

# The Foundations of Islamic Belief

The Foundations of the Islamic Belief

by

Al Ghazali (died 505/1111)

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Version 1.0

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## Foreward

Foreword by Professor Hasan El Fatih

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## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

This book was written in Arabic  
by Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, or Algazel as he was known to  
medieval Europe (died 505/1111).

His numerous works are well known, respected and quoted not only the middle east but in the higher universities of west. His contribution to theology and philosophy have proved to be major cornerstones of resource throughout the centuries. During the revival of Greek philosophy in the middle ages, many Christians were attracted and swayed by the persuasion of Greek logic. In an effort to protect Christianity, Christian theologians relied upon the profound arguments of Al Ghazali to defeat the adherents of Greek philosophy and thereby protected their religion.

Al Ghazali's works have been translated and printed in many languages. Comparative studies have shown that Jean Jacques Rousseau, known in the west as the pioneer of children's education, based his ideas and methods upon the work of Al Ghazali.

The Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam says of Al Ghazali: "He was the most original thinker that Islam produced and its greatest theologian." A.J. Arberry, professor and director of the Middle East Centre at the University of Cambridge, England referred to him as being: "He was one of the greatest mystical theologians of Islam and indeed of all mankind." I pray that the readers will benefit from the sound reasoning which they are about to embark upon and that it will open guiding channels of thought that will give pleasure in this life and in the Hereafter. Hasan El Fatih  
Umm Durman Sudan 1992

## **PREFACE**

The first translation into English was by the late Professor Nabih Amin Al Faris, American University, Beirut, October 31, 1962 with the examination of Dr. John H. Patton, Professor of Religion Park College, Parksville, MO. USA. The reason for this work being undertaken yet again is due to the need for updating this work and also to rectify English linguistic usages and to adapt it for the computer with the addition of an index.

If the reader encounters difficulty in understanding some parts of this book, we would advise a visit to the grand philosopher and Sufi of Islam, Professor Hasan El Fatih, at the Mosque of Sheikh Muhammad El Fatih, Umm Durman, Sudan. It is interesting to note that in the English versions of the Bible we found that the proper noun of the Creator referred to as God whereas we found in the Arabic edition of the Bible the proper noun changes to be Allah which is the same proper noun mentioned in the Arabic Koran. In the Name of the Compassionate, the Merciful Allah, This is the Book of the Foundations of Islamic Belief.

## **1 THE BELIEF OF SUNNI, THE WAY OF THE PROPHET**

The Exposition of the Belief of the Sunni, way of the Prophet, is embodied in two phrases of witnessing (Shahadah) which form one of the Pillars of Islam.

## **(A) THE MEANING OF THE FIRST PHRASE OF WITNESSING:**

We say - our success is from Allah - praise be to Allah the Creator, the Restorer, the One who does whatever He wills. He whose Throne is glorious and whose Power is Mighty; who guides the select amongst His worshipers to the righteous path. He who grants them benefits once they affirm His Oneness by guarding the articles of belief from the darkness of doubt and hesitation. He who leads them to follow the way of His chosen Prophet Muhammad - praise and peace be upon him - and to follow the example of his companions, the most honored, by directing their footsteps to the way of truth. He who reveals Himself to them in His Essence and in His Works by His fine attributes which none perceive except the one who inclines his ear in contemplation. He who makes known to them that He is One in His Essence without any associate, Single without any equal, Eternal without a similar. Nothing precedes Him, He is without any beginning. He is Eternal with none after Him, Everlasting without any end, subsisting without cessation, abiding without termination He has not ceased and He will not cease to be described by the epithets of Majesty. At the end of time He will not be subject to dissolution and decay, but He is the First and the Last, the Hidden and Apparent, and He knows everything.

### **1. TRANSCENDENCE (EXALTATION)**

Allah is not a body possessing form, nor a substance restricted and limited: He does not resemble other bodies either in limitation or in accepting division. He is not a substance and substances do not reside in Him; He is not a quality of substance, nor does a quality of substance occur in

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

Him.

Rather, He resembles no existent and no existent resembles Him. Nothing is like Him and He is not like anything. Measure does not bind Him and boundaries do not contain Him.

Directions do not surround Him and neither the earth nor the Heavens are on different sides of Him.

Truly, He is controlling the Throne in the manner in which He said and in the sense in which He willed - in a state of transcendence that is removed from parallel and touch, residence, fixity of location, stability, envelopment, and movement.

The Throne does not support Him, but the Throne and those who carry it are supported by the Subtleness of His Power and are constrained by His Firmness. He is above the Throne and Heavens and above everything to the limits of the earth with an aboveness which does not bring Him nearer to the Throne and the Heavens, just as it does not make Him further from the earth. Rather, He is Highly Exalted above the Throne and the Heavens, just as He is Highly Exalted above the earth.

Nevertheless, He is near to every entity and is "nearer to the worshiper than his juggler vein" and He witnesses everything since His nearness does not resemble the nearness of bodies, just as His Essence does not resemble the essence of bodies. He does not exist in anything, just as nothing exists in Him: Exalted is He that a place could contain Him, just as sanctified is He that no time could limit Him.

For, He was as before He had created time and place, and just as He was, He is now. He is distinct from His creatures through His attributes. There is not in His Essence any other than Him, nor does His Essence exist in any other than Him. He is Exalted from change and movement. Substance does not reside in Him and the quality of substance do not befall Him. Rather, He is in the attributes of His Majesty beyond

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

cessation. And He is in the attributes of His Perfection. He is not in need of an increase in perfection. In His Essence, His Existence is known by reason (in this life).

In the Everlasting Life, His Essence is seen by the eyes of the righteous as a favor from Him, and a subtlety as a completion of favors from Him through their beholding His Gracious Face.

## 2. LIFE AND POWER

He is Living, Able, the Conqueror and All-subduing. Inadequacy and weakness do not befall Him; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep; annihilation does not prevail over Him nor death. He is the Owner of the visible and invisible Kingdom, and of Power and Might. His are dominion, subjugation, creation, and command; the Heavens are rolled in His Right and created things are subjugated in His Firmness.

He is Single in creating and inventing. He is Alone in bringing into existence and innovating. He created all creatures and their deeds, and decreed their sustenance and their life span; nothing decreed escapes His Firmness and the mutations of the affairs does not slip from His Power.

Whatever He decrees cannot be numbered neither does His Knowledge end.

## 3. KNOWLEDGE

He is Knowledgeable of all the known, encompassing all that happens in the depths of earth to the highest heavens. He is Knowledgeable in which there is not an atom that escapes His Knowledge in heaven and earth. Rather, He knows the stamping of the black ant upon the solid rock in the darkest night. He

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

perceives the movement of a particle of dust in mid-air. He knows the secrets and that which is more hidden. He is the Overseer of the whispering of the self and the flow of thoughts, and the most deepest concealment of the selves. With a knowledge which is ancient from eternity and by which He has not ceased to be described through the ages. Not by a knowledge which is subject to updating by occurring and circulating in His Essence.

### 4. WILL

He is the Willer of all existence and the Planner of all contingent things. There is nothing that occurs in His visible or invisible world except by His prior planning and His execution whether it is little or plenteous, small or large, good or evil, benefit or harm, belief or unbelief, gratitude or ingratitude, prosperity or loss, increase or decrease, obedience or disobedience all is according to His Wisdom and Will, what He wills occurs and what He does not will does not occur. There is not a glance of the onlooker nor a stray thought that is not subject to His Will. He is the Creator at first, the Restorer, the Doer of whatsoever He wills. There is none that rescinds His command, and none that supplements His decrees, and there is no escape for a worshiper from disobeying Him, except by His Help and Mercy, and none has power to obey Him except by His Will. Even if mankind, jinn, angels, and devils were to unite to try to move the weight of an atom in the world or to render it still, without His Will they would fail. His Will subsists in His Essence amongst His Attributes. He has not ceased to be described by it from eternity, willing, - in His Infinity - the existence of the things at their appointed time which He has decreed. So they come into existence at their appointed times as He has willed in His Infinity without precedence or delay. They come to pass

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

in accordance with His Knowledge and His Will without variation or change.

He directs matters not through arrangement of thought and awaiting the passage of time, and so no affair occupies Him from another affair.

### 5. HEARING AND SEEING

He - the Most High - is the Hearer, the Seer. He hears and sees.

No audible thing, however faint, escapes His Hearing, and no visible thing, however minute, is hidden from His Sight. Distance does not prevent His Hearing and darkness does not obstruct His Seeing. He sees without a pupil and eyelid, and hears without the meatus and ears, as He perceives without a heart, and seizes without limbs, and creates without an instrument, since His attributes do not resemble the attributes of the creation, and as His Essence does not resemble the essence of creation.

### 6. SPEECH

He - the Most High - speaks, commanding, forbidding, promising, and threatening, with a speech from eternity, ancient, and self-existing. Unlike the speech of the creation, it is not a sound which is caused through the passage of air or the friction of bodies; nor is it a letter which is enunciated through the opening and closing of lips and the movement of the tongue. And that the Koran, the original Torah, the original Gospel of Jesus, and the original Psalms are His Books sent down upon His Messengers, peace be upon them.



## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

The Koran is read by tongues, written in books, and remembered in the heart, yet it is, nevertheless ancient, subsisting in the Essence of Allah, not subject to division and or separation through its transmission to the heart and paper (by this he meant that the movement of the reciter's tongue and his management of the flow of air in his mouth and ear etc., or the writer's inscription upon paper, all of which are created. Whereas the logic of Ghazali addresses what is beyond this human quality and dimension of time and physic. Thereby he refers to the Koran before one's movement of the tongue or transcription onto paper. Most errors have come from our human dimensions, and that we try to describe Divine attributes through our own limited human attributes - Darwish.) Moses - Allah praised him and gave him peace - heard the Speech of Allah without sound and without letter, just as the righteous see the Essence of Allah - the High - in the Hereafter, without substance or its quality. And since He has these qualities, He is Living, Knowing, Willing, Hearing, Seeing and Speaking with life, power, knowledge, will, hearing, sight, and speech, not solely through His Essence.

### 7. DEEDS

He, the Exalted, the High, there is no existence except Him, unless it occurs by His action and proceeds from His Justice, in the best, perfect, complete and just ways.

He is Wise in His verdicts. His justice is not to be compared with that of worshipers, because it is conceivable that the worshiper is unjust when he deals with properties of other than his own. But, harm is not conceivable from Allah - the High - because He does not encounter any ownership of other than Himself, in which His dealing could be described to be harmful. Everything besides Him, children of Adam and jinn, angels and devils, heaven and earth, animals, plants, and

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

inanimates, substance and its quality, as well as things perceived and things felt, are all originated things which He created by His Power and before they were nothing, since He existed in Eternity alone and there was nothing whatsoever with Him.

So He originated creation thereafter as a manifestation of His Power and a realization of that which had preceded of His Will and the realization of His Word in eternity, not because He had any need or necessity for it.

He is magnanimous in creating and inventing and in imposing obligations, not doing it through necessity.

He is Gracious in beneficence and reform, though not through any need. Munificence and Kindness, Beneficence and Grace are His, since He is able to bring upon His creatures all manner of torture and to try them with all kinds of pain and affliction. Even if He should do this, it would be justice from Him, it would not be vile, it would not be tyrannous. He - the Mighty, the Glorified - rewards His believing worshipers for their acts of obedience according to generosity and encouragement rather than according to their merit and obligation. For there is no obligation upon Him in any deed towards anyone and tyranny is inconceivable in Him. For there is no right upon Him towards anyone.

As for His right to be obeyed it is obligatory and binding upon all creatures because He made it obligatory upon them through the tongues of His prophets and not by reason. But He sent His prophets and showed their truthfulness through explicit miracles, and they conveyed His commands and prohibitions as well as His promises and threats. So it became obligatory upon all creatures to believe them and what they brought.

## **(B) THE MEANING OF THE SECOND PHRASE OF WITNESSING WHICH IS THE WITNESSING FOR THE MESSENGERS AND THEIR MESSAGE.**

Allah sent the unlettered, of Quraish, Prophet Muhammad - praise and peace be upon him - with His Message for Arabs and non-Arabs alike, to the jinn and humanity. Therefore Allah superseded other religions by the Religion of Prophet Muhammad - praise and peace be upon him - except that which He confirmed amongst them.

He favored Prophet Muhammad over all other prophets and made him the master of mankind, and declared incomplete any profession of faith which attests to Oneness, which is "There is no god except Allah," unless it is followed by the witness to the Messenger, which is your saying, "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." He obligated all nations to believe in everything he informed of the affairs of here and the Hereafter.

Allah will not accept the belief of any one (worshiper) until he believes in that which the Prophet informed of the affairs that occur after death, the first of which is the question of the angels Munkar and Nakeer. These are two awesome and terrifying beings who will make the deceased sit up in the grave, both soul and body; they will ask him about the Oneness of Allah and about the Message, asking, "Who is your Lord, and what is your Religion, and who is your prophet?" They are also known as the two examiners of the grave and their questions are considered as the first trial after death.

Again, one should believe in the punishment of the grave, and that it is real and that His Ruling is just over both the body

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

and soul in accordance with His Will.

And one should believe in the Scale with the two pans with its indicator - the magnitude of which is like the stages of the Heavens and the earth - in it, the deeds are weighed by the Power of Allah, and its weights or measures are the mustard seed and the atom, in order to establish exact justice. The records of good deeds will be placed in a fine image in the scale of light, and then the balance will be heavy according to its rank with Allah, by His Virtue.

The records of the evil deeds will be cast in an evil image in the scale of darkness, and they will be light in the balance through the Justice of Allah.

One should believe also that the Bridge is real; it is a Bridge stretched over Hell, sharper than the edge of the sword and finer than a hair. The feet of the unbelievers slip on it, according to the decree of Allah - the Exalted - and they will fall into the Fire; but the feet of the believers stand firm upon it, by the Grace of Allah, and so they are driven into the Everlasting residence. And one should believe in the frequented pool, the Pool of Prophet Muhammad - Allah has praised and given him peace -. From which the believers will drink before entering Paradise and after crossing over the Bridge. Whoever drinks a single mouthful from it will never thirst again. Its width is the distance of one month's journey; its waters are whiter than milk and sweeter than honey. Around it are ewers in number like the stars of the sky, and into it flow two springs from al-Kawthar.

And one should believe in the Judgement and the distinctions between those in it, that some will be closely questioned, that some will be treated with forgiveness and that others will enter Paradise without questioning - these are the nearest.

Allah will ask whomsoever He will of the prophets concerning

(B) THE MEANING OF THE SECOND PHRASE OF WITNESSING WHICH IS THE 2<sup>ND</sup> WITNE

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

the deliverance of the Message, and whosoever of the unbelievers concerning their rejection of the Messengers; and He will ask the innovators concerning the way of the Prophet (sunnah) and the Muslims concerning their deeds. One should believe that the believer in the Oneness of Allah (if he enters Hell on account of his sins) will be released from Hell fire after he has been punished, so that there will not remain in Hell one single believer.

One should believe in the intercession of the prophets, of the learned, and of the martyrs, then the rest of the believers - each according to his influence and rank before Allah. Whosoever remains of the believers and has no intercessor will be released through the Grace of Allah, the Mighty, the Glorified. Therefore not one single believer will abide in Hell forever; whosoever has in his heart the weight of an atom of belief will be brought out from there. One should believe the virtues of the Companions - may Allah be pleased with them - and their different ranks, and that the most excellent of mankind, after the Prophet - Allah praised and gave him peace - is Abu-Bakr, and then 'Umar, and then 'Uthman, and then 'Ali - may Allah be pleased with them - and one should think well of all the Companions and praise them, just as Allah - the Mighty, the Glorified - and His Prophet praised them all - Allah has praised the Prophet and given him peace -. All these were reported in the news and witnessed traditions (of the Prophet). Therefore whosoever believes in all this and believes in it without doubting will be among the people of truth and the congregation of the Way of the Prophet (sunnah), and indeed has separated themselves from the followers of error and party of innovation.

So we ask Allah to perfect our faith and make us steadfast in the Religion for us and for all Muslims through His Mercy.

(B) THE MEANING OF THE SECOND PHRASE OF WITNESSING WHICH IS THE 3<sup>RD</sup> WITNE

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

Truly He is the Most Merciful. And may the praise of Allah be upon our Master Muhammad and upon every chosen worshiper.

## 2 THE GRADUATION OF GUIDANCE AND CLASSIFICATION OF THE STAGES OF BELIEF

You should know that what we have already mentioned under the Exposition of the Creed should be presented to children in their early years in order that they may commit it to memory. Its meaning will continue to be unfolded before them little by little as they grow older.

The first step is to commit it to memory, after which comes understanding, then belief, then certainty and realization, all of which are ingrained in the child without proof.

Allah - the Exalted - from His Virtue over the heart of the human being has widened it by preparing the heart from the beginning for belief without the need for any argument or proof.

How can this be denied when all the articles of faith of the people are based upon pure repetition and imitation.

Yes, a belief which results from pure imitation may not be free of some weakness at the beginning, in that it can be shaken and impaired by its opposite whenever it is presented. It should, therefore, be strengthened and confirmed in the heart of the child and the layman until it becomes well established and unshakable.

The way to strengthen and confirm it does not lie in learning the art of debate and dogmatic theology. Rather, to be busy with the recitation of the Koran and its explanation, and

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

reading the Prophetic quotations and their meanings. Also, being busy in the performance of religious duties and acts of worship. It is in this way that one's belief continues to increase and become well established through the proofs and arguments heard from the Koran.

It is also increased through the explanation of the prophetic quotations with their merits. As well as it is increased by the light of worshiping, the fulfillment of obligatory duties and through observing the pious, by keeping company with them, listening to them, observing their stages and manners in obedience to Allah - the Mighty, the Glorified - the way in which they fear Him, and humble themselves before Him.

So the first repetition was like the sowing of seeds in the heart and what followed is like its watering and nursing until it grew and was raised as a good tree having well established roots with branches reaching up into the air. The senses of the child should also be guarded with utmost care against argumentation and dogmatic theology, because what argumentation impairs is greater than what it repairs. What it corrupts is greater than what it reforms. In fact, strengthening the child through argumentation is like striking a tree with an iron ax in the hope that it will strengthen it. In such a way limbs are broken off that can lead to either its destruction, or, most probably impair its growth.

Seeing should, in this case, suffice as a reason. Compare then the faith of the good, the righteous and the common person to that of those of dogmatic theology and debators. You will find that the belief of the ordinary person is as firm as a high mountain which is moved neither by storm nor lightning. On the other hand, the belief of those of dogmatic theology and he who guards his belief with the classified debate is like a thread hanging in the air, blown to and fro by the wind.

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

This is true of all except those who have heard the proof of faith and have accepted it through fellowship, just as they have taken hold of belief itself and accepted it through fellowship, since there is no difference in fellowship between learning the proof or the proved.

Learning the proof is one thing; arriving at it through independent thinking is another which is far from it. If the child were to be brought up on this firm belief then occupy himself with gaining his livelihood, he might not be more enlightened. But according to the belief of the people of the truth he will be saved.

This is because the Religion did not obligate the uncivilized Arabs more than believing and certifying in the apparent articles of belief. They were never obligated to research, inquire, nor to be burdened with the classification of arguments.

However, if one wishes to be among the travelers along the path of the Hereafter in order to be fortunate, one would be able to continue to act in accordance with one's knowledge by holding fast to piety, restraining one's soul from lust, practicing self-discipline and self-mortification. Then avenues of guidance would be opened which would reveal the realities of this belief through the Divine Light cast into one's heart through self-mortification in fulfillment of the promise of Allah who said: "Those who struggle in Our Cause, We will surely guide them to Our ways; and Allah is with those who do good." (Ch.29:69). This is, in truth, the precious pearl which is the ultimate goal of the belief of the sincere and those close to Allah.

It is the precious secret which rested in the heart of Abu Bakr al Siddiq - may Allah be pleased with him - and by which



## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

he excelled all others.

The revelation of this secret, rather, these secrets, have different stages, that depend upon the degree of self-mortification and upon the degree in which the inner self is clean and free of things other than Allah - the High - as well as upon obtaining guidance by means of the light of faith. This is just like the differences which exist among mankind in the comprehension of the mysteries of medicine, jurisprudence and the other sciences because their differences vary with their diligence and with their natural brilliance and prudence. Just as the former variations are not limited, so are the latter not limited.

