

**Ibn Baz Fatwas**

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**Essence of Tawhid and Shirk**

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. No aggression shall be except against oppressors. May peace and blessings be upon the Slave of Allah, His Messenger, the best of His creatures, and His Trustee over His revelation, our Prophet, Imam, and Messenger, Muhammad ibn `Abdullah ibn `Abdul-Muttalib, the Hashemite, the Arab, Al-Makky (from Makkah), and then Al-Madany (from Al-Madinah). May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon his family, Companions and those who adopt his way and follow his guidance till the Day of Resurrection!

Indeed, Allah (may He be Exalted), created the jinn, mankind, and so on, to worship Him Alone, without ascribing partners to Him. Allah (may He be Exalted) also sent His messengers to show this aim, call people for it, elaborate on it, and illustrate all that conflicts with it. This is why divine books were revealed and Allah's messengers (peace be upon them) were sent to the jinn and mankind. Allah (May He be Praised) made the worldly life a way leading to the Hereafter. Those who adhere to the worship of Allah and Tawhid (belief in the Oneness of Allah) and follow His messengers (peace be upon them) will move from the place of deeds, namely, the worldly life to the abode of reward, namely, the Hereafter, which is the abode of bliss, unalloyed pleasure, honor and genuine happiness. Those whom Allah (may He be Exalted) blesses with paradise will never die and their clothing and youthfulness will never fade. They will be in an eternal blessing, unfailing health, continuous youthfulness, and peace of mind. A caller from Allah (May He be Glorified and Exalted) will call them, **O people of Paradise! You are to live (therein) and you will never die; you are to stay healthy therein and you will never**

**fall ill; you are to stay young and you will never become old; you are to be in a constant bliss and you will never feel miserable.** This is the way the people of Paradise will live. They will be given all that they desire or demand. **An entertainment from (Allâh), the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.** They will see Allah's Honorable Face (May He be Glorified and Exalted) as He (glory be to Him) wills.

However, those who do not obey Allah's Messengers (peace be upon them) in this life and follow their vain desires and the temptations of Satan, will move to the abode of punishment, which will be for them a place of humiliation, loss, torture, pain and Hell. Those whom Allah (may He be Exalted) has predestined to be among the people of the Hell will be in unceasing torment and misery. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, **Neither will it have a complete killing effect on them so that they die, nor shall its torment be lightened for them.** Allah (may He be Exalted) also says, **Verily, whoever comes to his Lord as a Mujrim (criminal, polytheist, sinner, disbeliever in the Oneness of Allâh and His Messengers), then surely, for him is Hell, wherein he will neither die nor live.** and, **And if they ask for help (relief, water), they will be granted water like boiling oil, that will scald their faces. Terrible is the drink, and an evil Murtafaq (dwelling, resting place.)!** and, **and be given to drink boiling water so that it cuts up their bowels** The worldly life is the place of deeds that draw us near to Allah (May He be Glorified and Exalted) by the means that pleas Him. In this life, we should spare no effort to keep the self away from anything that displeases Allah (glory be to Him). It is, in fact, the time of learning and cooperation in righteousness and piety along with recommending one another to hold fast to and persist on the truth. Allah (may He be Praised and Exalted) says, **And I (Allâh) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me (Alone).** I seek not any provision from them (i.e. provision for themselves or for My creatures) nor do I ask that they should feed Me (i.e. feed themselves or My creatures). **Verily, Allâh is the All-Provider, Owner of Power, the Most Strong.**

Allah (glory be to Him) created the jinn and mankind

in order to worship Him (May He be Glorified and Exalted). He did not create them because He needs them, for He (may He be Praised) is Self-Sufficient and He is not in need of anything. He says, **O mankind! It is you who stand in need of Allâh. But Allâh is the Rich (Free of all needs), the Worthy of all praise.** **If He wills, He can remove you and bring (in your place) a new creation!** **And for Allâh that is not hard or difficult.** Allah (may He be Exalted) never created the jinn and mankind in order to obtain their support but He (may He be Praised) created them for a great wisdom; to worship, glorify, and to fear and praise Him (May He be Praised) with all that He is worthy of as well as to learn the Divine Names and Attributes and praise Him with them. They are intended to offer what Allah (may He be Exalted) loves of words and actions, be grateful to Allah (may He be Exalted) for the Grace He bestows on them and be patient with the afflictions they may face as they fight in the cause of Allah (may He be Exalted) which is the best of deeds as indicated by Hadiths. Moreover, people should contemplate on Allah's Greatness and what is required of them regarding their Lord. Allah (may He be Exalted) says,

