

The Basic Level

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, we seek His aid, we seek forgiveness from Him, and we seek refuge in Allah from the evils in ourselves and the evils of our actions. Whomsoever Allah guides, none can misguide, and whomever He leads astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah; I also bear witness that Muhammad (ﷺ) is his slave and final messenger. May Allah's praise, blessings and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad.

The following work has been compiled from notes used to prepare this advanced course in Aqeedah. The aim of this course is to help us deal with the challenge of the wave of doubts and false allegations that we are witnessing today against Islam and its principles, whether you yourself are exposed to these doubts, or you want to help those who have been affected by them, or you want to equip yourself with the knowledge required to deal with these doubts. What we hope to achieve through this course is to show you that belief in Islam as being the truth is not something emotional, based on simply following our ancestors, but rather it is a reality based on a wide range of evidence, proofs and convincing arguments that submit to our minds and hearts.

This book is based on several references, including:

- 1- The New Atheist Movement in the West (which was my thesis for my master's degree research).
- 2- Sabighat by Ahmad al-Sayyid.
- 3- Shumu' al-Nahar by Abdullah al-'Ujairi.

4- Dhahirah Naqd al-Din fi al-Fikr al-Gharbi al-Hadith by Sultan al-Umairi.

Lastly, I ask Allah to make this book beneficial to the reader, to make it sincerely for Him, to accept it from me and to overlook my errors.

Kamil Ahmad

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Ontario, Canada

Introduction

In every era, the battle between the truth and falsehood takes different forms; if the battle in the past was between the prophets and their people over the false gods they worshiped, then the battle today is over destructive ideologies that the enemies of Islam worship and want us to also worship. Thus, the paganism of *jahiliyyah* (pre-Islamic era) was one of idolatry, whereas the paganism of today is one of ideologies.

There are many ideologies that the West has tried to colonize our minds and hearts with, such as: liberalism, feminism, humanism, and other such 'isms'. But the most dangerous of those ideologies today is definitely Atheism; the denial of what everything in existence today is evidence for His existence! And this is the eventual natural end of all these evil ideologies: denial of the existence of Allah.

There was a time when many Muslims thought that such a fundamental truth would never be denied by any Muslim. They thought that although our youth were deviating, and may adopt many Western values, ideals, lifestyle and ideologies, they would never become outright Atheist. But the unfortunate reality is that many of our youth *are* becoming Atheist, or at the very least doubting the existence of Allah and other fundamental aspects of Islam.

So how should we deal with this phenomenon? How should we respond to the doubts raised by the enemies of Islam? How should we protect our youth from having their religion stripped away from them?

If we look at human history, we find that whenever there were wars, there have always been two things to focus on: attack and defense, and the

necessary weaponry for both. For attacking the enemy, humans have developed many different weapons over the course of history, and for defense, the same; shields.

If we continue to look at the nature of human wars, we find that they were not only battlefield wars fought with spears, arrows, guns, tanks or jets; but there were also other battlefields where ideas were fought and where other weapons were used; the weapons of writing, debating, using the media, and so on.

When we look at the life of the Prophet (ﷺ), we find that his enemies tried both physical warfare and ideological warfare to win the hearts and minds of the people, which is why Allah ordered him in the beginning to wage a jihad:

{ فَلَا تُطِعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا }

“So do not obey the disbelievers, and strive against them with the Qur’an a great striving.” [al-Furqan 25:52]

Throughout Islamic history, our scholars have stood up to the attacks against Islam, clarifying the truth with the weapons of evidence, convincing arguments, debates, critiquing the views of their opponents and exposing their falsehood.

The doubts and misconceptions are continuously being raised concerning Islam and its fundamental principles, highlighting the need to respond and making sure our response is effective, thereby equipping ourselves and our youth with the necessary shields to protect them from the attacks of our enemies.

Characterizing Today's Wave of Doubts and False Allegations Against Islam

When doctors look for a vaccination to prevent a certain virus, they first start by identifying the nature of the virus and the cause for its spread. Likewise is the case for ideological and social issues; you cannot even attempt to remedy a certain ideological or social problem unless you are well aware of its nature and the causes for it.

The following are some of the prominent characteristics of today's wave of doubts and false allegations against Islam:

- 1- It is destructive and not constructive, chaotic and not structured. The critics of Islam bring out problems and objections, but then don't present an alternative view that is solid and coherent. For example, the New Atheists today don't focus their attention on the issue of God's non-existence, but rather their focus is criticizing religion – and especially Islam – even though there are major problems with their Atheistic beliefs, but they don't address them and try to run away from such objections. Instead, you hear them talking about how Islam is the problem of all evil and violence, oppressing women, not valuing human rights, and so on.
- 2- The critics of Islam use attractive slogans and catchy phrases, the purpose of which is to plant the seeds of doubt in weak and ignorant Muslims. None of these slogans or phrases are defined holistically. They include “freedom”, “liberation”, “human rights”, etc.
- 3- The battlefield is mainly social media. Most of our youth who are becoming affected by today's wave of doubts are being affected by what is spread around on social media, making it a challenge to deal

with. What this means is that even if your son or daughter is going to the masjid regularly, or you have a good Islamic environment at home, they are still vulnerable to these doubts that will severely affect them, simply because they have access to the world from the comfort of their home.

- 4- Opposition to the core foundation of Islam and the Shari'ah that is unanimously agreed upon, as opposed to if it was a wave of doubts centered on a particular segment of the Muslims, or particular sect or school or group of scholars, without touching the foundations of Islam. The danger in this is clear: if one objects to a fundamental aspect of Islam and denies it, it is *kufr* leading to the hellfire, as opposed to denying other aspects where scholars may differ over certain issues not related to the foundations of Islam.
- 5- Those being affected are two kinds:
 - a) Those looking to free themselves from the shackles of religion to freely satisfy their *shahawat* (lustful desires).
 - b) Those who genuinely believe in these doubts and false allegations against Islam.

This means that we should not generalize when dealing with those affected, throwing them all in the same boat and dealing with all of them in the same way. But rather, we need to look for the root cause of these doubts in the person and then deal with him or her accordingly.

The Causes for Becoming Affected by Today's Wave of Doubts and False Allegations Against Islam

Many of us wonder what led my son or daughter to become Atheist, or what led my Muslim friend to start objecting clear-cut undeniable aspects of

Islam? Sometimes we tend to pinpoint the cause on one or two things, but we fail to realize that it's not limited to those one or two things, rather it is a web of different causes that come together. Some of these are the following:

- 1- The spread and ease of access of haram *shahawat* (lustful desires).
- 2- Weak level of *yaqin* (conviction).
- 3- Personal and social problems.
- 4- Low level of worship, especially that which relates to the heart.
- 5- Lack of Islamic knowledge.

Chapter One

Brief History of Atheism

Although Atheism is nothing new and has always existed throughout human history, it was never a widespread phenomenon like it has become today. In fact, what history shows us is that there were very rare cases of the total denial of a supreme divine being who created this world. What this proves is that the natural position of human beings is belief in God and not disbelief in His existence, as Atheists would like you to believe.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah says in this regard: “Denial of the Creator was never a predominant religion prevalent over any nation. Rather, the religion of the disbelievers who opposed the Divine Message was that of *Shirk*. It was only some people who denied the existence of the Creator. These were their scholars from among the *Mushrik* Sabian philosophers who used to venerate temples, planets and idols. The reports that have been narrated concerning their news and biographies all prove that.”¹

Thus, what was common among all people in the past was their mutual understanding of the existence of a supreme divine being who created everything that exists, including the *Mushrikun* who used to believe in Allah’s existence as the Creator, Provider and Controller of this universe. Allah says:

{ وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ }

“And most of them do not believe in Allah without associating others with Him [in worship].” [Yusuf 12:106]

¹ Majmu‘ al-Fatawa, Ibn Taymiyyah (7/631).

What further proves this is the fact that although the Qur'an has narrated in precise detail many stories of past nations, it has not narrated a single story of Atheism being spread among any nation. Rather, it has narrated a common phenomenon that existed among all nations: *Shirk* or directing worship to others besides Allah while acknowledging His existence. Allah says:

{ وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ }

“If you ask them who created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon, they will certainly say, ‘Allah!’ How can they then be deluded?” [al-‘Ankabut 29:61]

This is why Allah never sent the prophets and messengers to their people to prove to them the existence of God, because it was already common knowledge that no one denied. The Qur'an relates to us the response of the messengers when their people proclaimed their doubt in what the messengers were inviting them to:

{ قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ أَفِى اللَّهِ شَكٌّ فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ }

“Their messengers said: Is there any doubt about Allah, Creator of the heavens and earth?” [Ibrahim 14:10]

So it wasn't the existence of God that the messengers were sent to prove. Rather, the mission that the messengers were sent on was to call the people to the oneness of Allah and that He alone deserves to be worshipped without any partners. This was after the people had deviated from the natural belief in the oneness of the Creator. The Andalusian Islamic scholar, Imam al-Shatibi states: “The origin of this dispute is in *Tawhid* and worshipping The One, The Truth Almighty. The people in general did not differ in that they

have One who controls them and a Creator who brought them into existence, but they differed in specifying who He is according to different views, some saying that the deity is two or five, or nature or time, or the planets; to the point that some said it is humans, trees, stones, and what they carve out of their hands. Some of them affirmed the necessary existence (of God), but also according to different views, until God sent the prophets to clarify for their nations between the truth and falsehood of what they disputed over.”²

So the point of contention was never over God’s existence to begin with, but rather identifying who God is and whether He is one or has partners, which is why Allah sent the prophets and messengers to clarify His oneness and exclusivity to be worshiped. Allah says:

{ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ }

“We never sent a messenger before you except that We revealed to him that, ‘There is no god [worthy of worship] except Me, so worship Me [alone].” [al-Anbiya’ 21:25]

Based on the above, it can easily be concluded that belief in the existence of a supreme divine being who created this world is the natural position that humans have always held, and that denial of the existence of such a creator is an unnatural belief that may have been adopted in rare individual cases throughout history for various reasons and motives not necessarily linked to ‘absence of evidence’.

The Beginning of the Emergence of Atheism in the West

² Al-I’tisam, al-Shatibi (3/89-90).

So then when did Atheism, as we know it today, start to become a widespread phenomenon?

The roots of it can be traced back to the Renaissance and Religious Reformation Period in Europe starting around the 14th and 15th centuries, a time when the Europeans, after living centuries of darkness, took what they learned from the Muslims in the various fields of science, and advanced forward materialistically.

One of the distinct features of the period prior to this was that the Catholic Church had complete control over European society. It was the laws of the Church that were executed everywhere, thus making any objection to the church or Christianity nearly impossible without subjugation, imprisonment, torture and execution. However, with the beginning of the renaissance period, the power and control of the church started to secede, which gave way for individuals and groups to criticize Christianity which was represented by the Church. This is when the likes of Martin Luther and his Protestant Church emerged.

However, what is important to note here is that this criticism did not include criticizing the concept of God's existence. Rather, there were incidents where some were executed for even hinting to the idea, which shows us that belief in God's existence was still something society believed in and hadn't started doubting.

But as we move on to the 18th century and the Enlightenment Age in Europe, we find Atheistic ideas surfacing among intellectual circles, where some of the elite in society started taking a different approach to how society should look at religion and religious beliefs – that being not from the Church and what it forces people to believe in, but looking at it from outside the box.

But even then, Atheism didn't become an idea that was accepted by most people. It was still something that was being tested and was only discussed by an elite in society.

So when did Atheism start to become a widespread phenomenon? Many researchers consider the mid-18th century and beginning 19th century to be the starting point. What we find is that this coincided with the French Revolution which paved the way for the emergence of the philosophical and ideological movements of the 19th century.

What we find is that during this period, certain individuals arose in Europe who laid down the foundations of Atheism as we know it today. What they basically did was that they analyzed various phenomena based on their personal specializations – scientific, psychological, economical, social, etc. Then they tried to prove through their observations that there is no God or Creator of this universe.

What helped them in gaining followers was the scientific and technological advancement that the West had reached at the time. So many people were deluded into believing that the Atheistic ideas that were surfacing had been proven to be true through a practical way – through the so-called natural sciences – which therefore left no doubt in their minds that God does not exist.

So we see a major shift here in how European society started viewing religion and religious beliefs – by looking at it and studying it as any other cultural phenomenon in human history – something that humans created to solve their social problems.

We also see that people thought there was a contradiction between religion, religious beliefs and the natural sciences. So they looked at these sciences as being built on proof and experiment which proves to us realities which we can witness with our senses. On the other hand, religious beliefs are forced upon us to believe, which many times go against the evidences of the natural sciences.

But the reality is that this is what European society had gone through with its religion: Christianity and its corrupt beliefs which were based on their distorted scriptures and myths that have no origin. So it's completely normal and natural for them to have found contradictions.

On the other hand, if the religion was based on something solid that had not been corrupted or distorted, it would not be possible to contradict with what humans discover through their experimental sciences. This is because the religion and scientific discoveries have a common source: God.

By looking at how Atheism emerged and the circumstances in which it emerged, it becomes crystal clear that those original Atheists, as well as their followers today, were pushing themselves and others towards Atheistic ideas not because they felt that these ideas were actually the truth that they were convinced of, but rather for another more sinister motive.

Although there are many reasons and motives for people to turn to Atheism and reject God's existence, there is one that stands out the most: arrogance and not wanting to submit to the confines of religion, whether it be the true religion or religions that have become distorted from the true religion.

