

AL WALA' WAL BARA' ACCORDING TO THE AQEEDAH OF THE SALAF

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Chapter 1

THE DECLARATION OF FAITH

What the Declaration of Faith Confirms and What it Denies

The meaning of the first part of the declaration of faith, 'There is no god but Allah', is that nothing other than Allah is worthy of worship. This denies the attribution of divinity to all other things, and affirms it as a quality which belongs to Allah alone. (Shaykh Abdar-Rahman ibn Hassan, Fath al-Majid, p.36)

Ibn Taimiyah said: "The heart will not find complete happiness except by loving Allah and by striving towards what is dear to Him. It is not possible to achieve this love except by rejecting all things that compete with it. This is what the words, 'There is no god but Allah' mean; this is the spirit of the deen of Ibrahim and of that of every other prophet." (Ibn Taimiya, Majmu' al-Fatawa, vol 28, p.32, Riyadh)

When someone says, 'There is no god but Allah', he has denied one thing and affirmed another. With these words the believer first denies all those who reject faith, worship created things, obey the tyrant, rule by injustice or remain content under oppression; and then he affirms his allegiance to Allah, to His deen, to His Book, to His righteous

servants, and to the Sunnah of His Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace : "Whoever rejects false deities and believes in Allah has grasped a firm handhold which will never break." [2:256]

As for the second part of the declaration, 'Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah', this means that we do what the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, has told us to do, and stop doing what he has told us not to do. According to Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab, "No one truly believes until he rejects the forces of disbelief." This is supported by ayah 2 :256 just cited. The declaration of faith is a declaration of complete loyalty to the Shari'ah : "Follow that which is sent down to you from your Lord, and follow no protecting friends beside Him. Little do you recollect!" [7:3]; and : "So set your purpose (O Muhammad) for the deen as a man by nature upright - the natural way of Allah, in which He has created man." [30:30]

You must also denounce the rule of Ignorance: "Is it the judgement of the time of ignorance that they seek? And who is better than Allah for judgment for a people who have certainty (in their belief)?" [5:50] Indeed you must deny all other religions: "And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him, and he will be one of the losers in the Hereafter." [3:85]

The declaration of faith is thus a denial and an affirmation. In fact, it denies four things and affirms four others. It denies false deities, the tyrant, intermediaries, and ordained authorities, who are bogus. If you think a thing can help you or protect you from harm then you have taken it as a god. A tyrant demands that you worship and adore him. An intermediary, whether family, community or property, distracts you from faith: "And from among mankind are some who take for themselves (objects of worship as) rivals to Allah loving them as they should only love Allah." [2:156]

Bogus authority advises you to act against truth and to disobey Allah: "They have taken as lords beside Allah their rabbis and their monks." [9:31]

It also affirms four things: that the object of your worship is Allah; that glorification and love are for Allah alone; that hope and fear are due only to Allah; and that you are aware of Allah's power and might, this awareness is taqwa. The single and unique goal of the believer is to worship Allah and none other than Him. Thus, the believer's love is for Allah alone: "And those who believe are stronger in their love for Allah." [2:156] Hope, too, is exclusively in Allah and one fears nothing but Him: "If Allah afflicts you with some hurt, there is no one who can remove it except Him; and if He desires good for you, there is no one who can repel His bounty. He strikes with it whom He wishes of his servants. He is the Forgiving, the Compassionate." [10:107]

Lastly, the believer is conscious of Allah and aware of the danger of His displeasure and of His wrath. It is taqwa that causes a person abandon disbelief and disobedience, to devote himself entirely to Allah and to obey His law and His command. Ibn Mas'ud said: "When you act in obedience to Allah, in the light of Allah, you hope for Allah's reward. When you abandon disobedience of Allah, in the light of Allah, you fear Allah's

punishment." (Majumu'at ar-Rasa'il wa-Masa'il al-Najdiyya, Muhammad Rashid Rida, eds. vol4, p.99)

Whoever recognises these things must sever all links to anything other than Allah and free his heart from falsehood. Thus Allah tells us that Ibrahim, as well as our own Prophet, may the blessings and peace of Allah be on them, smashed the idols that their people took as gods and rejected all who worshipped them: "There is a good example for you in Ibrahim and those with him, when they told their people: Surely we disassociate ourselves from you and all that you worship beside Allah. We have done with you. And there has arisen between us and you enmity and hate forever until you believe in Allah only." [60:4]

>From beginning to end the Qur'an is a clarification of the meaning of the words, 'There is no god but Allah'. This statement is both a denial of shirk and of those who commit it, and an approval of sincerity and of those who strive for it. Every word and every deed that is dear to Allah is in some way connected to this declaration. It is the source of all noble action, its definition and its guide. This is why Allah has called it the 'declaration of fear'.

The Prophet's Companions and the Declaration of Faith

The following account illustrates the Companions' understanding and experience of the Kalima. In 170 AH someone asked Imam Sufiyan ibn Uyaynah al-Hillali * about faith. He said:

"It is in both speech and action." "But does it increase or decrease?" asked the man. "It increases as Allah wishes, and it decreases as He wishes until no more of it than this remains," and held out his hand. The man said, "So what should be our attitude towards those among us who assert that it is speech and not action?"

"This is what people used to say before the nature and limits of faith had been made clear. Of course Allah, Glorious and Mighty is He, sent his Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to all of humanity to tell them that there is no god but Allah and that he is the Messenger of Allah. Once they had accepted this, the security of their money and their lives was assured and they became accountable to Allah alone."

"When Allah was satisfied with their sincerity, He commanded His Prophet to order them to pray. He ordered them to do this and they did it. By Allah, had they not done this their first act would not have helped them."

"When Allah was satisfied with the sincerity of their prayers, He told His Prophet to order them to migrate to Madinah. By Allah, had they not done this neither their first act nor their prayers would have helped them."

"When Allah was satisfied with the sincerity of their hearts in this, He commanded them to return to Makkah to fight their fathers and their brothers until these said the Word

which they had said, established the same prayer and joined the same migration. He commanded them to do this and they did it. One of them even came with the head of his father and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, here is the head of a leader of the disbelievers.' By Allah, had they not done this their first act, their prayers and their migration would not have helped them."

"When Allah was satisfied with the sincerity of their hearts in this, He told His Messenger to order them to complete the rite of tawaf and to shave their heads in humility, which they did. By Allah, had they not done this their first act, their prayers, their migration and their combat with their fathers would not have helped them."