**It is Allâh Who has created seven heavens and of the earth the like thereof (i.e. seven). His Command descends between them (heavens and earth), that you may know that Allâh has power over all things, and that Allâh surrounds all things in (His) Knowledge.** and, **And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allâh, so call on Him by them** and, **Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding...** Those who remember Allâh (always, and in prayers) standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and think deeply about the creation of the heavens and the earth, (saying): "Our Lord! You have not created (all) this without purpose, glory to You! (Exalted are You above all that they associate with You as partners). Give us salvation from the torment of the Fire." We should remember the purpose of our creation and be aware that we will not remain in this worldly life forever; but we will move to another life to be accounted for our endeavors. Death may even overwhelm a person while he is young and yet to be held

be accounted for our endeavors. Death may even overtake a person while he is young and yet to be held accountable.

This is for a certain wisdom.

The world contains both good and evil, righteous people and wicked ones, sadness and happiness, harm and usefulness, illness and health, richness and poverty, disbelievers and believers, sinners and virtuous people as well as things that are created for the benefit of the jinn and mankind. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, [He it is Who created for you all that is on earth.](#)

Again, we emphasize that the purpose of the creation of jinn and mankind is to glorify and obey Allah (may He be Exalted) in this life, revere His commands and prohibitions, worship Him (may He be Praised and Exalted) by observing His commands and avoiding what He forbade, seek Him when we are struck with afflictions and complaints, ask Him alone for Ghawth (source of succor), and call for His help in everything and every matter in this world as well as in the Hereafter.

In fact, understanding the concept of Tawhid is the most important matter and it is the aim of creation along with revering Allah's orders and prohibitions, devoting all acts to Allah, calling for His help in both religious and worldly affairs, and following what has been revealed to His messengers (peace be upon them) with complete comfort and love of the divine commandments, dislike of the forbidden matters, hopefulness of Allah's Mercy and fear of His punishment.

Allah's messengers (peace be upon them) were sent to inform people of this truth and to educate them in what is obligatory and what is forbidden, so that people will not say, "There came unto us no bringer of glad tidings

and no warner." The messengers were sent to the people, bearing glad tidings and warning. Allah (may He be Praised) says, [And verily, We have sent among every Ummah \(community, nation\) a Messenger \(proclaiming\): "Worship Allâh \(Alone\), and avoid \(or keep away from\) Tâghûât \(all false deities i.e. do not worship Tâghûât besides Allâh\)." and, Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning in order that mankind should have no plea against Allâh after the \(coming of\) Messengers. and, And We did not send any Messenger before you \(O Muhammad peace be upon him\) but We revealed to him \(saying\): Lâ ilâha illa Ana \[none has the right to be worshipped but I \(Allâh\)\], so worship Me \(Alone and none else\)."](#)

The mission of the messengers is to direct the jinn and mankind to what has been revealed to them, show them the ways that lead to salvation, warn them against the ways that lead to destruction and establish the evidence against them to leave them with no excuse. Allah (may He be Praised) prescribed the acts of worship because He loves to be praised and worshiped. Therefore, He praised Himself with what He is worthy of and He dislikes evil-deeds, so He prohibits sins whether they are committed openly or secretly.

Therefore, a Muslim should exalt and praise Him as He deserves. All Praise is due to Allah in the first (i.e. in this world) and in the last (i.e. in the Hereafter). A Muslim should make use of the means that Allah (may He be Exalted) made permissible for him, keep away from His Prohibitions and abide by His Limits obeying Him (may He be Praised) and all that was revealed to the messengers (peace be upon them).

Moreover, learning religious knowledge and identifying the wisdom of creation as well as being patient with them are extremely beneficial. It helps the Muslim to offer the obligatory acts on the basis of knowledge and deep insight. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, [If Allah wants to do good to a person, He makes him understand the religion.](#) and, [He who follows a path in quest of](#)

[knowledge, Allah will make the path of Paradise easy to him.](#) Both Hadiths are related by Muslim in his Sahih (compilation of authentic Hadiths).

In fact, the greatest and most important matter is to believe in the Oneness of Allah (may He be Praised) and avoid ascribing partners with Him (may He be Glorified and Exalted). This is the basis of Islam, which is the religion of all the messengers from the first to the last.

Indeed, this is the basis of the religion of Islam as well as the religion of all the messengers from the first, Noah, until the seal of the prophets, Muhammad, (peace and blessings be upon them). By the same token, Islam is the religion of all the messengers. Allah (may He be Exalted) does not accept from anyone a religion other than it.

