Is Tawheed in the Sunnah?

Yes. Tawheed is also clearly taught in the Sunnah.

Sunnah means: The statements and actions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, things that happened in front of him that he approved of and his physical and personal qualities.

1. Hadeeth of Ibn Abbas: Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما reported that when the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم sent Muadh ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه to Yemen he told him:

"You will go to the People of the Book. Let the first thing that you call them to be to make Allah One."

يُوَحِّدُوا اللَّهَ

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

The words "make Allah One" come from the same Arabic root as Tawheed. The Arabic word used here is a present tense verb. This teaches us that making Allah One is not something that has a time limit. A Muslim must always worship Allah alone.

2. Hadeeth of Ibn Abbas: Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما also reported that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم told Muadh ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه:

"You are going to the People of the Book. When you come to them call them to the oneness of Allah."

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

This teaches us that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم told Muadh رضي الله عنه to begin by calling people to Tawheed.

3. Hadeeth of Ibn Umar: Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما reported that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"Islam is built upon five: that Allah is made One, establishing the prayer, paying the Zakah, fasting Ramadan and Hajj."

[Saheeh Muslim]

This narration directly connects Islam with making Allah One.

4. Hadeeth of Ibn Umar: Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما reported that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"Islam is built upon five: testifying that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, establishing the prayer, paying the Zakah, performing Hajj to the House and fasting Ramadan."

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari and Saheeh Muslim]

The first foundation mentioned is لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ, Laa ilaaha illa Allah: There is no one worthy of worship except Allah.

5. Hadeeth of Ibn Umar: Another narration from Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما mentions that Islam is built upon five and begins with worshipping Allah and rejecting everything worshipped besides Him.

[Saheeh Muslim]

From these narrations we understand that worshipping Allah alone is Tawheed.

**Tawheed in the Statements of the Salaf**

The Salaf are the Companions and the early generations of Muslims who came after them.

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"The best of you are my generation, then those who follow them, then those who follow them."

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

Their understanding of Tawheed came from the Quran and Sunnah.

Jaabir ibn Abdullah رضي الله عنه: Jaabir described the Hajj of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and explained that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم began his Hajj by declaring Tawheed in the Talbiyah:

لَبَّيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ لَبَّيْكَ، لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ، إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ وَالنِّعْمَةَ لَكَ وَالْمُلْكَ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ

"Here I am, O Allah, here I am. Here I am. You have no partner. All praise, blessings and the kingdom belong to You. You have no partner."

[Saheeh Muslim]

Jaabir رضي الله عنه used the word Tawheed to describe what the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was saying and doing. This shows that the Companions understood that declaring that Allah has no partners is Tawheed.

Hadeeth of the Delegation of Abdul Qais: A group from Abdul Qais came to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم commanded them to believe in Allah alone and asked:

"Do you know what is meant by believing in Allah alone?"

They replied:

"Allah and His Messenger know best."

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم explained:

"To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger."

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

This teaches us that believing in Allah alone includes believing that only Allah has the right to be worshipped.

Ataa ibn Abi Rabah

Ataa ibn Abi Rabah was from the Tabi'un. The Tabi'un were Muslims who learned from the Companions. He was also a Mufassir which means a scholar who explains the Quran.

Allah says:

"And whoever denies the faith, his work has become worthless, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers." [Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 5]

Ataa ibn Abi Rabah explained that faith or Iman in this verse means Tawheed.

[Tafseer At-Tabarani]

## How the Scholars Explained Tawheed

The scholars of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah explained Tawheed through the statement:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

Laa ilaaha illa Allah

There is no one worthy of worship except Allah.

Imam Ad-Darimi said that the explanation of Tawheed in this Ummah is:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

Laa ilaaha illa Allah, Muhammadur Rasulullah. There is no one worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. [Naqd or Ar-Rad ala Bishr al-Mirrisi, Vol. 1, Page 152]

Imam Al-Ajuri said that Tawheed is to say:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

Laa ilaaha illa Allah with certainty in your heart. [Kitaab Ash-Shariah, Vol. 2, Page 553]

Having certainty means you truly believe it in your heart without doubt.