As for in the past, the arrogance was clear, for the likes of Fir'awn did not deny the existence of Allah on scientific or evidence-based grounds,

rather the existence of Allah was well-known and recognized by him. But what led him to his denial was arrogance and seeking to maintain superiority so that he did not have to submit and surrender to the laws that Musa (as) brought. Allah says:

{ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ }

“We never sent a messenger before you except that We revealed to him that, ‘There is no god [worthy of worship] except Me, so worship Me [alone].” [al-Anbiya’ 21:25]

As for today, nothing much has changed. The only difference is that Atheists have presented theories that they claim indicate the non-existence of Allah, with arrogance being behind that which led them to this denial. You will not find anyone in the past or the present - in most cases - denying the existence of Allah unless he was pushed to this denial by arrogance and unwillingness to submit and surrender to the commands and prohibitions that religions demand.

This is expected and reasonable if the source of these commands and prohibitions is the religious authority represented by the Catholic Church, which was founded on a false religion and superstitions that have no basis in science and reason, and which persecuted, tortured and murdered all who opposed it. When the oppression of the church reached its peak and that coincided with the apparent scientific discoveries, thinkers and scholars took advantage of the opportunity to free themselves from religious authority by choosing empirical science instead of religious theology as a tool and a means of knowing material and unseen truths.

But after tracing the historical events that led to this stage in Western society, it becomes clear that behind all of that was the will to disengage and liberate oneself from religions, because they require following a certain way in life. Therefore, if anyone objects to the alleged freedom that Western society is experiencing today, and calls for the establishment of Islam and the application of its laws, without hesitation they attribute them to the oppression, persecution and tyranny that they overthrew several centuries ago. But the reality is that true “freedom” is freedom from being controlled by our base human desires and being ruled by man-made ideologies.

Chapter Two

Proofs for Allah's Existence

Affirmation of Allah's existence is the very foundation and core of Islam; all other beliefs come after it. So you cannot believe in any of the foundational beliefs of Islam until you first believe in Allah's existence. As such, belief in Allah's existence is foundational to Islam and does not require any specific proofs to prove it.

This point is very important before continuing, because Atheists today want to make it seem as if denying Allah's existence is the natural position. They do that by putting forward the following question: 'Does God exist and what evidence is there to support this belief?'

This is how they start the whole discussion, by proposing that we have to doubt Allah's existence and work our way up to prove His existence. But I would argue that we do not need any evidence for Allah's existence. So the question itself needs debating; it shouldn't actually be 'does God exist?' but rather: 'what reasons do we have to reject His existence?'

When we look into the reasons for rejecting or doubting Allah's existence, we see that they all have very little to do with the "evidence" and more to do with emotional factors. However, I am not saying that we don't have good reasons or evidences for believing in Allah's existence; we do. But the point I'm trying to make is that we don't *require* any evidence for His existence, because God's existence is self-evidently true.

This is why Ibn al-Qayyim says: "I heard Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah say, 'How could evidence be requested to prove the existence of

what everything in existence is evidence of?’ And he often used to give an example from the following lines of poetry:

وليس يصح في الأذهان شيء
إذا احتاج النهار إلى دليل

‘Nothing in the minds can be true,
If the day needs to be proven.’

It is well-known that the existence of the Lord is more apparent to the mind and innate nature than the existence of the day. Whoever does not see that in his mind and innate nature, then let him blame them (his mind and innate nature).”³

So if Allah’s existence is a self-evident truth that does not require any evidence, why are we going to discuss evidences proving His existence?

The answer is: because of the presence of opposition to this obvious fact; meaning that if Atheists or doubters never existed or were not vocal in trying to disprove Allah’s existence, there would be no need to provide proofs for something so obvious whose denial is not imaginable.

Proof #1: The *Fitrah*

Why is belief in Allah something so obvious and self-evident? Because of the *Fitrah*. The *Fitrah* is an Arabic word that means the ‘natural state’, the ‘innate nature’, or the ‘innate disposition’ of the human being. This innate nature acknowledges Allah and the need to worship Him.

Ibn Taymiyyah explained that: “Affirmation of a Maker is firmly-rooted in the hearts of all men; it is from the binding necessities of their creation.”⁴

³ Madarij al-Salikin, Ibn al-Qayyim (1/136-137).

⁴ Dar’ Ta’arud al-‘Aql wal-Naql, Ibn Taymiyyah (8/482).

Allah mentions the *Fitrah* in the Qur'an when He says:

{ وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِن بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا أَن تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ }

“And ‘remember’ when your Lord brought forth from the loins of the children of Adam their descendants and had them testify regarding themselves. ‘Allah asked,’ ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They replied, ‘Yes, You are! We testify.’ ‘He cautioned,’ ‘Now you have no right to say on Judgment Day, ‘We were not aware of this.’” [al-A‘raf 7:172]

Here, Allah tells us that He placed awareness and acknowledgment of Him in our souls before we even came into this world, proving that all human beings have this within them.

Also, Allah says regarding the *Fitrah* that He created within all humans:

{ فَأَقِمَّ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا }

“So be steadfast in faith in all uprightness [O Prophet]—the *Fitrah* of Allah which He has instilled in all people.” [al-Rum 30:30]

Also, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Every child is born in a state of *Fitrah*. His parents then make him a Jew, a Christian or a Magian...” [Muslim]

This hadith proves that whoever denies something that his *Fitrah* proves, like Allah’s existence, then it is because of his environment in which he is brought up which diverts his beliefs away from the *Fitrah* that he was born with.

What further proves that the *Fitrah* exists within us is that when we are exposed to danger and are on the brink of a disaster, that *Fitrah* comes out

and is ‘awakened’ making us to turn to Allah and call upon Him for help. As an example, Allah tells us:

{ هُوَ الَّذِي يُسَيِّرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلِكِ وَجَرَينَ بِهِمْ بِرِيحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ وَفَرَحُوا بِهَا جَاءَتْهَا رِيحٌ عَاصِفٌ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ أُحِيطَ بِهِمْ ۖ دَعَوُا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ لَئِنِ أَنْجَيْتَنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ }

“He is the One Who enables you to travel through land and sea. And it so happens that you are on ships, sailing with a good wind, to the passengers’ delight. Suddenly, the ships are overcome by a stormy wind and those on board are overwhelmed by waves from every side, and they assume they are doomed. They cry out to Allah [alone] in sincere devotion: ‘If You save us from this, we will certainly be grateful.’” [Yunus 10:22]

Why is it that we turn to Allah in such situations? Because there’s something deep down inside us that is telling us that there does exist a power beyond this created world that is able to save us, and that is the power of Allah.

There are also new studies that are proving the existence of this *Fitrah* within us. In the book “Born Believers: The Science of Children’s Religious Belief” the author, Justin Barrett, looked at the behaviour and claims of children. He concluded that the children believed in what he calls “natural religion”. This is the idea that there is a personal being that created the entire universe; that ‘being’ cannot be human – it must be divine and supernatural.

So if that was the case, then why do we have people who deny Allah’s existence? The answer is because the *Fitrah* can become ‘veiled’ or ‘spoiled’ by external influences. These influences, as indicated by the hadith above,

can include parenting, society and peer pressure. These influences can cloud the *Fitrah* and prevent it from acknowledging the truth.

Ibn Taymiyyah mentions that when the natural state of someone is 'altered', that person may need 'other evidences' for God's existence:

"Affirmation of a Creator and His perfection is innate and necessary with respect to one whose innate disposition remains intact, even though alongside such an affirmation it has many other evidences for it as well, and often when the *Fitrah* is altered, many people may be in need of such other evidences."⁵

That brings us to the next two evidences for Allah's existence, which are both based on rationality or the human intellect. However, we have to point out here that rational arguments must conform to Islamic Aqeedah and not adopt premises that contradict it. From this perspective, it is important to know that belief in Allah is not inferred from some type of inductive, deductive, philosophical or scientific evidence. Instead, this type of evidence acts as a trigger to wake up the *Fitrah* to believe in Allah and His existence.

Also, as we will see, both of these proofs are taken from the Qur'an itself. Allah uses many rational arguments in the Qur'an to prove different things. Whatever rational proofs we have for Allah's existence should be taken from what Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an and not from our own human efforts and deficient intellects.

Proof #2: The Origin of Creation/Causality Argument

This proof and argument is the most common and wide spread among different civilizations and religions. That is because of how simple of an

⁵ Majmu' al-Fatawa, Ibn Taymiyyah (6/73).

argument it is, and how any person can understand it, regardless of their level of comprehension or literacy.

This argument states: the existence of material things proves that something/someone caused it to come into existence from nothing, because it is impossible for it to come into existence on its own or without a cause.

A Bedouin was asked, “How do you know your Lord?” The Bedouin could only reply with that which was before him, so he said, “Droppings tell of a camel. Foot-prints tell of a traveler. The sky, the earth with mountain passes, seas with waves – do they not tell of the All-Hearer, the All-Seer?”

Imam Abu Hanifah was asked by a group of Atheists to prove Allah’s existence. So he said, “Let me think,” then he remarked, “I am thinking about a loaded ship that was tied to a port. The cargo unloaded itself without porters and the ship sailed away without a captain.”

Upon hearing this, the Atheists declared, “How can you say something like this! This is impossible. We cannot believe in it.”

Imam Abu Hanifah replied, “If you do not believe in this, then how do you believe in the sun, the moon, the stars, the sky and the earth – how can you believe that all these came into existence without an Originator?”

This argument is formulated in the following rational way:

1. Every material thing exists prior to being non-existent.
2. Every material thing in existence proves the existence of a cause that brought it into existence from nothing.
3. Therefore, an eternal all-Powerful Creator brought everything into existence from nothing.

Throughout the Qur'an, Allah points to the creation of everything as being proof for His oneness. The clearest example of how the Qur'an uses the above argument can be found in Surah al-Tur. Allah says:

{ أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ * أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ }

“Or were they created by nothing, or were they the creators [of themselves]? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are not certain.” [al-Tur 52:35-36]

So here we have four possibilities:

1. Created by nothing.
2. Self-created.
3. Created by something created: “Or did they create the heavens and earth...” implying: a created thing ultimately being created by something else that is also created.
4. Created by something uncreated: “Rather, they are uncertain...” implying: that the denial of God is baseless, and therefore there is an uncreated Creator.

We can make a universal formula out of this argument:

1. The universe is finite.
2. Finite things could have come from nothing, or created themselves, or have been created by something created, or have been created by something uncreated.
3. They could not have come from nothing, nor created themselves, nor have been created by something created.
4. Therefore, they were created by something uncreated.

So once we've concluded that this universe was created by an uncreated Creator, it naturally leads us to believe in a Designer and Creator who must possess certain attributes that are unique only to Him, including but not limited to: omnipotence (the quality of having unlimited power), being eternal and absolutely self-sufficient. Since these attributes are unique to God, anything with these attributes must be God. Thus, we have proven God's existence.

Proof #3: Divine Precision/Design Argument

The previous argument looked at creation from the perspective of its beginning and origin, because nothing exists except that it had a beginning. Now we will look at an argument that also looks at creation as its proof, but from another perspective: the design of the creation as it exists in front of our eyes and observation.

This argument states: the signs of very accurate and precise design in all things in this universe (both living and non-living) proves that something/someone designed them in this precise systematic way, because it is impossible for anything to exist in such a precise way by mere chance.

This argument is formulated in the following rational way:

1. There exists a very accurate and precise design in creation, showing very careful consideration for every minor detail.
2. The existence of this fine precision proves the existence of a causer who is characterized with attributes of omnipotence, knowledge and wisdom.
3. Therefore, an eternal all-Powerful, all-Knowledgeable, and all-Wise Creator designed creation in this manner.

Allah has mentioned this accuracy and precision in the design of the creation in general. Here are some examples:

{ صُنِعَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْقَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ إِنَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَفْعَلُونَ }

“[That is] the design of Allah, Who has perfected everything. Surely He is All-Aware of what you do.” [al-Naml 27:88]

{ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ }

“The sun and the moon [move] by precise calculation.” [al-Rahman 55:5]

{ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَّا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَافُوتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُورٍ }

“[He is the One] Who created seven heavens, one above the other. You will never see any imperfection in the creation of the Most Merciful. So look again: do you see any flaws?” [al-Mulk 67:3]

All of these verses echo the discoveries in physics and biology which show that the universe, as well as life, has laws that seem precisely set for life to be sustainable; an order that facilitates human existence.

This precision is something scientists now refer to as ‘fine-tuning’, meaning that the universe has been fine-tuned in such a remarkable way that without the laws as they are, life, and especially complex conscious life, would not be possible.

Think about this earth, it’s one planet in our solar system, and our solar system is one of the systems in the Milky Way Galaxy. There are millions of galaxies like the Milky Way. Think about how they are all in order. They are not colliding with each other.

Now think about the oceans, the fish, the insects, the birds, bacteria, and the chemical elements that have not yet been discovered and cannot be detected. Yet each one of them has a law that they follow with total synchronization, balance, and harmony.

Now think about your human body, with its massive and intricate control systems. Think about your brain, how it works, how it functions, how it analyzes, stores information, retrieves information, then distinguishes it and categorizes it in a millionth of a second; and does this constantly. Think about your heart, how it pumps continuously for 60 or 70 years, intaking and discharging blood throughout your body, and maintaining that steady precision throughout your life.

When you see the design of this universe, you know that it is very powerful and precise, and something this powerful and precise that is beyond your own imagination cannot be foolish. It could not have been just thrown together.

Did all this synchronization, variation, design, infinite numeration happen by chance? Do all these things in our universe function perpetually and perfectly by chance? And do they keep on reproducing themselves and maintaining themselves also by chance?

No, of course not! That would be totally illogical and foolish to think. The design, order, and complexity of the universe as well as the world around us are evidence of the existence of a supreme intelligence, a perfect designer. All the heavenly bodies are controlled by precise laws of physics. Can there be laws without a lawmaker?

When we read a book, we accept that an author exists. When we see a house, we accept that a builder exists. Both of these things were made with a purpose by those who made them. The universe, the earth, and living things on the earth all give silent testimony to an intelligent, powerful Creator.