The word 'Islam' indicates submission to Allah (may He be Exalted), humbling oneself to Him, worshiping Him, and obeying His commands. This is the essence of Tawhid, which is to be completely devoted and submitted to Allah (may He be Exalted). The true Muslim, who understands Tawhid, is the one who submits himself to Allah, devotes his deeds solely to Him, and directs his heart to Allah (may He be Exalted) in secret and open, in fear and hope, in sayings, deeds, and in everything.

Allah (may He be Praised) is the true God Who is worthy of being worshiped, obeyed, and glorified. There is no God but Him and no Lord other than Him.

However, Shari`ahs (revealed Messages) may differ. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, [To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way.](#) The religion of Allah (may He be Exalted) is one, which is Islam and it is manifested in seeking Allah alone with worship including supplication, fear, hope, reliance, longing for His mercy, and fear of His punishment. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, [And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him.](#) It means that Allah (may He be Exalted) commands not to

worship anyone other than Him. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, [You \(Alone\) we worship, and You \(Alone\) we ask for help \(for each and everything\)](#). Allah (may He be Exalted) ordered His servants to say and acknowledge this.

Moreover, Allah (may He be Exalted) taught them how to praise Him. He, the Exalted, says, [All praise and thanks are Allâh's, the Lord of the `Alamîn \(mankind, jinn and all that exists\)](#). [the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful](#). [The Only Owner \(and the Only Ruling Judge\) of the Day of Recompense \(i.e. the Day of Resurrection\)](#) Allah (may He be Exalted) teaches His servants how to praise Him, then He says, [You \(Alone\) we worship](#) Allah (may He be Exalted) directs them to this, so that they may praise Him with His Deserved Attributes, confessing that He is the Lord of the worlds, the One Who does good to them, and confers His Blessings upon them and that He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful and the Only Owner of the Day of Resurrection. All this is true for our Lord (may He be Glorified and Exalted).

The Allah (may He be Exalted) says, [You \(Alone\) we worship, and You \(Alone\) we ask for help \(for each and everything\)](#). The Ayah (Verse) means that we worship You Alone and You, Alone, we ask for help. There is neither Lord nor Supporter other than You. Indeed, everything good that occurs by people is from Allah, for He is the One Who guides them to it, prepares them for it, helps them to do it and gives them the ability to do it. Allah (may He be Glorified and Exalted) says, [Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allâh](#) He (May He be Praised) is the One Who blesses His creatures with favors and helps them. He is the One Who is rightfully worthy of worship (May He be Glorified and Exalted).

Therefore, every grace that comes to a person at the hand of a young, old, slave or free person, is from Allah's Blessings (may He be Glorified and Exalted), for He is the One Who provides it and makes it possible to you. He is the One Who creates the person who brings it to you and promotes him to bring it and gives him the power, the heart, and the mind and makes that person resolve to bring it to you.

Every blessing is from Allah (may He be Exalted) regardless of the means by which it comes to man. Indeed, Allah (may He be Exalte) is the One who is rightfully worthy of worship. He is the Creator of humankind, the One Who blesses them with bounties and the One Who judges between them in the worldly life and in the Hereafter. He is the One Who is described with the Attributes of Perfection and is far above the attributes of imperfection. He is One in His Lordship, One in His Divinity, and One in His Names and Attributes (May He be Glorified and Exalted). Allah (May He be Praised) entails all aspects of Tawhid. He, Alone, Who creates His servants, prepares their life for them, provides them with sustenance and arranges their affairs while no one shares this with Him (May He be Praised and Exalted). Allah (May He be Glorified and Exalted) says, [Allâh is the Creator of all things, and He is the Wakîl \(Trustee, Disposer of affairs, Guardian\) over all things](#). and, [Verily, Allâh is the All-Provider, Owner of Power, the Most Strong](#). and, [Surely, your Lord is Allâh Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days and then rose over \(Istawâ\) the Throne \(really in a manner that suits His Majesty\), disposing the affair of all things. No intercessor \(can plead with Him\) except after His Leave. That is Allâh, your Lord; so worship Him \(Alone\). Then, will you not remember?](#) [To Him is the return of all of you](#) and so on.

Allah Alone is worthy of worship, owing to His perfect blessing and benevolence. He disposes of the affairs of all creatures and guides them. He Alone is the Creator, the All-Provider, and the Perfect in Self, Attributes, and Names. Thus, He deserves worship and submission of all His servants. `Ibadah (worship) means submission and humility. Religion is called `Ibadah, because the person who adopts a religion offers the rites of that religion with submission and humility before the one whom he worships. So, Islam was called `Ibadah.

In the etymology of `Ibadah, the Arabs said "tareeq mu`abbad" means a paved way frequently treaded by people so that it became marked. In describing a camel, the Arabs said "ba'eer (camel) mu`abbad", i.e. a mount that has been frequently used in travel.