## Why Do We Study Tawheed?

1. Allah created us to worship Him alone. We were created to single out Allah alone in our worship. We pray to Allah alone, make Dua to Him alone and direct our worship to Him alone.

2. Allah does not accept worship without Tawheed. Our worship must be sincerely for Allah alone and cannot be mixed with Shirk.

3. Tawheed is a cause of entering Jannah. A person must learn Tawheed, believe in it and live according to it. A person who dies upon true Tawheed will enter Jannah.

4. Tawheed is a cause of increasing the reward of good deeds. The stronger a person's Tawheed and sincerity to Allah are, the greater the blessings and rewards in their good deeds can be.

5. Tawheed is a cause for sins to be forgiven. Allah may forgive sins because of a person's sincere Tawheed and faith in Him.

6. Tawheed is a cause of guidance and security. Those who truly believe in Allah and protect their Tawheed from Shirk are promised guidance and security.

7. Tawheed is a cause of peace in the heart. Allah places peace and calmness in the hearts of the believers. True belief in Allah helps a believer remain firm and turn to Allah during easy and difficult times.

8. Tawheed is a cause of receiving the Prophet's ﷺ intercession. By the mercy and permission of Allah, the people of sincere Tawheed may receive the intercession of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

## Two Conditions for Correct Worship

Correct worship requires two conditions:

1. Sincerity to Allah (الْإِخْلَاصُ): All worship must be sincerely for Allah alone. The opposite of sincerity is Shirk. For example, when a person makes Dua they must make Dua to Allah alone and not direct their Dua to someone besides Allah.

2. Following the Prophet (الْمُتَابَعَةُ) ﷺ: We must worship Allah in the way that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught us. The opposite is inventing acts of worship that the Prophet ﷺ did not teach. For example, we pray Salah according to the way the Prophet ﷺ taught us. We do not invent a new type of Salah and call it part of Islam. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever does a deed which has not been ordered by us, then it is rejected." [Saheeh Muslim, Hadeeth 1718]

Sincerity without following the Sunnah is not enough. For example, a person may sincerely want to worship Allah but invent a new act of worship that the Prophet ﷺ never taught. Their good intention does not make the invented worship correct. Following the outward Sunnah while directing worship to someone other than Allah is also not enough. For example, a person may perform an act in the correct outward way but direct that worship to someone besides Allah. Both conditions are required. The worship must be sincerely for Allah alone and it must follow the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ is the only person Muslims must completely follow in the religion.

## Why We Must Learn About Shirk

We must learn about Shirk so we can recognize it and stay away from it. Allah did not prohibit Shirk without explaining it. The Quran and Sunnah explain its meaning, types and dangers. Shirk is the opposite of Tawheed. Generally, Shirk means giving someone or something a share in something that belongs only to Allah. In worship it means directing an act of worship to someone or something besides Allah. Shirk is divided into Major Shirk and Minor Shirk.

Major Shirk (الشِّرْكُ الْأَكْبَرُ)

Major Shirk is directing an act of worship to someone or something besides Allah. It takes a person outside of Islam. For example, making Dua to the dead and asking them for something that only Allah can do is Major Shirk. Sacrificing an animal as an act of worship for someone besides Allah is another example. Major Shirk causes misguidance, removes security and destroys a person's deeds. If a person dies upon Major Shirk without repenting from it, Allah will not forgive it. It prevents the person who dies upon it from entering Paradise and leads to the Fire. Major Shirk is also the greatest injustice.

Minor Shirk (الشِّرْكُ الْأَصْغَرُ)

Minor Shirk does not take a person outside of Islam but it is still a serious sin. It makes a person's Tawheed and faith weaker and it can become a path that leads towards Major Shirk. One example is showing off in worship. For example, a person begins praying sincerely for Allah but then makes their prayer look better because they notice other people are watching them. This showing off can destroy the part of the worship in which it happens. Another example of Minor Shirk is swearing by someone or something besides Allah such as saying, "I swear by my father." A Muslim should swear by Allah or remain silent.