"When Allah was satisfied with the sincerity of their hearts in this He told the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to take a part of their money by which to purify themselves. He commanded them to do this and they did, giving much and giving little. By Allah, had they not done this their first act, their prayers, their migration, their combat with their fathers and their tawaf would not have helped them."

"When Allah was satisfied with the sincerity of their hearts which were now in harmony with the nature and limits of faith, He said to them: "This day I have perfected your deen for you and have completed My blessings to you, and have chosen for you as your deen al-Islam [5:3]."

Imam Sufiyan continued: "Whoever abandons any part of faith is a disbeliever as far as we are concerned. If this from neglect we would correct him, but he would be lacking in our eyes. This is the Sunnah. Relate it on my behalf to whoever may ask about it." (Al-Shar'a, Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Hussain al-Ajari, p.104)

* Imam Sufiyan ibn Uyaynah al-Hillali (107-198 AH): Imam Shafi'i said of him: "Were it not for Imams Malik and ibn Uyaynah, the learning of the Hijaz would have been lost." Imam Ahmad said, "I have not seen anyone more knowledgeable in the Sunnah than ibn Uyaynah."

Chapter II

THE PREREQUISITES OF THE DECLARATION OF FAITH

The importance of the declaration of faith has nothing to do with the number of its words, nor indeed with its memorisation. How many people have acknowledged it and lived according to it yet still could not tell you how many words it contains? How many people

have learned these words by heart to rattle them off as quick as lightning, but still fall into many things that contradict them? Success is only by the hand of Allah.(1)

In the first century of the Hijra someone asked Wahab ibn Munabbah whether the words, 'There is no god but Allah', were the key to success.' "Certainly", he said, "but of course every key has teeth, so if you come with one that has teeth, the door will open, but if you don't, it won't." (2) The teeth of this key are the prerequisites of the declaration of faith.

The ulama' consider that the declaration of faith depends on seven conditions:

The first of these prerequisites is knowledge of what the declaration of faith negates and of what it confirms. It negates ignorance. Allah says: "So you know (O Muhammad) that there is no god but Allah." [47:19] and also: "Except whoever bears witness to the truth knowingly." [43:86]; this witnessed truth is Tawheed, or Divine Unity, which pervades the heart as you declare the k'lama; and lastly: "Allah (Himself) is Witness that there is no god but Him - and (so are) the angels and the people of knowledge - Who sustains His creation with justice; there is no god but Him, the Almighty, the Wise." [3:18] In Sahih Bukhari, as in Sahih Muslim, there is a hadith reported by Uthman, that says, "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'Whoever dies in the knowledge that there is no god but Allah, shall surely enter Paradise.'" (3)

The second prerequisite is the complete denial of uncertainty. This means that whoever pronounces the declaration of faith must be completely and utterly sure that it is the truth. Faith must be based upon certainty and not upon doubt. (4) Allah says: "Surely the (true) believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger and then do not doubt, but struggle with their wealth and their selves in the way of Allah. These are the sincere." [49:15]

Abu Hurayrah has reported, "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that I am the Messenger of Allah. No one will come to Allah with these words, never doubting any of it, without entering paradise.'" (5) Another report says, "None will come to Allah with these words, never doubting any of it, and not see paradise." In another hadith, also reported by Abu Hurayrah, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, says, 'Whoever you find beyond this room, who bears witness with firmness in his heart that there is no god but Allah, give him glad tidings of paradise.'" (6)

According to al-Qurtubi, simply pronouncing the declaration of faith is not enough; you must also be certain of it in your heart. This contradicts the doctrine of the extremist Murji'a sect who say that by simply saying these words you have established an adequate foundation for faith. Their own arguments contradict one another. In fact, this position is known to destroy whoever supports it, because it requires him to condone hypocrisy and to ascribe true faith to hypocrites, and this is a negation of faith. (7)

The third prerequisite is to accept inwardly, and to declare openly, whatever the declaration of faith requires. Allah tell us that some of those who came before accepted it

and knew success, while others rejected it and invited His wrath: "And even so We sent not a warner before you (O Muhammad) into any township but that its luxurious ones said: 'Surely we found our fathers following a religion, and we are following in their footsteps.' (And the warner) said: 'What! Even though I bring you better guidance than what you found your fathers following?' They answered: 'Surely we are disbelievers in what you bring.' So we requited them. Then see the nature of the consequence of the rejecters!" [43:23-25]

And He says: "Then shall We save Our Messengers and those who believe in the same way (as before). It is incumbent upon Us to save the believers." [10:103] and also: "For when it was said to them, 'There is no god but Allah', they were scornful, and said: 'Shall we forsake our gods for a mad poet?" [37:35-36]

The fourth prerequisite is to abandon oneself to what the declaration of faith implies, namely, complete surrender to Allah: "Turn to your Lord repentant, and surrender to Him." [39:54]; and : "Who is better in religion than he who surrenders his purpose to Allah while doing good?" [4:125]; and: "Whoever surrenders his purpose to Allah while doing good, he has truly grasped the firm hand-hold." [31:22] The 'firm hand-hold' means to completely understand and accept the declaration of faith. In the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, "None of you has believed until his desires are in accordance with what I have come to you with." (8) This refers to the perfection of your obedience and of your desire to obey.

Furhtermore, Allah says: "But no, by your Lord, they will not believe (truly) until they make you the judge of what is in dispute between them, and find within themselves no dislike of what you decide, and submit with full submission." [4:65]

Ibn Kathir points out that in this ayah Allah makes an oath upon Himself and swears that no one has believed until he accepts the authority of the Prophet in all matters. This is the truth that the believer must apply to himself both in public and in private. This is why He says in the ayah: "and find within themselves no dislike of what you decide, and submit with full submission"; that is, "they accept your judgement in their hearts and find do difficulty in themselves in following what you have decided." Thus they submit to it completely, with no pressure or coercion, and without argument. This point was made again when the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "by He in Whose hand is my soul, none of you has believed until his desires are in accord with what I have come to you with." (9)

The fifth prerequisite is to denounce falsehood sincerely, doing this with heartfelt conviction, so that the tongue follows the heart. Allah says: "Alif. Lam. Mim. Do people imagine that they will be left (at ease) because they say, 'we believe', and will not be tested with affliction? Surely We tested those who were before you. Thus Allah certainly knows those who are sincere, and He certainly knows those who lie." [29: 1-3]

In a sahih hadith, Muaadh ibn Jabal reports that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "No one will say, 'There is no god but Allah Muhammad is the