So it becomes known and marked for this task.

`Abd, i.e. a slave, refers to the one who submits to Allah (May He be Exalted) and avoids Allah's Prohibitions. Indeed, the more a slave knows about Allah (may He be Exalted) and has perfect faith in Him, the more he offers acts of worship perfectly. On this basis, Allah's messengers were the most perfect slaves of Allah (may He be Exalted) and they worshiped Him the best due to their knowledge and glorification of Him more than anyone else. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon them!

Therefore, the best characteristic by which Allah (may He be Exalted) described His Messenger, Muhammad (peace be upon him) was being a Allah's slave. Allah (may He be Praised) says, [Glorified \(and Exalted\) is He \(Allâh\) \[above all that \(evil\) they associate with Him\] Who took His slave \(Muhammad peace be upon him\) for a journey](#) and, [All praise and thanks are Allâh's, Who has sent down to His slave \(Muhammad peace be upon him\) the Book \(the Qur`ân\)](#) and, [And when the slave of Allâh \(Muhammad peace be upon him\)](#) and so on.

To be a slave of Allah is a great and honorable rank. Allah (may He be Praised) endowed His messengers with an extra honor, which is the Message that was revealed to them. Therefore, they acquired two kinds of honor; the prophetic message and being Allah's Special Slaves. Indeed, Allah's messengers (peace be upon them) are the most perfect persons in terms of worship and piety followed by the 'sincere servants' (Siddiqun) who were the foremost to believe in Allah (may He be Exalted) and His messengers, adhered to His commandments and became the best people after the prophets, like Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him). Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq was the most sincere and perfect person after the Prophet (peace be upon him), because of his honor, piety, precedence in good deeds and observance of the teachings of Islam as well as the fact that he was the companion of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) in the cave who helped the Prophet (peace be upon him) as

much as he could. May Allah be pleased with him!

To summarize, the ranks of slaves and prophets are the noblest. If the honor of prophethood came to end then there remained the rank of Siddiqiyah, i.e. being a Siddiq (sincere servant to Allah) by sincerely worshiping Allah (may He be Exalted).

Allah's messengers (peace be upon them) were the most perfect persons with regard to faith, righteousness, piety and guidance owing to their perfect knowledge, worship, and submission to Allah (May He be Glorified and Exalted). They are followed by the sincere servants (Siddiqun), the martyrs, and then those who are righteous. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, [And whoso obeys Allâh and the Messenger \(Muhammad peace be upon him\), then they will be in the company of those on whom Allâh has bestowed His Grace, of the Prophets, the Siddiqûn \(those followers of the Prophets who were first and foremost to believe in them, like Abu Bakr As-Siddîq may Allah be pleased with him\), the martyrs, and the righteous. And how excellent these companions are!](#) It is prerequisite to believe in the prophets in order to have pure faith in the Oneness of Allah (may He be Exalted). That is why the prophets called people to believe in Allah (may He be Exalted) at first and then to believe in them as Allah's messengers.

Thus, there are two points required: (i) to believe in the Oneness of Allah and to be sincere in worshiping Him; and (ii) to believe in Allah's messengers (peace be upon them).

Therefore, whoever believes in the Oneness of Allah but denies the messengers is a disbeliever and whoever believes the messengers but does not believe in the Oneness of Allah is also a disbeliever.

Differences may occur in the Shari`ahs (revealed teachings and laws) whereas there have never been any discrepancy between the messengers with regard to the Oneness of Allah, being sincerely devoted to Him and ascribing no partners to Him. The messengers knew no difference in all the revealed religions. Indeed, there is no Islam, religion, guidance, or salvation except by having firm belief in the Oneness of Allah, ascribing no partners with Him in worship and believing in all that was conveyed by the messengers of Allah (peace and blessings be upon them).

Moreover, whoever believes in the Oneness of Allah but does not have belief in Nuh (Noah) at his time, Ibrahim (Abraham) at his time, or other prophets such as Hud (the prophet Hud), Salih (the Prophet Salih), Isma`il (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Ya`qub (Jacob), or who followed them until our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them) at their times, becomes a disbeliever unless he believes in the prophets along with believing in the Oneness of Allah (may He be Glorified and Exalted).

Islam at the time of Adam was represented in having firm belief in the Oneness of Allah as well as following the Shari`ah of Adam (peace be upon him). Islam at the time of Nuh was to believe in the Oneness of Allah along with following the Shari`ah of Nuh (peace be upon him). Likewise, other prophets, including Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is established in having belief in the Oneness of Allah along with believing in what was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and following his Shari`ah.