Hidden Shirk (الشِّرْكُ الْخَفِيُّ)

Shirk can also be hidden because it may be connected to what is inside a person's heart and may not be clear to other people. Showing off in worship is an example. A person may look like they are worshipping Allah while secretly wanting people to see them, praise them or think they are very religious. A Muslim should never feel completely safe from Shirk. Even Ibrahim عليه السلام asked Allah to protect him from Shirk.

Allah says:

"And [mention, O Muhammad], when Abraham said, 'My Lord, make this city [Makkah] secure and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols.'" [Surah Ibrahim, verse 35] If Ibrahim عليه السلام feared Shirk and asked Allah to protect him from it then we should also fear Shirk, learn about it and ask Allah to protect us from it.

The Prophet ﷺ also taught us to say: "O Allah, I seek refuge in You from associating partners with You knowingly and I seek Your forgiveness for what I do not know." [Musnad Ahmad] This teaches us to ask Allah to protect us from the Shirk we know about and the Shirk we may not recognize.

## Final Summary

Tawheed means to single out Allah alone. We believe that Allah alone is our Lord, we worship Allah alone and we believe in Allah's Names and Attributes. Tawheed has three categories: Tawheed of Lordship, Tawheed of Worship and Tawheed of Allah's Names and Attributes. The Quran teaches Tawheed from beginning to end. It teaches us about Allah, calls us to worship Him alone, teaches us to obey His commands, tells us about the rewards for the people of Tawheed and warns us about Shirk. The Sunnah also teaches Tawheed. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم called people to worship Allah alone and taught his Companions to begin their call to others with Tawheed. For worship to be correct it must be sincerely for Allah alone and it must follow the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. We also learn about Shirk so we can recognize it and stay far away from it.

The meaning of Tawheed is clearly shown in:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ

There is no one worthy of worship except Allah. upon The Qur'aan & Sunnah as Understood by the Salaf (Pious Predecessors) of this Ummah,

## Bismillah

Bismillah means "In the Name of Allah."

We begin with Bismillah for four reasons:

1. Following the Quran

Allah begins the Quran with Bismillah. This teaches us to begin with the Name of Allah.

2. Following the Prophet ﷺ

When the Prophet ﷺ wrote letters to kings and rulers, he began his letters with Bismillah. We follow his example by beginning with the Name of Allah.

3. Following the scholars

The scholars of Islam followed this practice and began their books and writings with Bismillah. We follow their example when beginning Islamic writings and lessons.

4. Seeking Allah's blessing

We begin with Bismillah to seek Allah's blessing in what we are doing. Saying Bismillah reminds us that all blessings come from Allah and that we depend upon Him.

When we say Bismillah before doing something, the action is understood even if we do not say it. For example, if we say Bismillah before drinking, it means, "In the Name of Allah, I drink." This teaches us to begin good actions with Allah's Name and seek His blessing.

The Basmalah contains three Names of Allah:

1. Allah: The One who alone deserves to be worshipped.
2. Ar-Rahman: The One whose mercy is vast and reaches all of creation.
3. Ar-Raheem: The One who gives special mercy to His believing servants.

We can see Allah's mercy through the many blessings He gives us such as rain, food, water and everything we need for life.

## Chapter 1: The Merit of Islam

This chapter teaches the great value of Islam. Islam is a complete religion chosen by Allah. Allah guided this Ummah to Islam, gave it special blessings and taught Muslims to hold firmly to the Sunnah.

### Quran Evidence

Allah says: "Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you and chosen Islam as your religion." (Surah al-Maidah 5:3) Allah tells the Prophet ﷺ to say: "O people, if you are in doubt about my religion, I do not worship those you worship besides Allah. I worship Allah." (Surah Yunus 10:104) Allah tells the believers to fear Him and believe in His Messenger ﷺ. Allah promises them a double share of His mercy. (Surah al-Hadid 57:28)

### The Example of the Workers

Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما reported that the Prophet ﷺ gave the example of a man who hired workers at different times of the day. One group worked from the morning until midday for one qirat each. This represented the Jews. Another group worked from midday until Asr for one qirat each. This represented the Christians. A final group worked from Asr until sunset for two qirats each. This represented the Muslims. The earlier workers complained because they worked longer but received less. They were told that none of the reward promised to them had been taken away. The extra reward given to the last group was from Allah's favour. Allah gives His favour to whom He wills.