Ibn al-Qayyim states after mentioning some examples of the accurate precision in various creations: “Is it right for someone who has a grip of intellect to say: all of this is by coincidence without the planning of the Almighty, the All-Wise who has perfected everything?!”⁶

Based on all that has preceded, it becomes clear that the Atheist claim that the accurate design we see in the creation is by mere chance and coincidence is an invalid claim, and that this claim is not based on any basis of sense or reason, nor from recent discoveries in the field of biology and astrophysics. Rather, this indicates that arrogance and stubbornness is what prompts them to refuse to acknowledge that the universe is designed in this precise and perfect form because of the existence of a supreme being who created it by His Will, Ability, Knowledge and Wisdom. There is no explanation for denying what can be known by physical observation and logical necessity except that.

⁶ Al-Sawa'iq al-Mursalah, Ibn al-Qayyim (4/1568).

Chapter Three

Proofs for Prophethood

Before starting, it's important to keep in mind that Iman in prophethood is not based on blind faith, nor is it based on some spiritual feelings, nor is it based on blindly following the claims of a human being. Rather, it is something that is based on evidence and proof that are logical, coherent and convincing.

Also, before getting into the proofs that prove Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was indeed sent by Allah, it's good to first establish a few key points concerning prophethood in general:

Firstly, discussion concerning prophethood and revelation is something that can only be done with someone who believes in the existence of Allah. As for someone who does not believe in any supreme God or Creator, then the first discussion with him must be on proving God's existence.

Secondly, prophethood is something logically possible and not impossible. When dealing with deists who deny prophethood, we have to show them that there is no logical reason to prevent Allah from communicating with humanity. So if a deist denies its possibility on the grounds of Allah's ability, then we say here he is contradicting himself, because if he believes that Allah has the ability to create this universe, then he must believe that Allah is capable of doing anything less than that, and prophethood is much easier without a doubt. But if his denial of its possibility is on the grounds of Allah's wisdom, mercy and justice, then we can explain

how Allah's wisdom, mercy and justice actually necessitate that He communicate to us through revelation.

Thirdly, Allah's wisdom, mercy and justice necessitate that He send prophets with His revelation, because if we agree that we were made by a Creator, then surely that Creator must have informed us about who He is and what He expects from us. This is because it's not logically acceptable that Allah would leave us in this world to wander in confusion about who He is and what He wants from us. That would mean that Allah is unjust, and we all agree that in order for God to be God He must possess attributes of perfection, among which is complete justice and mercy. Once we understand this, we understand that Allah has indeed communicated with us and told us about Himself and what He wants from us.

What further shows us that prophethood is not only possible, but necessary, is the fact that we are here in this world for a specific purpose. What proves that is the fact that Allah is the All-Wise (a necessary attribute of His), and wisdom dictates that whatever He does, He does for a wise purpose. Thus, He created us based on His ultimate wisdom, and for a purpose, not just like that without purpose, because once again, that would go contrary to Allah's very nature of being a Supreme being that is wise and intelligent. This is mentioned in the Qur'an:

{ أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ }

“Then did you think that We created you uselessly and that to Us you would not be returned?” [al-Mu'minun 23:115]

So if Allah created us for a specific purpose (based on His wisdom), then in order for us to achieve that purpose, it was necessary for Him to

communicate with us to guide us to the purpose of our being, and the only way to do that is through prophethood.

What further shows us that prophethood is necessary is the fact that we are part of Allah's creation, and since He created us, He would know what is in our best interests and most suitable for us, and the only way to tell us that is through revelation to prophets that He chooses. So through these prophets Allah tells us what to do, what not to do and why. He tells us what He expects of us and shows us how to correct our deficiencies. We can say that revelation is the ultimate user's manual, provided as guidance to the one who will use it—ourselves.

Fourthly, proving the truth of a prophet is something not only possible, but necessary, because based on what we have discussed concerning the necessary nature of prophethood and our need for it, it's illogical to assume that Allah would have made it difficult for us to prove the prophethood of His prophets and messengers; it goes against His wisdom and mercy to allow that to happen. Thus, Allah has made the proofs of prophethood clear and convincing, enabling us to distinguish between a true prophet and an imposter.

The ways of proving the truth of prophethood

The reality of prophethood is something that can be traced back to the fact that it is an account that is being relayed. So a prophet is someone who is relaying a certain account that he has received from someone else. So the same rules would apply to him as would apply to anyone who relays any account from someone else concerning any of our worldly matters, and when it comes to distinguishing between a truthful person and a liar, we use a variety of different kinds of signs and proofs. Even if we may not pick up right

away that a person is a liar in what he claims, as he makes more and more claims, we'll see if he is truthful or not very soon.

Just like we can use a variety of different proofs to distinguish between a truthful person who claims to love you and a liar, and between a knowledgeable person and someone ignorant, likewise we can use a variety of different proofs to prove the veracity of a claim made about Allah and the world of the unseen.

And remember that this claim is not like any other claim. Here, we're talking about making a claim about Allah and the world of the unseen, a claim that spans all details of our lives in this world and the next, which is why whoever claims prophethood is either one of two people: either one who is honest, truthful and righteous to the highest degree possible, or the most lying and evil of people whose lies and evil nature cannot surpass that of anyone else's; you cannot find anything in between.

Proofs of Prophet Muhammad's Prophethood

Since the proofs for Prophet Muhammad's prophethood are so many, what we're going to do is put them under six main categories. Anyone who studies the *Seerah* of the Prophet (ﷺ) can easily derive the evidences for his prophethood from these six categories:

First: Personal and moral integrity: Looking at the life of the Prophet (ﷺ), one finds a human who had reached the highest standard of integrity in his personality and character, such as being honest, trustworthy, reliable, just, humble, generous and courageous; something that was acknowledged about him by both friend and foe, those near and those distant.

But there are two of his characters that we need to focus on because they are directly related to our discussion: honesty and trustworthiness. Anyone who reads about the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) finds that he was an honest and trustworthy man before ever claiming to be a prophet. For basically forty years of his life, it was well-known and attested by his own people who turned against him that he was honest and trustworthy.

The best example of this is when he (ﷺ) first proclaimed his *da'wah* openly. He called on the leaders of Quraysh. After they all gathered, he asked them, "Suppose I told you that there is an enemy in the valley planning on attacking you, would you believe me?" They said, "Yes, for we have not found you telling anything other than the truth." He then said, "I am a warner to you of a horrific punishment." Abu Lahab said, "May your hands perish all this day. Is it for this purpose you have gathered us?" It was soon after this that Surah al-Masad was revealed.⁷ The point is that they couldn't accuse him of being a liar, even Abu Lahab, instead he resorted to cursing and belittling him.

Another example is when Heraclius, emperor of Rome, asked Abu Sufyan about the Prophet (ﷺ). One of his questions was: "Have you ever accused him of telling lies before his claim (to be a prophet)?" Abu Sufyan answered, "No." This was many years after the Prophet (ﷺ) started his mission, when he was in Madinah.

Therefore, it's impossible that a man of such high standards in honesty throughout his life would want to come now after forty plus years to lie and make up a story like this. That's exactly what Heraclius concluded: "I then asked whether he was ever accused of telling lies before he said what he

⁷ Sahih al-Bukhari (4972).

said, and your reply was in the negative. So I wondered how a person who does not tell a lie about others could ever tell a lie about Allah!”⁸

Imagine how Quraysh spent thirteen years with the Prophet (ﷺ) in Makkah, going back and forth with him in their denial and disbelief, and yet not once did they accuse him of lying, no matter how small a lie. If they had found even a small lie, they would have run with it and use it against him as justification for their denial.

Second: Legislative completeness and sophistication: When looking at what the Prophet (ﷺ) came with from Allah, we see a complete, sophisticated, comprehensive, detailed law system like no other in human history. All of this proves that one man in the middle of Arabia in the sixth century could never have come up with it on his own. Add to that that he was unlettered and didn't have major connections with the outside world.

This is not something that only we Muslims claim, but it is something acknowledged by many non-Muslim intellectuals and writers as well.

Third: Personal conviction and confidence: When we look at the life of the Prophet (ﷺ), we find that whatever he did or relayed from Allah, it was based on his conviction and confidence that this is from Allah, because if he wasn't, then he would have taken different stances in his life, those that any imposter would if he was in his position. This is because the nature of a liar is that you find him inconsistent and hesitant in many of his stances. The Prophet (ﷺ) knew that not only was this the truth from Allah, but on top of that Allah was aiding him all the way.

An example is when Allah revealed:

⁸ Sahih al-Bukhari (7).

{ يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ }

“O Messenger! Convey everything revealed to you from your Lord. If you do not, then you have not delivered His message. Allah will certainly protect you from the people.” [Al-Ma'idah 5:67]

The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered those guarding him to leave, telling them that Allah alone would protect him from his enemies. How could an imposter do such a thing, especially when he knows he's lying? Logically, only one who is truthful and confident that Allah will protect him would dare do such a thing when living in such hostile conditions.

Another example is the fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) would relay certain accounts of his enemies with full conviction and confidence, such that would be too risky for an imposter to do, because if things don't go the way he predicted, it would expose him as a liar. Look at the example of Surah al-Masad. It tells us that it is impossible for Abu Lahab to ever embrace Islam and that he's destined for the Hellfire. So let's imagine that Abu Lahab had accepted Islam; what would that say about the Prophet's claim that these are the words of Allah?

Another example of this is the challenge to produce something similar to the Qur'an. Again, what if they had done so? What would it say about the Prophet's claim that these are the words of Allah?

The point here is that the Prophet (ﷺ) was never hesitant in any claim that he ever made, but rather was fully convinced and confident, even though it involved risks to his mission and his claim to prophethood.

Fourth: Supernatural events (miracles): Like all other prophets and messengers, Allah aided the Prophet (ﷺ) with certain signs that would prove

he was indeed sent from Allah and not an imposter. These signs are things that Allah allowed him to do by Allah's permission which go against the physical laws of this universe.

These supernatural events happened numerous times, not just a few times. If they were just a few times, one can perhaps say that they happened by chance and coincidence. But the sheer number of miracles that happened in his life prove that they were intended and not coincidental.

Some examples: the splitting of the moon, the crying of the tree trunk, the flowing of water, blessing of food, prayers answered, and so on.

What if someone says that these miracles were the result of magic and sorcery? To answer that, we look at the differences between prophethood and sorcery:

- 1) Prophets are known for their honesty and trustworthiness, along with other high moral standards, while sorcerers are known for the opposite: lying, unreliable, greed and general low moral standards.
- 2) Prophets only command good moral values, while sorcerers command bad moral values.
- 3) Prophethood is not attained by learning or gaining a skill, nor has any prophet been known to seek to acquire it, whereas sorcery is based on learning magic and training to acquire a certain skill.
- 4) The miracles that prophets come with are outside the scope of human ability, and no one has ever come with anything similar to it when challenged, whereas magicians perform magic that other magicians have performed or can perform, and they compete with one another in that.

Fifth: Fulfillment of prophecies: The Prophet (ﷺ) on many occasions would foretell that an event would happen, and it would end up happening exactly like he had foretold it. No imposter could do so with such precision and accuracy on more than one occasion.

Examples: mention of specific individuals from Quraysh who would die in Badr before the battle even started, and mentioning the exact location of where they would die; mention of Fatimah being the first of his family members to follow him after his death; mention of Bayt al-Maqdis falling in the hands of Muslims after his death.

What if someone says that this is no different than fortune-tellers? We respond as we did earlier, clarifying the differences between prophethood and sorcery. We can also add that fortune-tellers can only make predictions sometimes, not all the time, and not with such accuracy.

As for an imposter, he would never dare make such predictions to begin with, because the stakes are too high for him to go wrong and then becoming exposed as a liar.

What further emphasizes this kind of proof is the fact that on some occasions, the Prophet (ﷺ) would give his personal opinions on certain matters that were totally his own (not revelation), and his opinion would turn out not to be the best. An example is his advice to the farmers who were planting date-palm trees a certain way. It turned out his advice caused the yield to be less, so he said, "If there is any use of it, then they should do it, for it was just a personal opinion of mine. Do not go after my personal

opinion; but when I tell you anything on behalf of Allah, then do accept it, for I do not attribute a lie to Allah.”⁹

So if he had independent knowledge of the future, why wouldn't he have used it in such cases? It proves that whatever he claimed about the future which was based on revelation was true, whereas if he gave a personal advice, it was from himself and not aided by revelation.

Sixth: The Miracle of the Qur'an: What is meant by this kind of proof is that when the Prophet (ﷺ) proclaimed that he was sent by Allah to all people, he brought words that we humans use, and said that Allah is the One who revealed these words to him. So he made that the proof of his truthfulness, and he made the sign that indicates its truthfulness the fact that no one can come with anything like these words in their eloquence, clarity, consistency, accuracy and content. And he announced a challenge on that which stands till this very day.

We should note that this challenge was not something that Allah asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to make from the very beginning, but rather it was only after Quraysh claimed that he was making up the Qur'an on his own. So Allah refuted them and challenged them to produce anything similar to it; first ten chapters, then one chapter, then Allah said:

{ قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ
ظَهِيرًا }

“Say: If all humans and jinn were to come together to produce the equivalent of this Qur'an, they could not produce its equal, no matter how they supported each other.” [Al-Isra' 17:88]

⁹ Sahih Muslim (2361).

Also, this particular miracle was intended because the Arabs thought of themselves as eloquent poets. They had a complex system of evaluating a poet and the poetry to meet rigid standards.

The fact that no effort has succeeded in 'producing a verse' like a verse of the Qur'an means that either no one has taken the Qur'an seriously enough to make the effort, or that they made the effort, but were not successful.

Either way, this miracle is one of the proofs that the Prophet (ﷺ) was indeed a prophet sent by Allah, because had the Arabs met the challenge, they would have discredited the Prophet (ﷺ). It would have been their biggest propaganda tool against him, but nothing like this happened. Instead, they chose war.