The Jews and Christians do not believe in Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon), so they are disbelievers even if some of them have faith in the Oneness of Allah. They are disbelievers according to the consensus of the Muslims, for they do not believe in Muhammad (peace be upon him). Moreover, if a person does not believe in the Message revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in full, such as the belief in everything except in the prohibition of adultery or sodomy, thinking that adultery or sodomy is permissible, is a disbeliever and his blood is violable according to the prescribed penalty agreed upon by all Muslim scholars after setting the religious proof against them if the person is ignorant of that. Thus, the mere belief in the Oneness of Allah avails him nothing, because he belies the messengers and consequently some of Allah's Message.

Moreover, if someone has belief in the Oneness of Allah and Allah's Messengers (peace be upon them) but mocks or belittles a prophet, they become disbelievers. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, [Say: "Was it at Allâh \(Exalted and Sublime\), and His Ayât \(proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.\) and His Messenger \(peace be upon him\) that you were mocking?"](#) [Make no excuse; you have disbelieved after you had believed.](#) The opposite of having faith in the Oneness of Allah is Shirk, which means ascribing partners to Allah (may He be Exalted). A poet said:

**"Opposite matters distinctly unveil "things get distinguished by each other..." and another said: "contraries"**

Shirk is the opposite of Tawhid revealed by Allah (may He be Exalted) to His messengers (peace be upon them). Shirk includes associating partners with Allah in worship, in His Lordship, or in His management of the affairs of the people or belying Allah's messengers in what they said or did.

Tawhid is the correct meaning of the Testimony of Monotheism, i.e. La ilaha illa Allah (there is no deity but Allah). This testimony denies offering worship to anyone but Allah and proves it is for Allah Alone. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, [That is because Allâh, He is the Truth, and that which they invoke besides Him is Al-Bâtîl \(falsehood, Satan and all other false deities\)](#) and, [So know \(O Muhammad peace be upon him\) that, Lâ ilâha ill allâh \(none has the right to be worshipped but Allâh\)](#) and, [Allâh bears witness that Lâ ilâha illa Huwa \(none has the right to be worshipped but He\), and the angels, and those having knowledge \(also give this witness\); \(He always\) maintains His creation in Justice. Lâ ilâha illa Huwa \(none has the right to be worshipped but He\) the](#)

always) maintains His creation in justice. *La ilaha illa Huwa* (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. ) and, ( And Allâh said (O mankind!): "Take not ilâhain (two gods in worship). Verily, He (Allâh) is (the) only One Ilâh (God). )

The true meaning of Tawhid is to worship Allah alone on grounds of belief, truthfulness and action, to have deep belief that worshipping anyone other than Him is invalid, and that whoever does so is a Mushrik (one who associates others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) and he must disavow Mushriks. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, ( Indeed, there has been an excellent example for you in Ibrâhîm (Abraham) and those with him, when they said to their people: "Verily, we are free from you and whatever you worship besides Allâh: we have rejected you, and there has appeared between us and you hostility and hatred forever until you believe in Allâh Alone" ) and, ( And (remember) when Ibrâhîm (Abraham) said to his father and his people: "Verily, I am innocent of what you worship" ) Except Him (i.e. I worship none but Allâh Alone) Who did create me; and verily, He will guide me. ) Thus, Ibrahim (peace be upon him) disavowed those who worshiped any other than Allah and the things they worshiped.

However, Tawhid is realized through seeking Allah alone with worship, disavowing worship of and worshipers of other than Him, believing in the invalidity of Shirk. It is obligatory on all those who worship Allah (may He be Exalted) from the jinn and humankind to seek Him alone with worship and to establish the duty of Tawhid which is enforcing Allah's Shari`ah. Indeed, Allah (May He be Praised and Exalted) is the Ruler in this worldly life by His Shari`ah and in the Hereafter by Himself (May He be Praised) and this is part of Tawhid to have firm belief in that. Allah (May He be Glorified and Exalted) says, ( ... the command (or the judgement) is for none but Allah... ) and, ( So the judgement is only with Allâh, the Most High, the Most Great! ) and, ( And in whatsoever you differ, the decision thereof is with Allâh (He is the ruling Judge). )

Therefore, offering some acts of worship to Awliya' (pious people), prophets, the sun, the moon, the Jinn, angels, idols, trees, and so on, is inconsistent with Tawhid and nullifies it.