Messenger of Allah', sincerely from his heart without Allah forbidding him the Fire." (10) Ibn al-Qayim remarks that sincerity with regard to the words, 'There is no god but Allah', must depend on your compliance with, and acceptance of, the obligations which this statement places upon you. These obligations are represented by the Shari'ah, which itself is an elaboration of the declaration of faith. It means that you believe in whatever Allah has revealed, that you follow His commandments and avoid what He has forbidden. One who is truly sincere in this belief will abide by it completely. The complete protection of the Shari'ah is only assured by complete compliance with it. Likewise, complete security from punishment only comes from complete obedience to it. (11)

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "My intercession is for whoever witness that there is no god but Allah sincerely, whose heart believes his tongue, and whose tongue believes his heart." (12) Ibn Rajab adds, "As for those who give lip service to the words, 'there is no god but Allah', but then follow Satan in disobedience and contentiousness, their actions have made clear the emptiness of their words and the weakness of their belief: "And who goes farther astray than he who follows his desires without guidance from Allah?" [28:50]; and: "Do not follow desire so that it lures you away from the way of Allah." [28:26]" (13)

The sixth prerequisite is singularity of devotion. This means that you should purify your deeds by cleansing your intentions of all traces of reverence towards any created thing: "Surely pure religion is for Allah only." [39:3]; and also: "And they are not ordered to anything else other than to worship Allah, keeping the deen pure for Him, as men by nature upright." [98:5] Abu Hurayrah reports that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Allah raises up by my intercession whoever says, 'There is no god but Allah', from the depths of his heart with complete purity of devotion." (14) The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, is reported by Utban ibn Malik in Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim as saying, "Certainly Allah has forbidden the Fire for anyone who says 'There is no god but Allah', and who seeks by these words only the pleasure of Allah." (15)

Two of the Prophet's companions report that he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Whenever someone says from his heart in singular devotion, his tongue pure in belief: 'there is no god but Allah alone; He has no partner; His is the dominion; His is the praise; and He has power over all things', Allah opens a path for this in the heavens and smiles (16) upon whomever from among the people of the earth has said it, and it is the right of the servant of Allah upon whom He smiles that his request be granted." (17)

"Though performed in singular devotion to Allah, an act of worship is not accepted if it is incorrectly done," writes al-Fudhayl ibn Iyadh. "One performed correctly, but not in singular devotion to Allah is not accepted either. Any act of worship must be performed both in complete devotion to Allah, and correctly. Complete devotion means that the act is for Allah alone. Correctly means that it is performed according to the Sunnah." (18)

Allah has given us a clear example of the contrast between absolute and flawed devotion to Him in this ayah from the Qur'an: "Allah strikes a metaphor: a man who has several

owners, quarrelling; and a man belonging wholly to one man. Are the two equal in comparison?" [39:29]

Commenting on this ayah, Sayid Qutub says: "This example contrasts the servant whose devotion is to Allah alone with the one whose devotion is shared out among many. The latter is likened to a slave jointly owned by men who quarrel over him: to each of them he owes a duty and each of them make demands of him. His situation totally confounds him. He can find no way and no means to satisfy all of their conflicting and contradictory demands. The former, however, has but one master. He knows what he wants from him and does his duty to him, so he finds the road clearly marked before him. Are these two the same? Not at all: the man whose service is to one master benefits from the comfort and security, peace of mind and certainty that unite his actions and his goals with the means of achieving them; but the man with quarrelling masters is shaken by torment. He can find now way out; if he pleases one the others are unhappy. The reality of the Unity of God is contained in this example, as is the truth about its antithesis, polytheism. The heart of the believer, rooted in the truth of God's Unity, is a heart through which guidance from Allah flows - that is, inspired only by Him and dutiful to Him alone." (19)

The significance of this is that it indicates that singularity of devotion is through singularity of purpose. As Allah says: "Are (many) different lords better, or Allah the One, the Almighty?" [12:39] (20)

Islam requires submission to Allah alone; whatever else one has submitted to in this way must be abandoned. This is the true significance of the words 'there is no god but Allah', since whoever submits to Allah and to something other than Him at the same time, has associated something with Allah. Allah does not forgive this. Whoever fails to submit to Him has scorned His worship : "Surely those who scorn worship of Me will enter Hell disgraced." [40:60]

The seventh prerequisite is to love the declaration of faith, to love all that it requires and all it implies, to love all those who act upon it and who hold to all that it stands for and to feel anger at whatever contradicts it. Allah says: "And from among mankind are some who take for themselves (objects of worship as) rivals to Allah. And those who believe are stronger in their love for Allah." [21:65] And He says: "O you who believe! Whoever of you becomes a rebel against his deen, (know that in his place) Allah will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him, humble towards the believers, harsh towards the disbelievers, striving in the way of Allah, and not fearing the blame of any blamer." [5:54]

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The sweetness of faith belongs to whoever may find himself in these three states: that Allah and His Messenger are more dear to him than any other thing; that he loves someone only for the sake of Allah; and that he despises a return to disbelief after Allah had saved him from it, as much as he would hate to be thrown into the fires of Hell." (21)

The signs of love for Allah are to give precedence to this love and to suppress your desires: to conquer your desire for what angers your Lord and to feel anger towards it; to ally yourself with Allah, His Messenger, and those who are with them; to oppose whoever opposes Him; and to follow in the footsteps of His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, accepting his guidance." (22)

Ibn al-Qayim said in a poem:

The love of the Beloved must be unconditionally returned If you claim love yet oppose the Beloved, then you love is but a pretence. You love the enemies of your Beloved and still seek love in return. You fight the beloved of your Beloved. Is this Love or the following of Shaytan? True devotion is nothing but total submission of body and soul to One Love

Notes

- 1- Ma'aarij al-Qubul, Hafiz al-Hakami, 1/377
- 2- He reported hadith from Abu Hurayrah, Abu Sa'id, Ibn Abbas and Ibn Umar among others. He came from Yemen and died in 110 AH. This hadith is reported in Bukhari, in an appendix to Kitab al-Jana'iz with regard to someone whose last words are 'there is no god but Allah', 3/109
- 3- Ibid. 1/378. See also Al-Jam' al-Fareed, p.356.
- 3- Ibid. 1/378
- 5- Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Iman, 1/56, (27)
- 6- Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Iman, 1/60, (31)
- 7- Shaykh Abdar-Rahman ibn Hasan, Fath al-Majid, p.36
- 8- This hadith appears in Imam Nawawi's Forty Hadith, number 41
- 9- Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, 2/306
- 10- Sahih Bukhari and Muslim
- 11- Ibn Qayim al-Jawziya, at-Tibyan fi Aqsam al-Quran, p.43
- 12- Al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak, 1/70; he said that the isnad was sahih, and ad-Dhahabi confirmed him in this.
- 13- Imam ibn Rajab, Kalimat al-Ikhlaas, p.28
- 14- Sahih Bukhari, Kital al-'Ilm, 1/193, (99)
- 15- Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Masajid, 1/456, (263)
- 16- The Arabic, hatta yandhuru alayhee, literally means: until He looks at him.
- 17- Imam ibn Rajab reports this in Kalimat al-Ikhlaas; al-Albani remarks that it appears in al-Jami'a al-Kabir, (2/477) where Ya'qub ibn Asim says, "Two of the Prophet's companions told me...etc" This Ya'qub is

one of Imam Muslim's authorities. Ibn Hibban confirms this as well.