For example, if you ask whether the study of argumentation and scholastic theology is blameworthy, like astrology, or that it is permissible or commendable, then, you should know that in this particular respect men go to excess and exaggeration on both sides. Some say that it is an innovation and unlawful and that, excluding the sin of polytheism, it is better for the worshiper to face the Creator guilty of every offense except that of Greek based logic of theology. Others say that it is an obligation and an ordinance either an Islamic public mandate or individual mandate. Therefore it is the best form of deed and the highest kind of obligation, and that it is the verification of the science of Oneness and the safeguard of the Religion of Allah - the High -. Among the famous jurisprudists who hold it unlawful are al Shafi, Malik, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Sufyan and all the scholars of the Prophetic quotations. Ibn Abd al A'la - may Allah be pleased with him - said, "On the day Al Shafi' - may Allah be pleased with him - debated with Hafs Al Fard, a Mu'tazilite theologian, Al Shafi' said: 'Excluding the sin of polytheism it is better for the worshiper to face his Creator guilty of every offense than to stand before Him with a little scholastic theology (the

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

science of Divinity). I have also heard Hafs say things which I cannot repeat." He added, "I have discovered among the scholastic theologians things which I never expected to find. Excepting the sin of polytheism, if the worshiper is tried with all the prohibitions it is better for him than looking into scholastic theology."

Al Karabisi related that al Shafi' - may Allah be pleased with him - was once asked about some of the scholastic theology and became infuriated and said, "Ask Hafs al Fard and his cohorts about this - may Allah dishonor them -." When al Shafi' - may Allah be pleased with him - was taken ill, Hafs came to him and asked: "Who am I?" He replied, "You are Hafs al-Fard - may Allah neither protect you nor take you under His auspices until you repent of your sins." He added: "If people only but knew what predilections lurk in scholastic theology they would run away from it as they would run away from a lion." And added, "Whenever I hear a man say that the "name" is "the named" or different from "the named" I bear witness that he is one of the people of scholastic theology and that he has no religion."

Al Za'farani related that al Shafi' once said, "My judgment concerning the scholastic theologians is that they should be beaten with palm branches and carried in that condition among the tribes and clans. While pronouncing "this is the penalty of those who desert the Koran and the prophetic sayings and take themselves to scholastic theology."

Ahmad ibn-Hanbal, said, "A scholastic theologian never succeeds. You cannot find anyone who, having dabbled in scholastic theology, without unsoundness in his heart." He was so strong in its condemnation that he ostracized al Harith al Muhasibi, in spite of the latter's asceticism and piety, because he wrote a work on the refutation of heresy, in which he told him, "Woe unto you. Do you not first state their

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

heretical beliefs and then answer them, thereby compelling men to study these heresies and to ponder over these dubiousities, all of which will draw them into self opinionation and research."

Ahmad - may Allah have mercy on him - also said, "The scholastic theologians are heretics." Malik - may Allah have mercy on him - said "Have you seen how, when one of stronger argument confronts him he will discard his religion for a new one every day?" In other words, the position of the debators is changing. Malik - may Allah have mercy on him - also said, "The testimony of the people of innovation and heretics is not permissible." In interpreting this, some of his companions said that he meant by heretics the scholastic theologians, no matter whichever doctrine they might belong.

Abu-Yusuf said, "He who seeks knowledge through dogmatic theology will become a heretic. Al-Hasan said, "Neither argue with heretics, associate with them nor listen to them." Upon this the scholar of the prophetic quotations in the first era have been unanimous. The narrations which came down to us from them are innumerable. They have said that the companions refrained from it although they are more knowledgeable of the realities and more capable of mastering the wording than others because they knew what evil would come out of it. For this reason the Prophet - praise and peace be upon him - said, "Destroyed are those who split hairs! Destroyed are those who split hairs! Destroyed are those who split hairs! And these are those who are extravagant in investigation and research." Also they proved by saying that if this subject were an integral part of Religion the Messenger of Allah - praise and peace be upon him - would have considered it to be the most important thing to command his Companions to address themselves with, and would have taught them its ways. He would

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

have also praised it and commended its founders.

One must bear in mind that he even taught how one should clean oneself after relieving oneself and urged them to study the law of inheritance and commended them on it. He forbade them from speaking on destiny. And he said: "Refrain concerning destiny." And accordingly the Companions did so - may Allah be pleased with them -.

Needless to say, to add to what the teacher set forth is harm and error; the Companions are our teachers and our example, and we are their followers and students.

The other group proved that the forbidden in the scholastic theology are such terms as substance and substance's quality and the other strange terms with which the Companions - may Allah be pleased with them - were not familiar. But the matter is not difficult to explain, because there is not a single branch of knowledge in which new terms have not been introduced for the sake of conveying meanings.

For example, the Science of Prophetic Quotations, the Science of interpretation, and the Science of Jurisprudence. Had the recipients encountered terms such as refutation, invalidation, composition, deduction, and false collocation, as well as the other questions which are brought as evidence by analogy, they would not comprehend them.

Therefore the introduction of new terms to signify a definite meaning is just as legitimate as inventing vessels with a new shape and form for use in permissible usages.

If it is the meaning of these terms which is forbidden, we do not mean to attain through them anything except the knowledge of the proofs for the creation of the universe, the Oneness of the Creator, and His Attributes as they are mentioned in the Religion.

Since when, is it unlawful to know Allah - the High - with the proof? But if it is sectarianism, fanaticism, enmity, hatred,

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

and all that dogmatic theologies and controversy breed which are meant and intended, then these are unlawful and should be guarded against and avoided, just as pride, conceit, hypocrisy, and the desire for power which the sciences of the Prophetic Quotations, Koran interpretation, and jurisprudence breed are unlawful and should be guarded against and avoided. Nevertheless, some of the knowledge should not be prohibited because of the methods. How then is mentioning the proof or requesting it or searching for it prohibited, when Allah said, "Say: Bring your proof" And He - the Mighty, the Glorified - said "that he who would perish might perish by clear proof, and he who would live might live by clear proof." And He - the High - said: "Have you any authority for this?" In other words a proof. And He - the High - said: "Say: 'For Allah is the overwhelming proof.'" And He - the High - said: "Have you not seen him who disputed with Abraham about his Lord" up to "He who disbelieved became pale" When He - the Exalted - mentioned how Abraham presented the proof in debating and gained the upper hand over his opponent in a matter that praises Abraham.

And He - the Mighty, the Glorified - said: "This is Our proof, We give it to Abraham over his nation." And He - the High - said: "They said: 'O Noah, you have debated us a lot.'" And He - the High - said in Pharaoh's story "And who is the Lord of the World" up to "even if I bring to you something clear" Briefly, the Koran, from its beginning to its end, is an argument with the unbelievers. The greatest proof of theologians for the Oneness of Allah is His Saying: "Had there been in either (Heaven or earth) gods besides Allah, both would have surely gone to ruin." Their greatest proof for the prophecy is, "And if you are in doubt as to that which We have sent down to our worshiper (Prophet Muhammad), then produce a chapter like it." Their greatest proof for the resurrection is, "Say: He shall give life to them Who originated them at

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

first." And so on of the rest of the verses and the proofs. Thus the prophets - the praise of Allah be upon them - did not cease to debate with the unbelievers and dispute with them. Allah said, "Dispute with them in the kindest manner." The Companions - may Allah be pleased with them - too used to debate and dispute with the unbelievers, but only when necessary. During the time of the Companions the need for disputation was minimal. The first to establish the precedence of summoning innovators back to truth by means of debate and argument was 'Ali ibn abi Talib - may Allah be pleased with him - when he sent ibn Abbas to the Kharijites. Ibn Abbas argued with them saying, "What, you rebel against your leader?" They replied, "He has fought, but did not turn the prisoners to be slaves nor took the spoils of war." Ibn Abbas explained to them that prisoners and spoils are taken only in a war against unbelievers, adding, "Would any of you, if Lady A'isha - may Allah be pleased with her - had been taken captive on the Day of the Camel, and if she had fallen to his lot, have deemed it lawful to deal with her as he dealt with his own property while she is referred to in the Koran as your mother?" They answered "No," and consequently two thousand of them returned to be obedient. It was also reported that al Hasan once debated with a Qadarite (who denied predestination) with the result that the latter repented. Similarly, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib - may Allah honor his face - also debated with a Qadarite.

It is also reported that 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud - may Allah be pleased with him - debated with Yazid ibn 'Amirah on the subject of belief. 'Abdullah said: "If I say that I am a believer it will be like saying that I am in Paradise." Thereupon Yazid ibn 'Amirah said to him, "O Companion of the Messenger of Allah, what is belief except to believe in Allah, His angels, Books and Messengers, as well as in resurrection

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

and the scales, and to perform the prayers, keep the fast, and pay the obligatory charity. Yet we have sins which, if we knew that they will be forgiven us, we would know that we will be of the people of Paradise. For this reason we say that we are believers, but we do not say that we are from the people of Paradise." Ibn Mas'ud replied, "By Allah, you have said the truth; this was a mistake on my part." Thus it should be said that the Companions immersed little in the debating and this they did for a short time and not as a long time necessity nor by the way of authorship, teaching it or taking it as a profession. Furthermore this limiting practicing on their part was due to little need for it as innovation did not appear in their time. They addressed themselves to it briefly because their only purpose was to silence the adversary and compel him to admit his error; they aimed at revealing the truth and removing dubiosities. Yet, whenever the confusion of the adversary persisted or he insisted in continuing in error, they prolonged their argument, never reckoning, as it were once they started they could not measure the need or the weight.

Their not applying themselves to teaching and writing about it is not unlike their custom with regard to jurisprudence, interpretation of Koran, and prophetic quotations. Therefore, if it is permissible to compose books on jurisprudence and to work out rare hypothetical cases which seldom arise, either as a preparation for the time when it is needed, or simply to sharpen the wits. It is also permissible for us to classify the methods of disputation in preparation for the time when dubiosities flare up or an innovator runs loose; or simply to sharpen the wits or have the argument ready so that when needed it will be within reach of all just as the preparation of armaments for war before the day of battle.

This is practically all that can be said on behalf of the two groups (the proponents and the opponents of dogmatic

theology).

## 1. RULINGS CONCERNING DEBATE

If you ask me what I think the best is: I will say that the truth of the matter is that those who condemn it absolutely and under all circumstances as well as those who praise it absolutely and unreservedly are wrong. The matter should be more carefully detailed.

You should know then, that first of all a thing, such as wine or carrion, may be pronounced unlawful from its very nature. What I mean by 'its very nature' is that the cause of its being pronounced unlawful is a quality inherent in it. Intoxication and death. If we were asked concerning these two things, we would not hesitate to say that they were absolutely unlawful, and would in no way think of allowing carrion to be eaten in time of desperation, nor ever think of permitting the drinking of wine when a person starts to choke over a mouthful of food and finds nothing with which to swallow it besides wine.

In the second place a thing may be pronounced unlawful for some other reason, such as underselling your Muslim brother during the period of option, trading during the call to prayer, or eating earth which is pronounced unlawful because of its harmful effect. Such things are divided into those which are harmful both in small and large quantities, and are therefore pronounced unlawful. For example, poison which is fatal whether in small or large quantity; and those which are harmful only when taken in excess like, for example, honey, which can be harmful to a feverish patient. The same is true



## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

of eating earth. Therefore, in pronouncing wine absolutely unlawful, only the most general cases were taken into consideration. In the event that something new arises, it will be well to consider the detailing.

We return now to the science of scholastic theology to say that it has benefits and harm.

With regard to its usefulness whenever it is useful it is either lawful, commendable, or obligatory, as the occasion demands. As to its harm, whenever it is harmful it is unlawful. Its harm lies in raising doubts and undermining the articles of faith by moving them out from the realm of certitude and determination. These things are happening at the beginning and their restoration by means of proof is doubtful. Furthermore, it varies with the individual. Therefore it is true that it is harmful to the faith. Yet it has another harmful influence which manifests itself in confirming the belief of the heretics in their heresies and establishing them in their hearts so that their claims increase and their insistence on them becomes more stubborn. This kind of harm, however, results from the fanaticism which disputation arouses. For this reason you find that the lay heretic can, through kindness, be easily dissuaded from his error in no time. But if he were brought up in a town where disputation and fanaticism abound it will be impossible for both the past and current generation to remove the heresy from his heart, their combined efforts notwithstanding. On the contrary, passion, fanaticism, hatred of the adversaries of disputation and non-conformist groups prevail over his heart and prevent him from comprehending the truth so that even if he were told, "Do you want Allah to remove for you the veil and to reveal to you through seeing that the truth is on the side of your adversary?" he would dislike it for fear that his adversary would be gladdened by it. This, then, is the chronic disease which has spread among men all over the land. It is a kind of

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

corruption which is set in motion by the disputants through their fanaticism. That is its harm.

As to its benefits some think that it is useful in revealing realities and knowing them as they really are. But how far from the truth this is, because the fulfillment of noble desire is not found in disputation. In fact the perplexity and confusion consequent on disputation surpass anything which it may reveal or unfold. If you were to hear that from a scholar of the prophetic quotations or a semi-scholar you would think that men are the enemies of that of which they are ignorant. Take it, then, from one who has familiarized himself with disputation and, after a careful study and a thorough investigation of it in which he surpassed the extreme limits of its masters and went even further to study in great detail other cognate subjects, has come to dislike it, and has ascertained that the road to the realities of knowledge is closed from this direction. Disputation, as a matter of fact, will inevitably reveal, unfold and clarify a few things, but this is very rare and only occurs in simple and clear matters which are readily understood even before any thorough study of the art of disputation. It has only one benefit. It preserves the belief for the ordinary people and safeguards it against the confusion of innovators by different kinds of argumentation. For the layman is swayed by the argument of the innovator although the argument may be false; and to confront a false position with another refutes it. People are expected to follow this belief which we have already mentioned because the Religion has ordained it for the good of their temporal and spiritual lives and because the good early generations agreed on it.

The learned are expected to watch over it for the ordinary people against the ambiguities of the innovators, just as the magistrates are expected to safeguard their property against

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

the attacks of the oppressors and ravishers. When both its harm and benefit are fully understood, one should be like the physician who is adept in the use of dangerous drugs, which he does not apply except to the right place and only at the time of desperation. To explain further, the laymen and the ordinary people who are engaged in crafts and trades should be left alone in the integrity of their beliefs which they have accepted when they were instructed in the faith which we have already stated. To teach them disputation is decidedly harmful to them as it will perhaps arouse doubts in their minds which will shake their belief. Once these doubts are aroused it will not be possible to remedy their shaken belief.

As to the layman who believes in a certain innovation, he should be called back to the truth with kindness and tact and not with fanaticism, with soft words which are convincing to the soul and effective in the heart, words similar to those of the arguments of the Koran and the prophetic quotations, mixed with a little admonition and warning. This is much better than debate along the line set down by the scholastic theologians. This is because the layman, when he hears such arguments, thinks that they are a kind of technique in disputation which the disputant has learned in order to draw men to his belief. Consequently, if the layman fails to reply to these arguments he will assume that the scholastic theologians of his school are capable of refuting them. Disputation with both this man and the former is unlawful. Likewise it is unlawful to argue with one who has fallen victim to doubt, since doubt should be removed with kindness by admonition and understandable proofs free of excessive speculation and endless debate. In fact disputation is useful in only one case, namely, when the layman has been persuaded to believe in an innovation through one kind of argument, in which case it should be countered by the same kind of argument in order to recall the person to the

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

truth. This, however, applies to those who - because of their fondness of disputation - are no longer satisfied with the ordinary admonitions and warnings, but have reached a stage where nothing will cure them except debate. Consequently it is permissible to argue with them. But in a country where heresy is rare and one rite prevails, it should be sufficient to state the articles of faith which we have already mentioned, without any attempt to take up the question of proofs. The person should wait until something questionable arises before he takes up the question of proofs which he should present according to the need. If the heresy were a common one and a fear existed that the children might be beguiled with it, then there would be no harm in teaching them the equivalent of what we have included in part of this book entitled "The Jerusalem Message" (al-Risalah al-Qudsiyah), as a means for overcoming the influence of the disputations of innovators if that influence should confront the children. This is a brief thing which we included in this book because of its brevity. If the child were bright and therefore became aware of a certain question or grew skeptical of something in his mind, then the feared disease has appeared and the malady has become visible. There will be no harm, then, to promote the child to the equivalent of that which we have included in the book entitled al-Iqtisad fi al-I'tiqad (The Mid-way Belief), which is free from any departures from a discussion of the foundations of the articles of faith to the other investigations of the scholastic theologians. If this convinces the child then he might be left alone; but if this should fail to convince him, then the disease has become chronic, the malady rooted, and the epidemic widespread. Let, then, the physician be as kind and tactful as possible, and let him await the Will of Allah until, through His Grace, the truth shall be revealed to the child. Otherwise he will persist in his doubt and skepticism. The material contained in that book and others of the same

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

kind is that from which benefit can be expected. Chapters not confined to the same subject are of two kinds.

The first comprises chapters which deal with subjects other than the foundations of the articles of faith, such as those which discuss propensity, transmutations and the different kinds of perceptions or discoursing on sight, whether or not it has an opposite which is called obstruction or blindness. If this obstruction does exist, then it will be an obstruction (which prevents the eye) from (seeing) all invisible things, or a proof which verifies every visible thing that can be seen, as well as other misleading trivialities. The second kind of these chapters contains a further expansion of the same arguments as applied to other subjects, together with several questions and answers - details which add nothing but confusion and perplexity to him who has not already been convinced by the previous material. For there are certain things which become more obscure with dilation and expansion. If one were to say that the investigation into the rules of perceptions and propensities is useful for sharpening the mind which is the instrument of Religion just as the sword is the instrument of Holy war (jihad), hence there is no harm in sharpening it, it will be like saying that playing chess, because it sharpens the mind, is a part of Religion. This, however, is insane because the mind may be sharpened through the other sciences of the Religion in which there is no fear of harm or injury.

By this you see how much of scholastic theology is blameworthy and how much is praiseworthy, the conditions wherein it is condemned and these wherein it is praised, as well as the persons who are benefited by it and the persons who are harmed. If you should then say that, since you acknowledge the need for it in refuting the arguments of the innovators, and since innovations have now risen and calamities spread, the need for it has become urgent, it is inevitable that

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

undertaking this science should become an Islamic public mandate just as undertaking to safeguard property and other rights and fulfilling the duties of justice and government and the rest. And unless the learned men engage in spreading and teaching this science and in making research in it, it will not endure; and if it were completely abandoned, it would surely disappear; nor is there in human nature by itself a sufficient ability to cut through the dubiosities of innovators unless this subject is learnt and studied. Therefore there should be instruction in it, and its investigation is now one of the Islamic public mandate, contrary to what it was at the time of the Companions when the need for it was not urgent.

If you should say this, then know that the truth of the matter is that undoubtedly there should be, in every town, someone who would undertake to engage in this science and take it upon himself to refute the dubiosities of the innovators which have spread in that particular town. This undertaking is performed through education, but it is not wise to instruct the laity in it just as they are instructed in jurisprudence and interpretation. For this is like a drug, and jurisprudence is like food. The harm of food is not dangerous but the harm of drugs is dangerous as we have already mentioned. The learned people of this science should confine their instruction to men who have the three following traits: The first is devotion to knowledge and passion for it; for the working man is prevented by his work from mastering the subject completely and from dispelling doubts when they arise. The second trait is sagacity, intelligence, and eloquence, because those with lessor intellect do not benefit by his understanding and the dull one does not gain by his argument. On the contrary such a person is injured by disputation and should not expect any good from it.

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

The third trait is that the man should by nature be good, religious, and pious; he should not be dominated by passions, because the sinful man would stray from Religion at the least provocation. Passions would do away with all deterrents and remove the barrier which stands between him and worldly pleasures. He would not be keen on dispelling anything questionable, but rather would seize upon it to free himself from any obligation. The things which such a student will spoil would be greater than those which he would reform.

When you know these divisions you would realize that, in disputation the praiseworthy argument is of the same kind as the arguments of the Koran, kind words which influence the hearts and convince the minds without going deeply into reasoning and analyses which most people do not understand; and whenever they understand them they consider them trickeries and artifices which their proponent has learnt in order to make things ambiguous. Should he be confronted by one of his professional colleagues he would resist him. You will also know that al Shafi' and all the good, early generation were forbidden from engaging in disputation and devoting themselves exclusively to it, because of the harm inherent in it which we have already pointed out. The reports of ibn Abbas' debate with the Kharijites and Ali's debate concerning free will was of the clear and intelligent kind, carried out at the time of need. Such disputation is praiseworthy under all conditions. Undoubtedly the need for disputation differs with the time; therefore it is not unlikely that the rule which governs it should also differ. This then is the rule of the creed which Allah imposed on mankind and the method of defending and preserving it.