Allah (May He be Praised) sent His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the prophets before him to nations who worshiped things other than Allah (may He be Exalted), such as prophets, righteous persons, trees, stones, idols, and stars. All the prophets called their people to believe in Allah and His Oneness and to say *La ilaha illa Allah* (the Testimony of Tawhid), disavowing all that contradicts this faith, those who worship other than Allah as well as the objects they worshiped. Allah (glory be to Him) says, ( And verily, We have sent among every Ummah (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): "Worship Allâh (Alone), and avoid (or keep away from) Tâghûât (all false deities i.e. do not worship Tâghûât besides Allâh)." )

By this, you know that what is done around the graves that are worshiped beside Allah (may He be Exalted), such as the grave of [Al-Sayyid] Al-Badawy and Al-Husayn in Egypt and the like as well as what some ignorant pilgrims may do at the Prophet's grave by seeking help over enemies and complaining to him, are forms of worshipping other than Allah (May He be Glorified and Exalted). It is like the Shirk of the first periods of ignorance. There are Sufis who believe that some Awliya' are capable of administering the universe and managing the affairs of the world even though this is major Shirk with regard to Allah's Divinity.

Some think that some people have a direct relation with Allah (may He be Exalted). Consequently such servants believe that they do not have to follow

Muhammad (peace be upon him) or that they know the unseen, and are able to control other things. Indeed, this is major disbelief in Allah, rendering its doer out of the fold of Islam if he is a Muslim.

Tawhid, Islam, faith or salvation can only be achieved by seeking Allah (may He be Exalted) alone with worship and believing that He is the Possessor of the kingdom and the One Who manages the affairs of His creatures; He is Perfect in His Self, Attributes, Names and Actions; He is the Lord of the universe and there is no partner with Him or anyone to prevent His Judgment.

This is Tawhid which is the religion of all the prophets and the meaning of Allah's Saying, ( You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything). ) The Ayah (Verse) means that (Allah) is the One Who we believe in His Oneness, obey, hope and fear. Commenting on the Ayah, Ibn `Abbas (May Allah be pleased with them) said, "We worship, hope and fear You Alone."

We seek Allah's Help to help us obey Him in all our affairs. Worship is to believe in the Oneness of Allah, be sincerely devoted to Him in fulfilling His Commands and abandoning His prohibitions; to have perfect belief that He is worthy of worship, the Lord of the Worlds, the Owner of everything, the Creator of everything and Perfect in His Self, Names, Attributes and Actions, and that He has no deficiency, default or partner in any of this (May He be Praised Exalted). For Him is Absolute Perfection in everything (May He be Glorified and Exalted).

Thus, it is evident that a Muslim must believe in all the Messengers and all that was revealed to them, including

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). However, if someone devotes their worship to Allah (may He be Exalted), believes in His Messengers (peace be upon them) and especially Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), follows His Shari`ah (Islamic Law), stands firm in the teachings of Islam but in the meantime commits one or more things that nullify Islam, their worship is nullified and their deeds will not benefit them.

For example, if someone believes in Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his whole mission and follows his Shari`ah, but says: 'Musaylamah, who rebelled and massed people in the battle of Yamama against the Muslims and was fought by the Companions during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, is a messenger like Muhammad (peace be upon him).' they will be disbelievers and their faith will become null and void. Likewise.

their good deeds will be nullified, even if they used to offer Salah (prayer) during the night and fast during the day.

This is because they commit one of the violations that nullify Islam, namely believing in Musaylimah Al-Kadhhab i.e. the Liar. This falsehood includes belying Allah (May He be Glorified and Exalted) Why says: ﴿ **Muhammad (peace be upon him) is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allâh and the last (end) of the Prophets.** ﴾ Moreover, this includes belying the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) who said in Mutawatir Hadiths (Hadiths reported by a significant number of narrators throughout the chain of narration, whose agreement upon a lie is impossible) that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Last Prophet, so, there is no prophet after him.

Likewise, if someone offers Sawm (fasting) during the day and Salah during the night, observes different acts of worship, seeks Allah Alone with their worship and follows Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) then once they dedicate some of their worship to someone or something other than Allah, such as offering certain worship for a prophet, a Waliy (a pious person), an idol, the sun, the moon or a star e.g. through supplication, seeking help and victory over enemies, all their works are in vain until they repent to Allah (may He be Exalted).

Allah (may He be Exalted) says, ﴿ **But if they had joined in worship others with Allâh, all that they used to do would have been of no benefit to them.** ﴾ and, ﴿ **And indeed it has been revealed to you (O Muhammad peace be upon him), as it was to those (Allâh's Messengers) before you: "If you join others in worship with Allâh, (then) surely (all) your deeds will be in vain, and you will certainly be among the losers."** ﴾

Similarly, if someone believes in all Allah's message but denies the prohibition of adultery, sodomy, or intoxicating beverages, they will be disbelievers even if they do every good deed, because allowing forbidden matters that are known to everyone renders the person outside the fold of Islam. Thus, their good deeds and Tawhid will be useless in this case according to the agreement of all Muslim scholars.