Chapter Four

Proofs for the Authenticity of the Qur'an

After we looked at the concept of prophethood, and how it is something real and necessary, and after we established different kinds of proofs showing that Muhammad (ﷺ) was indeed a true prophet and messenger sent by Allah, we now come to look at the revelation that the Prophet (ﷺ) brought and how it is rightly attributed to Allah.

Before starting, we need to understand what we mean by the Qur'an being from Allah. Every word and letter in the Qur'an was actually spoken by Allah and heard by Jibril. So when we say that Allah is the author of the Qur'an or that Allah sent down the Qur'an, it doesn't mean a physical book handed over to Muhammad (ﷺ), but rather what it means is the spoken words of Allah.

Now when we look at all the possibilities of the origin of the Qur'an, we can narrow them down to three:

- 1) Muhammad (ﷺ) authored it himself.
- 2) Someone else authored it.
- 3) It was revealed by Allah.

Proof #1: Personal and moral integrity of Muhammad (ﷺ)

Looking at the life of the Prophet (ﷺ), one finds a human who had reached the highest standard of integrity in his personality and character, such as being honest, trustworthy, reliable, just, humble, generous and courageous; something that was acknowledged about him by both friend and foe, those near and those distant. Anyone who reads about the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) finds that he was an honest and trustworthy man before ever

claiming to be a prophet. For basically forty years of his life, it was well-known and attested by his own people who turned against him that he was honest and trustworthy.

Therefore, it's impossible that a man of such high standards in honesty throughout his life would want to come now after forty plus years to lie and make up a story like this. That's exactly what Heraclius concluded: "I then asked whether he was ever accused of telling lies before he said what he said, and your reply was in the negative. So I wondered how a person who does not tell a lie about others could ever tell a lie about Allah!"¹⁰

Also, if we were to say that Muhammad (ﷺ) authored the Qur'an motivated by personal interests, liking seeking glory, nobility, leadership and followers (which is usually why false prophets emerge), then firstly: the Prophet (ﷺ) already had the qualities that any man would want (nobility, leadership, etc.); and secondly: when he was offered all of that in exchange for stopping his mission, he didn't accept the offer. His opponents said, "If it is poverty that is your problem, then we will gather wealth for you until you are the richest man of Quraysh. If it is women you want, then choose whichever of the women of Quraysh you want and we will marry you ten of them."¹¹

If it was true that he desired his personal glory and leadership, why would he decline the offer when it was presented to him and instead prefer a life of humility, simplicity, persecution, sanctions and even hostile attack by those who felt threatened by the message of the Qur'an?

Proof #2: The Prophet (ﷺ) was unlettered

¹⁰ Sahih al-Bukhari (7).

¹¹ Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an, al-Qurtubi (18/390).

How many incidents are there in history of simple desert men producing a book like the Qur'an, with all its sophistication, intricacy and accuracy? If we were to say for arguments sake that such is possible if someone was learned from a young age and gifted with intelligence, then how about the fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) was unlettered, meaning that he was known even to his opponents (who was raised among them) that he never learned how to read or write from the time of his birth?

{ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ }

“Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whose description they find in their Tawrah and Injil.” [Al-A'raf 7:157]

The Qur'an has never been edited or revised, as it was never in need of any revision or correction. How were such vast subject areas expounded upon with such precision by a seventh century Arab with no formal education or even the ability to read whatever scant material there may have been in his environment on such topics? Where and when has history ever produced an illiterate author of such a scripture?

Proof #3: Putting up with mockery

Several occasions presented themselves where the Prophet (ﷺ) could have fabricated verses. For example, after the first revelation came, people awaited to hear more, but the Prophet (ﷺ) didn't receive anything new for months. So the Quraysh began making fun of him, “His Lord has abandoned him!” This continued until finally Surah al-Duha was revealed:

{ وَالضُّحَىٰ * وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ * مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ }

“By the morning sunlight, and the night when it falls still! Your Lord [O Prophet] has not abandoned you, nor has He become hateful [of you].” [Al-Duha 93:1-3]

The Prophet (ﷺ) could have compiled something and presented it as the latest revelation to end the mockery, but he didn't.

Another example is when the hypocrites accused his beloved wife A'ishah (ra) of being unchaste. The Prophet (ﷺ) could have easily fabricated something to free her of blame, but he waited for many difficult days, all spent in pain, mockery and anguish, until revelation came from Allah freeing her from the accusation.

Proof #4: The Qur'an criticizing Muhammad (ﷺ)

Several verses criticized the Prophet (ﷺ), and were on occasion strongly worded. How can a false prophet blame himself when it could potentially make him fall into the danger of losing the respect and following of his followers?

Here are some examples:

{ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ تَبْتَغِي مَرْضَاتَ أَزْوَاجِكَ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ }

“O Prophet! Why do you prohibit [yourself] from what Allah has made lawful to you, seeking to please your wives? And Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [Al-Tahrim 66:1]

{ عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى (١) أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى (٢) وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكَّى (٣) أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى (٤) أَمَّا مَنْ اسْتَعْزَى (٥) فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّى (٦) وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَزَّكَّى (٧) وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى (٨) وَهُوَ يَخْشَى (٩) فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّى }

“He frowned and turned [his attention] away, simply because the blind man came to him [interrupting]. You never know, perhaps he may be purified, or he may be mindful, benefitting from the reminder. As for the one who was indifferent, you gave him your [undivided] attention, even though you are not to blame if he would not be purified. But as for the one who came to you, eager [to learn], While he fears [Allah], you were inattentive to him.” [‘Abasa 80:1-10]

If he were to hide anything, he would have hid these verses, but he recited them honestly and truthfully. If the Prophet (ﷺ) himself authored the Qur’an, thus being a lying imposter, he would have made sure that there was nothing in existence which could jeopardize the gaining of followers and supporters. The fact that the Qur’an, on various occasions, reprimands the Prophet (ﷺ) on certain issues in which he had made incorrect judgment is in itself a proof that it was not authored by him.

Proof #5: Similarities between the Qur’an and other scriptures

Similarities between the Qur’an and the Bible does not necessarily mean that the former has been copied from the latter. In fact, it gives evidence that both of them are based on a common third source; all divine revelations came from the same source: Allah.

So how can we disprove the claim that the Qur’an was copied from the Bible?

Firstly: He was unlettered (as previously explained).

Secondly: His interactions with Jewish and Christian scholars was very limited.

Thirdly: His travels to Christian areas was very limited (only twice to Syria: once with Abu Talib and once with Khadijah).

Fourthly: Whatever discussions he had with Christians and Jews happened more than thirteen years after the revelation started (in Madinah).

Fifthly: The Arabic version of the Bible never existed in his lifetime. The earliest Arabic version of the Old Testament was in 900 C.E. (more than 250 years later), and the oldest Arabic version of the New Testament was published in 1616 C.E. (a thousand years later).

Sixthly: There are serious creedal differences between the Qur'an and the Bible that cannot make it possible for the former to be copied from the latter.

Seventhly: His critics had kept a close eye on him looking for anything to prove that he was a liar, and yet they never once accused him of copying from other scriptures.

Proof #6: The miraculous content of the Qur'an

If we look at many things mentioned in the Qur'an, we would realize that none of these things could have been known to an Arab in seventh century Arabia, let alone someone uneducated. These things include: detailed news of the past, prophecies of the future and scientific facts.

Here are some examples:

- 1) Referring to the ruler of Egypt at the time of Yusuf (AS) as a king and not a Pharaoh (see Surah Yusuf).
- 2) The body of Fir'awn would be recovered and preserved, which happened in recent times (see Surah Yunus 10:92).

- 3) The victory of Persia over Rome and vice-versa (see Surah Rum 30:3).
- 4) Various scientific facts that have come to be discovered only in recent times, such as in the fields of embryology, geography and astronomy.

Is it even conceivable that any human being over 1,400 years ago could have produced a scripture with such information in it, let alone a person who had never been educated?

Proof #7: The miraculous style of the Qur'an

The Qur'an is a literary masterpiece of Arabic which was and remains unrivaled in its eloquence. Its rhythmic style shook the foundations of a society which had prided itself on its literary skills. Contests were held every year in Makkah for who could recite the longest and most eloquent pieces from memory. When the Qur'an was revealed, all such contests were brought to a halt, as there was no more competition.

When Quraysh denied the Qur'an, claiming that it was the words of a poet, Allah challenged them to produce anything similar to it; first ten chapters, then one chapter, then Allah said:

{ قُلْ لَّيْنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ
ظَهِيرًا }

“Say: If all humans and jinn were to come together to produce the equivalent of this Qur'an, they could not produce its equal, no matter how they supported each other.” [Al-Isra' 17:88]

The fact that no effort has succeeded in 'producing a verse' like a verse of the Qur'an means that either no one has taken the Qur'an seriously

enough to make the effort, or that they made the effort, but were not successful.

Either way, this miracle is one of the proofs that the Qur'an must be the words of Allah and not those of the Prophet (ﷺ), because had the Arabs met the challenge, they would have discredited the Prophet (ﷺ). It would have been their biggest propaganda tool against him, but nothing like this happened, instead, they chose war.

Proof #8: The preservation of the Qur'an

The Qur'an's preservation is two-fold: preservation of its words and preservation from inconsistencies.

As for the first, Allah says:

{ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ }

“It is certainly We Who have revealed the Reminder, and it is certainly We Who will preserve it.” [Al-Hijr 15:9]

As for the second, Allah says:

{ أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا }

“Do they not then reflect on the Qur'an? Had it been from anyone other than Allah, they would have certainly found in it many inconsistencies.” [Al-Nisa' 4:82]

When we compare these two kinds of preservation to other scriptures, we find that no scripture has been preserved in both ways described above. As such, this is one of the strongest proofs that the Qur'an is from none other than Allah.

Chapter Five

The Beauty and Uniqueness of Islam

After going through some of the proofs for the truth of Islam (prophethood, Qur'an, etc.), it's important to emphasize on those aspects that make Islam unique and different from all other religions and systems in the world.

This is because some people think that all religions are the same, and it doesn't matter which one you follow, since all of them encourage people to do good and stay away from evil; so why should we say that Islam is the only true religion?

To answer that, we say:

Firstly: It is illogical to claim that all religions are the same and equal, because they all contradict one another and they cannot all be true at the same time. The truth is always only one; if one belief system has components that are proven true, then any competing belief system with contrary claims must be false. Allah says:

{ وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَرَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا }

“And say: The truth has come and falsehood has vanished. Indeed, falsehood is bound to vanish.” [Al-Isra' 17:81]

Secondly: After proving that Islam is the truth based on the previous discussions (prophethood, Qur'an, etc.), there are additional points we can mention that show us how Islam is unique and different from all other religions, proving that it is the only one that is from Allah that has been kept preserved until today.

The following points will focus on the beauty and uniqueness of Islam:

Point #1: Looking at man and existence holistically

One of the ways of seeing the beauty of Islam is by looking at how Islam takes everything into consideration in a holistic and comprehensive fashion, because many times, those who object to Islam or some of its legislations, don't take this fact into consideration, and instead look at Islam from a narrow perspective, focusing on only our existence in this present world.

When Allah legislated five daily prayers, staying away from food and drink in Ramadan, giving to the poor, going for Hajj, etc. He didn't legislate these obligations as simply tasks that we must complete without any real benefit for us in this life and the next. Yes, we do them because Allah commanded us to do so irrespective of the wisdom behind His commands, but that doesn't mean these obligations are meaningless or that we don't get anything out of them.

All of the legislations of Islam connect man to his Lord one way or the other:

1) Salah:

{ إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي }

“It is truly I. I am Allah! There is no god [worthy of worship] except Me. So worship Me [alone], and establish prayer for My remembrance.” [Taha 20:14]

2) Fasting:

{ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ }

“O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you—as it was for those before you—so perhaps you will become conscious [of Allah].” [Al-Baqarah 2:183]

3) Zakah:

{ خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا }

“Take from their wealth charity to purify and bless them.” [Al-Tawbah 9:103]

4) Hajj:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Tawaf around the Ka‘bah, running between Safa and Marwah and stoning the pillars have only been made to establish the remembrance of Allah.”¹²

The point is that Islam connects all of its legislations to Allah, all the various details related to all aspects of life are inter-connected, and one is not separate from the other.

Point #2: Understanding the reality of worship in Islam

The essence of worship in Islam is the total submission of one’s will to Allah. Worship in Islam is not just a bunch of rituals and practices that we do that are empty of any meaning, or that are simply outward actions without anything happening internally.

Islam teaches us that worship stems from veneration and love for the One we worship, but it’s not only out of love that we worship Him, but also

¹² Sunan Abi Dawud (1888).

out of fear and awe, meaning that only one who recognizes who his Lord is will be able to enjoy his worship of Him.

Moreover, this concept of worship in Islam is not something theoretical, but something practical, meaning that you will never understand it unless you test it for yourself, which is why no one who properly worships Allah and tastes the pleasure of that worship would ever even consider forsaking that pleasure for anything else in the world, as some of the Salaf would say, “We find a certain pleasure and bliss in worship that if the kings and their sons were to realize what we’re in they would fight us for it with swords.”¹³

Point #3: The unique nature of Islam’s proofs

When compared to the proofs and arguments presented by other religions and ideologies, we find that the proofs and arguments that Islam puts forward for all of its foundational matters are strong, convincing, coherent and bullet-proof. Look at all other religions, philosophies and ideologies, and you will find that their proofs and arguments are either feeble, incoherent or illogical.

Take the example of proving the authenticity of the Qur’an. The scholars of Islam have put forward proof after proof, argument upon argument, proving how the Qur’an is divine and the true word of Allah. You have entire volumes of books that the scholars of Islam have written on this one subject, and sometimes just on one of the proofs. Now let’s look at the other most famous religious scripture in the world today, the Bible, and look at the proofs that Christian scholars put forward to try to convince us that it is divine and from God.