As to dispelling doubts, revealing truths, knowing things as they really are, and comprehending the mysteries which the words of this belief signify, there is no way to attain any of

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

them except through self-mortification and the subduing of passions, through seeking Allah whole heartedly and persisting in thoughts which are free from the blemishes of disputation. They are a mercy from Allah which comes to those who expose themselves to its beneficence according to what Allah ordained for them and the extent to which they had exposed themselves to it as well as the capacity of their hearts and the degree of their purity. This is the sea the depth of which cannot be sounded and the waters of which cannot be traversed.

## 2. REALITY AND RELIGION

If you say that this discourse implies that these sciences have external as well as internal meanings, that some of them are obvious and readily understood, while others are hidden and become evident through self-mortification, discipline, earnest desire, pure thinking and a heart free from all worldly activities except those which are required, and conclude that such discourse is almost contrary to the Religion because the Religion does not have external and internal meanings, secret and manifest, but the external and the internal, the secret and the manifest, are in it all the same. Then you should know that the division of these sciences into hidden and obvious is not denied by anyone of any insight but is denied by the ignorant who, having acquired some knowledge in their youth, did not advance any further and consequently failed to gain promotion to the lofty heights where lie the stations of the learned men and the spiritual sheikhs.

This is evident from the testimony of the Religion as the Prophet said, "Indeed, there is an external meaning and an internal meaning to the Koran, a scope and a point." 'Ali,



## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

pointing to his breast, said, "Indeed, herein lies abundant knowledge; would that there were some to (comprehend and) transmit it." The Prophet also said, "We prophets were ordered to communicate with everyone according to his ability to understand." And again, "No one has ever recited a prophetic quotation to a people which their minds have failed to grasp without it being a temptation for them." Allah says: "And we strike these similitudes for the people, but none understands them except those who know." Ch.29:42 Koran.

The Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - said, "Indeed, knowledge has a branch which resembles a hidden thing; no one grasps it except those who know Allah." And again, "If you only knew what I know, you would laugh a little and weep much." If this had not been a secret which he was forbidden to divulge because of the inability of the minds to comprehend it, why then did he not explain it to them, especially as they would have certainly believed him if he had done so? In connection with the interpretation of the Words of Allah, "It is Allah who has created the seven heavens and of earth their like; and between them the Command descends...." (Ch.65:12 Koran). Ibn Abbas said, "Were I to relate its interpretation you would stone me." In another transmission, "you would have said, 'He is an unbeliever'." Abu-Hurayrah said, "I have received from the Prophet of Allah two things, one of which I have made public. Were I to divulge the other, this throat would be cut." The Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - said, "Abu-Bakr has excelled you not by excessive fasting and much prayer, but by a secret which rests in his chest." No doubt this secret was connected with the foundations of Religion and not removed from it. And whatever belonged to the foundations of Religion could not have been hidden from the other Companions through its outward form.

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

Sahl al-Tustari - may Allah be pleased with him - said, "The learned person possesses three kinds of knowledge: visible knowledge which he imparts to people in general; invisible knowledge which he cannot reveal except to its own people; and finally a confidential knowledge which lies between him and His Lord and which he cannot reveal to anyone." One of the gnostics said, "To divulge the secret of the Lord is equivalent to unbelief." Some one also said, "The Lord has a secret, if revealed, prophecy will become obsolete. Prophecy has a secret, if divulged, knowledge will become useless, and the learned people of Allah have a secret, if disclosed, the Religion will become of no force." If he who had said this did not mean thereby the futility of prophecy as far as those with lessor intellect are concerned because of their inability to understand, then what he said is not true. Rather, that which is true is free of contradiction. The perfect man is he whose knowledge does not destroy his piety, and the road to piety is through the prophecy.

You may say, "These verses and prophetic quotations may be subject to several interpretations. Show us, then, how their visible meaning differs from the invisible. For if the visible is contradictory to the invisible, it will destroy the Religion, which is exactly the position of those who say that reality is contrary of the Religion. This is unbelief because the Religion represents the visible and reality represents the invisible. If the one is neither contradictory to, nor in disagreement with the other, then both are identical.

Therefore the division (of knowledge into obvious and hidden, visible and invisible) is hereby destroyed and the Religion will have no secret (meaning) which should not be divulged. Rather both the hidden and the obvious will be the same." If you inquire, then you should know that this question raises a grave issue and leads into the science of Revelation departing from the intent of the science of practical Religion which is

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

the purpose of these books. For the articles of faith which we have already mentioned come under the deeds of the heart which we are required to receive with acceptance and consent, by fixing the heart on them and adhering to them, not by endeavoring to comprehend their realities, since this was not required of all people. Were it not a part of practical Religion we would not have mentioned it in this book, and were it not one of the outward deeds of the heart we would not have mentioned it in the first half of the book. Real (and complete) revelation is an attribute of the essence of the heart and its inward part. But if the discussion leads to the stirring up of doubt or the shadow of doubt concerning the contradiction of the visible to the invisible, a brief word of explanation becomes necessary. For he who says that reality disagrees with the Religion and the invisible contradicts the visible is closer to unbelief than to belief.

### **3. SECRETS CONCEALED BY THE PEOPLE OF ALLAH**

In fact, the secrets whose comprehension is peculiar to the favorites of Allah and the practice of which is limited to them and which they do not divulge to the masses may be divided into five categories.

The first is that the thing in itself is subtle and beyond the comprehension of most hearts and minds. Consequently its comprehension is restricted to the elite who should not divulge it to those who are unable to grasp it lest, whenever their hearts fail to comprehend it or to understand the concealed secrets of the spirit, it becomes a calamity to them.

The Prophet himself refrained from explaining this part. The

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

minds fail to comprehend its reality and the imaginations to imagine its truth. But do not think that this was not revealed to the Prophet of Allah - the praise and peace be upon him - for he who does not know the spirit does not know himself, and he who does not know himself does not know his Creator. It is not unlikely that this was revealed to some of the people who are close to Allah and the learned men although they were not prophets; but they disciplined themselves in the etiquette of the Religion and held their peace in the matters where the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - himself was silent. In fact there are in the attributes of Allah many hidden things which are beyond the comprehension and understanding of the crowds. Of these, the Prophet of Allah - the praise and peace be upon him - did not mention anything except those that are obvious to the minds, such as knowledge and power and the like, which men understand in terms of something akin to them and then suppose that they performed the feat through their own knowledge and power, especially since they possess certain qualities which are called knowledge and power. Consequently they arrive at that by some manner of analogy. But if the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - mentioned some of the attributes of Allah to which men have nothing akin and which do not resemble, even remotely, anything they possess, they would not have understood them. Thus, the pleasure of coition, if mentioned to the child or to the impotent, will not be understood by them except in relation to the pleasure of eating which they comprehend. This understanding, however, will not be one of actual experience. Furthermore, the difference between the Knowledge and Power of Allah and human knowledge and power is greater than the difference between the pleasure of coition and the pleasure of eating. In short, mankind does not comprehend except themselves and their own attributes which are present with them or were with him in the past. By

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

comparison and analogy with these they understand the attributes of others. They will also realize that there is a difference between their attributes and those of Allah in nobleness and perfection. Therefore it is not within the power of people but to declare as belonging to Allah what has been declared as belonging to themselves, such as action, knowledge, and power as well as other attributes and to acknowledge that in Allah they are the most perfect and the most noble. Most of their emphasis would, therefore, be on their own attributes rather than on those of Majesty which belong exclusively to Allah.

For this reason the Prophet said, "I cannot count praising You as You have praised Yourself. "This does not mean the inability to express what I comprehend but rather an admission of the inability to comprehend the Essence of the Majesty of Allah. For this reason again someone said: "No one truly knows Allah except Allah Himself." Abu-Bakr al-Siddiq said, "Praise be to Allah who has not given men a way to know Him except through their inability to know Him." Let us now, however, stop this kind of discussion and go back to the main purpose, namely that one of these categories comprises that which the minds fail to comprehend, such as the spirit and some of the attributes of Allah. Perhaps the Prophet referred to something of the same nature when he said, "His cover is Light, if He reveals it, indeed, the Exaltation of His Face will burn everything of His creation that His Sight reaches." (Darwish notes: Christians are taught to believe and surrender their limited reason and trust God. The same applies to Muslim scholars who believe in the limitation of the brain and trust Allah and His Messengers so the question remains: "Is there proof that God has a son which came from Him Himself?" The answer in both Islam's Koran and authentic, early Christian literature is that He does not. In the Koran you will find a denial of such claim and that Allah told Prophet Muhammad to

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

tell the world "If the Merciful has a son, indeed I will be the first one to worship him." Therefore the rejection is not based upon malice or even the limitation of the brain that it fails to comprehend, but it is based upon clear revelation which should be considered by all.)

The second category of the hidden things which the prophets and the people who are close to Allah decline to mention or divulge comprises those things which are intelligible in themselves and the minds do not fail to grasp, but their mention is harmful to most hearers although it is not harmful to the prophets and the people who are close to Allah.

The secret of the decrees of Allah which the learned men were forbidden to divulge belongs to this part. Consequently it is not unlikely that certain truths may be harmful to some people just as the light of the sun is harmful to the eyes of bats and the perfume of the rose is harmful to black-beetles. And how could this be deemed unlikely when we know that our saying that unbelief, adultery, sin, and evil exist all by the Will of Allah, which in itself is true, but, nevertheless, has been harmful to many because it was taken by them as an evidence for folly, lack of wisdom, and approval of evil and wickedness? Thus has al-Rawandi as well as several separatists, deviated from the right path by following such heresies.

Similarly, if the secret of the decrees of Allah were divulged most people would fancy that Allah is lacking in power, because their minds are incapable of comprehending anything which will remove that fancy.

Furthermore, if someone should discuss the Day of Resurrection and should say that it will fall after a thousand years, or a few years after or a few years before, his words would be understood. Nevertheless the appointed time of the Day of Resurrection was not foretold for the welfare of mankind and

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

for fear of the harm which might ensue. The (intervening) period may be long and the appointed time very distant, with the result that people, thinking that the Day of Recompense is remote, would cease to mind or care. On the other hand it may be, in the Knowledge of Allah, close at hand. If then, the appointed time should be foretold, people would be greatly frightened with the result that they would neglect their (daily) work and transactions and havoc would overtake the world. Were this to occur and come true, it would be an example of this category.

The third category is where the thing is such as will be understood and cause no harm when mentioned clearly, although it is usually expressed through metaphor or allegory so that its impression on the heart of the listener may be deeper. Its value is that it leaves a greater impression on the heart. Thus if a person had said that he had seen a man place pearls around the necks of swine and his words were taken metaphorically to express the imparting of knowledge, and the spread of learning among those who are unworthy, the (ordinary) listener would readily understand its literal meaning while the thorough and careful listener, when he examines and finds that the man had no pearls and was not surrounded by swine, would see through and comprehend the inner and invisible meaning. Consequently men differ in this respect. An example of this found in the following poem: Two men, one a weaver the other a tailor on either side of Constellation of Virgo; One is weaving shrouds for the deceased, and his companion tailors for the forthcoming one. The poet expressed the celestial phenomena of the rising of the stars and their setting metaphorically through the parable of two artisans. This kind of (metaphor) belongs to the principle of expressing a certain meaning through a picture which contains the same meaning or a similar meaning.

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

Belonging to the same kind are the words of the Prophet when he said, "Verily the mosque will shrink when people spit in its courtyard just as the piece of skin shrinks when it is placed over the fire." You can readily understand that the courtyard of the mosque does not actually shrink when people spit in it. What the words of the Prophet really mean is that the atmosphere of the mosque, being honored and exalted, has been dishonored and belittled by spitting, which is as opposed to the idea of the mosque as fire is to the integrity of the particles of skin.

Belonging to the same kind are the words of the Prophet when he said, "Is he who raises his head from prostration before the prayer leader not afraid that Allah will transform his head into that of a donkey?" This, however, will never take place literally but only metaphorically since the head of the donkey is proverbial, not for its form and shape, but for its characteristic stupidity and foolishness. Thus, whoever would raise his head from prostration before the prayer leader, his head would become like that of a donkey in stupidity and foolishness. It is this which is meant and not the shape which the literal meaning (of the words) indicates. For it is utterly foolish to place following (the prayer leader) and preceding (him) together because they are contradictory.

The knowledge that, in such cases, there are inner meanings which differ from the outward significations, can only be determined by either rational or legal evidence. The rational is when any interpretation according to the outward meaning is impossible, as in the words of the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - when he said: "The heart of the believer lies between two of the fingers of the Merciful (Allah)." When we examine the hearts of the believers we shall not find them surrounded with fingers, and consequently we shall know that the words are used metaphorically for power which is inherent



## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

in fingers and constitutes their hidden life. Furthermore, power was metaphorically represented by the fingers because such a metaphor conveys the idea of power more completely. Of the same kind is the instance where Allah expresses the idea of His Power metaphorically by saying: "When We decree a thing, We only say: 'Be,' and it is." (Ch.16:40 Koran) The outward meaning of this verse is not possible because if the saying of Allah 'Be' was addressed to the thing before that thing came into existence, then it would simply be an impossibility since the non-existent does not understand address and, therefore, cannot obey. And if it was addressed to the thing after the thing has come into existence, then it would be superfluous, since the thing is already in existence and does not need to be brought into being. But whereas this metaphor has been more impressive upon the minds in conveying the idea of the greatest power, recourse has been made to it.

Those cases where the inner meaning is determined by means of legal evidence are the cases which can be interpreted according to their literal and outward signification, but, on the authority of prophetic quotations, a meaning other than the outward was intended, as is the case in the interpretation of the Words of Allah when He said, "He sends down water from the sky which fills the riverbeds to overflowing, so that their torrents carries a swelling foam..." (Ch.13:17 Koran). Here the word water stands for the Koran and the torrents represent the hearts. Some of the hearts receive and hold a lot; others receive a lot and hold little; while others still receive a lot and hold nothing at all. The foam represents unbelief and hypocrisy, which, although it rises to and floats upon the surface of the water, does not last; but guidance which benefits mankind, endures.

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

In this part a group of men went deeply and interpreted the things which were mentioned in connection with the Hereafter, such as the balance, the Bridge, and the like. All this, however, is innovation because it was not handed down by prophetic quotations, especially since its literal and outward interpretation is not impossible. Therefore it should be interpreted literally. The fourth category is where a person comprehends the thing in a general way and then through further investigation and experimentation, understands its particulars so that it becomes a part of him. Thus the two kinds of knowledge differ. The first, (i.e. the general) resembles the husks, while the second (i.e. the particular), resembles the pith. The first is the visible or outward, the second is the invisible or inward. This is just like the example of the man who sees a person in the dark or from a distance and acquires a certain picture of that person. But when he sees him from a close range or after the darkness has gone, he realizes certain differences. This last picture, however, is not opposed to the first but complementary to it. The same is true of knowledge, faith, and belief. For a person may believe in the existence of love, sickness, and death even before any of them occur. But to believe in their existence after they have taken place is more complete than believing in their existence before they take place. In fact mankind has, with regard to passion and love as well as the other conditions, three different stages and three distinct degrees of comprehension. The first is to believe in the existence of the thing before it takes place; the second is to believe in its existence at the time of its occurrence; and the third is to believe in its existence after it has taken place.

To recognize the existence of hunger after it is gone is different from recognizing its existence before it is gone. Similarly, there are some of the sciences of Religion which

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

mature by experience and their mature state as compared with their premature state is like the invisible as compared to the visible. Hence there is a difference between the sick man's knowledge of health and the healthy man's knowledge of it. In short, people differ in these four parts; yet in none of them is there an invisible meaning which contradicts the visible. Rather the invisible meaning completes and perfects the visible just as the pith completes the husk.

The fifth category is where concrete words are used figuratively. Those with lesser intellect will regard the literal and visible meaning sensible and will not go beyond it; but the man who has an insight for realities will comprehend the secret it contains. This is like the words of him who said, "The wall said to the peg, 'why do you split me?' The peg replied 'Ask the one who is hitting me and does not let me go. Go and see the mallet which is behind me.'" This is, undoubtedly, figurative.

Of the same kind are the following Words of Allah, "Then He willed to the heaven, when it was smoke, and to it and to the earth He said: 'Come willingly, or unwillingly.' 'We come willingly,' they answered." (Ch.41:11 Koran). Those with lesser intellect, because of their lack of understanding, would assume that both the Heaven and the earth possess life intellect, and the ability to understand speech. He would also assume that they were addressed by a speech of actually enunciated words which both could hear and reply to with enunciated words saying, "We come willingly." But whosoever has insight would realize that this was a figurative (use of language) and that Allah only expressed that the Heaven and earth are subject to His Will. Of the same kind, too, are the Words of Allah when He said, "There is nothing that does not proclaim His Praise..." (Ch.17:46 Koran). Those with lesser intellect, because of their lack of understanding, would assume that the inanimate things possess life intellect, and

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

the ability to speak and enunciate words, so that they would have to say, "Praise is to Allah" in order that His Praise might be established. But he who has insight would know that the actual utterance with the tongue was not meant by that but merely that everything, through its own existence, praises Allah, and in its own essence exalts Him and attests to His Oneness. As has been said: "In everything He has a sign which declares that He is One." In the same way it is said, "This masterpiece testifies that its Maker possesses the ability and perfect knowledge." This does not mean that the masterpiece actually utter the words, "I testify ..." etc. but merely that, through its form and state, (it testifies to the Ability and Knowledge of its Maker).

Similarly everything does, in itself, stand in need of the Creator to create and sustain it, to maintain its attributes and to move it to and fro in its different states. And through its need it testifies to its Maker by Exalting Him. Such a witness is comprehended by those who have insight, not those who stand still and do not venture beyond the externals. For this reason Allah said, "But you do not understand their extolling." (Ch.17:46 Koran). Those with lesser intellect do not understand this at all, while the favorites of Allah and the versatile learned men do not understand it perfectly because everything extols Allah and praises Him in many ways and each comprehends according to his intellect and insight. The enumeration of these witnesses is not becoming under the science of practical Religion. In this part too those who cling to externals differ from those who have insight, and in it the disagreement between the visible and the invisible becomes evident.

## 4. INTERPRETATION AND ABSTENTION WITH SUBMISSION

In this connection people are either extremists or followers of the middle-road. As extremists, some have gone so far in the (allegorical) interpretation of words that they have explained away all or most of their outward and literal meaning. They have taken the Words of Allah, "Their hands will speak to and their legs will testify to their earnings." (Ch.36:65 Koran) as well as, "'Why did you bear witness against us,' they will say to their skins, and their skins will reply: 'Allah gave us speech, as He gave speech to everything.'" (Ch.41:21 Koran) and the conversation which takes place between Munkar and Nakeer, and in the Balance, the Bridge, and the Judgement Day together with the debate between the people of Hell and the people of Paradise when (the former) says: "Pour upon us some water, or of the refreshments Allah has given you," and claimed that all this was figurative.

On the other hand some went to the opposite extreme and forbade (any but the literal interpretation). Among those was Ahmad ibn-Hanbal who went as far as to forbid the allegorical interpretation of the Words of Allah "'Be', and it is." (Ch.16:42 Koran). His followers have claimed that these Words were words of actual speech with enunciated letters and sounds brought into existence by Allah the very moment He created a created thing. I have even heard one of his followers say that (Ahmad ibn-Hanbal) forbade the allegorical interpretation of all but three prophetic quotations, namely the words of the Prophet when he said, "The Stone is the right Hand of Allah in the earth," (the Stone in Ka'bah) and, "The heart of the believer lies between two of the fingers of the Merciful (Allah);" and "Verily I shall find the soul of the Merciful

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

(coming) from the direction of al-Yaman." Even here the literalists have been inclined to forbid any allegorical interpretation.

It is assumed, however, that Ahmad ibn Hanbal knew that ascending is not fixity of location, and descending is not change of location; nevertheless he forbade allegorical interpretation for the good and welfare of people, since whenever it is allowed matters become worse and get out of control, overstepping the limits of moderation. Things which go beyond the limits of moderation are beyond control.

Therefore there is no harm done by such a prohibition which is also attested by the lives of the good, first generation who used to say, "Take them literally as they have been (revealed and) handed down." Thus Malik, on being asked about ascending, went so far as to say, "The fact of ascending is known but its manner is not; to believe in it is an obligation, to inquire about its manner is a heresy." Another group advocated the middle of the road position and permitted allegorical interpretation in everything which relates to the attributes of Allah but have taken the things which pertain to the Hereafter in a literal sense and forbade their allegorical interpretation. The advocates of this position are the Ash'arites.