Equally, if someone said that Nuh, Hud, Salih, Ibrahim, Isma`il, or any other prophet is not a prophet, they become non-Muslims and all their good deeds become invalid, for they belie Allah (May He be Praised) concerning what He mentioned about these prophets (peace be upon them).

Likewise, deeming as unlawful what Allah (may He be Exalted) regards as lawful in spite of having Tawhid, sincerity and faith in the Messengers renders the person outside the fold of Islam. For example, if someone claims that they prohibit eating the meat of camels, cows, and sheep that Allah (may He be Exalted) makes lawful and is agreed upon by scholars to be lawful, they will be regarded as apostates after showing them the evidence of the case if they are ignorant of it.

Also, if someone says that wheat, barley, or anything that is allowed to be consumed, is prohibited or says that a daughter or sister is allowed to be married to their unmarriageable kin, they become non-Muslims even if they pray and fast and offer all acts of worship, because deeming unlawful what is lawful renders the person outside the fold of Islam.

Allah (may He be Exalted) says, ﴿ **... but if they had joined in worship others with Allâh, all that they used to do would have been of no benefit to them.** ﴾

Unfortunately, we are living at a time when ignorance and lack of knowledge are running rampant. People have ever-growing interest in sciences other than religious sciences and become occupied with worldly matters so that their awareness of Allah (may He be Exalted) and His religion become weak. These things took them away from religious knowledge. You may find most scientific talks are concentrated on financial subjects whereas comprehending matters of religion and learning Shari`ah and Tawhid are neglected and abandoned.

Therefore, one should pay attention to this matter and be interested in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace be upon him). One should study and consider them in order to understand the meaning of Tawhid, Iman, and Shirk and to be well-acquainted with religious knowledge. Understanding the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah makes one realize the ways to Paradise and Salvation from Hellfire. This is especially true when a person is keen to attend religious sessions and study under pious scholars in order to gain knowledge and spread useful knowledge to others and be aware of the religion.

There are two major categories of Shirk: major Shirk and minor Shirk.

Major Shirk contradicts Tawhid and Islam. It also invalidates good deeds, because those who commit it are consigned to Hellfire. This applies to every act or saying that is proved to be an act of disbelief, such as calling on the dead or idols for help, deeming forbidden things as lawful and vice versa, or belying the Prophets. These acts and the like nullify one's good deeds and render the person an apostate from Islam, as elaborated

previously.

Allah (may He be Exalted) says in Surah (Chapter) of Al-Nisa', ﴿ **Verily, Allâh forgives not that partners should be set up with Him (in worship), but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He wills; and whoever sets up partners with Allâh (in worship), he has indeed invented a tremendous sin.** ﴾ The Ayah indicates that Shirk is not forgiven while any other sin is left to Allah's Will; He may forgive or punish in parallel to the bad deeds when one dies without showing repentance for them. Allah (may He be Exalted) may take a person out of the Hell and admit him to Paradise. This is the doctrine of Ahl-ul-Sunnah wal-Jama`ah (those adhering to the Sunnah and the Muslim main body). This is contrary to Khawarij (separatist group that believes committing a major sin amounts to disbelief). Mu`tazilah (a deviant Islamic sect claiming that those who commit major sins are in a state between

belief and disbelief) and those who followed their way.

There is another Ayah in Surah Al-Zumar in which Allah (may He be Exalted) uses general words; He (may He be Praised) says, ﴿ Say: "O 'Ibâdî (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allâh: verily, Allâh forgives all sins. Truly He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴾ Scholars said that this Ayah talks about those who showed repentance whereas the Ayah of Surah Al-Nisa' speaks of people other than those who repent, i.e. those who die while having committed Shirk and other wrong deeds. The Ayah of Surah Al-Nisa' reads, ﴿ Verily, Allâh forgives not that partners should be set up with Him (in worship), but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He wills... ﴾

As for the one who dies after committing sins other than Shirk, such as adultery, while he believes that these sins are prohibited and does not regard them as unlawful, but he dies before he shows repentance, this person is left to Allah's Will; He (glory be to Him) may forgive him and admit him to Paradise for he comprehended Tawhid and Islam and may also punish him in accordance with the bad deeds he committed, such as adultery, consuming intoxicant beverages, disobedience of parents, severing kinship ties or other major sins as shown previously.