If this isnad is sahih then the hadith is sound.

18- cf. Ibn Taimiyah, *Iqtida as-Sirat al-Musta'qim*, p.451.

19- Sayid Qutub, *Fi Dhilal al-Qur'an*, 5/3049.

20- Muhammad Jamal as-Din al-Qaasimi, *Mahaasin at-Ta'weel*, 14/5138

21- Sahih Bukhari, *Kitab al-Iman*, 1/60; Sahih Muslim, *Kitab al-Iman* 1/66

22- Hafiz al-Hakami, *Ma'arij al-Qubul*, 1/383

23- Ibn Qayim al-Jawziya, *an-Nuniyya*, p.158

Chapter III

AL-WALA' WAL-BARA' AND THE DECLARATION OF FAITH

Love is the source of wala' and hate is the source of bara'; it is by this that both the heart and the hand are moved to act. Wala' inspires intimacy, concern and help. Bara' provokes obstruction, enmity and rejection. Wala' and Bara' are both related to the declaration of faith and constitute essential elements in it. The evidence of this from the Qur'an and the Sunnah is considerable.

As for the Qur'an, consider the following ayat: "Let not the believers take disbelievers for their friends in preference to believers. Whoever does this has no connection with Allah unless you are guarding yourselves against them as a precaution. Allah bids you to beware (only) of Himself. And to Allah is the journeying." [3:28]

And He says: "Say, (O Muhammad, to mankind), If you love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your wrong actions. Allah is Forgiving, Compassionate. Say, Obey Allah and the Messenger. And If they turn away, then surely Allah does not love the disbelievers." [3:31-32]

Speaking of the aims of the enemies of Allah, He says: "They long for you to disbelieve even as they disbelieve, so that you may be the same (as them). so do not choose friends from among them until they go out in the way of Allah." [4:89]

And also: "O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends. They are friends of one another. And whoever of you takes them for friends is (one) of them. Surely Allah does not guide wrongdoing people." [5:51]

And lastly: "O you who believe! Whoever of you becomes a rebel against his deen, (know that in his place) Allah will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him, humble towards the believers, harsh towards the disbelievers, striving in the way of Allah, and not fearing the blame of any blamer." [5:54]

We will mention only a few of the many hadith and reports of the Companions on this subject. Imam Ahmad reports from Jarir ibn Abdullah that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, made him swear an oath to 'offer counsel to every Muslim and to steer clear of every disbeliever.' (1) Ibn Shayba reports that the Prophet said, "The strongest bond of faith is love for the sake of Allah and enmity for His sake." (2) Ibn Abbas reports that the Prophet said, "The strongest bond of faith is loyalty for the sake of Allah and opposition for His sake, love for the sake of Allah and enmity for His sake." (3)

Ibn Abbas is also reported to have said, "Whoever loves for the sake of Allah, and hates for the sake of Allah, and whoever seals a friendship for His sake, or declares an enmity for His sake, will receive, because of this, the protection of Allah. No one may taste true faith except by this, even if his prayers and fasts are many. People have come to build their relationships around the concerns of the world, but it will not benefit them in any way." (4)

Shaykh Sulaiman ibn Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab explained the words of Ibn Abbas by saying that the meaning of 'to seal a friendship for the sake of Allah' indicates the obligation of establishing relationships of love and trust for His sake; this is friendship for the sake of Allah. It also indicates that simple affection is not enough here; indeed what is meant is a love based upon alliance. This entails assistance, honour, and respect. It means being with those whom you love both in word and deed.

As for 'enmity for the sake of Allah', it includes the obligation to declare enmity for His sake: opposition for the sake of Allah. It is to declare opposition in deed, to take up arms against His enemies, to shun them, and to stay far from them both in word and deed. This proves that simple opposition of the spirit is not enough, and that it must be a complete

honouring of your commitment, for Allah says: "There is a good example for you in Ibrahim and those with him, when they told their people: 'Surely we disassociate ourselves from you and all that you worship beside Allah. We have done with you. And there has arisen between us and you enmity and hate for ever until you believe in Allah only'." [60:4] (5)

All this leads us to conclude that loyalty for the sake of Allah really means to love Allah and to come to the assistance of His deen; it is to love those who are obedient to Him and to come to their help. Opposition for the sake of Allah is to feel anger at the enemies of Allah and to struggle against them. Because of this Allah has called the first group the "party of Allah" and the second the "party of Satan": "Allah is the Protecting Guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of darkness into light. As for those who disbelieve, their patrons are false deities. They bring them out of light into darkness. Such are rightful owners of the Fire. They will abide therein." [2:257]

And Allah says: "Those who believe do battle for the cause of Allah; and those who disbelieve do battle for the cause of idols. So fight the friends of Satan. Surely Satan's strategy is always weak." [4:76]

It is well known that Allah has never sent a Prophet on His mission without also raising up opponents against him. Allah says: "Thus have We appointed for every prophet an adversary - devils from mankind and the jinn who inspire in one another plausible words that are deceiving." [6:112] It may be that opponents of Divine Unity possess some learning, a part of Revelation, and proof. As Allah says: "And when their Messengers brought them clear proofs (of Allah's Sovereignty), they exulted in the knowledge which they (themselves) possessed. And that which they had become accustomed to mock befell them." [40:83]

It is the obligation of every Muslim to learn from Allah's deen whatever may serve as a weapon for him in the struggle against the friends of Satan. In this he should have no fear and no misgivings, since the devil's strategy is always weak. Allah says: "And surely that Our host would be the victors." [37:173] To the host of Allah shall be the victory in discussion and in debate, as in war and strife. In this way an ordinary man from the party of the One God will overcome a thousand scholars of the disbelievers. (6)

If the aim of the enemies of Islam - whether they are atheists or Jews, or Christians or modernists, or Zionists or Communists - is the emasulation of the Aqeedah of the Muslims, and the erosion of their unique character in order to make them 'the ass of the chosen people', (as it is put in The Protocols of the Elders of Zion), then the urgency of this issue should become clear to every Muslim.