¹³ Hilyah al-Awliya’, Abu Nu’aym al-Isfahani (7/370).

This is why it doesn't take 'evidence' to convince a Muslim to convert to Christianity, but it's usually other factors, like accusing Islam of certain things. That's because Islam raises the bar on several important matters concerning evidence.

The following are some examples:

- 1) Islam raises the bar on verifying the historical authenticity of religiously authoritative statements, while Christians are comfortable taking from scriptures whose sources are not accurately verified.
- 2) Islam raises the bar on scriptural preservation, while Christians are comfortable with admitting that they don't have to settle for 100% scriptural preservation.
- 3) Islam raises the bar on clarity of fundamental doctrines (the five pillars of Islam and the six articles of Iman), yet Christians need to struggle really hard just to demonstrate that their Bible teaches the most fundamental belief of theirs, namely the Trinity. Imagine if Muslims had to produce hundreds of books and tens of thousands of articles just to prove that Islam teaches the *Shahadah*; that would be pretty outrageous and mindboggling, no?
- 4) Islam raises the bar on scriptural infallibility, while many Christians are open to the idea of Biblical errancy and try to suggest new creative ways of understanding the "inspiration" of the Bible's authors, and so on.

It's extremely difficult for a Muslim who's been used to such standards to settle for less and consider Christianity. People strive to gain more, not compromise to settle for less. So when Christians ask us to "consistently"

evaluate their faith as we do ours, they need to understand that such a request is not in their best interests!

Point #4: The clarity of Islam concerning belief in the Creator

There is no religious scripture of any religion today that venerates the Creator or negates deficiencies from Him, mentioning what God is not supposed to be, like we have in the Qur'an and what has authentically been reported from the Prophet (ﷺ). Thus, Islam is different from all other religions in its clarity of who God is and who God isn't, from the angle of God's perfection, which is why a rational person would never find any difficulty in submitting to what Islam teaches about Allah, contrary to what other religions teach.

This is not something difficult to find in the Qur'an or the Sunnah. Rather, the entire Qur'an – in fact every Surah – talks about Allah, either affirming something for Him or negating something from Him.

The following are a few examples:

- 1) The greatest Surah of the Qur'an (al-Fatihah).
- 2) The greatest Ayah in the Qur'an (Ayat al-Kursi).
- 3) The Surah that represents a third of the Qur'an (Surah al-Ikhlās).

On the other hand, look at what other religions teach about God. If Judaism and Christianity describe Allah in such deficient terms, then other religions are bound to be worse, as they are not based on any scriptures from Allah.

Jewish scriptures describe Allah as having 'regretted' some of His decisions, getting into a fight with Ya'qub (AS), not knowing where Adam

(AS) hid after eating from the tree, among many other offensive and obnoxious remarks against the Prophets of Allah.

As for Christianity, then we find how obscure and ambiguous their beliefs are concerning Allah, and how they go through great lengths in trying to prove the doctrine of the Trinity. It's enough of an insult to Allah for them to say that He came in this world through the womb of a human being, and then had to be killed in such a gruesome manner, and how he had to call for help after that.

This is why we can use this argument against Christians: If Christ is on the cross and you are standing before him and have the power to do something, will you let him die or will you save him? If you save him, then you would annul the atonement of Christ and cause the loss of humankind; but if you let him die, then not much difference would be left between you and those who were trying to kill him. With this one question, you've brought down their entire creed concerning Allah.

It's due to this clarity of Islam concerning Allah that our enemies don't target our belief concerning Allah (which is the foundation of our faith, such that if you bring down the foundation, the rest of the faith comes crumbling down). Rather, they target the other issues that are related to its legislations and practices (like the treatment of women, the concept of Jihad, etc.) because our concept of God is simple, logical and straightforward, and it agrees with the *Fitrah*. After that, everything is easy to explain (like miracles and prophethood, and how they are built on the attributes of Allah). On the other hand, if the foundation wasn't clear, then what comes after would be unclear and difficult to explain.

Point #5: The existence of a practical example for theoretical teachings

Among the beauties of Islam is that it combined between theory and practice. It didn't just give us a set of beliefs, practices and rules, and just command us to submit without sending us a practical living example to emulate those teachings. This is found in the life of the Prophet (ﷺ), for he was that example of a person who adhered to those beliefs, practices and rules like no one else, which is why A'ishah (RA) said when asked about the character of the Prophet (ﷺ), "His character was the Qur'an."¹⁴

The presence of this practical living example to follow makes it easy for us to adhere and abide by the teachings Allah has sent us, as opposed to philosophical teachings that remain theoretical and imaginary, and also open for debate on how to implement those teachings.

This is why one of the wisdoms behind Allah sending us a human role model to follow was so that adhering and following the teachings would be made easy for us. Imagine if the messenger was some other being other than a human (like an angel); the people would say, "Well, he has certain qualities that makes it easy for him to abide by the teachings." Allah refutes this claim:

{ وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ بَشَرًا رَسُولًا * قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَلَائِكَةٌ يَمْشُونَ مُطْمَئِنِّينَ لَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَلَكًا رَسُولًا }

“And nothing has prevented people from believing when guidance comes to them except their protest: ‘Has Allah sent a human as a messenger?’ Say: Had there been angels walking the earth, well

¹⁴ Sahih Muslim (746).

settled, We would have surely sent down for them an angel from heaven as a messenger.” [Al-Isra’ 17:94-95]

Moreover, Allah made the Prophet (ﷺ) go through so much trial and affliction in his life to show the people that he was merely a human being, and that nothing stopped him from being the most worshipping and fearing of Allah, meaning that if he could do it with all the challenges he faced, then why can't we with much lesser challenges than him?

Point #6: Moderate and balanced reform

When you look at any reform movement throughout history, no matter how 'tolerant' they are considered, you find it extremely difficult for them to control their followers from going to extremes in their opposition of who they're trying to reform, and once they gain the upper hand, you see the extremes they went into (such as the Spanish inquisition, the French revolution, the Marxist revolution, and so on).

On the other hand, when you look at Islam and how it came to reform the Arabs, and change their backward ways of *Jahiliyyah*, replacing it with a completely new reformed code of conducts, you find that Islam placed extreme importance on remaining balanced and moderate, commanding us to not go to extremes and warning us of its consequences.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Beware of going to extremes.”¹⁵

He also said, “Religion is very easy, and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Sunan al-Nasa'i (3057) and Sunan Ibn Majah (3029).

¹⁶ Sahih Bukhari (39).

This is why when some of the Companions were so impressed by what they found in this new religion, and they decided to go to extremes (one saying he would never marry, another saying he would never eat meat and a third saying he would never sleep on his bed), the response of the Prophet (ﷺ) was, “By Allah, I fear Allah more than you do, and I am most obedient and dutiful among you to Him, but still I observe fast and break it; perform Salah and sleep at night and take wives. So whoever turns away from my Sunnah does not belong to me.”¹⁷

¹⁷ Sahih Bukhari (5063) and Sahih Muslim (1401).

Chapter Six

Epistemology in Islam

So far, we've covered many topics concerning the fundamental foundations of Islam, like belief in Allah, prophethood and the Qur'an, and we've supported our beliefs with 'proofs' and 'evidence'.

But here we need to pause for a moment, because a lot of people look at 'evidence' and what constitutes as evidence based on what they've been taught in school; that evidence is through observation, it's what you can see, hear, smell, or touch; it's hard material evidence.

The reason why many of us think this way is because of how advanced and materialistic the world has become, to such a degree that we're no longer interested in entertaining any evidence that is not scientifically supported.

On top of that, today's Atheists are forcing this type of evidence on everyone, telling us that science has disproved God, and based on what we know from science, God does not exist.

So when you come to such people with evidence of God's existence, or prophethood, or the Qur'an, they don't even bother exploring and investigating to see how true those proofs are, and instead demand scientific evidence. Why? Because that is all they believe in.

This is nothing new. Allah gives us examples of how the disbelievers would treat the signs and proofs supporting the belief that the prophets and messengers were truly indeed sent by Allah; how instead of looking into these signs and contemplating how convincing they are, they would demand other evidences that are material and observable in nature, because

according to them, that's the only way to prove for certain that what they are claiming is true, and they added that if those evidences are brought forward, then they will believe on the spot. Allah says:

{ وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَىٰ لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ نَرَى اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذْنَاكُمُ الصَّاعِقَةَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ }

“And [remember] when you said, ‘O Musa! We will never believe you until we see Allah with our own eyes,’ so a thunderbolt struck you while you were looking on.” [Al-Baqarah 2:55]

Allah also says:

{ وَقَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبُوعًا (٩٠) أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَعِنَبٍ فَتُفَجَّرَ الْأَنْهَارُ خِلَالَهَا تَفْجِيرًا (٩١) أَوْ تُسْقِطَ السَّمَاءَ كَمَا زَعَمْتَ عَلَيْنَا كِسْفًا أَوْ تَأْتِيَنَا بِاللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ قَبِيلًا (٩٢) أَوْ يَكُونَ لَكَ بَيْتٌ مِّنْ زُخْرَفٍ أَوْ تَرْقَىٰ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لِرُفُوقِكَ حَتَّىٰ تُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا كِتَابًا نَّقْرُؤُهُ ۗ قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّي هَلْ كُنْتُ إِلَّا بَشَرًا رَسُولًا }

“They say: We will never believe in you until you cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us, or until you have a garden of palm trees and vineyards, and cause rivers to flow abundantly in it, or cause the sky to fall upon us in pieces, as you have claimed, or bring Allah and the angels before us, face to face, or until you have a house of gold, or you ascend into heaven—and even then we will not believe in your ascension until you bring down to us a book that we can read.

Say: Glory be to my Lord! Am I not only a human messenger?” [Al-

Isra' 17:90-93]

What we learn from all of this is that such people are not really looking for proof in order to believe, but that these are mere excuses for not believing and submitting to the truth, which is why Allah tells us that even if He sent a book that they can touch and read from, they still wouldn't believe:

{ وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا فِي قِرْطَاسٍ فَلَمَسُوهُ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ لَقَالِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ }

“Had We sent down to you a revelation in writing and they were to touch it with their own hands, the disbelievers would still have said:

This is nothing but pure magic!” [Al-An’am 6:7]

And Allah says:

{ وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِن جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ لَّيُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ أَنَّهَا إِذَا جَاءَتْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ }

“They swear by Allah their most solemn oaths that if a sign were to come to them, they would certainly believe in it. Say: ‘Signs are only with Allah.’ What will make you realize that even if a sign were to come to them, they still would not believe?” [Al-An’am 6:109]

So why is it that Allah did not send us material evidence that is in accordance to the scientific method? The answer is simple: we humans have been made distinct and unique from all other creatures by our ability to choose what we see is as being right based on our *Fitrah* and intellect. If Allah’s existence was based on observable evidence such that we can see Allah directly, there would no longer be any function for our intellect and free will; we would all be forced to believe without any choice, because seeing something is not like being told about it.

This is exactly why it’s too late to believe or repent at the moment of death when a person sees the angels coming to take his soul, because he now sees with his eyes what he disbelieved in all his life (while he had the free will to believe).

So this is why Allah did not send this kind of direct observable evidence to prove the world of the unseen. This now brings us to the point of what is

meant by 'evidence', or how do you arrive at the conclusion that something is true? What is knowledge? This is what they call *epistemology* or the theory of knowledge and realities.

Those who believe that the only way to arrive at the truth of anything is through the scientific method are believers in what is known as Scientism; they only believe that something is real if it can be proven scientifically, which naturally means they don't believe in anything called world of the unseen (or metaphysical). It has reached the point where some of them are even attempting to prove things like consciousness and the soul through scientific means and explanations. Basically, they want to replace religion with science.

How can we prove that realities and truths can be proven through other than the scientific method?

Basically, even Western scientists and philosophers agree that science is limited to the observable world, and other realities rely on other sources of knowledge other than science. For example, history (as a field of knowledge) relies on narrations and reports, not on hard material evidence. For example, historians don't ask for the body of Alexander the Great to prove that he existed in history, or that a certain event took place based on pictures and videos. They rely on reports and narrations.

So yes, certain things are proven through science, while other things are proven through logic, and yet other things are proven through narration. Ibn Taymiyyah says, "The ways at arriving at knowledge are three: observation, intellect and a combination of the two: testimony. So there are certain things that cannot be known except through testimony, like everything that a person knows through the testimonies of trustworthy people

like a report that is narrated by multiple narrators, and also what is known through the testimony of the Prophets.”¹⁸

So whatever we know about Allah or the world of the unseen is based on evidence, but not scientific evidence, because scientific evidence is restricted to only the observable world.

So this is how we respond to Atheists: just because we cannot prove something unobservable exists through the scientific method, it doesn't automatically mean that it doesn't exist. The only thing it proves is that we cannot arrive at the conclusion that it is true through the scientific method. Therefore, there must be another source that leads us to know about what exists beyond this material observable world, and this is where the role of revelation comes into play.

Now, if we were to think of everything that exists, we can say that they come under two categories:

- 1) What is observable by our human senses (physical material world).
- 2) What is not observable by our human senses (metaphysical/unseen world).

The unseen world is further divided into two categories:

- a) What can be proven by the human intellect (Allah, miracles, etc.).
- b) What cannot be proven by the human intellect, but rather by revelation (angels, Paradise, Hellfire, the Throne, etc.).

Here is how we prove the validity of our 'non-scientific evidence': when we say (as in the first category) that the human intellect can prove the existence of something unseen/unobservable, we don't mean that it is

¹⁸ Dar' Ta'arud al-'Aql wal-Naql, Ibn Taymiyyah (1/178).

proven directly without an intermediary, but rather it is proven through traces which are observable connecting us to that thing in the unseen.

Therefore, every observable thing or phenomenon can be traced back to a cause, and that cause can sometimes be something material, and other times non-material. This brings us back to the logical proof that nothing exists without an initial cause.