### Allah Guided This Ummah to Friday

Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ explained that the people before this Ummah were not guided to Friday. The Jews were given Saturday and the Christians were given Sunday. Allah guided the Muslims to Friday. This Ummah came later in this world but will be ahead on the Day of Resurrection. (Sahih al-Bukhari)

### The Religion Most Beloved to Allah

The Prophet ﷺ said that the religion most beloved to Allah is "al-Hanifiyyah as-Samhah." This means the pure religion that turns away from Shirk and turns to Allah alone, with ease and balance.

### Hold Firmly to the Sunnah

Ubayy ibn Kab رضي الله عنه advised Muslims to stay upon the correct path and the Sunnah. He explained that remembering Allah with true fear and following the Sunnah brings great benefit. He also taught that doing a smaller amount of worship according to the Sunnah is better than doing a large amount of worship in a way that goes against the Sunnah.

## Report of Abu ad-Darda

Abu ad-Darda رضي الله عنه taught that a wise person may sleep or break a voluntary fast while another person may spend the night praying and the day fasting. A small deed done with righteousness, Taqwa and certainty can be greater with Allah than a large amount of worship done by a person who is deceived about himself.

## Chapter 2: The Obligation of Islam

This chapter teaches that following Islam is not optional. Allah has chosen Islam and Muslims must follow His straight path instead of following other religious paths or invented ways.

## Quran Evidence

Allah says: "Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers." (Surah Al Imran 3:85) Allah says: "Indeed, the religion with Allah is Islam." (Surah Al Imran 3:19) Allah says: "This is My straight path, so follow it. Do not follow the other paths because they will separate you from His path." (Surah al-Anam 6:153) Mujahid رحمه الله explained that the other paths include Bidah and doubts or false ideas that take a person away from the straight path.

## New Religious Actions Are Rejected

Aishah رضي الله عنها reported that the Prophet ﷺ said that whoever introduces something into Islam that does not belong to it will have it rejected. Another wording says that whoever does an action that is not according to the command of the Prophet ﷺ will have it rejected. (Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim)

## Obeying the Messenger ﷺ

Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said that all of his Ummah will enter Paradise except those who refuse. The Companions asked who would refuse. He explained that whoever obeys him enters Paradise and whoever disobeys him has refused. (Sahih al-Bukhari)

## Three People Most Hated by Allah

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما reported that the Prophet ﷺ mentioned three people who are especially hated by Allah: a person who does wrong in the Sacred Mosque, a person who wants to bring the ways of Jahiliyyah into Islam and a person who unjustly seeks another person's blood. (Sahih al-Bukhari)

## Meaning of Jahiliyyah

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله explained that Jahiliyyah can include beliefs or practices from Christianity, Judaism, paganism or anything else that goes against what the Messengers brought.

## Stay on the Straight Path

Hudhayfah رضي الله عنه told the people of Quran to remain straight upon the path. He warned that turning away to the right or left after receiving guidance leads a person far away from the truth. Abdullah ibn Masud رضي الله عنه explained that difficult times are not only about money or rulers. A serious problem happens when knowledgeable and righteous people pass away, then people begin judging religious matters only by their own opinions. This can damage people's understanding of Islam.

## Chapter 3: The Explanation of Islam

This chapter explains what Islam means. Islam includes submitting yourself to Allah, believing correctly, carrying out the acts of worship Allah made obligatory and treating Muslims properly.