We should all take heed, for ourselves and for those who are with us, so that we may warn all the Muslims who are slipping away into the abyss of apostasy, warn them of the treacherous call of the disbelievers to what they call 'brotherhood and equality', warn them of the false claim that religion is for Allah but that nationhood is for the masses. We will return to this point in more detail later.

For the present, the evidence is clear from the Qur'an and the Sunnah that allegiance is demanded by the declaration of faith since this is an essential part of its meaning. As Ibn Taimiya has said, "The declaration of faith, there is no god but Allah, requires you to love only for the sake of Allah, to hate only for the sake of Allah, to ally yourself only for the sake of Allah, to declare enmity only for the sake of Allah; it requires you to love what Allah loves and to hate what Allah hates." (7) It also requires you to ally yourself to the Muslims wherever you find them and to oppose the disbelievers even if they are your closest kin.

NOTES

- 1) Imam Ahmad, Musnad, 4/357-8.
- 2) Abu Bakr Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Shaybah, (d.235 AH) Kitab al-Iman. At-Tabarani, al-Kabir, ascribes it to Ibn Mas'ud as "marfu'", and classed it as "hasan".
- 3) At-Tabarani, al-Kabir. It is mentioned by as-Suyuti, al-Jami' as-Saghir, 1/69. Al-Albani classes it as "hassan".
- 4) Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, Jami' al-Ulum wal Hikam, p.30.
- 5) Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab, Sharh Kitab at-Tawhid, p.422.
- 6) Abridged from Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab, Kashaf ash-Shubuhah, 3rd edition, p.20.
- 7) Ibn Taimiya, al-Ihtijaj bil-Qadar, p.62.

Chapter Four

THE DECLARATION OF FAITH: ON THE TONGUE AND IN THE HEART

According to Ibn al-Qayim, belief in Divine Unity is not simply saying that Allah is the sole Creator and that He is Lord and Master of all things. This was what the pagans used to say, while at the same time worshipping many gods. Belief in Divine Unity does not only mean love of Allah, but also submission to Him, humility before Him, complete obedience to Him, and devotion to Him in all our words and deeds, in what we hold on to and in what we give, in our love and in our hate. It can never be confused with the urge to disobey, or to do as you please in misguided self interest.

Whoever takes this to heart will understand the words of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, "Certainly Allah has forbidden the Fire from taking whoever says 'There is no god but Allah', and who says this for the pleasure of Allah.";(1) and in another hadith, "whoever says 'there is no god but Allah, shall not enter the Fire."

So what do these reports really mean? Many people have misunderstood them, going so far as to say that these statements were later abrogated, and that they were made before the completion of the shari'ah, before we knew what we must and must not do. Others have said that the fire they refer to is the hell of the disbelievers, while others still interpret the actual entering of the fire to mean entering it for eternity; thus "...shall not enter the Fire (for eternity)." These are just a few of their baseless interpretations.

In fact, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, did not say that this would occur merely by pronouncing the declaration of faith; this would contradict our entire understanding of Islam. The hypocrites say these words with their tongues, but they are bound for the deepest pit of Hell, and will be punished even more severely than those who actively dispute the fact that there is no other god than He. What is being referred to is, of course, a matter of both the heart and the tongue.

While the heart must believe, it must also realise the truth: it must realise the meaning of the words of the declaration of faith, of what they deny and what they affirm; realise that there is no other divinity than Allah; and realise that the attribution of divinity to anything else is quite impossible. Thus its meaning must be taken to heart consciously and deliberately, with certainty and urgency. This is what protects you from the Fire.

This recalls the story of the man who had murdered a hundred men, and though faith arose in his heart he took no notice of it, pushing it out of his breast; but when he came to

death's door it again entered his heart and so he was one of those who entered Paradise. (2)

And also the account about the prostitute whose heart was moved by the sight of a dog dying of thirst by the side of a well, eating the dust in desperation. With no higher purpose or hope of reward, she filled her shoe to the brim and gave it to the dog. Though people usually beat it she took it by the paw and stilled it until it had drunk, knowing that it could neither reward her nor even thank her in any way. Her supreme act of love wiped out all her previous sins and this is how she was forgiven. (3)

Imam Muslim reports a hadith in which the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, says, "Whoever says, There is no god but Allah, and denies whatever he used to worship beside Allah, will find that his life and his property are protected, and his reward is with Allah." (4)

Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab points out that this is the greatest proof we have of the real meaning of the declaration of faith, since neither life nor property are protected simply by pronouncing these words; indeed there is no significance at all in just saying them, nor in advocating them, nor in calling on Allah alone. Your life and your property are not protected until you actually deny whatever you used to worship beside Allah; and if you have any doubt or hesitation about that, then you are still outside Islam. (5)

This should make clear the error of the Murji'a sect (6), who said that faith was equivalent to knowledge, and disbelief to ignorance, and who in this way severed deeds from belief. Everyone knows that the pagans of Makkah understood what the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, meant by saying, "There is no god but Allah". They understood it and they believed it, but they arrogantly refused to acknowledge it; so their faith in the One God, the Provider, the Bringer of Life and Death, did not benefit them at all. When the Prophet told them, "Say there is no god but Allah", they said: "Does he make the gods One God? Surely that is an astounding thing." [38:5]

The strange thing is that while the disbelievers know that the declaration of faith is more than just saying the words, some think that these reports mean that a simple utterance of the words 'there is no god but Allah', with none of their meaning entering the heart, is all that is required. But wiser people understand that it means that there is no creator other than Allah: no other provider, giver of life, bringer of death, and no other who holds all

things in his hand. However, there is still no benefit to be gained by knowing what the declaration of faith means if you are without any belief. This throws new light on the meaning of those reports in which the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, mentions the simple repetition of these words, such as, "I have been ordered to struggle against people until they say 'There is no god but Allah'." (7)

Some people hope to imply by this that whoever recites the declaration of faith is not a disbeliever, and that we should not oppose him, regardless of whatever else he does. These people should recall that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, fought the Jews and cursed them even though they said, 'There is no god but Allah'. Not only this, but also the Companions of the Prophet fought the Bani Hanifa who not only said, "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah", but also prayed and claimed to be Muslims; this was the same for the people whom Ali ibn Abi Talib burned alive for saying that he was an incarnation of Allah.