The Mu'tazilites go further. They explain away the possibility of seeing Allah and His being possessed of hearing and sight. They also explain away the ascension (al mi'raj) of the Prophet and claim that it had not taken place bodily, the punishment of the grave, the balance, the Bridge, and other eschatological representations. Nevertheless they confess the resurrection of the body, Paradise with its food, perfume, and sex as well as other sensual pleasures, and Hell with burning fires which scorch the skin and melt the fat. The philosophers (who invaded all the branches of today's Christianity) go

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

still further. They interpret all eschatological representations as allegories denoting mental and spiritual pain, and mental and spiritual delight. They deny the resurrection of the body but believe in the immortality of the soul and that it will be punished or made happy by punishment and delight of non-sensual nature. They are extremists.

The true middle-road (called Asharia after Imam Abul Hasan Al Ashari) between this complete allegorism and the rigidity of the Hanbalites is subtle and obscure. It is found only by those who enjoy Divine Guidance and comprehend things by the aid of Divine Light, not by hearsay. Then when the mysteries of things are revealed to them, so that they see them as they are, they go back to the Koran and prophetic quotations and their wording; whatever agrees with what they see with the light of certainty they affirm, and whatever disagrees with it they interpret allegorically. But he who bases his knowledge of these things on mere hearsay will thereby fail to secure a firm foothold or gain a well defined position therein. Such a man who confines himself to mere hearsay would do better to follow the position of Ahmad ibn Hanbal. But a closer examination and definition of the middle-road position in these things belongs to the vast subject of revelation which we must leave aside.

Our aim was only to make clear that the invisible and visible may be in harmony with one another and that no disagreement exists between them. At any rate many things have been unfolded through our discussion of these five parts. It is our opinion that for the common people the explanation of the faith which we have already given is sufficient for them and that nothing further will be required of them in the first degree. But if any fear of disturbances arises on account of the spread of heresies, then, in the second degree, recourse may be had to a statement of the belief wherein a brief and

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

undetailed outline of the obvious proofs is presented.

We shall, therefore, present these obvious proofs in this book and shall confine ourselves therein to what we have issued to the people of Jerusalem, entitled al Risalah al Qudsiyah fi Qawa'id al 'Aqa'id (The Jerusalem Epistle on the Foundations of the Articles of Faith) and included in the following third section of this book.

<strong>

### **3 SHINING PROOFS OF THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE ARTICLES OF FAITH (COMPOSED IN JERUSALEM)**

We say - In the Name of the Merciful, the Compassionate Allah. Praise be to Allah who distinguished the community of the sunnah (prophetic way) with the light of certainty and favored the people of truth by guiding them to the foundation of Religion; who saved them from the errors of the unrighteous and the wickedness of the unbelievers.

It is with His Grace that He led them to follow the example of the Master of the Messengers; who directed their footsteps in the way of his honored companions and enabled them to emulate the good, early generations, so that they protected themselves with the strong cord against the dictates of reason, and (to emulate) the lives and beliefs of the ancients with the clear method, combining thereby the products of reason and the ordinances of the religion. Furthermore they found out that mere verbal repetition of the words "There is no god except Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah" is of no avail unless they completely understand what the fundamentals of the



## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

witness involve of principle and pillars. They also have known that the two witnessing phrases, despite their brevity, contain an affirmation of the existence of Allah Himself, His Attributes, and His Deeds, as well as an affirmation of the truthfulness of the Messenger - the praise and peace be upon him - And they also knew that establishing the faith upon these pillars, which are four, each one having ten principles: The first pillar concerning the knowledge of the Essence of Allah - the High - consists of ten principles. They are: 1. The knowledge that Allah - the High - exists. 2. He is Ancient 3. He is Everlasting. 4. He is not a substance. 5. He is not a body. 6. He is not a quality of a body (accident). 7. He is not subject to a direction. 8. He is not resident in a place. 9. He is seen. 10. He is One.

The second pillar concerns the attributes of Allah: It comprises of ten principles. They are the knowledge that: 1. He is Alive. 2. He is Knowledgeable. 3. He is Powerful. 4. He is the Willer. 5. He is the Hearer. 6. He is the Seer. 7. He is the Speaker. 8. His Essence is Exalted to contain a creation (a substratum for originated properties or a locus of phenomena). 9. His Words are ancient and eternal. 10. His Knowledge is ancient and eternal as His Will. The third pillar concerns the Deeds of Allah: it consists of ten principles: 1. The actions of mankind are created by Allah - the High -. 2. They are gained by the creation. 3. They are willed by Allah - the High -. 4. Allah has been Gracious by creation and invention. 5. Allah is free to impose unbearable obligations. 6. Allah is free to punish the innocent. 7. While taking into consideration that which is best is not obligatory upon Him. 8. That there is nothing obligatory except by the Religion. 9. His sending of prophets is possible (not an obligation upon Him). 10. The prophecy of our Prophet Muhammad - the praise

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

and peace be upon him - is true being confirmed by miracles. The fourth pillar is concerning heard verses and the prophetic quotations mentioning the unseen. And consist of ten principles: 1. The affirmation of the assembly on the Day of Recompense. 2. The accounting. 3. The questioning (of the dead by the angels) Munkar and Nakeer. 4. The punishment of the grave. 5. The balance. 6. The Bridge over Hell. 7. The creation of Paradise and Hell. 8. The ruling of the imamate (Caliphate). 9. The excellence of the Companions is in accordance with the chronological order. 10. The conditions of the imamate (caliphate).

## THE FIRST PILLAR

The first among the pillars of belief is the knowledge of the Essence of Allah - the Exalted, the High - and that Allah - the High - is One.

It consists of ten principles:

### (1a) THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS EXISTENCE

The first principle is the knowledge of the existence of Allah - the High -:

The first light which should be used for illumination and the first thing to be followed on the road of admonition are the instructions of the Koran, because there is no explanation beyond that of Allah - the Exalted -. Allah says in the Koran: "Have We not made the earth a cradle and the mountains as pegs? And We created you in pairs, and We made your sleep a rest, and We made the night a mantle, and We made the day for

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

a livelihood. And We built above you seven strong ones, and placed in them a blazing lamp and have sent down from the clouds pouring rain that We may bring forth with it grain and plants and luxuriant gardens." (Ch.78:6-16). And again, "Assuredly in the creation of the Heaven and of the Earth; and in the alternation of night and day; and in the ships which pass through the sea with what is useful to man; and in the rain which Allah sends down from Heaven, giving life by it to the earth after its death, and by scattering over it all kinds of cattle; and in the change of the winds, and in the clouds that are compelled between the Heaven and the Earth; are signs for those who understand." He - the High - also said: "Have you not seen how Allah created the seven heavens one above the other, setting in them the moon as a light and the sun as a lantern? Allah has caused you to grow from the earth, and to it He will return you. Then He will bring you forth." (Ch.71:15-18). And He - the High - said: "Have you seen what you ejaculate? Did you create it, or are We the Creator? It was We that decreed death among you. We will not be outstripped that We will charge you and cause you to grow again in a fashion you do not know. You have surely known the first creation. Why then, will you not remember! Consider the soil you till. Is it you that sow it, or are We the Sower? If We will, We would make it broken orts and you would remain wondering. (Saying:) 'We are laden with debts! Rather, we have been prevented!' Consider the water which you drink. Is it you that send it down from the clouds or We? If We will, We would make it bitter, why then do you not give thanks? Consider the fire which you kindle. Is it you that originated its tree, or are We the Originator?" (Ch.56:58-72 Koran). Anyone with the least bit of intellect is able to reflect upon the import of these verses and reviewing the wonders of the creation of Allah, in Heaven and on earth as well as the beauties of nature in animal and plant, realizes that this wonderful

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

matter with its consummate order cannot be independent from the Creator to direct it and the Maker to govern it and quantify it. Therefore Allah - the High - said: "Is there any doubt about Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth?" (Ch.14:10). The prophets - the praise of Allah be upon them - were, therefore, sent in order to call the creation to the Oneness, that they may say, "There is no god except Allah." They were not, however, commanded to say, "We have a god and the world has a god," because such a thing is inborn in their minds from the time of their birth and in the midst of their youth.

For this reason Allah - the High, the Glorified - said: "If you ask them: 'Who has created the heavens and the earth?' They will reply: 'Allah.'... (Ch.31:25 Koran). And He - the High - said: "Therefore set your face to the Religion, purely, the upright creation upon which He originated people there is no changing of the creation of Allah, this is the valuable religion." (Ch.31:30 Koran). Therefore there is in human nature and the testimonies of the Koran what will render the task of citing proof unnecessary.

### **(1b) THE PROOF OF REASON FOR HIS EXISTENCE**

Nevertheless, by way of preparation and following the example of the learned theologians, we say: One of the obvious logic of the mind is that an originated phenomenon cannot come into existence without a cause. Since the world is an originated phenomenon, it cannot come into existence without a cause. As for our saying that originated phenomena cannot come into existence without a cause, is obvious. For every originated phenomenon belongs to a certain definite time the precedence or the subsequence of which may be assumed. Its being definite in time and distinct from what preceded it and what succeeded

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

it, will naturally require one who renders things definite. As to one saying that the world is an originated phenomenon, its proof is found in the fact that bodies are not independent of motion and rest. Both states are originated phenomena; and whatever is not independent of originated things is itself originated.

The proof consists of three claims: The first is that bodies are not independent of motion and rest. This is readily understood and requires neither meditation nor thinking, for he who conceives of a body being in neither the kinetic state nor in the static state is both ignorant and foolish. The second assertion is our saying that both motion and rest are originated phenomena, the proof of which is found in their alternation and in the appearance of the one after the other is gone. This is true of all bodies, those that have been seen as well as those that have not been seen. For there is not a static object the potential motion of which is not required by the mind, and there is no moving object the potential rest of which is not required by the mind. The sudden is originated because of its immediate occurrence and that which has gone is also an originated matter since it is no longer due to the fact if it is proven it is ancient it will obligate that it does not turn to nothing - details of which will be explained in proving eternity of the Maker - the High, the Purified -. The third assertion is our statement that whatever is not independent of originated things is itself originated. Its proof lies in the fact that if it were not so, then there would be, before every originated phenomenon, other originated phenomena which have no beginning; and unless these originated phenomena come to nothing in their entirety, the turn for the present originated phenomena to come into being immediately would never arrive. But it is impossible for that which has no end to come to nothing. Furthermore if the celestial spheres have revolutions, the numbers of which have no end, it is

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

inevitable that their numbers be either odd or even, or both odd and even, or neither odd nor even. But it is impossible that their numbers be both odd and even at the same time, or neither odd nor even for this would be a combination of both the negative and the affirmative, since in the affirmation of the one is the negation of the other, and in the negation of the one is the affirmation of the other.

Furthermore they cannot possibly be even because the even number becomes odd with the addition of one; and how could that which has no end be wanting one? Nor can they possibly be odd because the odd number becomes even with the addition of one; and how could it be wanting one when its number has no end? Therefore the conclusion is that the world is not independent of originated phenomena, and that which is not independent of originated phenomena is itself originated. And when its being an originated phenomena has been established, its need for an Originator becomes a necessity through obvious comprehension.

### **(2) ANCIENT ETERNITY**

The second principle is the knowledge that Allah is Ancient from eternity. He has no beginning, but He is the beginning of everything and before anything living or dead. The proof of this is found in the supposition that if Allah had been originated and not ancient, He would have been in need of an originator. In turn His originator would also need an originator and so on in a chain of infinity. And whatever enrolls in such chain will never be found. Or it reaches to an Ancient Originator and He is the First. This is the wanted whom we named the Maker, the Originator, the Fashioner, and the Creator of the Worlds.

### **(3) ETERNITY**

The third principle is the knowledge that Allah, besides being without beginning, His Existence has no end.

He is the First and the Last, the Visible and the Invisible, since that whose eternity is established His end is impossible. Its proof lies in the realization that if it came to nothing it is inevitable that it should come to nothing either by Himself or by an opponent.

And if it were possible for a thing, which is conceived of as self-subsisting, to come to nothing, it will be possible for a thing, which is conceived of as self-annihilating, to come into being. And just as the sudden emergence of existence requires a cause, so does the emergence of extinction require a cause. That it will come to nothing through an opposing annihilating agency is false, because if that annihilating agency were ancient, existence side by side with it would be inconceivable. But we have learnt in the two previous principles of His Existence and His Eternity. How did He exist together with the claimed opponent in eternity? If, however, the annihilating opponent were an originated phenomenon, its existence from eternity would be impossible because for the originated phenomenon to oppose the ancient and destroy its existence is less likely than the ancient to oppose the originated and prevent its existence. In fact prevention is easier than destruction while the ancient is stronger and more pre-eminent than the originated.

### **(4) FREE FROM SUBSTANCE**

The fourth principle: The knowledge that He - the High - is not a substance which can be in a dimension. Rather, He is

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

Exalted above to be suitable for a dimension. The proof of this lies in the fact that every substance which is definite, is limited by its own place and is inevitably either constant in it or moving away from it. Therefore it is not independent of motion or rest for both these are originated, and that which is not independent of originated phenomena is itself originated.

If an ancient definite substance were conceivable, the eternity of the substances of the world would have been reasonable. And if a person should use the term substance and not mean thereby a resident substance, he would be mistaken as far as the use of the term is concerned, not as far as the meaning for which he had used it.

### **(5) FREE FROM BODILY FORM**

The fifth principle: The knowledge that He - the High - is not a body composed of different substances, since the body is that which is composed of substances. When His being a substance limited by place is refuted, His being a body is also refuted, because every body is limited by place and is composed of substances. But it is impossible for the substance to be free from division, composition, motion, rest, form, and quantity, all of which are characteristics of originated phenomena. And if it were possible to believe that the Maker of the world is a body, it would also be possible to believe in the divinity of the sun and the moon as well as other heavenly bodies. If, therefore, one should dare and call Allah a body but not mean thereby a composition of substances, he would be wrong as far as the name is concerned, but not in negating the idea of body.



## **(6) FREE FROM THE QUALITY OF SUBSTANCE**

The sixth principle: The knowledge that He - the High - is not a quality of substance of a substance existing in a body or a condition in a place; because an accident is that which exists in a body. But every body is inevitably originated and as such its originator exists before it. How then could (Allah) exist in a body when He has existed in eternity alone, with no other beside Him, and then originated the bodies and their qualities afterwards. Besides He is a Knowing, and Able, and the Willing Creator as shall be discussed later. It is impossible for these attributes to exist in substance or its quality. On the contrary they are impossible except in a Self-existent and Self-sufficient Creator.

The conclusion derived from these principles is that He (Allah) is Self-existing, being neither substance, nor body, nor a quality of substance; that the whole world is made of substances, their quality, and bodies, and consequently He resembles nothing and nothing resembles Him. He is the Living, the Subsisting, there is none like unto Him. For how could the created resemble its Creator, the ordained resemble He who ordained it, and the fashioned resemble He who fashioned it? All bodies and their qualities were created and made by Him; hence it is impossible that they are like Him or resemble Him.

## **(7) FREE FROM DIRECTION AND PLACE**

The seventh principle: The knowledge that Allah - the High - is removed from being limited by any direction because a direction is either above or below, right or left, before or behind. All these He created and originated through the

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

creation of man whom he made with two extremities, the one rests on the earth and comprises his feet, while the opposite extremity is his head. Consequently the term above was originated to indicate the direction of the head and the term below, the direction of the feet. This is true even of the ant which creeps on the ceiling with the result that the directions, in relation to it, are reversed - what we consider above is to it below, and what we consider below is to it above. Similarly people were created with two hands, one hand usually being stronger than the other. The term right was therefore originated to indicate the direction of the stronger hand and the term left to indicate the opposite direction. Consequently the right hand side is called the right and the opposite direction is called the left.

Mankind was also created with two (other) directions from one of which he sees and toward which he moves. Consequently the term before was originated to designate the direction toward which he moves, while the term behind was originated to designate the opposite.

Therefore the directions are originated through the creation of man; and had he not been created along these lines, but rather created round like a sphere, these directions would never have existed. How then could Allah have been subject to a direction in eternity when every direction is originated. Or how could He have become subject to a direction when He never had any direction above Him when He created man; for that will mean that He has a head, since above designates the direction above the head. But Allah is far Exalted (above His creatures) to have a head. Again how could He have become subject to a direction when He never had any direction below Him when He created mankind; for that will mean that He has feet, since below designates the direction below the feet. Allah is far Exalted (above His creatures) to have feet. All this is too

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

impossible (to imagine) in the mind. For whatever the mind conceives is definite in so far as it is limited by place, in the same way as substances are limited, or by substances, in the same way as their qualities are. But the impossibility of His being a substance or its quality has been established - consequently His being subject to a direction becomes impossible.

If therefore anything else is meant by the term direction other than these two meanings then the usage will be wrong in terminology and signification; because if Allah were above the world He would be opposite to it, and everything which is opposite to a body is either equal to it in size, or smaller or larger. All this implies measurement which necessarily requires an object or measurement. But Allah the One Creator and Ruler of the world and universe is far Exalted above such things.

As to the raising of hands heaven-wards at the time of supplication it is because Heaven is the direction of supplication and implies a description of the One to whom the supplications are offered, such as Majesty and Grandeur, employing thereby the direction of height to represent the quality of Glory and Exaltation. For Allah is above all in dominion and power.

### **(8) ISTAWA**

The eighth principle: That He - the High - "istawa" upon the Throne in the sense which He willed by that state of equilibrium - a state which is not inconsistent with the quality of grandeur and to which the symptoms of origination and annihilation do not permeate. It is exactly what has been meant by the ascension to Heaven in the Koran when Allah said, "Then He willed to the Heaven, when it was smoke." (Ch.41:11 Koran). This is only through dominion and power, as the poet

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

said: "Bishr has gained dominion over Iraq, With neither sword nor shedding of blood."

Thus were the people of truth compelled to pursue such a figurative and allegorical interpretation just as the people of the invisible knowledge were compelled to interpret His saying - the High -: "He is with you wherever you are" (Ch. 57:4 Koran). This has been taken, by agreement, to mean thorough comprehension and knowledge just as the words of the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - "The heart of the believer lies between two of the fingers of the Merciful (Allah)", have been taken to mean might and power while his words, "The Black Stone is the Right Hand of Allah in the earth," have been taken to mean veneration and honor, because if they were taken literally, the result would have been impossible.

Similarly the "istawa" of Allah upon the Throne, if it were left to mean fixity of location and stability, would necessitate that He who is seated upon the Throne is a body touching the Throne, and is either equal to it in size, or larger or smaller. But all this is impossible, and what leads to the impossible is itself impossible.

### **(9) SEEING**

The ninth principle: Is the knowledge that He - the High - although exalted from form and quantity and exalted above directions and dimensions, is nevertheless seen with the eyes in the Hereafter, the Everlasting abode. For He said, "On that Day there shall be radiant faces, gazing towards their Lord." (Ch.74:22-23 Koran). But He cannot be seen in this world according to His saying - the Mighty, the Glorified -: "No eye can see Him, He sees all eyes" (Ch.6:103 Koran). And according to His Words in addressing Moses - peace be upon him -: "You

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

shall not see Me." Would that I knew how the Mu'tazilites knew the attributes of Allah that Moses himself did not know; or how Moses asked to see Allah when seeing Him was impossible! Ignorance is more likely to be rampant among heretics and sectarians than among the prophets - the praise of Allah be upon them -.

As for the reason of taking the verse describing seeing literally it is because it does not lead to the impossible. For sight is a kind of revelation and knowledge, although it is more complete and clearer than knowledge. And if it is possible to know Allah without reference to direction, it is also possible to see Him without reference to direction. And just as it is possible for Allah to see men without confrontation, it is possible for men to see Him without confrontation; and just as it is possible to know Him without modality or form, it is possible to see Him likewise.

### **(10) THE ONENESS**

The tenth principle: The knowledge that Allah - the Mighty, the Glorified - is One without any associate, Single without an equal. He is separate in creating and innovating; He is alone in bringing into existence and inventing. There are none like Him to rival or equal Him, and none opposite Him to contest or contend with Him. The proof is in His saying - the High - "Had there been other gods in both of them (in Heaven or earth) besides Allah, there would have been ruin."