## Quran Evidence

Allah tells the Prophet ﷺ: "If they argue with you, say: I have submitted myself to Allah and so have those who follow me." (Surah Al Imran 3:20)

## The Five Pillars of Islam

Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما reported that the Prophet ﷺ explained Islam as: testifying that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and that Muhammad ﷺ is His Messenger, establishing the prayer, paying Zakah, fasting Ramadan and performing Hajj to the Sacred House if a person is able. (Sahih Muslim)

## A Muslim and a Muhajir

Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said that a Muslim is a person from whose tongue and hand other Muslims are safe. A Muhajir is a person who leaves what Allah has forbidden.

## Submitting to Allah

Bahz ibn Hakim reported from his father from his grandfather that he asked the Prophet ﷺ about Islam. The Prophet ﷺ explained that Islam includes submitting your heart to Allah, turning your face to Allah, performing the obligatory prayers and paying the obligatory Zakah. (Ahmad)

## Islam and Iman

Another man asked the Prophet ﷺ, "What is Islam?" He explained that Islam means submitting the heart to Allah and keeping Muslims safe from your tongue and hand. When he was asked which Islam is best, he answered: faith. When he was asked what faith is, he explained that it is to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the resurrection after death. (Ahmad)

## Chapter 4: Whoever Seeks a Religion Other Than Islam

This chapter teaches that Islam is the religion accepted by Allah and that a person's deeds must be based upon the true religion.

## Islam Is the Accepted Religion

Allah says: "Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers." (Surah Al Imran 3:85)

## Deeds on the Day of Judgment

Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه reported a hadith describing deeds coming on the Day of Judgment. Prayer will come and Allah will say that it is good. Fasting and the other deeds will also come. Then Islam will come. Allah will make clear that Islam is the standard by which reward and punishment are judged. The hadith then mentions Surah Al Imran 3:85. (Ahmad)

## Actions Must Follow Islam

Aishah رضي الله عنها reported that the Prophet ﷺ said that whoever does an action that is not according to his command will have it rejected. This teaches that good intentions are not enough. Religious actions must agree with the guidance brought by the Prophet ﷺ. (Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim)

## Chapter 5: The Obligation of Following the Book and the Prophet ﷺ

This chapter teaches Muslims to be satisfied with the guidance Allah gave in the Quran and through Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. We do not need another religious path to replace the final revelation.

## Quran Evidence

Allah says: "We have sent down to you the Book as an explanation of everything." (Surah an-Nahl 16:89)

## Umar and the Page from the Torah

The Prophet ﷺ saw Umar ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه holding a page from the Torah. He warned him and explained that the guidance he brought is clear. He said that if Musa عليه السلام were alive, Musa عليه السلام would have to follow him. Umar رضي الله عنه then expressed that he was pleased with Allah as Lord, Islam as religion and Muhammad ﷺ as Prophet. (Ahmad and ad-Darimi)

## Chapter 6: Leaving the Call and Name of Islam

This chapter warns Muslims not to replace the names and unity given by Islam with calls based on Jahiliyyah, group pride or division.

## Allah Named Us Muslims

Allah says that He named the believers "Muslims" before and in this Quran. (Surah al-Hajj 22:78)

## Five Commands

Al-Harith al-Ashari رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ commanded five matters that Allah commanded him: listening, obeying, Jihad, Hijrah and staying with the Jamaah, the Muslim community. He warned against separating from the Jamaah and against calls of Jahiliyyah. Even if a person prays and fasts, Muslims should use the names Allah gave them: Muslims, believers and servants of Allah. (Ahmad and at-Tirmidhi)

## Do Not Separate from the Muslim Community

The Prophet ﷺ also warned that a person who separates from the Muslim community even by a small amount and dies in that condition dies a death of Jahiliyyah. (Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim)

## Calls of Jahiliyyah

When a Muhajir and an Ansari argued and each called his own group for support, the Prophet ﷺ strongly rejected this and called it a call of Jahiliyyah. Abu al-Abbas explained that calls which oppose Islam and the Quran can include pride based on lineage, nationality, race, a group or another identity when it is used to divide people away from the call of Islam.

## Chapter 7: The Obligation of Entering Islam Completely

This chapter teaches that a Muslim must accept Islam as a whole. A person should not take the parts he likes and leave the parts he does not like.