However, when you ask these people about the case of someone who denies the rising of the dead, they say that he has disbelieved and that we should fight him, even he says, 'there is no god but Allah'. They agree that whoever disputes any of the five pillars of Islam has disbelieved and should be opposed with the pen and the sword, even though he may pronounce the declaration of faith.

The contradiction here is that none of these denials involve the central tenet of Islam, which is the affirmation of Divine Unity, and yet these people are prepared to go to war over them; but when it is a matter of someone who denies the very essence of belief, the Divine Unity of God, then they provide him with an excuse for its denial, even though it is the very source and foundation of the deen.

So it becomes clear that these people are the enemies of Allah, and that they have not understood at all the meaning of what the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, has said: It is well known that when a man declares himself to be a Muslim we should act prudently towards him until he does something that clearly contradicts his claim. Allah says: "O you who believe! When you go out (to fight) in the way of Allah, be careful, and do not say to one who offers you peace: 'You are not a believer', seeking the chance profits of this life (so that you may despoil him). With Allah are plenteous spoils. You too were like this once, and Allah gave you hope, so be careful; surely Allah is well aware of what you do." [4:94]

This verse indicates the necessity of restraint until such time as you are sure about the situation, since Allah says: "be careful". If it becomes clear that someone is at odds with Islam, then fight him. If this were not the case, then the command to verify the situation before fighting would be meaningless.

Similarly the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said of the Kharijites, "Wherever you find them fight them, for were I to discover them I would destroy them utterly, as the people of Ad were destroyed." (8) He said this even though they were meticulously observant in their dedication and in their worship, so much so that the companions, with whom they studied, felt humbled before them. Their declaration of faith, however, did not benefit them, and neither did the fullness of their worship, nor indeed their service to Islam, once they had abandoned the Shari'ah.(9)

Any intelligent person knows that if this whole matter hinged upon a single word, a mere word, then it would have been a simple thing for the Quraish to say it. They would have said, 'There is no god but Allah', saving both themselves a lot of trouble and their gods from ridicule. But they knew that the declaration of faith also involved a commitment, and it was this commitment that threatened their power and status in the land.

The point here is that Islam is a force that liberates all people from the unjust slavery of one to another, and places mankind at the service of the One, the Victorious. The degree of their fear of Allah became the measure of their worth and excellence among people. Thus the habits and customs of the jahiliyyah, inherited from parents and grandparents, had no place. Every good hearted, sincere Muslim must strive towards the full realisation of the declaration of faith, in order that each and every one of us may worship Allah with insight, knowledge, and certainty. This is the real challenge of Islam.

Notes

- 1) Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Masajid, 1/356.
- 2) See Sahih Bukhari, Kitab al-Anbia', 6/512, (3470); and Sahih Muslim, Kitab at-Tawba, 4/2118 (2766)
- 3) Ibn al-Qayim, Madarij as-Salikin, 1/330-332.
- 4) Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Iman, 1/53, (23).
- 5) Ibn Abdul Wahhab, Kitab at-Tawhid, p.115.
- 6) The Murji'a sect believed that belief is all that is needed to reach the Garden
- 7) Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Iman, 1/51, (20)

- 8) Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Zakat, 2/742, (1064)
9) Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhab, Kashaf ash-Shubuhah, p.40. The Kharijites believed that committing major wrong actions turns a Muslim into an unbeliever.
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CHAPTER FIVE

THE EFFECTS OF THE DECLARATION OF FAITH ON THE HEART

Abu A'la al-Mawdudi mentions in his book, Fundamentals of Islam, nine effects of the declaration of faith upon the heart.

First, as a believer you are not narrow minded like those who believe in many gods or who dispute the existence of God altogether.

Second, as a believer you feel a sense of your own worth and dignity, since it is Allah alone who brings benefit and harm, and He alone who brings life and death. Wisdom, power and authority are His. Because of this the heart feels no fear of anything other than Him. No head bows to another, no one is humbled before anyone else. No one may fear another or be intimidated by human power or majesty, since Allah is the Majestic and the Omnipotent over all things. In contrast to this we see the subjugation of the disbelievers, the Christians and the Jews, and the pagans and the atheists, to one another.

Third, as a believer your sense of honour and self esteem are inspired by faith. The Muslim knows humility without humiliation, and pride without vainglory. Shaytan can not affect his pride or inspire conceit in him since he is well aware that it is Allah Who has given him all that he has and Who is capable of stripping him of everything at any time. Yet you see the atheist bursting with pride whenever some worldly benefit comes his way.

Fourth, as a believer you have the knowledge and the certainty that it is only through purification of the self and the performance of good works that success may be had. As for the disbelievers they have only the false hope that the 'son' of God will wash away the sins of the world, or that since they are themselves the 'sons' of God and His high priests they will not be punished for their sins, or that they will benefit from the intervention of

the noble and pious, or that their offerings and sacrifices to their gods will give them licence to do as they please. As for the atheist who supposes that his existence in this world is without purpose and unguided by any higher plan, his gods are his own passions and desires. To these things he has dedicated his life.

Fifth, the believer in this Aqeedah will not know hopelessness or despair, because he believes that Allah is Master of all that the heavens and earth contain. So his heart is reassured in peace and in hope. Even when weak in himself and defeated, when life closes in around him, he knows that those whom Allah takes into His protection will not be neglected or abandoned so long as they depend upon Allah and trust in Him. The disbelievers prefer to depend upon their own feeble resources, yet how quickly despair overtakes them, plunging them into desperation, and even driving them to suicide.

Sixth, belief in this Aqeedah develops in the individual great determination, fortitude, patience, confidence and trust, since you are engaged in the greatest of enterprise, the quest for the pleasure of Allah. Indeed you feel that what supports you is the power of He Who possesses the heavens and the earth. In this way the strength and determination of the believer, with his resolute will inspired by this confidence, becomes like a mountain that no human force may move. Could there ever be such a strength and confidence as this to inspire a person's disbelief?