Why do we have to say that there exists a non-material cause even though we cannot prove it through observation? Because nothing observable (like creation and effects of miracles) can come into existence on its own or from nothing.

As for the second category (what cannot be proven by the human intellect, but only by revelation), it cannot be proven by the intellect alone because that physical intermediary is missing between the intellect and the unseen creation (angels, Jannah, Hellfire, the Throne, etc.). So this is why we need revelation to tell us about those truths.

Once we understand this, we see the importance of revelation as a valid source of evidence, and once again, just because we cannot physically and scientifically prove the existence of the revelation, it doesn't mean it doesn't happen and doesn't exist. The way to prove the truth of any revelation is not through the scientific method, but rather by looking at how true the claim of the prophet is when he claims to receive revelation from Allah, which is all based on logical reasoning (which we already previously discussed). Thus, whenever we prove the truthfulness of a prophet, it necessitates that he is truthful that he receives revelation from Allah.

From all of this, we see how the revelation is a valid and true source of evidence to prove anything related to the world of the unseen, and that believing in the world of the unseen (when based on authentic revelation) is not based on emotions or blind faith without being convinced logically about the truth of it.

Based on all of this, we see how evidence is more than just some physical observable data that proves the existence of things beyond this material world. It cannot rely on science because it is outside the realm of the scientific method and observation.

But here is a question to conclude with: how did we arrive at this situation where we are being demanded to prove what is not observable through science?

It goes back hundreds of years to the reformation age in Europe where Western society wanted to free itself from the suppression of the Church and religious elite who would enforce their views on everyone even if they went against new scientific discoveries. So once they freed themselves of the clutches of the Church, they decided to completely disregard anything that religion teaches until we can prove it scientifically. This is where a transformation happened where society started looking at everything that is claimed to be true that it must be proven scientifically, especially when religious texts contradicted many scientific findings. So this is where they threw religion and scripture out of being considered a source of knowledge and evidence for anything.

On the other hand, if we come to the Islamic concept for proving what exists beyond this material world, we find that Islam emphasizes on the importance of the authenticity of the revelation, and how it cannot have any

distortions or inconsistencies in its narration to us. From this, we can see the huge difference between Islam and all other religions in how we prove what we believe. No one knows the unseen other than Allah.

Chapter Seven

Sources and Methodology of Deducing Evidences in Islam

Now we move on to look at evidence in Islam. Where do we Muslims derive our beliefs from? In fact, not only our beliefs, but everything in Islam; what are all the legislations and rulings based on? What are our sources and how do we go about understanding these sources?

The sources of Islam which all beliefs, principles and rulings are based on is nothing other than the revelation of Allah (and we previously discussed the importance of the revelation and its validity as a source of evidence).

This revelation in Islam is represented by two things: the Qur'an and Sunnah. This is what is implied by Islam being a divinely-revealed religion: its pillars are based on infallible texts that were sent down from heaven, which are represented in the verses of the Qur'an and the texts of the authentic Prophetic Sunnah.

From these two sources, the scholars derived other principles on which rulings may be based. Some scholars called them the 'Sources of *Shari'ah*' or the 'Sources of Islamic legislation'. They are: *Ijma'* (scholarly consensus) and *Qiyas* (analogy).

Imam al-Shafi'i says, "No one has any right whatsoever to say that something is *Halal* or *Haram* except on the basis of knowledge, and the basis of knowledge is a text in the Qur'an or Sunnah, *Ijma'* (scholarly consensus) or *Qiyas* (analogy)."¹⁹

But what we want to focus our attention on is the primary source: the revelation (texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah); how are we supposed to deal

¹⁹ Al-Risalah, al-Shafi'i (p. 34).

with these texts? How are we supposed to understand them? Especially in light of the accusations made against Islam and its teachings, or scientific discoveries that seem to contradict these texts.

Understanding and interpreting the texts in different ways is what led to the division in this *Ummah*, just like what led to the deviation of the previous nations. It's nothing new, but rather something very old, and the Prophet (ﷺ) foretold that our *Ummah* will follow in the footsteps of those previous nations, but the only difference is that Allah promised to preserve this *Deen* from becoming corrupt unlike the previous ones.

Whenever division occurred in the *Ummah* over a difference in understanding the texts, it was *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah* that had a solid and consistent methodology in how they dealt with these texts. The following are guidelines based on that methodology:

First: Venerating the texts and submitting to them

The sad reality that we find among those who wish to interpret the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah is that they don't hold any value for these texts, because if they did, they wouldn't try to interpret them according to their whims and desires, which is why those who study Islam in the Western academia claim that we must approach these texts with objectivity and doubt it before accepting it.

While you find others who easily dismiss these texts and don't submit to them the way they should, as outlined in the Qur'an:

{ فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا
تَسْلِيمًا }

“But no! By your Lord, they will never be believers until they accept you as the judge in their disputes, and find no resistance within themselves against your decision and submit wholeheartedly.” [Al-Nisa’ 4:65]

This submission is a total submission, not rejecting anything of these texts, nor rejecting their meanings, looking for meanings that come in line with one’s way of thinking, upbringing, or surroundings.

Second: The complete nature of this religion

Those who look into the texts of the Qur’an and Sunnah, trying to understand them, must realize that what Allah has sent is complete in every way; nothing is missing, and there’s nothing needed to be added.

The Prophet (ﷺ) did not leave this world until Allah had accomplishing this completeness for him:

{ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا }

“Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and chosen Islam as your way.” [Al-Ma’idah 5:3]

What this means is that any claim for something to be added to the religion, in a way meant to get closer to Allah and worship Him, is an innovation that the Prophet (ﷺ) warned us from when he said, “Hold on to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly-Guided *Khulafa’* after me. Hold on to it with your molars. And beware of newly invented matters, for every newly invented matter is an innovation, and every innovation is a misguidance.”²⁰

²⁰ Sunan Abi Dawud (4607).

So what this completeness means is that we must suffice with what we have in the revelation to prove anything related to this *Deen*, and there's no need to go elsewhere.

Third: There are no inconsistencies in the texts

We must believe that these texts before us have no inconsistencies or contradictions between one another, whether it is from the Qur'an or the authentic Sunnah. Rather, any apparent contradiction is in our lack of understanding, not in the texts themselves.

This is because the source is one: Allah. Allah says:

{ أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا }

“Do they not then reflect on the Qur'an? Had it been from anyone other than Allah, they would have certainly found in it many inconsistencies.” [Al-Nisa' 4:82]

This is something every Muslim must believe, and one's *Iman* is incomplete unless he believes that.

So whenever we seem to find something contradictory, we need to take the steps laid out by the scholars to find the truth and clarify whatever seems to be contradictory.

Fourth: There is no contradiction between authentic revelation and sound intellect

What this means is that a sound human intellect that hasn't been hampered or corrupted will always agree with whatever comes in the revelation, as long as it is authentically attributed. This means that whenever there seems to be a contradiction, we must put forward the revelation over

our intellects. Why? Because our human intellects are the creation of Allah, and Allah would never send us revelation that contradicts the minds He has given us.

As an extension to this point, we can say the same with science; that there is no contradiction between authentic revelation and scientific fact, and when there is, it's really an *apparent* contradiction, and not a *real* one. This is because Allah is the Creator of this universe and the laws that govern it, and scientific discoveries are discoveries of those laws.

So we have to look into each claim made and examine the following:

If one of the two (revelation or scientific fact) is authentically established and understood correctly, we put forward the one authentically established.

There are many examples of this, like:

- a) The earth revolving around the sun (the texts' understanding are not correct, whereas this is an established scientific fact).
- b) Evolution of man (Adam's creation is authentically established and correctly understood from the texts, whereas theory of evolution is not fact).

Fifth: Interpreting the texts through other texts

The primary source for understanding the texts of the revelation is through the revelation itself. How? By looking for other texts in the Qur'an and Sunnah that explain the text that we don't understand.

For example, Allah mentions in many places in the Qur'an that Iblis refrained from prostrating to Adam along with the angels. Christian and

Jewish scriptures tell us he was a fallen angel, but when we look back in the Qur'an, we find Allah tells us:

{ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ }

“And when We said to the angels: Prostrate before Adam, so they all did—but not Iblis, who was one of the jinn, but he rebelled against the command of his Lord.” [Al-Kahf 18:50]

The same thing with the Sunnah; it explains much of the verses in the Qur'an which have been left general:

{ وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ * إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ }

“Nor does he speak of his own whims. It is only a revelation sent down [to him].” [Al-Najm 53:3-4]

Sixth: Combining all the texts about a particular issue

A common reason for why people deviate in interpreting the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah is that they first believe in an idea, and then they come to the texts to look for backing evidence. So they'll select only those texts that support their perspective and idea, and ignore those texts (that talk about the same issue) that go against that pre-conceived perspective and idea they brought.

This has also led many sects to go astray. They approach a particular issue citing only those texts that support their stances, ignoring those texts that oppose them. Examples of this include the Qadarites and Jabrites (who represent two opposite ends of the spectrum on the issue of Allah's *Qadar*), and the Mu'tazilites and Murji'ites (who represent two opposite ends of the spectrum on the concept of *Iman*).

But when we bring all the texts about any given issue together, we find that the position of *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah* is always balanced between the various extremes who only held on to one set of texts, while ignoring the other texts on that issue.

Seventh: Interpreting the texts through the understanding of the Companions, Tabi'un and those who followed them

Whenever people differ in their understanding of events, they usually agree to get confirmation from the eye-witnesses, because their interpretation will always be the most accurate. Thus, the Companions lived the revelation and witnessed each verse being revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ), and then learned directly from the Prophet (ﷺ) what each verse meant and what it didn't mean. Then, they passed on that understanding to the next generation, and so on.

For us to come now 1400 years later, and adopt an understanding that goes against their understanding is a clear deviation and proof of how someone is following their whims and desires in trying to understand the texts based on their own understanding that suits themselves.

This is from the logical perspective. As for the Qur'anic perspective, then Allah has singled out the Companions as being the ones we should follow because He is pleased with them:

{ وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ }

“As for the foremost—the first of the Muhajirun and the Ansar—and those who follow them in goodness, Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. And He has prepared for them Gardens

under which rivers flow, to stay there for ever and ever. That is the ultimate triumph.” [Al-Tawbah 9:100]

It is important to note here that what we mean by following the Companions is to follow them in those things they all agreed on, and to follow their way in dealing with the texts. We don't mean to follow them on every secondary issue that they may have differed over.

Eighth: The texts must be understood in the Arabic language

Allah revealed the Qur'an in a clear Arabic language:

{ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا }

“Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an.” [Yusuf 12:2]

{ بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ }

“In a clear Arabic language.” [Al-Shu'ara' 26:195]

And the Prophet (ﷺ) spoke with a clear Arabic tongue. So it's impossible to try to understand the intricate detailed matters of this religion in a language that the texts have been translated into, because that translation was a human attempt at interpreting those words, and human attempts will always have their shortcomings. So whenever there is a disagreement over the meaning of something, we need to trace it back to the meaning in the Arabic language.

This is not to say that you cannot be a Muslim without fully understanding the Arabic language, but what is meant here is that you cannot attempt to interpret and understand the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah, and become a scholar in it, unless you have that basic tool of the Arabic language first.

Chapter Eight

The Underlying Errors of Common Allegations Against Islam

When we look at many doubts and allegations against Islam, we find that the line of argument used in each varies in terms of its strength – some can easily be dismissed by even your average Muslim, while others require more analysis and are not easy to reply to.

Thus, the following five steps will help us to identify the underlying errors in many of these arguments. These steps are arranged in order, such that when you aren't able to identify the error using the first step, you move onto the next, and so on, until you arrive at the final step.

Step One:

Verifying that the allegation does not go contrary to the reality of what we believe to be true, and being cautious of the '*straw man fallacy*'.

Many allegations against Islam are based on fabrications and lies that are associated with Islam to the point where people start believing that this is what Islam truly represents. As such, these allegations are not an attack on Islam, but an attack on what is *claimed* to represent Islam.

How should we deal with such allegations? By simply not spending too much time and energy in refuting them, but only pointing out how these are false allegations and that Islam is in no way associated with them.

Examples:

- a) Islam is a pagan religion because Muslims worship the *Ka'bah* and its stone.
- b) Muslims worship the moon-god.

c) Islam is a religion only for the Arabs.

How do we respond to these allegations? By clarifying that none of these allegations are true, and that they are based on twisting the facts and are perfect examples of the '*straw man fallacy*'.

The '*straw man fallacy*' is a form of argument based on giving the impression of refuting an opponent's argument, while actually refuting an argument that was not presented by that opponent to begin with.

The Muslim should pay attention to such fallacies and not engage with the opponent by presenting counter-arguments and evidences before assessing how true the allegation even is.

Step Two:

Making sure that there is evidence to back the doubt and that it's not simply an accusation without supporting evidence

All doubts and allegations against Islam or its foundations come under two kinds:

- 1) Accusations that are spread around without citing any evidence.
- 2) Allegations that are supported by proofs.

How do we deal with the first kind? We ask our opponent to prove the validity of his allegation. If he cannot, then the allegation is worthless and thus falls apart. The reason for this is because if we accept claims without asking for the proof, then the defendant can also make a claim without backing it up with proof. In this way, there remains no meaning for proof and evidence, and thus we can never arrive at the truth about anything.

The mistake some Muslims make is that we rush to counter such allegations with our own proofs that will refute the claims being made. This is not the right way of approaching such doubts, because the onus/burden of proof lies with the claimant, not the defendant.

In fact, in traditional Islamic scholarship, when talking about debating methods, they refer to the claimant not being able to back his claim with proof as '*Ifham*' (striking a blow/silencing the opponent), and they say that such a method is sufficient in bringing an end to the debate.