(Ch.21:22 Koran). And to explain, if there had been two gods and the first of them willed a certain thing, the second, if he were under compulsion to aid the first, would be a subordinate and impotent being rather than an almighty god; and if the second were able to contradict and oppose the first, he would be a powerful and dominating being while the first would be weak and impotent rather than an almighty god.

## THE SECOND PILLAR

CONCERNING THE ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH Based upon ten principles.

### (1) ABILITY

The first principle is the knowledge that the Maker of the world is Almighty and that He - the High - is Truthful in His saying: "He has power over all things," (Ch.5:120 Koran). Because the world is perfect in its making and orderly in its composition. For he who would see a silk garment, fine in its weave and texture, symmetrical in its embroidery and ornamentation, and would imagine that it was woven by a dead person that has no life, or by a helpless person with has no power, would be completely lacking in intellect and utterly foolish and ignorant.

### (2) KNOWLEDGE

The second principle is the knowledge that He - the High - is Knowledgeable, knowing all things and comprehending all creation; not even the weight of an atom in Heaven or on earth is ever hidden from His Knowledge. He is truthful in His saying: "He has knowledge of all things." (Ch.2:29 Koran). Furthermore evidence of His Truthfulness is found in His Saying - the High -: "Shall He who has created all things not know? He is the Subtle, the Aware." (Ch.67:14 Koran). He has led you, through His creation, to comprehend the knowledge that you cannot doubt in proving the subtleness of creation and orderly creation, even in insignificant and meager things, offers to the knowledge of the Maker of how to bring order and how to arrange. And what Allah - the Exalted - Himself said is the Last Word in guidance and in revealing knowledge.

### **(3) LIFE**

The third principle is the knowledge that Allah - the High, the Glorified - is Alive, because he whose knowledge and power are established, his being possessed of life will, of necessity, become established. If it is possible to conceive of the existence of an able, knower, doer and planner yet without life, it will be possible to doubt the life of animals, despite their movements, as well as the life of all craftsmen and artisans, all of which is utter ignorance and error.

### **(4) WILL**

The fourth principle is the knowledge that He - the High - is Willing for His Deeds. And nothing exists which does not depend upon, and proceed from His Will. He is the Creator, the Restorer, the Doer of whatsoever He wills. And how could He not be a Willer when, in every deed which has proceeded from Him, its opposite could have proceeded from Him; for whosoever has no opposite it is possible that action could proceed from Him by Himself before or after the time in which it has proceeded.

And it suits His Power both the two opposites and the two times in the same way. Therefore, it is necessary that there should be a Will which directs His Power to one of the two possibilities.

And if Knowledge would, in specifying the known thing, render the Will needless, so that it could be said that a thing has come into being at a time when its existence had already been known (this is not the case otherwise), it would be possible for knowledge to render power needless, so that it could be said that a thing has come into being without Power (which is

not the case), but simply because its existence has already been known.

### **(5) HEARING AND SEEING**

The fifth principle is the knowledge that He - the High - is the Hearer and the Seer. Neither the whispers of the innermost heart nor the secret thoughts and reflections are hidden from His Sight. The sound of the creeping of the black ant upon the solid rock in the darkest night is not beyond His Hearing. And how could He not see and hear when seeing and hearing are (attributes of) perfection not of defect? Could the created be more perfect than its Creator, the thing made more magnificent and more complete than the Maker? Or how could they ever be equal, no matter how much He might diminish in perfection while His creation and work increase therein? And again how could the argument of Abraham - the praise and peace of Allah be upon him - against his father, who ignorantly and erroneously worshipped idols, be sound? Abraham addressed his father saying: "O father, why worship that which can neither see nor hear, nor can do anything for you?" (Ch.19:42 Koran). But if these defects which characterized the idols of his father characterized his Creator as well, his argument would have been invalid and his evidence worthless, and the words of Allah: "This is Our proof which We gave to Abraham against His people," would have been false.

And as understood He is a Doer without limbs and knowledgeable without heart and head, so it could also be understood that He is the Seer without pupil and Hearer without ear as there is no difference between both.



### (6) SPEECH

The sixth principle: Is that He - the Exalted, the High - speaks with a speech which is a Self- existing attribute. It is neither a sound nor a letter; it does not resemble the speech of others, just as His Existence does not resemble others. In reality speech is the speech of the self. Sounds were built into words merely as symbols, just as gestures and signals are often used to represent the same thing. How then has this fact not been known by a group of ignorant (theologians) people while it has been known by ignorant poets (of theology).

One of them said: "Speech is in the heart; While the tongue is an indicator for the heart." As for him whose intellect does neither deter nor restrain him from saying that his tongue is an originated thing, but what originates in it by means of his originated power is ancient do not be anxious to rectify his brain and refrain your tongue from speaking with such a person. Similarly, you should not direct your heart to him who does not understand that the Ancient is that nothing existed before Him. And that the letter "n" is before the letter "a" in the word "Name" so that the letter "a" cannot be relatively older than the letter "n".

For Allah - the Exalted - has a secret for leading some men astray; "None can guide those whom Allah leads astray." (Ch.13:33 Koran). As for him who deems it improbable that Moses could have, in this world, heard a speech which was neither sound nor letter, let him deny that in the Hereafter he could see His Existence having neither body nor color.

But if it has been possible to conceive that which has no color, or body, or size, or quantity, could be seen. And He is still as He was - never seeing other than Him - similarly, it

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

could be conceived in the sense of hearing what has been conceived in the sense of seeing.

And if it has been possible to conceive of Allah having one knowledge, which is the knowledge of all existent things, it would also be possible to conceive of Him having one attribute, which is a speech comprising all that He has represented with meaning.

And if it has been possible to conceive of the existence of the Seven Heavens, Paradise and Hell, written all on a small piece of paper and preserved in a minute part of the heart, and seen with a part of the pupil not exceeding the size of a lentil seed, without the Heavens and Earth, Paradise and Hell actually existing in the pupil, or the heart, or the paper, it would also be possible to conceive of the Speech of Allah being read with tongues, preserved in the hearts, and written in books, without the actual existence of that speech in these things.

If the fire of Hell, through the writing of its name on the leaves, would exist actually thereon and (the leaves) would be burned, (this is not the case), similarly the very Speech (of Allah) should not actually exist on the leaves of a book, nor Allah Himself, through the writing of His Name on these leaves, would exist in it.

### **(7) ETERNITY OF SPEECH, AND ATTRIBUTES AND PURITY FROM ORIGINATION**

The seventh principle: Is that the Self-existing Speech (of Allah), as well as His other attributes, is Ancient from eternity, since it is impossible that He is subject to the substance and its quality (originated phenomena). On the contrary His attributes obligate the same external nature

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

which His Essence obligate.

Change does not overtake Him nor substance or its quality befall Him. No, He does not cease, in His Eternity, to be described with the commendable attributes.

In His Everlasting Eternity, He is far exalted from change. For he who is subject to substance (originated phenomena) cannot be apart from it. And whosoever cannot be apart from substance is a substance (originated phenomena). The description of bodies with the phenomena's origination was established because of their exposition to changing and alteration of descriptions. How, then, could their Creator share with them the acceptance of change. Accordingly, it is essential that the Speech of Allah is ancient from eternity and it is of His Self-existence. Only the sounds which represent it are originated.

If it is possible to conceive that a father prays for his unborn son to be knowledgeable. Then the child is born with that dormant ability; from which we understand that Allah has created this knowledge in relation to the father's heart. The knowledge exists and remains in the child until he is able to comprehend the knowledge which he has been given. Similarly, it is possible to conceive the standing of the ordinance of Allah which was indicated by the saying of Him - the Mighty, the Glorified - "Take off your sandals" which Moses - peace be upon him - became subject to after Moses existed due to the fact that a knowledge of this ordinance was created for him. Then once the child has reached the stage of ability to be able to understand, Allah has created that knowledge which was the father's heart desire. Accordingly, he heard that Ancient saying.

## **(8) ETERNITY OF KNOWLEDGE**

The eighth principle: Is that His Knowledge is ancient and not subject to updating. He has not ceased to know Himself and His Attributes, as well as everything that happens from His creation. Whatever happens in and from the creation does not update His Knowledge, rather it is known to Him through His Eternal Knowledge.

Thus if we were given prior knowledge of the coming of so and so at sunrise, and that prior knowledge persisted until the sun had risen, then the coming of so and so at sunrise would have been known to us through that prior knowledge without any necessity for its renewal.

Likewise, the eternity of the Knowledge of Allah - the High - should be understood.

## **(9) ETERNITY OF WILL**

The ninth principle: Is that His Will is ancient. In its eternity it governs the origination of phenomena in their appointed times in accordance with the Eternal Knowledge. For if His Will were originated, He will be subject to substance (originated phenomena.) Furthermore if it happened in other than His Will, He would not be the one who is the willer of it. Just as you yourself would not execute an action which is not in yourself. No matter what hypothesis you may assume, its presence requires another will, and likewise the other will requires a third, and so on to infinity.

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

And if it were possible for a will to come into being without a Will, it would be possible for the world to come into being without a will.

### **(10) KNOWLEDGEABLE WITH KNOWLEDGE, LIVING WITH LIFE, ABLE WITH ABILITY, WILLER WITH WILL, SPEAKER WITH SPEECH, HEARER WITH HEARING AND SEER WITH SEEING.**

The tenth principle: Is that Allah - the High - is Knowledgeable with knowledge, Living with life, Powerful with power, Willer with will, Speaker with speech, Hearer with hearing, and Seeing with sight. He has the qualities of these ancient attributes.

To speak of a knower but without knowledge is like speaking of one who is wealthy but without wealth, or of knowledge without a knower, or a knower without something known. For knowledge, the knower, and that which is known are inseparable just as murder, the murdered, and the murderer are inseparable. And just as it is impossible to conceive of a murderer without murder and the one murdered, or of one murdered without a murderer and murder, it is impossible to conceive of a knower without knowledge, and of knowledge without something known, and of something known without a knower. These three are in reason inseparable in the brain and the one is inconceivable without the other.

Whoever would deem it possible that a knower could exist independently of knowledge, he would have to deem it possible that a knower could exist independently of that which is known, and that knowledge could exist independently of a knower, since there is no difference between these qualities.

## THE THIRD PILLAR

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE DEEDS OF ALLAH Based on ten principles

### (1) ORIGINATED THINGS ARE OF HIS DEEDS, CREATION AND INVENTION

The first principle: Is the knowledge that every originated phenomenon in the world is of His making, creation, and invention. There is no other creator of it besides Him, and there is no innovator of it except Him. He created the creation and fashioned them, and He brought into being their ability and movement. All the deeds of His worshipers are created by Him and related to His Power, in confirmation of His saying - the High - "the Creator of all things," and His saying - the High - "Allah created you and what you do." (Ch.37:96 Koran). And in His saying - the High - "Whether you speak in secret or aloud. He knows the innermost of the chests. Shall He who has created all things not know? He is the Subtle, the Aware." (Ch.67:13-14 Koran). He commanded His worshipers to be careful in their words, deeds and secret thoughts and intentions, because He knows the motives of their deeds. And the creation is a proof of His Knowledge.

And how could He not be the Creator of the deeds of a person when His Power is complete and free of any impotence.

Furthermore His Power is related to the movements of the bodies of people - while these actions are similar to one another - the relation of the Power of Allah with them is self-existing.

What then would prevent its connection in the case of some actions and would not prevent it in the case of others, when all are similar? For how could the animal be capable of invention by itself? The spider and the bee as well as the

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

rest of the animals produce fine works which amaze wise minds. But how could they have invented these things alone without the Lord of lords, when actually they are not aware of the details of what gains are produced from them?

All creation are abased before Him, the Owner of the Kingdom both visible and invisible, and the Compeller of the Heavens and Earth.

### **(2) INVENTION BY ALLAH AND A GAIN FOR HIS CREATION**

The second principle: Although Allah - the Exalted - is the Sole Inventor of the actions of His worshipers, it does not negate the action from being of the Ability of Allah for the gain of the worshipers.

Rather, Allah - the High - created both the ability and those who are able, and created both the choice and those who choose. Therefore, the ability is a description for a human being and a creation for the Lord; it is not a gain for Him. As for the movement, it is a creation for the Lord - the High - and a description for the human being and his gain, in other words it is created with ability that is his description. While movement is related to another description called ability, and for this reason it is considered a gain. So, how could they be the result of complete compulsion when the difference between the voluntary actions and the involuntary reflexes is instinctively comprehended by man? Or, how could they be a creation of man when he does not know the different parts of acquired actions and their numbers? Thus when the two extreme positions are disproved, there remains nothing except the middle position which asserts that they are voluntary through the Ability of Allah by invention and through the ability of the worshiper by another connection which is expressed by the term acquisition or gain. The

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

relation between the Ability and the willed is not necessary to be through invention only, since the Ability of Allah in eternity was to relate to the world although the world was not yet invented and at the time the invention was not yet occurring, while it is concerning the invention it is related with a different kind of relation.

Therefore, it is apparent that the relation of the Ability is not specifically for the occurrence of what was subject of the Ability.

### **(3) GAINED BY THE CREATION, WILLED BY ALLAH**

The third principle: Is that the deeds of the worshiper, although they are his gain, are nevertheless willed by Allah - the Exalted -. Neither a twinkling of an eye nor a stray thought, or the glancing of an onlooker ever occur, either in the visible or the invisible world except through His Decree and Ability, His Will and His Determination.

From Him is good and evil, benefit and harm, Islam and disbelief, gratefulness and ingratitude, winning and loosing, righteousness and error, obedience and disobedience, Oneness and polytheism.

There is none that rescinds His Commands, none that audits His Decrees. He leads astray whom He wishes and guides whom He wishes. "None shall question Him about His works, but they shall be questioned." (Ch.21:23 Koran). This is attested by the narrations of the sayings of all the scholars of the prophetic quotations; "What He Wills is and what He does not will is not." And the saying of Allah - the Mighty, the Glorified -: "Had Allah pleased He could have guided all people." (Ch.13:31 Koran). And His saying - the High - "Had it been Our Will, We will give every soul its guidance." As for the evidence for it from the point of view of reason that if



## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

Allah neither likes nor wills sin and crimes, they must be in accordance with the will of the enemy, iblis - Allah cursed him - who is the enemy of Allah - the Exalted - and consequently what takes place in accordance with the will of the enemy will be greater than what takes place in accordance with the Will of Allah - the High -. How could a Muslim deem it possible that the Kingdom of the Compeller, the Owner of Majesty and Honor, be reduced to such a rank that would not even interest the leader of a village, because if the enemy of that leader has greater influence in the village, no doubt the leader would resign. Disobedience prevails upon mankind, which is considered by the innovators of theology to be happening despite the Will of Allah - the True, the High - . This would be considered the most weak and impotent. Exalted is the High, the Lord of lords above the blasphemous words of the transgressors. Furthermore when it becomes evident that the deeds of mankind are created by Allah, it becomes clear that they are also willed by Him.

If it should then be asked, "How does Allah forbid what He has willed and orders what He does not will?" We would say that the question is not that of will. For example, if a master strikes his servant and is reprimanded by the sultan, he justifies his action by the rebellion of the servant against him. But the sultan disbelieves him. So he attempts to prove his contention by ordering the servant to do something which the servant would refuse in the presence of the sultan. So, he tells the servant to saddle a mount. (Now how about this) the master has ordered the servant to do something which he really doesn't want him to do. If he had not given his order, he would not have been able to prove his point; and having given the order - had he really desired what he ordered he would have desired what has not served his purpose, which is unthinkable.

#### **(4) CREATION IS FROM HIS GRACE NOT AN OBLIGATION**

The fourth principle: Is that Allah - the High - is Generous in creating and inventing and Gracious in imposing obligations upon mankind. Neither creation nor imposing obligations were obligatory upon Him.

The Mu'tazilites said that these were obligatory on Him for the welfare of mankind. But this is impossible since He is the Sole Orderer, the only One to obligate and to forbid. How then can He be subject to any obligation or necessity or be subjected to given orders.

Obligation or necessity means one of two things: First, an act which, when it is refrained from causes future harm. As when it is said that it is obligatory for mankind to obey Allah if they want to escape torment by fire in the Hereafter, or immediate harm as is the case when we say that it is obligatory for him who is thirsty to drink otherwise he might die. Second, it means that which its non-existence would lead to an impossibility. As it is said that the existence of that which is known is necessary since its non-existence will lead to an impossibility, namely knowledge becoming ignorance. If the adversary meant that the act of creation is necessary for Allah according to the first meaning, he would have exposed Him to harm.

If he implied the second meaning, he would be in agreement, because the precedence of knowledge necessitates the existence of the known. However, if he implied a third meaning, it is unintelligible. As to his statement: "It is obligatory for the benefit of His worshiper" it is corrupt logic, for if He is not harmed by neglecting the welfare of mankind, the obligation upon Him bears no meaning.

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

Speaking of what is best for mankind is really its welfare in that He creates them in Paradise. While to create them in the world of trials and to expose them to sin then becomes subject to the danger of punishment, and to the terrors of presentation and accounting (on the Day of Recompense) is not enviable by the wise.

### **(5) OBLIGATING WHAT IS BEYOND ONE'S ABILITY**

The fifth principle: It is possible that Allah - the Exalted - imposes on people obligations beyond their ability. This is contrary to the position of the Mu'tazilites (or anyone who follows this way of thought).

For if this were not contingent, it would be impossible for men to ask Allah to spare them that burden. But as a matter of fact they have beseeched Allah to spare them that burden when they said: "Our Lord do not over burden us more than we can bear." (Ch.2:286 Koran).

Furthermore Allah - the High - has informed His Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - that Abu Jahl would not believe Him, nevertheless Allah commanded the Prophet to command Abu Jahl to believe in all the Words of Allah. But among the Words of Allah were those that Abu Jahl would not believe in Him. How then would he believe Him by not believing Him? The existence of such a thing is absolutely impossible.

### **(6) INFLICTING PAIN UPON THE CREATION IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE**

The sixth principle: Contrary to the Mu'tazilites (or anyone who follows this way of thought), it is for Allah - the Mighty, the Glorified - to inflict pain on men and to torment

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

them, without their having previously committed any offense, and without the necessity of compensating them with future rewards. Because He is dealing with His Own Kingdom. It is inconceivable that His actions fell beyond His Kingdom. Tyranny is dispensing with the possessions of others without their permission. But this is impossible in the case of Allah - the High - because there is no kingdom owned by other than Him, whereby His dealing with it would be considered to be tyrannous.

And the proof for this is simply because it exists. For example, the slaughter of animals inflicts pain on them, and the various kinds of torture which man imposes upon them have not been preceded by any offense.

If it is said that Allah - the High - will raise them from the dead and will reward them according to the amount of pain which they suffered, and that such action is obligatory upon Allah - the High - we would reply that anyone who would claim that it is incumbent upon Allah to bring every ant which was killed under the feet and every bug which was crushed back to life, so that He might reward them the pain which they suffered, would violate the dictates of Religion and reason, for it is said: "The description of reward and assembly is that it is obligatory upon Allah" - if it is meant that it will harm Him to neglect doing it it is impossible, and if it is meant by it other than the above mentioned for the necessitating otherwise any other reason beyond this will be considered unintelligible.

### **(7) CONSIDERING WHAT IS BEST IS NOT AN OBLIGATION**

The seventh principle: Is that He - the High - does with His creation whatever He wishes and there is no obligation upon Him to take into consideration that which is best for His

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

worshipers, because of what we have already mentioned regarding the fact that there is nothing obligatory upon Him - the Exalted -. Rather, it is inconceivable that there are any obligations upon Him, for He is not questioned about what He does whereas others are asked.

I wonder what answer a Mu'tazilite would give when, in connection with his statement that it is incumbent upon Allah to do what is best, we place before him the following hypothetical debate.

It is supposed that in the Hereafter an argument takes place between two persons, a child and an adult, both of whom died as Muslims. Now, according to the Mu'tazilites, Allah exalts the rank of the adult and gives him preference over the child, because the former labored hard in acts of worship after he attained maturity. In fact this is incumbent upon Allah according to the Mu'tazilites. Suppose then that the child says, "O my Lord! Why have You exalted his rank above mine?" And Allah answers, "Because he has attained maturity and has labored in acts of worship." Thereupon the child rejoins, "But Lord, it is You who caused me to die a child. So it is obligatory upon You to have prolonged my life until I attained maturity; then I would have labored in Your worship. But You, O Lord, have deviated from justice by favoring him with long life. Lord! Why have You favored him?" Allah - the High - would then reply, "Because I knew that if you had lived to attain maturity, you would have committed the sins of polytheism and disobedience. Hence it was better for you to die a child." Such will the apology of the Mu'tazilite (or anyone who follows this way of thought) be for Allah - the Mighty, the Glorified -. But then the unbelievers will cry up from the midst of Hell-fire saying: "O Lord! Had You not known that if we had lived to attain maturity we should have committed the sin of polytheism, why then didn't You cause us

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

to die in childhood before we could sin? We should have been content to enjoy in Paradise in a lesser rank than that of the Muslim child." What kind of answer could be given for this? In the face of this situation, is it not imperative to conclude that Divine matters, in view of their majesty, are exalted above to be weighed by the scales of the Mu'tazilites.