Seventh, the believer derives both strength and support from the declaration of faith, since it puts you out of reach of the two things that can undermine your strength, love of the world and fear of it. Love of the world is to place love of yourself, your spouse or your money before love of Allah. Fear of the world is fear of an unknown force, not under the power of God, waiting to destroy you. The believer knows that there is no god but Allah, and so neither of these things can gain any power over the heart, because it is reassured by the fact that Allah is the Sole Possessor of both life and property. Once you dedicate yourself to the pleasure of your Lord regardless of the cost, you suddenly realise that no one can deprive you of your life, neither man nor beast: the gun, the sword and the stone do not kill; it is God alone Who brings death.

There is no stronger determination than that of someone who believes in Allah. No man can intimidate him and no army frighten him, neither flashing swords nor bullets falling like rain. Whenever a believer presents himself for battle in the path of Allah, his strength is multiplied tenfold. So where does this leave the Christians and the Jews, the disbelievers and the atheists.

Eighth, by believing in the declaration of faith you can take command over your own life, take pride in yourself, in your confidence and determination, and in this way purify your heart from the influence of avarice, jealousy, cowardice, spite, and all other vices.

Ninth, and by far the most important of these effects on the heart, is the knowledge that the declaration of faith guides you to understand the law of Allah, and helps you to keep carefully to it. Thus you are awakened to the fact that Allah is totally aware of every thing, and that He is nearer to you than your jugular vein; and although you may be able to escape from most kinds of danger, there is no escaping from Allah. The degree to which faith pervades the human mind determines in turn the extent of the believer's obedience to the laws of Allah, his keeping to Allah's limits and not coming near to what Allah has forbidden, and his hastening to do good works and to fulfill Allah's commands.

The declaration of faith is the first of the five essential pillars of Islam. It is also the most important of these when it comes to ascertaining the extent of a person's faith. The Muslim is the obedient servant who keeps near to Allah. We can not do this until we believe from the depths of our hearts that there is no god but Allah. The declaration of faith is the source of Islam and the basis of its strength. Regardless of the details of our belief or the different shades of legal opinion, everything ultimately rests upon this one statement: the power of Islam relies upon nothing else. If this should ever be lost, then nothing at all would be left of our deen.(1)

Ibn Rajab, when commenting on the declaration of faith, quotes Sufyian ibn Uyaynah: "Allah did not bestow upon His servants a greater blessing than the knowledge that there is no god but Allah. For the people of Paradise these words are the same as fresh water is to a people who live on the parched Earth. By it the scales of Heaven and Hell are set. Because of it the Messengers were sent into battle. Whoever declares it to be so, his wealth and his life are protected, but whoever denies it shall find himself destroyed. It is the key to paradise, and the single call of all the Messengers." (2)

1) Abu A'la al-Mawdudi, *Mabadi' al-Islam*, p.87.

2) Ibn Rajab, *Kalimat al-Ikhlās*, p.53

CHAPTER VI

WHAT NEGATES THE DECLARATION OF FAITH - PART ONE

We have now discussed the meaning of the declaration of faith, the obligations that it places upon the believer, its essence and its effects upon those who proclaim it. In order to provide a more complete picture of the precise meaning of the words, 'There is no god but Allah', we will now turn our attention to what contradicts it.

It is common knowledge that disbelief, shirk, hypocrisy and apostasy all stand in complete contradiction to Islam. Before discussing this point, however, we should perhaps mention the necessity of supporting our arguments from both primary as well as secondary sources. It is in comparing the sources that a cogent reply to the claims of the Murji'a and other sects may be found. This method will expose both the distortion inherent in the beliefs of such groups as the Murji'a, and the extremism of the Kharijites, both of whom have departed from the straight path. Islam steers a course of moderation between neglect and excess.

This topic has been much discussed, both in the past and in the present, and every opinion has its partisans. Ibn al-Qayim spoke about it at length. He says, "Disbelief and faith are mutually exclusive: when one of them disappears the other takes its place."

"Faith is fundamental and consists of many branches, each of which may be known as 'iman': its branches are the prayer, zakat, haj and fasting, as well as actions of the inner self such as modesty, reliance upon Allah, fear of Allah and drawing near to Him. The least of its branches is to remove an obstacle from the road as an act of faith."

"There are branches of iman which are vital to the very existence of belief; one of these is the declaration of faith. But there are others that are not vital to belief; the removal of an obstacle from the road is an example of this. Between these two extremes there are branches of iman that are associated more closely with the declaration of faith, and others that are associated more closely with the removal of obstacles."

"Disbelief too is fundamental and has its branches. As a branch of iman is related to faith, so a branch of disbelief is related to kufr. If modesty is a characteristic of faith, immodesty is one of disbelief. If honesty comes from faith, dishonesty comes from faithlessness. The prayer, zakat, hajj and fasting are branches of faith, while abandoning

any one of them is a kind of disbelief. To rule by what Allah has revealed is a quality of those who have faith, but to rule by another law is a quality of those who are without belief. All disobedience comes from disbelief and all obedience is due to belief."

"The branches of faith are of two types: the first is speech, and the other is action. In the same way, the branches of disbelief take the form of either a word spoken or a deed performed."

"Of the branches of faith connected to speech, there are those whose disappearance results in the disappearance of faith itself. This is also true of those branches of faith that are connected to action. When such a deed is left unperformed, the result is an eclipse of iman."

"Likewise, the branches of disbelief are of two types, both speech and action. Thus it follows that deliberately saying a word of disbelief will in fact, result in disbelief, since this is one of the branches of kufr. It is the same for the performance of any act of disbelief, like prostrating to a graven image, or making fun of the Qur'an, since kufr is at its root."

"Therefore, we should realise that faith is a matter of both word and deed. Words include both the private statement to oneself, which is inner conviction, and the public statement to the world, which is the declaration of faith. As for deeds, the private act is the inner resolve, sincerity and intention known to the heart and known to Allah. Public acts are the outward actions of each one of us in the world. If these four things disappear then faith too, has gone."

"If the heart knows no sincerity, then whatever else you have of faith can not benefit you, since sincerity must precede belief. Sincerity makes belief worthwhile and without it actions of the heart are nothing. This is the root of the disagreement between the ahlu-s-sunnah wal-jama'a and the Murji'a sect. The ahlu-s-sunnah wal-jama'a maintain that faith would be destroyed, and that sincerity would be useless in the absence of the inner action of the heart, that is, love and submission to the message. The faith of Iblis (i.e. shaytan) and of Pharaoh and his people, and of the Jews and the pagan Arabs, and of all others who apparently acknowledged the sincerity and truth of the Prophet's message, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was destroyed in this way. Though they agreed with

it both inwardly and outwardly, and even protested that they had not denied it, they neither followed him nor put their trust in him."