## Quran Evidence

Allah says: "O you who believe, enter into Islam completely." (Surah al-Baqarah 2:208) Allah mentions people who claim to believe in what was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ and what was revealed before him. (Surah an-Nisa 4:60) Allah says that on the Day of Judgment some faces will be bright and some faces will be dark. (Surah Al Imran 3:106) Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما explained that the people of the Sunnah and unity will have bright faces while the people of Bidah and division will have dark faces.

## Following the Prophet ﷺ and His Companions

Abdullah ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما reported a hadith explaining that this Ummah would follow some of the mistakes and divisions that happened among the Children of Israel. The hadith says that the Ummah will divide into groups and that the saved way is the way of the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions. (at-Tirmidhi) A related hadith from Muawiyah رضي الله عنه warns that false desires can spread deeply through a person. The lesson is to hold firmly to the Quran, the Sunnah and the way of the Companions instead of following desires or the ways of Jahiliyyah.

## Chapter 8: Bidah Is More Serious Than Major Sins

This chapter gives a serious warning about Bidah. Bidah changes the religion and can also mislead other people.

### Quran Evidence

Allah says: "Allah does not forgive Shirk if a person dies upon it, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills." (Surah an-Nisa 4:48) Allah says that people who mislead others will carry their own burdens and some of the burdens of those they misled. (Surah an-Nahl 16:25)

### Warning About the Khawarij

The chapter includes very severe prophetic warnings about the Khawarij because of their dangerous beliefs and actions. It also mentions that the Prophet ﷺ did not allow fighting unjust Muslim rulers as long as they continued to establish the prayer. The point is that religious rulings are followed according to revelation, not personal anger or desire.

### Starting a Good or Bad Practice

Jarir رضي الله عنه reported that after one man gave charity, other people followed his example. The Prophet ﷺ explained that whoever begins a good practice in Islam receives its reward and the reward of those who follow it without reducing their reward. Whoever begins an evil practice carries its sin and the sins of those who follow it without reducing their burden. (Sahih Muslim) Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه also reported that whoever calls people to guidance receives rewards like those who follow it and whoever calls people to misguidance carries sins like those who follow it. (Sahih Muslim)

## Chapter 9: Allah Withholds Repentance from the Person of Bidah

This chapter warns about one of the dangers of Bidah: a person may become so attached to an invented belief or practice that he does not recognize it as wrong and therefore does not leave it.

### Report About the Person of Bidah

The chapter mentions a report from Anas رضي الله عنه about repentance being withheld from a person of Bidah until he leaves his Bidah.

### Report of Ibn Sirin

Ibn Waddah reported that a man had followed a deviant belief and later appeared to leave it. When Muhammad ibn Sirin رحمه الله was told about him, he warned that the later part of the hadith was even more serious: some people leave Islam and do not return to it.

## Explanation of Imam Ahmad

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal رحمه الله was asked about the meaning of this warning. He explained that the person is not given help to repent. The lesson is that a Muslim should fear Bidah, recognize mistakes and return to the Quran and Sunnah.

## Chapter 10: Following the Religion of Ibrahim عليه السلام and the Sunnah

This chapter teaches that true religion is not based on family claims, labels or extreme worship. It is based on following the religion of Ibrahim عليه السلام and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

## Quran Evidence

Allah asks the People of the Book why they argue about Ibrahim عليه السلام. The verses explain that Ibrahim عليه السلام was not from the people of Shirk. (Surah Al Imran 3:65-67) Allah says: "Who would turn away from the religion of Ibrahim except a person who fools himself?" Allah chose Ibrahim عليه السلام in this world and he will be among the righteous in the Hereafter. (Surah al-Baqarah 2:130)

## True Friendship with the Prophet ﷺ

The chapter connects this lesson to a hadith in which the Prophet ﷺ explained that family connection by itself does not make someone his close ally. His true allies are Allah and the righteous believers. (Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim)

## The Three Men Who Wanted Extreme Worship

Anas رضي الله عنه reported that some men wanted to do extreme acts of worship. One wanted to stay awake praying and never sleep, another wanted to fast continuously and another wanted to stay away from marriage. The Prophet ﷺ explained that he prays and sleeps, fasts and breaks his fast and marries. He warned that whoever turns away from his Sunnah is not upon his way. (Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim) The author tells the reader to think carefully about this. If worship can be wrong when it leaves the Sunnah even when the person wants to do good, then Bidah is even more dangerous. Correct worship must follow the Prophet ﷺ.