If it is said that because Allah can consider that which is best for mankind but instead inflicts upon them all manner of torment, this will be considered undesirable and unworthy of wisdom.

We should then say that the undesirable is that which does not suit the aim, but a thing may be undesirable to one person and desirable to the other if it disagrees with the desire of the one and suits the other.

Thus a family would deem the murder of their child undesirable but their enemies would welcome it.

Hence if it is meant by what is not best that which does not suit the desire of Allah - the Originator, the Exalted - this will be impossible because He has no desire. Therefore, the opposite of the best is not expected from Him, nor the harm because He does not deal with that owned by others. And if it is meant by what is not best is that which does not suit the desire of others! Why, then did you say that this is impossible for Him? Is it not merely wishful thinking, disproved by what we have assumed of the debate of the adult and the child and the plea of the unbelievers from the midst of Hell-fire? Furthermore the wise is he who knows the realities of things and is capable of harnessing them in accordance with his will. It is here where the consideration of that which is best is imperative. And as to the wise among us, he takes into consideration that which is best as far as he himself is concerned, in order to gain therewith praise in this world and reward in the Hereafter, or to prevent some

evil from befalling him all of which are impossible for Allah - the Exalted, the High -.

### **(8) KNOWING ALLAH BY RELIGION AND NOT BY REASON**

The eighth principle: Is that knowing Allah - the Exalted - and obedience to Him are obligatory upon mankind, by the obligation of Allah - the High - in His Religion, and not by reason at all. Of course this is contrary to the Mu'tazilites (and some philosophers and Christians).

For if reason renders obedience obligatory, it does so either for no purpose, - for reason does not obligate resurrection - which is impossible, or for some purpose or desire. Or, obligates it for a benefit and a desire which in turn has to return to the Worshipped and this is impossible concerning Allah - the High - for He is Exalted above desires and benefits. Even disbelief and unbelief, obedience and disobedience are the same from a beneficial point of view to Him. Or, it returns to the benefit of the worshiper which is again impossible, because he has no current desire. Because of obedience, he becomes tired and refrains from lower appetites. While there is nothing in the future except reward and punishment. So, how then, can he know that Allah - the High - rewards the disobedient and the obedient and does not punish both of them because both are equal concerning (their having an affect on) Him. Because He is inclined to neither, but we know all these characteristics from the Religion. While he who arrives at it through drawing an analogy between the Creator and the creature errs, as the creature distinguishes between gratitude and ingratitude on the basis of the amount of joy, gladness, and pleasure which he derives from the one or the other. If it is said that if examination and knowledge are not obligatory except through the Religion which does not become

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

defined unless the person who is required to fulfill its obligations examines it, and if that person should say to the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - that reason does not obligated him to examine while the Religion is not confirmed except through examination, and obviously I am not going to examine it. All this will conclude in the Messenger - the praise and peace be upon him - being silenced? We would then say that this argument is the same as that of the person who, on being warned by another that there is a wild lion standing behind him, and that unless he runs away the beast will devour him, and that he can ascertain that the warning is true if he will only look behind, says to the one who warned him that the truth of your warning can be established only if I look behind me, yet I am not going to turn and look behind me unless your truth is proven to me! This indicates stupidity of the speaker and guides him to destruction and there is no harm upon the guide!! As such is the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - he says: (in similitude) "Behind you is death, wild cats and the burning fire. If you are not cautious and realize my truthfulness by turning and looking at my miracles, you will be destroyed. So whosoever turns will know and be cautious and saved. But whosoever does not turn and insists is destroyed and lost, and there is no harm upon me even if all humanity are destroyed. It is only for me to proclaim the message in a clear manner." The Religion knows the existence of the wild lions after death, while reason aids in understanding the words of the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - and in realizing that which he prophecies is possible, and nature urges that precautions are taken against injury and harm.

A thing is necessary because its neglect causes injury and harm; while reason is that which renders a thing necessary because it makes known the impending harm. But reason in itself does not lead to the knowledge that when a person



## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

follows his appetite he will expose himself to harm after death. This then is the meaning of both Religion and reason as well as their part in determining that which is obligatory. For had it not been for the fear of punishment, for the neglect of things commanded, obligations would not have been established, since the term obligatory would be meaningless if no harm in the Hereafter were consequent upon its neglect in this world.

### **(9) SENDING MESSENGERS IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE**

The ninth principle: Is that sending prophets is possible and not impossible, contrary to the Brahmans who say there is no use in sending prophets since reason renders it unnecessary. Because reason does not guide men to deeds which lead to salvation in the Hereafter, just as it does not guide them to discover medicines which are beneficial to the health. Therefore the need of mankind for prophets is just like their need for physicians. The integrity of the physician is known through experience while the truthfulness of the prophet is known through miracles.

### **(10) THE PROOF OF THE MESSENGERHOOD OF THE SEAL OF THE PROPHETS**

The tenth principle: Is that Allah - the Exalted - has sent Prophet Muhammad - the praise and peace be upon him - as the seal of the prophets and as an abrogator of all previous Religions before him; the religions of the Jews and the Christians and the Sabians (a Judaeo-Christian sect). He (Allah) upheld him with unmistakable miracles and wonderful signs such as the splitting of the moon, the praise of the pebbles, and causing the dumb animal to speak, as well as

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

water flowing from between his fingers and the unmistakable sign of the Glorious Koran with which he challenged the Arabs.

The Arabs, in their struggle with the Prophet, did everything to counteract him, but despite their distinguished ability and excellence in eloquence and rhetoric, they were not able to oppose him with anything like the Koran, because it was not within the power of human beings, to combine the succinctness of the phrases of the Koran and the smoothness of its style together with what it contained of the news of the ancient generations and the fact that the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - himself was unlettered having no experience with books, with the prediction of unknown future events the subsequent occurrence of which established the truthfulness of the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him -.

Examples of this are found in the Words of Allah: "You shall certainly enter the Sacred Mosque in security if Allah wills, with hair shaven or cut short and without fear." (Ch.48:27 Koran). And again, "The Romans have been defeated in a land close by; but after their defeat, in a few years they shall become the victors." (Ch.30:2-3 Koran).

The reason why a miracle attests the truthfulness of the messengers is because everything which human beings cannot do must be the work of Allah. Whatever is linked by the Prophet with a challenge enjoys the same position as that to which Allah says, "You are right." This is like the case of the person who, standing before the king announces to the subjects that he is the king's messenger, and in order to prove that he is, he asks the king to stand upon his throne and sit down three times contrary to his usual practice. The king obliges and the subjects know, beyond the shadow of doubt, that the king's action takes the place of his saying "You are right."

## THE FOURTH PILLAR

CONCERNING THE PROPHETIC QUOTATIONS ON THE HEREAFTER AND THE BELIEF IN WHAT THE PROPHET TAUGHT

This is based upon ten principles

### (1) ASSEMBLY AND PRESENTATION OF ACCOUNTS

The first principle: Is the belief in the resurrection of the dead and the Day of Judgement both of which have been mentioned in the prophetic quotations. They are real and belief in them is obligatory, because, according to reason, they are possible. They signify restoration to life after death which, like the first act of creation, is within the Power of Allah. Allah says: "Who will quicken these bones after they have decayed? Say: 'He will quicken them Who created them the first time...'" (Ch.36:78 Koran). Therefore the Ability of Allah to restore the dead to life is deduced from His Ability to perform the first act of creation. Allah says: "Your creation and your resurrection are but as a single soul." (Ch.31:28 Koran). Restoration to life is nothing but a second act of creation, and is possible like the first act of creation.

### (2) THE INQUISITION OF MUNKAR AND NAKEER

The second principle: Is the belief in the inquisition of the angels Munkar and Nakeer.

This is mentioned in the prophetic sayings and should, therefore, be accepted, because it is possible, since it does not require anything except the restoration to life of that part of the body with which dialogues are understood. This is

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

possible in itself and neither the apparent stillness of the dead person's corpse nor our failure to hear the questions put to him refute it. For the sleeping person is outwardly still and motionless, but he perceives inwardly, pains and pleasures the effects of which he feels once he is awake. Furthermore the Prophet heard the voice of Gabriel and saw him while those who were around neither heard nor saw him. For "and they do not comprehend anything of His Knowledge except what He willed." (Ch.2:255 Koran). Thus if Allah does not create hearing and sight for mankind, they will not know Him.

### **(3) THE PUNISHMENT OF THE TOMB**

The third principle: Is the belief in the punishment of the grave which is mentioned in the prophetic quotations. Allah says: "Before the Fire they shall be exposed morning and evening, and when the Last Day comes, (it will be said):) 'Admit the people of Pharaoh in the most terrible chastisement!'" (Ch.40:46 Koran).

It was also well known that the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - and the good, early generation were wont to seek refuge in Allah from the punishment of the Grave.

This punishment of the grave is possible and the fact that the corpse may be dismembered and scattered in the bellies of lions and the gizzards of fowls does not prevent the belief in it, because the bodily members which feel the pain of punishment are those particular members to which Allah had ordained the restoration of sense, perception and feeling.

## **(4) THE SCALES**

The fourth principle: Is the belief in the balance which is real. Allah says: "We shall set up just scales on the Day of Resurrection..." (Ch.21:47 Koran). And again: "Those whose scales are heavy shall triumph, but those whose scales are light shall lose their souls." (Ch.7:8-9 Koran).

The manner in which this is done is that Allah causes to exist in the balance of men's deeds, a weight in proportion to the value of these deeds in His Sight. Consequently the value of the deeds of men becomes known to them so that the justice of Allah in punishment, His Grace in forgiveness, and generosity in reward might become evident.

## **(5) THE BRIDGE**

The fifth principle: Is the belief in the Bridge, which is stretched over Hell; it is finer than a hair and sharper than the edge of the sword. Allah says: "and guide them to the Path of Hell, and stop them to be questioned." (Ch:37:23-24 Koran). This is also a fact and belief in it is obligatory. For Allah who is Able to make the birds fly in the air is also able to make mankind walk over the bridge.

## **(6) PARADISE AND HELL**

The sixth principle: Is the belief that Paradise and Hell are created. Allah said "And vie in haste for pardon from your Lord, and a Paradise, vast as the Heavens and the Earth, prepared for those who fear Allah." The Word of Allah 'prepared' proves that both Paradise and Hell are created.

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

Therefore the literal meaning of the verse should be accepted especially since it is not impossible. Nor will it be said that there is no use in their creation before the Day of Judgement because "None shall question Him about His Works, but they shall be questioned." (Ch.21:23 Koran).

### **(7) THE TRUE CALIPHATE**

The seventh principle: Is that the guided caliphs after the Prophet of Allah are Abu-Bakr, then 'Umar, then 'Uthman and then 'Ali. No clear designation of a caliph was ever made by the Prophet of Allah - the praise and peace be upon him -. If there had been any such designation it would have had a much better chance to become known and survive than the designation of a local imam in some part of the land by unknown governors and army commanders. In the latter case the designation became known and survived. How then did it not become known and survive in the case of the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him? If it were really made, how then did it disappear and why was it not transmitted to us? Accordingly Abu-Bakr was not a caliph except through election and through the oath of allegiance.

To maintain that someone other than Abu-Bakr was designated would amount to the same thing as accusing all the Companions of contradicting the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - and of violating the principle of the unanimous agreement of the scholars.

No one dares fabricate such an accusation except the Rafidites. The belief of the Sunni community requires the vindication of all the Companions as well as their praise just as Allah and His Prophet have praised them. As for the struggle which took place between Mu'awiyah and 'Ali, it was the result of different points of view in independent

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

interpretation rather than a struggle wherein Mu'awiyah disputed 'Ali's right to the caliphate. Because of their many relatives among the tribes and the fact that these relatives were scattered all through the army, 'Ali deemed that the surrender of the assassins of 'Uthman, would lead to disturbances which would endanger the safety of the caliphate in its early days. Therefore he saw fit to postpone their surrender. On the other hand, Mu'awiyah thought that any delay in the surrender of the assassins to justice would, in view of the enormity of their crime, incite further attacks on the lives of caliphs and would lead to the shedding of blood.

One of the celebrated learned men said that every independent interpreter of the religion was right in his own interpretation; while others said that he who is right is one. No one of learning and intelligence, has charged 'Ali with error.

### **(8) THE RANKS OF EXCELLENCE OF THE FOUR CALIPHS AND THE REST OF THE COMPANIONS**

The eighth principle: Is that the excellence of the Companions is in accordance to their chronological order in which they succeeded the Prophet.

For real excellence is that which is excellent in the Sight of Allah, and no one will have knowledge of it except the Prophet of Allah - the praise and peace be upon him -.

Several verses in praise of all the Companions were revealed and a number of prophetic quotations that recite their honor have been handed down. Yet the subtle distinction of excellence and precedence is not grasped except by those who were eye-witnesses to the Revelation and had the opportunity

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

to observe it in its setting and to watch its development. Had they not understood that so well they would not have arranged matters as they did, since it was not their habit to abandon the Way of Allah on account of threat or pressure and nothing would turn them away from the truth.

### **(9) THE CONDITION OF THE CALIPHATE**

The ninth principle: Is that, in addition to being a Muslim, the qualifications of the caliph are five: male, being of age, piety, learning, competence, and membership in the tribe of Quraish because the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - said, "The caliphs should be of the Quraish". When these qualifications appear in several candidates, the caliph will be the one who receives the homage and allegiance of the majority of Muslims, and he who contradicts the majority is a sinner who is to be brought back into line with the majority. (Imam of the Two Mosques, Al Juwani, the teacher of Al Ghazali allowed the condition of being from the Quraish to have no affect if this condition is not available in the candidate if the other conditions are satisfied. Ref: "Al Ghiyathi" by Al Juwani - Darwish).

### **(10) VALIDITY OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE CALIPH WHEN FEARFUL OF DISASTER**

The tenth principle: Is that if neither piety nor knowledge appear in the claimant, yet any attempt to oust him will result in perilous and unbearable strife, we hold that his caliphate should be considered legitimate and binding because of the grave dilemma which would confront us.



## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

Thus we have either to replace him by another and consequently stir up strife, in which case the evil that will afflict the Muslims will surpass any loss they may incur because of the claimant's lack of piety and knowledge, qualifications designed to promote the public welfare; but no one will destroy the means of welfare in order to promote and enhance it, for this will be just like the person who will erect a single house and demolish a whole town. Or, we have to declare that there is no caliph and consequently there is neither Religion nor equity in the land, which is impossible. We declare that the authority of unjust rulers should be enforced in their land because of the urgent need for authority therein. How, then, do we not declare a caliph legitimate when the need for it is great and urgent? These then are the four pillars which comprise the forty principles which pertain to the foundations of the articles of faith. Whosoever believes therein will be in harmony with the Sunni (way of the Prophet) community and be an enemy to all heretics.

May Allah by His Grace guide us and lead our steps into the way of truth.

## 4 BELIEF, SUBMISSION

(AND IHSAN "SUNNI SUFIS") THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BELIEF AND ISLAM AND THE DIFFERENCES WHICH DISTINGUISH THEM. WHETHER BELIEF INCREASES OR DECREASES AND THE QUALIFICATIONS WHICH THE GOOD, EARLY GENERATION LAID DOWN CONCERNING IT.

This chapter is comprised of three matters. First matter: People disagreed concerning the meaning of Islam (submission), whether it was identical with iman (belief) or different therefrom; and, in the event it was different, whether it was

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

removed from belief and could exist without it, or inseparable from it and does not exist without it. Some have said that they are one and the same thing. Others say that they are two different things wholly unrelated, and still others say that although they are two different things, they are closely related to each other. Abu Talib al Makki had something to say in this connection; yet what he said was greatly confused and extremely long. Let us, therefore, proceed to declare the truth without bothering with that which is useless.

To begin with, this discussion comprises three considerations: First concerning the literal meaning of the two terms Islam and Iman (Submission and Belief); Second the technical meaning of the two terms in the Koran and prophetic quotations; Third the functions which they fulfill in this world and the next. The first is one of language, the second is of interpretation, and the third is of jurisprudence and Religion.

The first consideration concerning the literal meaning of the words. Belief means literally acceptance. Concerning the brothers of Joseph, Allah says: "They said (to Jacob): 'We went racing and left Joseph with our things. The wolf devoured him. But you will not BELIEVE us, though we speak the truth'" (Ch.12:17 Koran), which is the same as saying that he will not accept their word. Islam on the other hand means submission, and surrender to Allah through yielding and compliance; and henceforth abjuring rebellion, pride, and stubbornness.

Acceptance lies in the heart while the tongue serves as its interpreter. But submission is more comprehensive and pervades the heart, the tongue and the senses. For every acceptance with the mind is a submission and a disavowal of pride and unbelief.

The same is true of verbal confession as well as of obedience and compliance with the senses. According to the dictates of language Islam is the more general term, while belief is the

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

more specific. Therefore belief (Iman) represents the noblest part of Islam.

Consequently every acceptance is submission, but not every submission is acceptance.

The second consideration treats the technical meaning of the two terms in the Koran and prophetic quotations.

The truth of the matter is that the Religion i.e. the Koran and prophetic quotations, has used the two terms as synonyms interchangeably, as different terms of different meaning, and as related terms, one being a part of the other.

Their use synonymously is shown in the Words of Allah when He said, "So We brought the believers out of that they were in. We found in it but one household of those who had surrendered themselves," (Ch.51:35-36 Koran). Yet as a matter of fact there was only one family. Allah says: "Moses said: 'O my people, if you believe in Allah, in Him put your trust if you are Muslims.'" (Ch.10:84 Koran).

The Prophet also said, "Islam is built upon five pillars." At another time the Prophet was asked what belief was and he gave the same answers, namely the five pillars. (The bearing witness that there is no god except Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet, prayer, obligatory charity, pilgrimage, the fast of Ramadan). The use of the terms Islam and belief to signify different meanings is shown in the Words of Allah when He said: "The Arabs declare: 'We believe.' Say: 'You do not' rather say, 'we submit'.." (Ch.49:14 Koran). This means that they have surrendered outwardly only. In this case the Prophet used belief for acceptance with the mind only and used Islam for surrender outwardly through the tongue and limbs.

(Similarly when Gabriel assumed the appearance of a stranger) and questioned the Prophet concerning belief the latter

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

replied saying, "Belief is to believe in Allah, His Angels, Books, Prophets, the Last Day, the resurrection of the dead, the Judgement, and in the Decrees of Allah, the good and the evil." Gabriel then asked what Islam was, to which the Prophet replied by citing the five pillars. He thus used Islam for submission outwardly in word and deed. According to a prophetic quotation related on the authority of Sa'd the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - once gave a certain man a gift and to another he gave nothing whereupon Sa'd said: "O Prophet of Allah. You have given this man nothing although he is a believer." The Prophet added, "Or a Muslim." Sa'd repeated his question and again the Prophet added, "Or a Muslim." Their use as related terms, the one being a part of the other is shown by what has been related concerning the Prophet of Allah - the praise and peace be upon him - when he was asked what deeds were best and he replied, "Islam"; and when he was asked which type of Islam was best he answered: "Belief". This proves the use of Islam and belief (Iman) both as different terms and as related terms the one being a part of the other, of which latter use is the best linguistically, because belief is in reality a work - in fact the best of works.

Islam on the other hand is submission either with the mind or with the tongue, or with the senses; but the best is the submission with the mind. It is that acceptance which is called belief.

The use of the terms Islam and belief as two different words of different meanings, as related terms, the one being a part of the other, and as synonyms, does not overstep the possibilities which the language allows. Their use as different terms of different meanings makes belief signify acceptance with the mind only, which signification conforms to the dictates of language; it makes Islam signify submission

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

outwardly, which thing is also in harmony with the requirements of language. For the submission in part is also called submission, since the unanimous agreement of the scholars application of a term is not a necessary prerequisite for its use.