"If it is true that faith diminishes as the inner actions of the heart wane, when it is also true that faith has a direct connection to the most significant of your outward actions. This is especially true if your actions are liable to inhibit the love in your heart and the desire to follow it; this in turn undermines any sincere commitment you may have had, as in the examples given above. If your heart does not know inward obedience, you will not be able to obey outwardly either. But if your heart had followed and obeyed, then you too would have done the same. Whoever is unable to obey lacks the sincerity to motivate him to do so; this is the nature of faith."

"Faith is not a matter of simple sincerity of belief, as some have claimed. Rather it is sincere belief in the necessity of obedience and of following the heart. Guidance, too, does not simply mean knowing the truth and the arguments which support it. It also means that you realise the necessity of following it and of acting in accordance with it. Without this realisation, guidance is neither complete nor is it sufficient, just as simply believing that the message is sincere does not in itself constitute sincerity of faith."

"Disbelief, too, is of two types: one is disbelief by inner stubbornness and recalcitrance, and the other is by outer action."

"The first means to stubbornly deny that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, came with knowledge from his Lord, knowledge of His Names and Attributes, knowledge of His works and knowledge of His Shari'ah. This kind of disbelief contradicts faith totally."

"As for disbelief in deed, it may be divided into a disbelief which contradicts faith, and one which does not. Some of the acts which contradict faith are the worship of idols, the ridiculing of the Qur'an, and the killing or slandering of a prophet. Ruling by something other than what Allah has revealed and abandoning the prayer are also, undoubtedly, acts of disbelief. It is not possible to say that we should not call someone who does any of these things a disbeliever, since Allah and His Messenger have both referred to such people in this way. According to what the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, has said, whoever rules by other than what Allah has revealed, or abandons the prayer is a disbeliever."

"A distinction between action and conviction remains, however, and while we can say that, because of some action, a person is a disbeliever, this is not proof that he does not believe. We know that Allah does not call someone who does not rule by what He has revealed a disbeliever, in the absolute sense of disbelief, nor did the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, call anyone who had abandoned the prayer a disbeliever absolutely. (1) In fact, the Prophet denied this in the case of the fornicator, the thief, the drunkard, and in the case of the man who troubles his neighbours."

Also, we have the hadith, 'Whoever consults a fortune teller and believes what he says, or commits sodomy with his wife, is free of what has been revealed to Muhammad'. (2) He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, also said, "If a man says to his brother: 'O disbeliever', then one of them has fallen into it." (3)

"A person may keep the law of Allah, not exceeding the limits nor approaching what has been forbidden, hastening to good works and to fulfillment of Allah's commands, only according to the depth of his faith."

"Allah has referred to someone who observes part of the Revelation and leaves part of it aside as believing in the part that he observes and disbelieving in the part that he does not. He says: "And when We made a covenant with you not to spill one another's blood, not to drive one another away from your homes, you agreed and you were witnesses to it. But now you kill one another, and you drive your own people out of their homes; supporting one another against them, in sin and enmity. And if some of them came to you as captives you would ransom them; but driving them out (in the first place) was forbidden to you. Do you believe in part of the Book and disbelieve in part of it? What is the reward of whoever does this other than dishonour in this world? And, on the Day of Resurrection they will be returned to an even more terrible punishment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do." [2:84-85]

"Allah says that they agreed to His covenant, which He also commanded them to keep. Part of it was that they would not kill each other, or drive each other out of their homes. He then says that they disobeyed His commands and a party of them then attacked the other and drove them away. This was how they disbelieved in the Revelation that came to them. Then He ends by saying that they would ransom some of the defeated party out or respect for their covenant with Allah. So they believed in the part of it that they observed, and disbelieved in the part of it that they ignored."

"In action and conviction, faith is the opposite of disbelief. In a well known hadith, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, makes a distinction between action and conviction when he tells us, 'to curse a Muslim is corruption, to kill him is disbelief'. (4) The conviction is in cursing and the action is in killing: he regarded cursing as corruption but not evidence of disbelief, while killing is, apparently, proof of disbelief. It is well known that what he meant by this was disbelief in action, not in conviction. This kind of disbelief can not take someone completely out of the circle of Islam, just as the fornicator, the thief and the drunkard may still be called Muslims, but not believers."

"This is the understanding of the Prophet's companions, may the blessings and peace of Allah be on him and on his family and on them, who knew the Book of Allah better than anyone else: they knew the meaning of submission and the meaning of disbelief and they knew the distinction between them. We do not accept anyone else's opinion about this."

"Later, some people who failed to understand this split up into two groups: the first group said that those who commit major wrong actions should be excluded from the Muslim community, and were thought to be condemned to Hell for ever. The second group said that such people should still be considered believers. (5) The first group over-exaggerated and the second turned a blind eye. Of course, the correct position is to follow the Prophet's Sunnah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, which is to follow the guidance of Allah."

"The lesson of the Sunnah implies that there is a disbelief that is less than disbelief, a hypocrisy that is less than hypocrisy, a shirk that is less than shirk, a corruption that is less than corruption, and an oppression that is less than oppression. Ibn Abbas said that the ayah. 'And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are disbelievers' [5:44] refers to an act of disbelief."

"Consider: 'The disbelievers, they are wrong-doers' [2:254], and with reference to the laws of marriage and divorce: 'And whoever goes beyond the limits of Allah certainly wrongs himself' [65:1]. Speaking in the Qur'an the Prophet Yunus says: 'There is no god but You, Glory be to You! Surely, I have been a wrongdoer' [21:87]; and Adam says: 'Our Lord we have wronged ourselves' [7:23]; and Moses says: 'My Lord, surely I have wronged myself, so forgive me [28:16]. It is clear that we are dealing with two kinds of wrong doing here."

"In the Qur'an, the disbelievers are called 'corrupt' : 'And He misleads by it only the corrupt; those who break the covenant of Allah after ratifying it' [2:26-27]; and also: 'Truly We have revealed to you clear signs, and only the corrupt will disbelieve in them'.[2:99] "

"There are many more such examples; but the believer too is called 'corrupt', as these ayat show: 'O you who believe! If a corrupt person brings you some news then verify it, or else you may unknowingly cause hardship to people, and then be sorry for what you have done'. [49:6] (This was revealed with reference to an incident involving al-Hakam ibn al-'As, who was not literally corrupt) And again: 'And those who accuse honourable women but do not bring four witnesses, whip them (with) eighty lashes and never (afterward) accept their testimony. - They indeed are corrupt' [24:4]."