Examples:

- a) Islam is a violent bloody religion.
- b) Islam oppresses women.
- c) Islam encourages slavery.
- d) There's no way to prove the validity of hadith texts that are claimed to be 1,400 years old.

How do we respond to these allegations? We don't start by trying to prove these allegations wrong with counter-arguments or proofs. For example, we don't start by saying that Islam is a tolerant peaceful religion and here are all the proofs for that. Instead, we ask the opponent: what is your proof that Islam is a violent bloodthirsty religion? If he cannot give proof to back his claim, then his allegation is worthless and thus falls apart. However, if he does come up with some proofs, then this is where we move on to the next steps.

Step Three:

Verifying the validity of the proof that the allegation is based on after looking at it as: proof and conclusion

If the opponent who makes an allegation against Islam comes with proof to back his claim, what we have to do is separate the proof from the conclusion, as well as examining how he went about using the proof. Then we take a look at the proof to see how valid it is. We do this through four ways:

- 1) How authentic is it?
- 2) Was it understood properly (irrespective of whether it leads to the conclusion or not)?
- 3) Was it selected properly (from among all the proofs)?
- 4) Is it a valid proof for the one using it?

First: How authentic is it? Many doubts and allegations are based on inauthentic proofs.

Example: the claim that the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to commit suicide by jumping off the top of a mountain after the discontinuation of the revelation. This story is mentioned in Sahih Bukhari.²¹ So we explain how Bukhari only mentioned it to show how it is a weak narration after first mentioning the hadith according to the correct authentic chain of narrators (which did not have this story in it).

Other examples: those hadiths that appear to contradict modern science, like the hadith that says cow meat is a disease. This is based on a weak hadith.

Second: Was it understood properly? Even if the allegation is based on a proof that is authentic, it could be brought down by pointing out how the

²¹ Sahih al-Bukhari (6581).

opponent did not understand the proof correctly, either based on the language, or context, or other things that give the wrong understanding.

Example:

{ لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ }

“For you is your religion, and for me is my religion.” [Al-Kafirun 106:6]

This verse is often used to try to prove that those who follow other religions should not be called disbelievers. So we respond by saying that this understanding is incorrect because it goes contrary to the context of the surah (the very first verse starts by calling them disbelievers).

Another example:

{ وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَفَفْتُمُوهُمْ }

“And kill them wherever you find them.” [Al-Baqarah 2:191]

This verse is often quoted to try to prove how bloodthirsty and violent Islam is. We respond by telling them to go back to the context of the verse by looking at the verses before. It says that there was a peace treaty between the Muslims and the *Mushrikun* of Makkah. This treaty was violated by them, and a period of four months was given to them to make amends, otherwise war would be declared against them. Then this verse comes and is quoted during a battle. So we understand that the language used is fierce to boost the morale of the fighters during war.

Third: Was it selected properly (from among all the proofs)? Sometimes the proof can be authentic and even understood correctly, but the one using it is selective, ignoring the many other proofs under that same topic that give a balanced picture.

Example:

{ لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ }

“There is no compulsion in religion.” [Al-Baqarah 2:256]

This verse is often mentioned to try to prove freedom of religion and not tell people that they are doomed if they don't accept Islam. We respond by bringing all those other proofs that show the obligation of accepting Islam and how those who don't accept will be punished and are doomed. As for this particular verse, it is concerning the non-Muslims living in a Muslim country; we accept *Jizyah* from them in exchange for remaining upon their religion.

Another example: Those who claim that we have no free will by citing those proofs from the Qur'an and Sunnah that show Allah has decreed everything and nothing is outside of His *Qadar* and will. We respond by bringing all the other proofs affirming human free will.

Fourth: Is it a valid proof for the one using it? There are those who will make allegations against Islam by citing proofs that they don't even believe in its validity to begin with. This shows their inconsistency.

Example: The New Atheists believe that the only source of evidence is material scientific evidence. They do not even believe in logical philosophical arguments as long as science does not prove God's existence. Rather, whatever logical arguments are used for God's existence, they try to find errors in them. Then we find them trying to come up with logical arguments to try to disprove God's existence.

Another example: Christian theologians in medieval times tried to discredit Islam by saying that although the Prophet (ﷺ) was a true prophet from God, he was only sent to the Arabs and not all of mankind. So they claim that the Qur'an was only sent for the Arabs. We respond by saying that if you agree in the Qur'an being from Allah, then in the Qur'an Allah clearly states that He sent Muhammad (ﷺ) for all of mankind.

Step Four:

Looking at the relation between the proof and conclusion, and discrediting what is not considered a necessary conclusion

After verifying that the allegation is backed by proof, and then making sure we follow the steps to ascertain the validity of the proof, the next step is to look at the relation between the proof being used and the conclusion that the opponent is trying to arrive at by using this proof. So if the proof gives the necessary conclusion being made, then we move on to the next step, otherwise if there is no necessary conclusion then the argument falls.

Example: Atheists who try to use the theory of evolution to prove that God does not exist. We respond by saying that this is not a necessary conclusion because there are many other non-living creations in this universe. So to deny God's existence on the basis of explaining how only living creatures came into existence shows how this is not a necessary conclusion. This is if we say for argument's sake that the theory is even valid to begin with.

Another example: Atheists who try to use the '*problem of evil*' to deny the existence of God. We respond by saying that the existence of evil does

not disprove that God exists, but only that an All-Merciful and All-Powerful God exists.²²

Step Five:

Making sure that the conclusion does not oppose another fact that is stronger

Some of our opponents may use what they consider to be authentic proof. They may even claim that the proof is understood correctly and that their allegation is an established necessary conclusion of the proof. However, we then find that the conclusion goes contrary to a fact that is stronger in evidence. In this case, we put forward what is stronger and dismiss what is weaker.

This is after we give in to their claims for argument's sake, not because we actually believe that their proofs hold water. So we come to this last and final step to wipe them out.

Example: The theories that are claimed as scientific fact by Atheists to try to prove that God doesn't exist. We respond in this way:

- 1) These theories are not established scientific facts.
- 2) There is a missing link between the theories and using them as proof for God's lack of existence (no necessary conclusion).
- 3) These theories go against proofs that are more probable in proving God's existence, like logical arguments, since they are completely valid logical conclusions and they go contrary to these theories that still have not been proven to be completely valid.

²² This will be discussed more in depth when we respond to the '*problem of evil*'.

Chapter Nine

Addressing Common Doubts

(Part 1: Allah’s Existence)

When dealing with critics of Islam, it is important to go on the offensive instead of always remaining on the defensive. We should not always have to be clarifying doubts because this distracts us from what is more important, and that is to show the clear truth of Islam to the people and convince them to follow it. This is exactly how Allah addressed the Christians of Najran:

{ قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ }

“Say: O People of the Book! Let us come to common terms...” [Aal ‘Imran 3:64]

So here Allah is teaching us to take the first step and go on the offensive. Don’t sit back and wait to be attacked and then think of how to defend. Then invite them to the truth that we believe in and warn them of the falsehood that they believe in:

{ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ }

“...that we will worship none but Allah, associate none with Him, nor take one another as lords instead of Allah.” [Aal ‘Imran 3:64]

Then if they refuse and want to continue arguing, what do you do? Don’t busy yourself in arguing with a people who are not sincere in the pursuit of the truth, because you’ll get nowhere with such people. Instead:

{ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ }

“But if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we have submitted [to Allah alone].” [Aal ‘Imran 3:64]

Doubt #1: Science has disproved God

This is something we've already addressed when talking about the sources of knowledge. The reason why some people think that science today has disproven God's existence is because according to them, the only way to arrive at the truth of anything is through the scientific method. We mentioned that such people are believers in what is known as Scientism; they only believe that something is real if it can be proven scientifically, which naturally means they don't believe in anything called the world of the unseen (or metaphysical). It has reached the point where some of them are even attempting to prove things like consciousness and the soul through scientific means and explanations. Basically, they want to replace religion with science.

The reason why such people cannot fathom the idea of a Creator for this universe is because according to them, He cannot be observed, therefore He does not exist. But logically, this is a flawed way of thinking because not everything that you cannot observe is automatically ruled out as not existing. What this means is that the non-existence of God is not something provable.

Moreover, science is a field of knowledge that is used to prove the observable universe only, meaning its realm is restricted to material things that we humans can observe with our limited senses. Allah by definition is a Being that exists outside of material existence. This is something that one can only understand once he understands the correct concept of Allah and His Attributes.

Doubt #2: Who created the Creator?

Once again, this objection is made by someone who doesn't have the correct conception of Allah. He is still thinking of Allah as a material being that must be a part of this material universe.

To answer this doubt, we go back to one of the proofs for the existence of Allah: the origin of creation/causality argument. This argument states: The existence of material things proves that something/someone caused it to come into existence from nothing, because it is impossible for it to come into existence on its own or without a cause.

One of the things we mentioned concerning this argument is that it naturally leads us to believe that this Creator is attributed with the attribute of "The First" who has no beginning and was not preceded by anyone. This is because if we were to say – for the sake of argument – that the Creator had a creator, then they would ask, "Who created the creator of the Creator? Then, who created the creator of the creator of the creator?!" And so on, infinitely. This is irrational and impossible because an infinite regress of causes is logically not possible because it would mean that we would not therefore exist, but we do exist. Let's take the example of a hypothetical infinite number of universes being created one after the other; if you keep going back in time infinitely, you would never end up getting to the present.

The conclusion is that all of creation goes back to the Creator Who created all things. No one created Him, He created everything. He Himself is not a part of this creation, He is separate from it, so He is not bound to the laws of this created universe. Something that never had a beginning cannot be created. This is what makes sense and is logical.

Since this objection comes to the minds of many and can cause them to have serious doubts, the Prophet (ﷺ) guided us regarding it, where it

originates from and how to respond to it. He said, “People will keep on asking questions until someone will say: ‘Allah created the universe, but who created Allah?’ Whoever encounters anything like that, let him say: *Amantu Billah* (I believe in Allah).”²³

In another narration, he said, “Shaytan will come to one of you and say, ‘Who created such and such?’ until he says to him, ‘Who created your Lord?’ When it reaches that stage, let him seek refuge with Allah (by saying: *A‘udhu billah min ash-Shaytan ar-Rajim*) and stop thinking about it.”²⁴

Doubt #3: If God exists, why is there evil and suffering?

This is known as the “problem of evil” and is the most widely used argument of Atheists. In fact, most Atheists admit that it was this issue that led them to disbelieve in God, and in reality, it is this emotional argument that is behind the Atheism of most people, not a genuine belief that God does not exist based on rational or scientific evidence, as many of them may claim.

The reality is that this doubt has little to nothing to do with God’s existence. It doesn’t prove nor disprove God’s existence, because it is only after believing in the existence of God that this question comes up. In reality, what this question debates is certain attributes of Allah that seem to contradict the existence of evil and suffering. So in reality, this is something that should only be debated among those who affirm God’s existence, and traditionally it has always been so; theologians have always debated this question under the heading of “Theodicy”, which is how to answer the question of why a good God permits the existence of evil, thus resolving the issue of the “problem of evil”.

²³ Sahih Muslim (212).

²⁴ Sahih al-Bukhari (3276) and Sahih Muslim (214).

So even if we were to say – for argument’s sake – that God is not attributed with these specific attributes, that doesn’t mean God does not exist, but that He is only not attributed with these attributes.

So what is the “problem of evil”? The existence of evil and human suffering contradicts Allah being attributed with attributes of perfection, like perfect power, knowledge, mercy and justice, because Him having these attributes would mean that He not allow evil and suffering, whereas He does allow it.

Our response to this is very simple: those who have this objection have gotten two things wrong: the concept of evil and suffering, and the concept of Allah’s attributes.

Firstly, their definition of evil and suffering is based on individualism and materialism. So for them, the only good and happiness is through physical material pleasure, and if that is taken away, then it means pure evil which can never contain any good.

So the correct concept of evil and suffering is by looking at all perspectives, and not just this one narrow perspective. Thus, there is no such thing as pure evil from all perspectives, rather evil comes in many different perspectives; from our perspective, it seems pure evil, but from other perspectives, there is good in it (but we may not see it).

Based on this understanding, we know that Allah has never created nor decreed anything that is purely evil from all angles. Rather, the evil that He creates and decrees is a relative evil.

In this way, we affirm the existence of evil, while at the same time not attributing it to Allah, both of which the Prophet (ﷺ) affirmed. He said, “(Part

of Iman is) to believe in *Qadar*, the good and bad of it.”²⁵ He also said in one *du‘a*, “All good is in Your hands, and evil is not attributable to You.”²⁶

Secondly, their understanding of Allah’s attributes is based on their understanding of human attributes. So they think Allah in human terms. For example, they have a certain perception of mercy based on what they see when humans are merciful to one another, and then they think Allah’s mercy must be the same, or Allah’s justice, etc. Thus, when they see evil and suffering, they think Allah’s mercy or justice is missing.

Also, they look at each attribute of Allah on its own, without taking a comprehensive look gathering all the attributes. So for example, someone who only looks at the mercy of Allah, while ignoring other attributes like Allah’s justice and punishment, they will have a problem whenever they see evil and suffering because they only recognize one attribute of Allah.

So the correct way to understand Allah’s attributes is by first realizing that He in no way whatsoever resembles His creation – not in His essence/being, nor in His attributes, because Allah and His attributes are perfect in every way, whereas our attributes are imperfect. Then by taking a comprehensive look at all of Allah’s attributes, without isolating one from the others.

Based on this understanding, we see how Islam solves this supposed problem. When Allah allows evil, firstly, it is evil to us, but there is good in it from Allah; and secondly, Allah allowing it doesn’t mean that He is not Merciful, or that He is unjust, or that He is incapable of removing it; all it

²⁵ Sahih Muslim (8).

²⁶ Sahih Muslim (771).

means is that Allah allowed it and decreed it for a greater wisdom, sometimes we may see that, while most times we may never be able to pinpoint it.