For example, he who touches another with a part of his body is nevertheless called contiguous despite the fact that the whole of his body is not in contact with that of the other. Hence the application of the term Islam to outward submission, although the inward submission is lacking, is in complete harmony with the rules of language. In this sense were the Words of Allah used when He said "The Arabs declare: 'We believe.' Say: You do not', rather say, 'we submit,'... (Ch.49:14 Koran). The same is true of the use of the two words Islam and Iman (belief) in the prophetic saying related by Sa'd where the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - added: "Or a Muslim." He did that because he preferred the one to the other. What is meant by the use of the two terms as different words of different meanings is that the terms contend for superiority and vie with each other in excellence.

Their use as related terms, the one being a part of the other, is also in harmony with the rules of language. It is the use of Islam for submission with the mind as well as with word and deed; while using belief for a part of Islam, namely acceptance with the mind. This is what we meant by the usage of Islam and belief as related terms, the one being a part of the other. It satisfies the rules of language with respect to both the specific application of belief and the general use of Islam, which is all-inclusive. It was in this sense that the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - used the term belief when he replied to the question put to him as to which type of Islam is best, thereby making it a particular aspect

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

of Islam and a part of it. The use of the two terms synonymously, thereby using the word Islam for both inward and outward submission, would make it all submission; the same is true of belief, which may be used freely and its particular meaning extended, thereby making it general and including under it outward submission. This is quite possible because the outward submission through word and deed is the fruit and result of inward submission.

Thus the name of a certain tree is freely used to signify both the plant itself as well as the fruit of the plant.

Similarly the significance of the term belief may be extended so as to become general, thereby making it synonymous with the term Islam and in exact agreement with it. Allah said: "We found in it but one household of those who had surrendered themselves," (Ch.51:36 Koran).

The third consideration deals with the legal rules which govern the two terms.

Islam and belief have two functions, one which pertains to the Hereafter and one which pertains to this world.

The function which pertains to the Hereafter is for the purpose of bringing people forth from Hell fire and preventing them from remaining there for ever. The Prophet of Allah - the praise and peace be upon him - said, "Whoever has in his heart the weight of an atom of belief will be brought forth from Hell fire." People disagreed concerning this function and concerning its fulfillment, and have asked what things comprised belief. Some have taught that it is simply an inward adherence and verbal confession. Others add a third element; deeds according to the pillars of Islam.

We shall then remove the veil and declare that there is no disagreement at all that anyone who combines in himself all these three elements will have his final abode in Paradise.

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

This is the first degree.

The second degree is that where a person has the first two elements and a part of the third, namely inward adherence and verbal confession together with some good deeds according to the pillars of Islam, but commits one or several great sins. According to the Mu'tazilites, the person by committing such great sins departs from the true belief but does not thereby become an unbeliever, but he becomes an "in between". He is neither a believer nor an unbeliever but occupies an intermediary position between the two, and will remain eternally in Hell fire. This, however, is false as we shall show.

The third degree is where the person fulfills the inward adherence and verbal confession but fails to perform the deeds according to the pillars of Islam with his limbs. People have disagreed concerning it. Abu-Talib al-Makki held that deeds were a part of belief and the latter is incomplete without them. He also claimed that the unanimous agreement of the scholars backed his position and cited in its support proofs and evidence which tend to prove the contrary, such as the Words of Allah: "Those who believe and do the things that are right." This quotation would indicate that deeds are something over and above belief rather than a part of it. Otherwise the reference to deeds would be a repetition, which is redundant.

It is strange that Abu-Talib al-Makki should claim the support of the unanimous agreement of the scholars for this position of his and yet relate the following prophetic saying: "No one would be declared an unbeliever unless he should deny what he has professed," and finds fault with the Mu'tazilites because they insist that a person who commits a great sin will remain eternally in Hell fire. Yet he who holds such views holds the

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

same views of the Mu'tazilites, since if he were asked whether or not a person, who accepted Islam with his heart and testified with his tongue thereto and then died, would be in Paradise, he would say 'Yes', thereby asserting that belief could exist without deeds. We would then add another question and ask him whether or not that person, if he had lived until the time of prayer had arrived, but neglected to perform his prayer and died immediately after, or if he had committed fornication and died, whether or not he would remain eternally in Hell fire? If he should answer, 'Yes', he would agree with the Mu'tazilites; but if he should say, 'No', it would amount to a declaration that deeds are neither a part of belief itself nor a prerequisite for its existence. Neither are they necessary for gaining the reward of Paradise. But if he should say that what he meant was that the person would remain eternally in Hell fire only if he had lived a long time without either praying or attempting any of the deeds prescribed by the Religion, we would say, exactly how long is that period, and how many are those good deeds through the neglect of which belief is rendered worthless? How many of the great sins would, if committed, annul belief?" Such a thing is impossible to determine and no one has ever done so.

The fourth degree is represented in the case of the person who accepts Islam inwardly with his mind but dies before either confessing it verbally with his tongue or performing any of the deeds which its pillars prescribe. Would it be said that such a person died a believer? People differ on this question. Those who insist on verbal confession as a prerequisite of belief would say that he died before fulfilling the conditions of belief. But this is false because the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - said, "Whoever has in his heart the weight of an atom of belief will be brought forth from Hell fire." This person's heart overflows with belief; how then would he remain eternally in Hell fire? Furthermore when



## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

Gabriel asked Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - concerning belief, the only condition set forth was to believe in Allah and His Messenger, His Angels, His Books, the Last Day, the resurrection of the dead, the Day of Judgement, and in the Decrees of Allah, with good or evil, as has already been mentioned.

The fifth degree is when a person accepts Islam in his mind and lives long enough to be able to confess the two phrases of the witness with his tongue and to know that they are obligatory upon him, but, for some reason, he does not so confess them. It is possible that his failure to confess them with his tongue is like his failure to pray. Concerning such a person we will say that he is a believer not doomed to Hell fire eternally. Because belief is simple acceptance and the tongue is its interpreter.

It is certain, therefore, that belief exists in its entirety even before its verbal confession with the tongue, so that the tongue can interpret it. This is the most plausible position, since there is no choice but to follow the exact meaning of terms and to satisfy the dictates of language. The Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - said, "Whoever has in his heart the weight of an atom of belief will be brought forth from Hell fire." The heart does not become void of belief because of the failure of the person to fulfill the duty of confessing that belief with the tongue, just as it does not become void of belief because of the failure of the person to perform obligatory deeds.

Some people have said that to confess the two phrases of the witness with the tongue is indispensable because it is not merely an outward expression of the inward belief, but rather the sealing of a contract and the commencement of a life of witness and obligation. The first position is the more correct. In this connection the Murji'ites have gone to the

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

extreme, declaring that no one who professed to be a Muslim will ever enter Hell fire, and that a believer, even if he should sin, is sure of salvation. We shall see to it that their position is refuted.

The sixth degree is to say with the tongue that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, but disbelieve it in his heart. We have no doubt that the fate of such a person in the Hereafter is with the unbelievers, and that he will remain eternally in Hell fire. On the other hand we are sure that in this world, the affairs of which are entrusted to imams and governors, he will be reckoned among the Muslims, because we have no access to his heart and have, therefore, to give him the benefit of the doubt and assume that he adheres in his heart to what he had professed with his tongue. We, however, have our doubts concerning a third matter, namely the status which exists in this world between such a person and his Creator, Allah, in the event that one of his relatives dies, and as a result of his relative's death he accepts Islam in his heart as well. Having thus accepted Islam in his heart as well, he questions the learned men concerning his status saying, "I did not accept Islam with my heart, (although I had confessed it with my tongue), until my relative died. Having fallen heir to his property. I wish to know whether or not it is lawful for me to receive it?" Or in case he had married a Muslim woman (while he disbelieved in his heart), but upon his marriage he came to accept Islam in his heart; would he be required to repeat the marriage contract again? These questions are controversial and leave room for different opinions. Thus it may be said that the decisions of this world, whether they are clear or hidden, depend upon the express confession of Islam. It may also be said that, in so far as they pertain to the individual in his relationship to other men, these decisions depend upon the outward confession of Islam, because the heart of the

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

individual is not known to others besides himself and Allah. The more correct position, and Allah knows best, is that it is unlawful for that person to receive the inheritance of his deceased relative, and that he must repeat the marriage contract a second time. For this reason, Hudhayfah used to stay away from the funerals of hypocrites, and it was customary for 'Umar to follow his example and absent himself whenever Hudhayfah did so.

Nevertheless prayer over the dead is a formal ceremony, although it is also one of the acts of worship. To guard oneself against what is unlawful is, like prayer, among the obligations of the individual towards Allah. This is not contradictory to our saying that inheritance is the law of Islam. Islam is surrender, in fact complete surrender is that which includes both outward and inward acts. These are doubtful problems in jurisprudence, based upon the outward meaning of words, vague generalities, and mechanical analogies. Consequently no one immature in knowledge should think that he could arrive at absolute certainty in any of these cases, although it has been customary to cite them under those parts of scholastic theology where absolute certainty is the desired goal. For no one who follows the common practices and conventional formalities will ever succeed.

### **(1) THE CONFUSION OF MU'TAZILITES AND THE MURJI'ITES**

If you should say, "What then are the fallacies of the Mu'tazilites and the Murji'ites (and anyone who follows this way of thought), and what are the proofs that their position is false?" I would then say that their fallacies arose from their failure to understand certain generalities mentioned in the Koran. As to the Murji'ites, they said that no believer

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

would enter Hell fire, although he might commit every possible sin. They based their position on the Words of Allah when he said, "And whoever believes in his Lord, shall fear neither shortage nor injustice" (Ch.72:13 Koran) and again in His Words when He said: "Those who believe in Allah and His Messengers are the sincere and the martyrs before their Lord. They shall have their reward and their light. But those that disbelieve and belied Our verses, are the inhabitants of Hell." (Ch.57:19 Koran).

They also quote the Words of Allah: "Every time a host is cast therein, its keepers will ask them: 'Did no one come to warn you?' 'Yes,' they will reply, 'but we belied the Warner (Messenger) saying: 'Allah has not sent down anything, you are in great error!'" (Ch.67:8-9 Koran). His saying: "Every time a host is cast therein", is inclusive and therefore every one who is thrown into Hell fire must have treated the warner as a liar. They also quote the Words of God "In which none shall be roasted except the most wretched sinner, who lied and turned away." (Ch.92:15-16 Koran). In this verse we find a specification, as well as an affirmation and a negation. Again they quote the Words of Allah: "Whosoever comes with a merit, for him there is better than it, and they are safe on that Day from its terror." But belief is the beginning of good deeds.

Again they quote, "And Allah loves the good doers." Allah also said: "We do not waste the reward of him who does good deeds." (Ch.18:30 Koran). But they have no proof in any of these verses, because when belief is mentioned in them it means belief coupled with good deeds.

We have shown that belief is used to signify Islam, which is in conformity with the heart, word, and deed. Supporting this interpretation are many prophetic quotations concerning the punishment of sinners and the extent of their penalty.

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

Furthermore the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - said, "Whoever has in his heart the weight of an atom of belief will be brought from Hell fire." But how could anyone be brought forth from Hell fire if he had not first entered therein? We also find in the Koran the following Words of Allah: "Allah does not forgive (the sin of inventing an) association with Him, but He forgives other sins to whomsoever He will." (Ch.4:116 Koran). The fact that Allah may exempt from punishment according to His Will. The usage of "willing" indicates divisions.

He also said: "He who disobeys Allah and His Messenger, for him is the Fire of Hell, which he will be in forever." (Ch.72:23 Koran). To declare such a person an unbeliever is, nevertheless, unjust. Allah also said: "The evildoers shall suffer an everlasting punishment." (Ch.42:45 Koran). And again, "But those who come with an evil deed shall have their faces thrust into the fire." (Ch.27:90 Koran). Some of the understanding of the generalities of these verses on first impression contradict the other generalities. Therefore we must resort to the understanding of the specific versus general and also to discipline interpretation on both sides; especially when prophetic quotations are clear in their pronouncements that the sinners will be punished. In fact the Words of Allah, "There is not one of you who shall not go down to it." (Ch.19:71 Koran) is almost an express declaration that punishment is inevitable to all, because every believer cannot help but commit an offense.

Furthermore, by the Words, "In which none shall be roasted except the most wretched sinner who lied and turned away." (Ch. 92:15-16 Koran). Allah meant certain particular people, since the appellation 'the most wretched' refers to a particular person.

Again in His Word, "Every time a host is cast therein, its keepers will ask them" (Ch.67:8 Koran) refers to a special

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

group of unbelievers. At any rate dealing with statements which are linguistically "general" to convey the meaning for "special" is not an uncommon practice. Because of this last verse al-Ash'ari as well as several other scholars of theology fell into the denial that all "general" usages, and that such usages await a qualifier "evidence" to clarify their meanings.

The fallacy of the Mu'tazilites arose from failure to understand the following Words of Allah. Allah says: "I am all Forgiving for he who repents, believes, practices good deeds, then is guided." And His Words when He declared, "By the afternoon time! Surely the human is in a (state of) loss, except those who believe and do good deeds..." (Ch.102:1-3 Koran). Also His Words when He said, "There is not one of you who shall not go down to it: such is a thing decreed, determined." (Ch.19:71 Koran) and continued saying: "We will save those who fear Us..." (Ch.19:72 Koran). Also the Words of Allah: "And whosoever disobeys Allah, and His Messenger, indeed for him is Hell, and therein they will abide forever." As well as every verse in which Allah mentions good deeds coupled with belief. Also the Words of Allah when He said: "He who kills a believer deliberately - his recompense is Hell, he is eternal there." (Ch.4:93 Koran). These generalities are also specific as is proved by the Words of Allah when He said: "but He forgives other sins to whomsoever He will." (Ch.4:116 Koran). Therefore freedom to forgive men sins, other than the sin of polytheism, must be left to Allah.

Similarly the words of the Prophet when he said, "Whoever has in his heart the weight of an atom of belief will be brought forth from Hell fire," prove the same thing.

Allah declared: "As for those who believe and do good deeds, We do not waste the reward of him who does good deeds." (Ch.18:30 Koran). And again "Allah does not waste the wage of

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

the good-doers." How then would Allah suffer the reward of belief itself as well as that of good deeds to be lost because of one single offense? As for the Words of Allah: "He who kills a believer deliberately," they mean whoever kills a believer because of his belief, and the words have been revealed for that particular purpose.

You may say, "What has already been said will lead to the conclusion that belief obtains without good deeds although it is well known that the good, early generation said that belief comprises inward adherence, verbal confession and good deeds; explain to us therefore the meaning of all this. I shall then say it is not unlikely that good deeds are considered a part of belief, because they perfect and complete it, just as it is said that the head and hands are part of man. It is evident that a person will cease to be human if his head no longer exists; but he will not cease to be a human being if one of his hands is lost through amputation.

Similarly both the exaltation and the praise are considered a part of prayer, although it is not annulled by their omission. Therefore acceptance with the heart stands in relation to belief as does the head in relation to the existence of man, since the one depends for its existence upon the other and ceases to exist when the other no longer is. The remaining good deeds are like the limbs of the body, some are more important than the others. The Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - said: "A believer is no longer a believer when he commits fornication." Furthermore the Companions held the same opinion as the Mu'tazilites concerning the fact that a person ceases to be a believer when he commits the sin of fornication. What this really means is that such a person is no longer a real believer possessing a complete and perfect belief, just as the deformed individual whose limbs have been amputated is described as being no longer a human being; in

other words he lacks that perfection which is beyond actual humanity.

## **(2) THE INCREASE AND DECREASE OF BELIEF**

Second Matter: You may say, "The good, early generation have agreed that belief is subject to increase and decrease - increasing with obedience and good deeds, and decreasing with disobedience and sin." In that case I shall say that the good, early generation are just witnesses, and no one has any right to depart from their judgment. What they have said is true; but the important thing is to grasp its meaning. It proves that good deeds are not an integral part of belief nor a basic thing for its existence. Rather they are an addition which augments belief. Both the surplus and the deficit exist, but nothing increases in itself. Thus it cannot be said that man's head is an addition or a surplus which increases his stature or size; but his beard and corpulence are. Similarly it is not permissible to say that prayer is augmented and increased by kneeling and prostration; rather it is augmented by the manner of its execution and the usages followed therein. This, therefore, is a clear declaration that belief as such does exist, and that once it exists, it may vary, subject to increase and decrease.

If you then say that the ambiguity lies in the problem of acceptance, how could it increase and diminish when it is always the same? I shall then say that if we put aside all hypocrisy and ignore the opposition of adversaries and then lift the veil off the exact meaning of the word, all ambiguity will be removed. Consequently we say that belief is a common noun used in three different ways.



### **(3) THE DEFINITIONS OF BELIEF, IMAN**

The first usage denotes an acceptance with the heart, a belief based on the authority of other believers without the benefit of revelation and an open heart. This is the belief of the ordinary people; in fact it is the belief of all people except the elite.

This belief is, as it were, a knot bound around the heart, sometimes tightened and made stronger and sometimes loosened and made weaker, just like the knot in a piece of string.

Do not consider this unlikely but remember the tenacity of Jews in holding fast to their doctrine, how they cannot be shaken or moved from it either by threatening, or warning, promising or admonishing, examining or proving. The same is true of Christians and innovators among whom exist some who can be made to doubt with the least word, and can be made to move from their belief with the least attraction or threat, although, like the Jews, they do not doubt the veracity of their own doctrine, yet they differ in the degree of their determination.

Such variations in the degree of determination also exist in the true belief, and good deeds influence the development and growth of this determination, just as irrigation influences the growth of trees. Allah says:, "Whenever a chapter is revealed, some of them ask: 'Which of you has it strengthened in belief?' It will surely increase the belief of the believers and give them joy." (Ch.9:124 Koran). And again, "It was He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers so that they might add belief to their faith." (Ch.48:4 Koran). According to a prophetic saying; "Belief is subject to increase and decrease." This is accomplished by the influence of good deeds upon the heart, a thing which is not

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

perceived except by those who meditate over their different inner states during the hours of worship and apply themselves solely to it through the presence of the heart at the time of inactivity and languor, as well as realizing the variations which are inherent in devoting oneself in these states to the articles of belief, so that the tie which binds him to his belief might become firmer and consequently harder to undo for the person who wishes to loosen it with doubt. In fact if the person, who believes that the orphan offers him the opportunity to reveal the quality of mercy, will act according to his belief and show kindness toward the orphan, he will be assured within himself of the real existence of mercy as well as of its manifold increase through its active operation. Similarly, if the person who believes in modesty will, in accordance with his belief, humble himself before another person, he will sense the quality of modesty within himself at the time he performs the act.

The same is true of all the qualities of the heart: all bodily actions proceed from them, and then the very influence of these actions react upon them, thereby confirming their existence and increasing their strength. This subject will be discussed in two volumes of my book "Ihya Uloom Ad-Din, The Revival of Religious Knowledge" one volume speaks of the destructive characteristics and another of the characteristics of safety. In which we mention the relation of the inward to the outward and that of deeds to beliefs. This relation is of the same nature as that of the relation between the visible world and the invisible world.

By the visible world, which is also called 'alam al-shahadah, (the witnessing world) I mean the world which is perceived by the senses; and by the invisible world, which is also called 'alam al-ghayb, (the unseen world) I mean the world which is perceived by the light of the heart. The heart belongs to the

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

invisible world while the members of the body as well as their activities belong to the visible world. The subtlety and fineness of the interdependence of the two worlds have led some to think that they are closely connected, while others thought that there was no world except the visible which is made of the concrete and tangible bodies. One who has perceived the two worlds and realized first their independence and then their interdependence expressed his observation in the following manner: "The glass was fine, the wine was clear. So confusion spread: to some it seemed nothing but glass; while others swore 'This is but wine, no glass is here'." Let us go back to the main purpose of our discussion, especially since the invisible world is outside the scope of the science of practical religion.

Nevertheless the two worlds are connected and interdependent. For this reason the science of revelation extends its scope every now and then into the realm of practical religion and does not withdraw until it imposes some obligations. This then is how belief, in accordance with this usage, increases through good deeds. For this reason, 'Ali said, "Indeed belief will loom as a single white spot in the heart of man. If the man will do that which is good the white spot will grow and spread until the whole heart is white. Whereas hypocrisy makes it first appearance as a black blotch in the heart of a man. If the man will do that which is unlawful, the black blotch will grow and spread until the whole heart is black, and blackness becomes man's second nature." Allah says: "No, but what they used to do has veiled their hearts." The second usage of the term belief denotes both acceptance and deeds, just as the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - stated: "Belief comprises over seventy divisions." The same thing is also seen in the words of the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - when he said: "A believer is no longer

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

a believer when he commits fornication." And when deeds become an integral part of belief, it becomes evident that it is subject to increase and decrease. Does this, however, affect belief which is mere acceptance? The question is one of opinion, and we have already stated that it does.