However, the Khawarij maintain that a person who commits a major sin is to stay in Hell eternally and by this he is a non-Muslim. The opinion of the Khawarij is approved by the Mu` tazilah concerning his eternal abode in Hell. However, the moderate position of Ahl Al-Sunnah Wal-Jama` ah differs from that. They maintain that a person who commits adultery, theft, disobedience to parents and other major sins is neither a non-Muslim by this nor will he stay in Hell eternally as long as he does not believe it is lawful to commit these sins. The doctrine of Ahl Al-Sunnah wal-Jama` ah states that such wrongdoers are to be left to Allah's Mercy as we said. In fact, these are very important matters that should be known and recognized by Muslims, for they are among the principles of `Aqidah (Islamic Creed).

A Muslim should know the reality of his religion and all that contradicts it, such as ascribing partners to Allah (glory be to Him). Allah (may He be Exalted) makes it allowable to repent of bad deeds until the sun rises from the west but what is strikingly distressful is that many people are unaware of the religion of Islam and are ignorant of its principles that may cast them into the abyss of Shirk and disbelief due to their ignorance of what was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) of guidance and religion. Therefore, one should take care of himself and avoid the Prohibitions of Allah (may He be Exalted) and seek Allah Alone with his good deeds. Moreover, the best deeds that one should observe as a Muslim is hastening to do good deeds and to learn Islamic teachings substantiated by evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah through reciting Allah's Book, attending religious sessions, and making friends from among the righteous people so that one may be aware of his religion.

The Muslim should invoke Allah (may He be Exalted) to keep him on the way of guidance and Truth. If you commit a wrong deed, you should hasten to offer repentance from that sin. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴿ All children of Adam are to err and the best amongst them are those who repent. ﴾ This is an authentic Hadith. This is because an evil-deed results from lack of religion and weakness of faith.

Allah (may He be Exalted) accepts the repentance of a person who repents. So, why do some people delay repentance for evil-deeds and abandon these deeds and feel regret for them? Allah (may He be Praised) says, ﴿ And all of you beg Allâh to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful ﴾ and, ﴿ O you who believe! Turn to Allâh with sincere repentance! ﴾ Repentance is most required, for it is a characteristic of a true Muslim. Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said, ﴿ Penitence wipes out all the previous misdeeds. ﴾ So, you should adhere to repentance. Whenever you commit a sin, offer penitence and set yourself aright. A true believer is that who does not occupy himself with worldly matters but makes time for working and another time for learning and understanding religious matters and contemplating, reciting, and studying the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and attending learning circles and making friends with righteous people, for these matters are the most important of your affairs and the cause of happiness.

There is another kind of Shirk called Minor Shirk, such as Riya' (showing-off ); seeking reputation by words or actions; saying if Allah and so-and-so will; and swearing by other than Allah, like swearing by one's trust, Al-Ka` bah, the Prophet (peace be upon him), and the like. These things are classified as minor Shirk and one is commended to beware of them. ﴿ When a man said to the Prophet (peace be upon him), "What Allah and you will," the Prophet said: "Do you make me equal to Allah? (Say), "What Allah, Alone, wills." ﴾

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said, ﴿ Do not say, "What Allah and so-and-so wills," but say, "What Allah wills and afterwards so-and-so wills. ﴾

He (peace be upon him) also said, ﴿ "Whoever takes an oath should swear by Allah or remain silent." (i.e. He should not swear by other than Allah.) ﴾ and, ﴿ Do not swear by your fathers, or by your mothers, or by rivals to Allah; and swear by Allah only when you are speaking the truth. ﴾ and, ﴿ Whoever swears by other than

Allah he commits Shirk. ﴾ There are other authentic Hadiths in this regard, such as, ﴿ The most dreadful thing I fear for my Ummah is the minor Shirk. When he was asked about it, he (peace be upon him) said: Riya' (showing off). ﴾

Riya' may be a form of major disbelief if a person adopts Islam as a kind of Riya' and hypocrisy so that he shows Islam while he neither believes in it nor loves it. Therefore this person is regarded as a hypocrite and a non-Muslim.

Similarly, if someone swears by other than Allah (may He be Exalted), glorifies the one who swears by Him, thinks

that a certain person knows the unseen or can be worshiped along with Allah, they will be committing major Shirk.

However, if someone swears by something other than Allah (may He be Exalted) spontaneously, such as the Ka`bah, the Prophet (peace be upon him), and the like without having this belief, they are only committing minor Shirk.

I ask Allah (may He be Exalted) to bestow comprehension of His Religion on us and to help us adhere to it and protect us from the evils of ourselves and our misdeeds and from temptations. He (May He be Exalted) is the All-Generous and Openhanded.

May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon His servant and Messenger our Prophet Muhammad, his family, Companions and those who follow him rightfully until the Last Day.