## Chapter 11: Following the Fitrah and the Religion of Ibrahim عليه السلام

This chapter teaches Muslims to remain upon the natural religion Allah created people upon, follow the religion of Ibrahim عليه السلام and hold firmly to the Sunnah.

### Quran Evidence

Allah says: "Turn your face sincerely toward the true religion. This is the Fitrah of Allah upon which He created people. There is no change in Allah's creation. This is the straight religion, but most people do not know." (Surah ar-Rum 30:30) Ibrahim and Yaqub عليهما السلام told their children: "Allah has chosen this religion for you, so do not die except as Muslims." (Surah al-Baqarah 2:132)

Allah commanded Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to follow the religion of Ibrahim عليه السلام, who was a Hanif and was not from the people of Shirk. (Surah an-Nahl 16:123)

### Those Closest to Ibrahim عليه السلام

Ibn Masud رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said that every prophet has close allies and that Ibrahim عليه السلام is his close ally among the prophets. He then recited the verse explaining that the people closest to Ibrahim عليه السلام are those who followed him, this Prophet ﷺ and the believers. (Surah Al Imran 3:68)

### Allah Looks at Hearts and Deeds

Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said that Allah does not look at people's bodies or appearances. Allah looks at their hearts and deeds. (Sahih Muslim)

### The Hawd

The chapter includes several hadiths about the Prophet's ﷺ Hawd on the Day of Judgment. Some people will be kept away from it because they changed matters after the Prophet ﷺ. These reports are a warning not to change the religion after his guidance has been made clear. (Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim) One narration explains that the Prophet ﷺ wished to see later believers from his Ummah. He explained that they will be recognized by the signs of Wudu. Yet some people will be turned away because they changed after him. Another narration mentions people who turned away after the Prophet ﷺ. Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما then mentioned the words of Isa عليه السلام in Surah al-Maidah 5:117: he was a witness over his people while he was among them, and after Allah took him, Allah was the Watcher over them.

### Every Child Is Born upon the Fitrah

It is narrated from Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه. The Prophet ﷺ taught that every child is born upon the Fitrah, then the child's parents make the child Jewish, Christian or Magian. He then gave the example of an animal being born complete. Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه connected this hadith to Surah ar-Rum 30:30. It is reported in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim.

### Hadith of Hudhayfah رضي الله عنه

Hudhayfah رضي الله عنه said that other people asked the Prophet ﷺ about good but he asked about evil because he feared it might reach him. The Prophet ﷺ explained that after a time of good there would be evil. After that there could be good mixed with problems. There would be people whose guidance was different from his Sunnah and later there would be callers leading people toward Hell.

Hudhayfah رضي الله عنه asked what he should do if he lived at that time. The Prophet ﷺ told him to stay with the Jamaah of the Muslims and their leader. If there was no Jamaah and no leader, he was told to stay away from the divided groups and remain firm until death. The narration also mentions later trials, the Dajjal and the coming of the Last Hour. (Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim)

### Advice of Abu al-Aliyah

Abu al-Aliyah رحمه الله told people to learn Islam and not leave it. He told them to stay on the straight path, hold to the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ and stay away from false desires.

### The Author's Warning

The author connects these lessons to Allah's words to Ibrahim عليه السلام: "Submit." (Surah al-Baqarah 2:131), the command of Ibrahim and Yaqub عليهما السلام to their children to die only as Muslims (Surah al-Baqarah 2:132) and the warning that only a foolish person turns away from the religion of Ibrahim عليه السلام (Surah al-Baqarah 2:130). The author warns students not to think that these warnings only apply to other people. Every Muslim should fear going away from the straight path and should not feel completely safe from falling into error.