The third usage of the term belief denotes certain acceptance resulting from revelation and an open mind as well as from seeing truth with the light of the heart. The last is the least to lend itself to increase. I shall, however, say that the way in which the heart accepts certain things which are free of doubt differs. Thus the way the heart and mind accepts the fact that two are greater than one is unlike the way it accepts the fact that the world is created and originated. Although there is not the slightest doubt of the certainty of either fact. For certain things differ in the degrees of their clarity and in the degrees to which the mind accepts them. We touched on this subject in the section of certainty in the "Book of Knowledge" under the characteristics of the learned people of the Hereafter; therefore there is no need to go over it again. In all these usages it became evident that what they have said concerning the increase and decrease of belief was true. How could it not be true when we have the express testimony of the prophetic sayings: "Whosoever has in his heart the weight of an atom of belief will be brought forth from Hell fire." In another prophetic saying: "He will be brought forth from Hell fire, who has in his heart the weight of a dinar of belief." Why then should the amount differ if the belief in the heart does not vary?

### **(4) THE CLAUSE OF "ALLAH WILLING" IN STATING ONE'S BELIEF. QUESTION AND ANSWER**

You may ask, "What then have the good, early generation meant

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

with the saying: 'Allah willing, I am a believer!'" A qualification implies doubt, and to entertain doubts concerning the veracity of belief amounts to unbelief. Yet all the good, early generation used to refrain from giving a definite reply concerning belief, and were extremely careful not to commit themselves. In this connection Sufyan al-Thawri said, "He who says, 'Before Allah I am a believer, is a liar; and he who says, 'I a really a believer', is an innovator." But how can he be a liar when he himself knows that he is a believer? For he who is a believer in himself is a believer before Allah, just as he who is big and generous in himself and is aware of this fact, will be big and generous before Allah.

The same is true of him who is likewise glad, or sad, or hearing, or seeing. On the other hand if man were asked whether or not he was an animal it would not be fitting for him to reply, "Allah willing, I am an animal." When Sufyan made this statement he was asked, "What then shall we say?" Thereupon he replied, "We believe in Allah, and that which has been sent down to us." (Ch. 2:130 Koran). And what is the difference between saying, "We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us" and saying, "I am a believer?" Once al-Hasan was asked, "Are you a believer?" To which he replied, "If it is the Will of Allah". Thereupon he was told, "O Abu-Sa'id? Why do you qualify your belief?" He answered and said, "I fear saying, 'Yes', and then Allah will say, 'You have lied Hasan.' Then I shall rightly merit His punishment." He also used to say, "I fear that Allah may find that I have done something abominable to Him and will consequently abhor me and say, 'Go away. I accept none of your deeds.' Then I shall be working in vain." Ibrahim ibn Adham once said, "Whenever you are asked, 'Are you a believer?' say, 'There is no god except Allah'." At another time he said, "Say, 'I do not doubt belief; your question to me is an innovation'."

(4) THE CLAUSE OF "ALLAH WILLING" IN STATING ONE'S BELIEF. QUESTION AND ANSWER

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

'Alqamah was once asked, "Are you a believer?" to which he replied, "I hope so. Allah willing." Al Thawri said: "We believe in Allah and in His angels, Books, and Prophets. But we do not know what we are before Allah." You may ask all this and say: "What then is the meaning of all these qualifications?" The answer to your question is that these qualifications are correct and are put forward for four reasons, two of which arise from doubt, not of the reality of belief itself, but of its end and perfection; and two do not arise from doubt at all. The first reason which does not arise from any doubt at all is the care not to be decisive for fear of self-praising and making one's self out to be pure. Allah says: "Do not praise yourselves." And again, "Haven't you seen those who praise themselves?" And again: "Behold how they devise a lie against Allah." A certain wise man was once asked, "What is detestable truth?" He replied, "Man's praise of himself." Belief is one of the highest forms of praise and to be definitely certain of it amounts to absolute praising. The formula of qualification (Allah willing) is nothing but an attempt to temper and tone down such praising, just as when the man is told that he is a physician, or a jurisprudent, or a commentator, he will say, "Allah willing," not because he doubts that the fact but simply to avoid being boastful. This formula is that of disavowing and disclaiming the fact itself and means disclaiming one of the implications of the fact which is self justification. Following this interpretation, when the person is asked concerning something uncomplimentary, it will not be fitting for him to put forth any such qualification.

The second reason for the use of these qualifications is courtesy by remembering Allah at every time and under all conditions, and by submitting all things to His Will. Thus, Allah instructed His Prophet in courtesy and said to him: "Do not say of anything: 'I will do it tomorrow,' (without adding)

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

'if Allah wills.'" (Ch.18:23-24 Koran). Nor has Allah limited the use of the qualifying phrase to those things the occurrence of which is subject to doubt. On the contrary He said: "You shall certainly enter the Sacred Mosque in security if Allah wills, with hair shaven or cut short and without fear." (Ch.48:27 Koran) although He had known that they were undoubtedly going to enter it and that He had willed their entrance.

What Allah instructed the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - in the use of the qualifying formula. Consequently the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - learned the lesson and showed his courtesy by the use of that formula in connection with everything he had said -whether that thing was known with certainty or doubtful; so that when he entered the cemetery, he said, "Peace be upon you, the believing inmates of this abode. Indeed, if it is the Will of Allah, we shall follow you." This he said, notwithstanding the fact that death is not subject to any doubt, because courtesy demands that Allah is always remembered and that all things are made dependent upon Him. This formula indicates such a thing and has become, by virtue of its common use, representative of the expression of desires and wishes.

Thus when you are told that such and such a person is about to die and happens to say: "If it is the Will of Allah," you betray your desire and not your doubt. The same is true when you are told that a certain person will recover from his sickness and you say, "Allah willing," by way of expressing your earnest desire.

The phrase has thus been transferred from one expressing doubt to one which signifies desire. Also, in the same way is its transfer to express courtesy and respect for remembering Allah in all circumstances.

(4) THE CLAUSE OF "ALLAH WILLING" IN STATING ONE'S BELIEF. QUESTION AND ANSWER

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

The third reason for the use of those qualifications arises from doubt and means, "Allah willing, I am truly a believer," since Allah spoke of some particular men as being true believers. Consequently believers are divided into two groups: those who are described as truly believers and those who are not. This arises from doubt concerning the perfection of belief and not its reality. Every person doubts the perfectness of his belief, yet this doubt does not constitute unbelief. Doubting the perfectness of belief is right and justified for two reasons: The first is because hypocrisy militates against the perfectness of belief, and hypocrisy is something hidden while freedom from it is readily discerned or determined.

The second is because belief is perfected through the fulfillment of good deeds which are not known to exist in their perfect form. As for deeds Allah says: "The believers are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and do not doubt; and who struggle in His way with their possessions and their selves. Such are the truthful ones." (Ch.49:15 Koran). The doubt would, therefore, be concerning this truthfulness. Similarly Allah says: "But righteousness is to believe in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angels, and the Book, and the prophets." Thus Allah laid down twenty qualities, such as the fulfillment of promises and fortitude under hardship, as conditions for belief and then said, "Indeed, these are they who are true." Allah also says: "Allah will raise up those who believed among you, and those who have been given knowledge in ranks." (Ch.49:11 Koran). He also says, "Those who spent before the victory and took part in the fighting, are mightier in rank and are not equal to those who spent and fought thereafter." (Ch.47:10 Koran). He also says: "They are of ranks before Allah." The Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - said, "Belief is uncovered and its clothing is



piety." And again, "Belief comprises of over seventy branches, the least of which is to clear an obstacle from the road." This shows the dependence of the perfectness of belief on good deeds.

### **(5) BELIEF IS PURE FROM HYPOCRISY**

Its dependence on freedom from hypocrisy and concealed polytheism is shown by the words of the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - when he said, "Four things, if they gather in a person make him a hypocrite, no matter how often he prays, fasts, claims that he is a believer; he who lies when he speaks, breaks a promise when he pledges his word, betrays a confidence when he is trusted, and deviates from justice when he enters a controversy." In another narration "And when he makes a compact with his neighbor, he defrauds him." A prophetic quotation related on the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, says, "The hearts are of four kinds: a sealed heart, which is the heart of the unbeliever; a two-faced heart, which is the heart of the hypocrite; a clean heart from the midst of which a radiant lamp sheds its radiant light; and a heart which contains some belief and some hypocrisy. The belief it contains is like a vegetable which receives its nourishment from fresh waters. The hypocrisy it contains is like an ulcer which feeds on pus and blood, whichever of the two substances will prevail will determine its fate." According to another narration: "Whichever will prevail will seal his doom." The Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - also said, "The most hypocritical people of this nation are those among the reciters (of Koran)". In another narration he said: "Polytheism among my people is more subtle than the creeping of the ant on the rock."

## **(6) NARRATIONS CONCERNING FREEDOM FROM HYPOCRISY**

Hudhayfah said, "During the time of the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - there were things which made the man who repeated them a hypocrite as long as he lived. However, now, I hear these same things repeated ten times a day, (and no one seems to mind)." A certain learned man said, "The person closest to hypocrisy is he who deems himself free thereof." Hudhayfah also said, "Hypocrites are more numerous today than they were at the time of the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him -. At that time they used to conceal their hypocrisy; now they reveal it." Such hypocrisy militates against the reality of belief as well as against its perfectness. It is something concealed and subtle: the farthest removed from it are those who are constantly afraid of it, while those who deem themselves free of it are they who are nearest to it.

A Hasan al Basri was once told: "There is no more hypocrisy nowadays." To which he replied, "Brother! Were the hypocrites to perish from the land you would feel lonely on the way." Again either al Hasan himself or someone else said, "Were tails to grow on the backs of the hypocrites and trail behind them our feet would no longer be able to touch the earth." Once Ibn 'Umar, on hearing a man speak disparagingly of al Hajjaj (the Umayyad governor), told him, "Would you speak disparagingly of him if he were here present?" The man answered, "No." Thereupon Ibn 'Umar said, "We used to consider this hypocritical at the time of the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him -. The Prophet said, 'He who has a fork-tongue in this world will, in the Hereafter, be made fork-tongued by Allah'".

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

The Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - also said, "The worst man is the two-faced who meets one people with one face and another people with another face." Al Hasan al-Basri was once told, "There are some who say that they do not fear hypocrisy." Thereupon he answered, "By Allah, I would rather be sure that I am free of hypocrisy than have all the gold in the world." Al Hasan also said, "Among the different kinds of hypocrisy are the disagreements between the tongue and the heart, between the concealed and the revealed, and between the entrance and the exit." A certain person told Hudhayfah: "Indeed, I fear I am a hypocrite." To which Hudhayfah replied, "Do not fear. If you were a hypocrite you would not have feared hypocrisy. Indeed, hypocrisy does not fear hypocrisy."

Ibn abi Mulaykah said, "I have known one hundred and thirty of the Companions of the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him -, all of whom feared hypocrisy." It was related that the Prophet of Allah - the praise and peace be upon him - was once sitting with a group of his Companions who were discussing a certain man and praising him highly. Suddenly, while they were in the midst of their discussion, the man himself appeared before them with his face still wet with the water of ablution, carrying his shoes in his hands and his forehead covered with dust from prayer. Thereupon they said to the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - "Behold. This is the man whom we were discussing." The Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - turning to them, said, "I see on his face the mark of satan." Then the man came and, after greeting the group, sat in their midst. The Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - then addressed him and said, "Tell me, I ask you by Allah, have you not said to yourself when you approached the group that there was no one among them who was better than you?" The man replied, "By Allah! Yes, I did." In his prayer the Prophet said, "O Allah, I seek refuge in You against the

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

evil of things I did and things I left undone." He was then asked, "Are you afraid O Prophet of Allah?" To which he replied, "What could make me feel secure when the heart lies between two of the fingers of the Merciful, and He does with them what He wills?" Allah says: "And there shall appear to them, from Allah, that which he did not expect." This was interpreted in commentaries to mean that men have done things which they thought were good but on the Day of Judgement these things will appear in the balance in the scale of evil.

Sariy al Saqti once said, "If a person enters a garden containing trees of every kind and on them are birds of every kind, and then each bird calls to him in a different language saying, 'Peace be upon you, O friend of Allah', and as a result he feels very well pleased and satisfied, he becomes their captive." These prophetic quotations and narratives reveal to you the gravity of the matter, particularly because of the subtle nature of hypocrisy and hidden polytheism, and bring out the fact that no one can be safe from them.

This led 'Umar ibn-Khattab to ask Hudhayfah about himself - whether or not he was numbered among the hypocrites.

Abu Sulayman ad Darani said, "I heard a certain governor say something and I wanted to express my disapproval of it but feared lest he order me to be killed. And although I did not fear death I was afraid lest I became tempted to boast before men when my spirit departs. For this reason I refrained from expressing my disapproval of the governor's words. This kind of hypocrisy strikes against the truth, perfection, and purity of belief, rather than against its reality.

## **(7) CLASSIFICATION OF HYPOCRISY**

For hypocrisy is of two kinds: The one results in parting with Religion, pursuing infidels and joining the company of those who are deemed eternally to Hell fire; the second leads the person to Hell fire for a certain period of time and puts him down from the high ranks of Paradise and demotes the people who are close to Allah from their high ranks. It is a field open to doubt and therefore it is desirable to resort to the use of qualifications therein. This kind of hypocrisy rises from the disparity and disagreement between the concealed and the revealed, from feeling secure from the deep counsel of Allah, and from conceit and other things from which only the people who are close to Allah are free.

The fourth reason for the use of these qualifications arises also from doubt. It is the fear of the end, for no one knows whether or not he will still have any belief at the hour of death.

If he should end with unbelief all his previous deeds would come to nothing and fail, because (the value of these deeds) depend entirely upon their good ending. Thus if a fasting person were asked early in the day concerning the validity of his fast and replied, "I am surely fasting," but later in the day he broke his fast, it would become evident that he was lying since the validity of his fast depends upon the maintenance of the fast until sunset at the end of the day. And just as the day is the set period for the fulfillment of fasting, so the lifetime is the set period for the fulfillment of the validity of belief. To describe it as valid before its conclusion simply because it has already been fulfilled in part is very doubtful and its end is frightful. It was because of the end that most of those

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

who fear Allah have wept. For the end is the outcome of a preordained event and the result of the Eternal Will which does not become known except when the preordained event itself takes place and which no human being can ever tell. The fear of the end is the result of the fear of that which was preordained and there may appear in the present a thing which will give the lie to the words, ("I am a believer"). And who can be sure that he is one of those for whom Allah has preordained good things.

It has been said that the Words of Allah: "And when the agony of death comes in truth," (Ch.50:19 Koran) mean that the preordained thing (has been fulfilled) and made known. One of the good, early generation said that deeds would be judged by their ends. Abu ad Darda' used to swear by Allah saying: "There is no one who feels safe in his belief who is not robbed of it." It was also said that some sinful deeds were not punished except by their sad ends. We seek refuge in Allah against such deeds and such punishments. It has also been said that such punishments await those who falsely claim righteousness and the gift of miracles. One of the gnostics once said, "If I were given the choice between martyrdom at the outer gate of the house and death as a true believer at the door of an inner room, I would choose the latter because I do not know what might occur to me and divert my heart from true belief on my way (from the inner room) to the outer gate of the house." Another said, "If I had known a certain person to have been a true believer for the last fifty years and then, even though so frail a thing a pole should hide him from my sight before his death, I could not be sure that he died a true believer." According to one condition, "Whoever says, 'I am a believer', is an infidel; and whoever says, 'I am learned', is ignorant." In the interpretation of the Words of the Allah, "And the Words of your Lord are completed in truth

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

and in justice." It has been said that truth relates to those who died a believer and justice relates for he who dies an unbeliever. He - the High - said: "And all final matters belong to Allah." No matter how little doubt may be in such cases the resort to qualification is obligatory, because belief is a means of grace for the Hereafter just as fasting is a means of grace for absolving the heart from guilt in this life. Whatever fast is rendered void before sunset it is no longer a fast and will not absolve from guilt. The same thing is true of belief. In fact a person may be asked about a previous fast concerning which there is no doubt. He will be asked, "Have you fasted yesterday?" and he will reply. "Yes, Allah willing." For genuine fasting is the only acceptable fasting, and the acceptable fasting is unknown except to Allah.

For this reason it is desirable to use the qualification, "Allah willing" in all the deeds of righteousness. This will imply doubt as to their acceptance by Allah, since such acceptance, despite the outward fulfillment of all the prerequisites of validity, may be blocked by hidden causes unknown except to Allah, the Lord of lords of the Mighty Majesty. Hence it is desirable to entertain some doubts concerning the validity. These, therefore, are the different reasons for the desirability of qualifying one's answers when asked about his belief. With it we conclude the book of the Foundation of Islamic Belief. The book concluded with the praise of Allah, the High and Allah praised our Master Muhammad, and every chosen worshiper. The following principle is explained by Ahmad ibn ed-Darwish

## **(7) IHSAN, PERFECTION**

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

In the fourth chapter, Imam Ghazali elaborated upon two of the three parts of the Religion; Islam with means submission and Iman which means belief. There is a third part which he did not discuss in this book and that is Ihsan. Simply, Ihsan in the beginning of Islam was referred to as Ihsan or Zuhd which means doing without; a form of purification. Later it became known as Sunni Sufism in which participants have an unconditional discipline of following the Sunni Order (Way of the Prophet).

Ihsan is mainly an ethical and spiritual course which respects and follows the scholars of Ihsan as well as the other two parties of scholars namely, the scholars of Iman (belief) i.e. Imam Ashari and Salaf (first generation) as well as the scholars of Islamic Jurisprudence i.e. Shafi, Hanballi, Maliki, and Hanafi.

In simple words, Ihsan is based on three dimensions: For the sake of self cleansing, one asks Allah for forgiveness repeatedly, over and over again. This is followed by the multi repeated remembrance of bearing witness that there is no god except Allah. Thirdly, by the abundant repeating of the the praise of Allah and His angels for Prophet Muhammad as prescribed in the Koran - the praise and peace be upon him -. During the time of Imam Ghazali, the practice of Ihsan was common and he too followed a spiritual sheikh of Ihsan. In his book "Al Munqiz min Ad- Dalal" (The Safety from Deviation) he investigated the validity of the roots, theory, and practices of many sects from Greek philosophy to the heritage of the Indians and Chinese. In this book he dissected and analyzed each sect individually and certified without any doubt that the Sufism of the Sunni Muslims was by far the best path to the Creator.

Having a spiritual guide is highly recommended. The undermentioned Prophetic quotation describes the three parts



## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

of the Religion - Islam, Iman and Ihsan. "One day when we (the companions) were with the Messenger of Allah - the praise and peace be upon him - a man with very white clothing and very black hair came to us. There was no sign of travel upon him and none of us recognized him.

He sat down in front of the Prophet - the praise and peace be upon him - with his knees touching his. Then, placing his hands on his thighs he said: 'Tell me, Muhammad about Islam.' He replied: 'Islam means that you bear witness that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, that you pray (the five daily prayers), pay the obligatory charity, fast the month of Ramadan and make the Pilgrimage to the House (Ka'bah in Mecca) if you have the means.' The man replied: 'You have spoken the truth.' We were surprised at his questioning and then confirming that he had spoken the truth. Then the man asked: 'Now tell me about Iman (belief).' He replied: 'It means that you believe in Allah, His angels, His Messengers and the Last Day, and that you believe in both the decree of good and evil.' The man replied: 'You have spoken the truth.'

'Now tell me about Ihsan (linguistically, perfecting).' He replied: 'It means that you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, because He sees you although you do not see Him.'

Then the man asked: 'Now tell me about the Hour.' He replied: 'The one who is asked about it is no better informed than the one who is asking.' So the man asked: 'Then tell me about its signs?' He replied: 'That the maid servant will give birth to her mistress and the bare-footed, naked, poor herders are seen living arrogantly in high buildings.'

Then the man departed, and after I had waited for a long time - the Prophet, the praise and peace be upon him - asked me: 'Do you know who the questioner was Umar?' I replied: 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' So he told me: 'He was Gabriel

## The Foundations of Islamic Belief

who came to teach you your Religion.'