### The Straight Line

Ibn Masud رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ drew one straight line and said that it was Allah's path. Then he drew other lines on the right and left and explained that each one had a devil calling people toward it. He then recited Surah al-Anam 6:153: follow Allah's straight path and do not follow the other paths because they will separate you from His way. (Ahmad and an-Nasai)

## Chapter 12: The Strangeness of Islam and the Merit of the Strangers

This chapter teaches that there may be times when holding firmly to Islam and the Sunnah makes a person seem strange because many people have moved away from correct guidance.

### Quran Evidence

Allah mentions that only a small number from earlier generations stood against corruption and were saved. (Surah Hud 11:116)

## Islam Began as Something Strange

Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said that Islam began as something strange and will return to being strange, so glad tidings are for the strangers. (Sahih Muslim) A report from Ibn Masud رضي الله عنه explains the strangers as people who remain righteous when many people become corrupt. Another report says that the strangers correct the Sunnah when people have corrupted it.

## Holding Firm During Difficult Times

Abu Thalabah رضي الله عنه asked about Surah al-Maidah 5:105, which tells believers to take care of themselves and explains that those who go astray will not harm them if they are guided. The Prophet ﷺ told Muslims to continue commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong. He then warned of a time when greed is followed, desires are obeyed, worldly life is preferred and people are impressed with their own opinions. During such difficult times, holding firmly to the religion will require great patience. The hadith explains that a person who remains firm and does righteous deeds at that time can receive a very great reward, described as the reward of fifty from the earlier believers. (at-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah) A similar report from Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما says that later people who patiently hold to the religion will receive the reward of fifty from the earlier believers. Another report explains that the early Muslims had clear guidance, commanded good, forbade evil and struggled in Allah's cause. Later, ignorance and love of long worldly life would spread. A person who holds firmly to the Quran and Sunnah during that time is promised a great reward. Another narration describes the strangers as those who hold to the Quran when people abandon it and act upon the Sunnah when people leave it.

## Chapter 13: Warning Against Bidah

This final chapter gives a strong warning against inventing new acts of religion. The safe path is to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ and the way of his Companions.

## Hold Firmly to the Sunnah

Al-Irbad ibn Sariyah رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ gave the Companions a powerful reminder that made them fear and brought tears to their eyes. They felt that it sounded like a farewell reminder, so they asked for advice. The Prophet ﷺ advised them to fear Allah, listen and obey. He explained that those who lived after him would see many disagreements. He told them to hold firmly to his Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly guided Caliphs and to hold onto it very strongly. He warned them to stay away from newly invented religious matters because every Bidah is misguidance. (at-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah and Ahmad)

## Advice of Hudhayfah رضي الله عنه

Hudhayfah رضي الله عنه warned Muslims not to perform an act of worship that the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ did not practice. He told people to fear Allah and follow the path of those who came before them.

## Ibn Masud رضي الله عنه and the Circles in the Mosque

Before Fajr, some students used to wait for Abdullah ibn Masud رضي الله عنه. Abu Musa al-Ashari رضي الله عنه came and told them that he had seen something unusual in the mosque. People were sitting in circles with pebbles. A leader told them to say Takbir one hundred times, Tahlil one hundred times and Tasbih one hundred times while they counted with the pebbles. Ibn Masud رضي الله عنه went to them and asked what they were doing. They explained that they were using the pebbles to count their remembrance of Allah. He told them to count their sins instead and assured them that their good deeds would not be lost. He reminded them that many Companions of the Prophet ﷺ were still alive and that the Prophet's ﷺ belongings had not even become old. He warned them that either they believed their way was more guided than the way of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ or they were opening a door to misguidance. They answered: "We only intended good." Ibn Masud رضي الله عنه explained that many people intend good but do not reach it. Good intentions do not make an invented religious practice correct. He also reminded them of the Prophet's ﷺ warning about people who would recite the Quran but it would not go beyond them. The narrator later said that many of the people from those circles were seen with the Khawarij at the battle of Nahrawan. The lesson is to follow the Sunnah from the beginning and not open the door to Bidah.