So just because we cannot see that wisdom and purpose, it doesn't mean that it doesn't exist, all it means is that Allah has hidden it from us. So it comes under the world of the unseen that our limited minds can never comprehend.

So for every evil and human suffering there are wise reasons for why Allah allows it. Some of these Allah and His Messenger have told us, like punishment, wake-up call, mercy, purification, compensation of sins, reward in the hereafter, and so on.

Chapter Ten

Addressing Common Doubts

(Part 2: Foundation of Islam)

Doubt #1: There's no need for religion

This is a doubt that arises in people who know that God exists and they're convinced about it, but there's something preventing them from submitting to God and what He has sent us.

These people could be deists, who believe in a supernatural being who created this universe, but don't believe that He intervenes in it, nor communicates with humans. Such people believe that God has not really sent a specific religion or way of life for us to follow.

Or these people could be Muslims who don't believe that Islam is really needed anymore in today's day and age, or that people can practice Islam on an individual basis, as in a secular society where the state does not interfere with religion.

So how do we answer this doubt?

Firstly, to answer the deist, we bring his attention to who God is specifically and what are some of God's attributes that He must possess. The Creator must have attributes of perfection in order for Him to be God, like power, wisdom, mercy, justice, etc.

Then we say that if we agree that we were made by a Creator, then surely that Creator must have informed us about who He is and what He expects from us, because it's not logically acceptable that God would leave us in this world to wander in confusion about who God is and what He wants from us. That would mean that God is unjust, and we all agree that in order

for God to be God He must possess attributes of perfection, among which is complete justice and mercy.

Once we understand this, we understand that God has indeed communicated with us and told us about Him and what He wants from us. God sent many prophets and messengers to mankind throughout history, for the sole purpose of guiding them to understand who God is and what God wants from them.

As for the Muslim who starts doubting the need for religion, we bring their attention to the fact that there is no possible way for us to have knowledge about certain things, or to worship Allah in the way He is pleased with, or to live our lives and function in the best possible way except through Allah revealing all of that to us, which is through the prophets.

Yes, in terms of certain things in our lives, we human beings can independently determine its benefits or harms, like scientific and technological advancement, but from where will our human minds determine the details of Allah's attributes, or what exists in the world of the unseen and life after death, or the way in which Allah wants us to worship Him, or the details of right and wrong, and so on.

Finally, we say that as long as one is convinced with the evidences that prove Islam as being the truth from Allah, then there's no escaping the reality that Allah has addressed in the Qur'an our need for His guidance and that we cannot do without it in this life and the next. Allah says:

{ إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ }

“Indeed, the [only] religion in the sight of Allah is Islam.” [Aal ‘Imran

3:19]

And Allah says:

{ وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ }

“And whoever desires other than Islam as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers.”

[Aal ‘Imran 3:85]

Doubt #2: There is no need for the Sunnah

This is a doubt that comes from some progressive Muslims who think that the Qur’an alone is the revelation of Allah, while the hadith literature that we have is not divine and are the words of men passed on by men. These people are commonly referred to as Qur’anists or hadith rejectors.

Firstly, these people are very selective in what they cite as evidence for their position. So they will quote certain kinds of verses from the Qur’an to support their position, like:

{ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ }

“We have revealed to you the Book as an explanation of all things...”

[Al-Nahl 16:89]

While they ignore the many other verses that point to the authority of the Sunnah (which we will mention shortly).

So the way to answer this doubt is two-fold:

Firstly, by clarifying the meaning that the Qur’an is an “explanation of all things” and that the words of Allah is “all we need”. Yes, there’s no doubt that the Qur’an is an explanation of absolutely everything, but what that means is that certain things are explained by Allah in the Qur’an directly, while for other things, Allah has referred us elsewhere; sometimes to the

Prophet (ﷺ), other times to those of knowledge, other times to those of authority over us and other times to the body of believers.

Secondly, by showing the evidences from the Qur'an itself (the same Qur'an that such a person believes we must follow) that prove to the authority of the Sunnah. The following are examples:

{ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا }

“Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it. And whatever he forbids you from, leave it.” [Al-Hashr 59:7]

{ مَن يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ وَمَن تَوَلَّىٰ فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا }

“Whoever obeys the Messenger has truly obeyed Allah. But whoever turns away, then We have not sent you as a guardian over them.” [Al-Nisa' 4:80]

{ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنكُمْ فَإِن تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ }

“O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. Should you disagree on anything, then refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day.”

[Al-Nisa' 4:59]

{ فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا }

“But no! By your Lord, they will never be believers until they accept you as the judge in their disputes, and find no resistance within themselves against your decision and submit wholeheartedly.” [Al-

Nisa' 4:65]

All of these verses clearly show us that the Sunnah is an integral part of this religion, and one cannot suffice with the Qur'an while rejecting the Sunnah.

What further proves that the Sunnah is not merely the words of another human being, but revelation from Allah:

{ وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ * إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ }

“Nor does he speak of his own whims. It is only a revelation sent down.” [Al-Najm 53:3-4]

But here, we should point out the difference between the Qur'an and the Sunnah, that although both are revelation from Allah, they are different. The following are some of those differences:

Firstly, the Sunnah comes as an explanation of the Qur'an. Ibn Abd al-Barr says: “The commentary of the Prophet (ﷺ) on the Qur'an is of two types:

- 1) Explaining things that are mentioned in general terms in the Qur'an, such as the five daily prayers, their times, prostration, bowing and all other rulings.
- 2) Adding rulings to the rulings of the Qur'an, such as the prohibition on being married to a woman and to her paternal or maternal aunt at the same time.”²⁷

Secondly, the Qur'an is the word of Allah which was revealed verbatim to the Prophet (ﷺ), whereas the Sunnah may not be the words of Allah, rather it is only His Revelation. So it does not necessarily have to come to us verbatim, but the meaning of it has come to us.

²⁷ Al-Tamhid, Ibn 'Abdul-Barr (2/155-156).

Thirdly, while the Qur'an has been preserved in both word and meaning, as Allah has promised to preserve it, the Sunnah has been transmitted to us by meaning and not necessarily by the letter, because the point of transmitting the Sunnah to us is not so we worship through it/recite it like we worship through/recite the Qur'an, but rather the point of transmitting the Sunnah is to convey its meanings.

But even then, the scholars of Islam from the early generations strove hard to convey whatever they heard from the Prophet (ﷺ) word for word, which is why you won't find any system of transmission of literature in human history more stringent and rigorous in verifying its authenticity than the science of hadith and what our early scholars did to preserve the Sunnah, sifting out what can be authentically attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ) versus what cannot.

Chapter Eleven

Addressing Common Doubts

(Part 3: Legislations of Islam)

It is important to understand that those who find issues with Islam's legislations, it's because they have a Western liberal secular worldview, whether they realize it or not. They start doubting certain aspects of Islam's legislations because to them it goes against what they see as being equality, freedom and justice, a perception that is completely Western in nature.

So we must get our perception of things in our minds and soul right from the very beginning, because many of our youth have had their minds colonized without realizing it, which is why we have many of them trying to find a middle path between Islam and Western society and its norms and traditions.

To put it simply: a Muslim is one who submits wholeheartedly to what Allah has decreed and legislated, whether it makes sense to him or not, whether he can see the wisdom in it or not. A Muslim is not one who objects to the legislations of Allah and His Messenger. Allah says:

{ فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا
تَسْلِيمًا }

“But no! By your Lord, they will never be believers until they accept you as the judge in their disputes, and find no resistance within themselves against your decision and submit wholeheartedly.” [Al-

Nisa' 4:65]

When we look at terms like equality, freedom and justice, we need to ask ourselves who's narrative are we going to go by?

Equality means: treating similar cases similarly and treating unlike cases dissimilarly. But who decides what are similar cases?

Freedom means: giving every human being the right to live as they want, or preserving human interests. But who defines what human interests are?

The same with justice; who decides what justice means and what laws are considered fair and just?

So we need to fix our perception of such terms. We also need to realize that many who object to Islam's legislations do so because of what the West has gone through in its dark history of oppression and subjugation of people. When they hear 'slavery', what comes to their mind is the transatlantic slave trade from the 16th to 19th centuries. When they hear of fighting in the name of religion, they think of the subjugation of religion and the religious elite in Europe in medieval times. When they hear of women not being treated equally as men, they remember their own past, and so on.

Doubt #1: Islam permits and encourages slavery

Firstly, Islam affirms that Allah created man fully accountable and enjoined duties upon him, to which reward and punishment are connected on the basis of man's free will and choice. No human being has the right to restrict this freedom or take away that choice unlawfully; whoever dares to do that is an oppressor.

Secondly, when Islam came, there were many causes of slavery, such as warfare, debt (where if the debtor could not pay off his debt, he became a slave), kidnapping and raids, and poverty.

When we look at how slavery spread throughout the world in the later centuries, we find that it did not spread in this appalling manner except by means of kidnapping. In fact, the main source of slaves in Europe and America in later centuries was this method.

Thirdly, when Islam came, it limited the sources of slaves that existed before the beginning of the Prophet's mission to one way only: enslavement through war which was imposed on non-Muslim prisoners-of-war and on their womenfolk and children.

Capture of prisoners during war was the most common way of acquiring slaves. Prisoners would inevitably be captured during any war, and the prevalent custom at that time was that prisoners had no protection or rights. They would either be killed or enslaved. But Islam brought two more options: unconditional release or ransom.

Thus, we can understand the limited ways that can lead to slavery. Islam did not abolish it altogether, because the non-Muslim prisoner who was opposed to the truth and justice was a wrongdoer, or was a supporter of wrong, or was a tool in the execution or approval of wrongdoing. Allowing him to go free would give him the opportunity to spread wrongdoing and aggression against others and to oppose the truth of Islam and prevent it from reaching people.

Fourthly, when Islam came, it changed the way in which slavery was dealt with. Slaves were not considered humans and were treated worse than animals. This continued in Western society until only a few decades ago.

But what about Islam? In contrast, Islam teaches the following concerning dealing with slaves:

- 1) Treating them fairly and guaranteeing them food and clothing like that of their masters. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “They are your brothers whom Allah has put under your authority, so if Allah has put a person’s brother under his authority, let him feed him from what he eats and clothe him from what he wears, and let him not overburden him with work, and if he does overburden him with work, then let him help him.”²⁸
- 2) Preserving their dignity. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Whoever accuses his slave when he is innocent of what he says will be flogged on the Day of Resurrection, unless he is as he said.”²⁹ He also said, “Whoever slaps his slave or beats him, his expiation is to manumit him.”³⁰

Fifthly, as we’ve already explained, there were many sources of slavery at the time of the advent of Islam, whereas the means of manumitting them were virtually nil. Islam created many new ways of liberating slaves.

Among the ways of liberating slaves is the following:

- 1) Allocating a portion of *Zakah* funds to freeing slaves.
- 2) The expiation for accidental killing is freeing a slave.

²⁸ Sahih al-Bukhari (6050).

²⁹ Sahih al-Bukhari (6858).

³⁰ Sahih Muslim (1657).

- 3) The penalty for breaking vows and having intercourse during the day in Ramadan is to free a slave.
- 4) *Mukatabah* (where the slave can buy himself from his master and be free).

In addition to that, Islam also encouraged Muslims to free slaves for the sake of Allah and promised huge rewards for those who do so.

Doubt #2: Islam legislates hudud punishments which go against human rights and freedoms

Firstly, Islam is a complete way of life that covers all aspects of human life. It is not an individualistic religion but rather governs societies as well. The primary goal of the penal system in Islam is: protecting rights; individual rights (like self-harm, such as drinking and suicide), rights of others (like murder, theft, *zina*) and rights of Allah (like worship and *da'wah*). So whenever anyone steps on one of these rights, there needs to be a penal system in place to punish those who transgress.

Secondly, no one knows what laws are better for us besides the One who created us. These laws are in place to prevent people from transgressing. When such strict laws are not put in place, it does not deter people from transgressing.

Thirdly, when it comes to the punishment for apostasy specifically, we need to understand it in the right perspective: not just any non-Muslim in a Muslim society is executed for being a disbeliever, but there are rules and conditions, like:

- 1) The apostate is one who was a Muslim all his life and then decides to openly declare *kufir* (beliefs, words and actions).

- 2) He is an adult with a sound mind and leaves Islam freely on his own choice.
- 3) His case is brought before an Islamic court run by the state (only a judge can pass a verdict in his case).
- 4) If he is found guilty, he is given a grace period of three days to repent.

After understanding this, we see that there are reasons and wisdoms for why Islam legislates such a tough ruling for the apostate. Among these reasons are the following:

- 1) Preserving the sanctity of Islam in society (every society has sacred things and red lines).
- 2) Preserving social cohesion of society (open apostasy causes confusion and turmoil among the believers who were upon the *Fitrah*).
- 3) The apostate commits treason (his loyalty is no longer to the Islamic society), which is why he is worse and more dangerous than a born disbeliever (because he initially accepted and then transgressed as opposed to the disbeliever).

Doubt #3: Islam degrades and oppresses women

Firstly, Islam came at a time when women were degraded and considered nothing. Look at the many examples of how pre-Islam Arabs looked at women (female infanticide, no inheritance rights, forced prostitution, forced to make *Tawaf* naked, etc.).

Secondly, when Islam came, it elevated the status of women, giving back their due rights that they deserved and placing them in the place they belong. It put an end to several crimes and injustices directed at women. It put an end to infanticide. It legislated that women could inherit and could own assets. It legislated that a woman's wealth was her property and no one could take it. According to Islam, no matter how wealthy a woman could be, her clothing, protection and sustenance is the responsibility of her husband if she is married or her father or brothers if otherwise.

Several verses of the Qur'an were revealed commanding the believing men to be kind, just and pardoning to the women. The Prophet (ﷺ) also guided us to good treatment of women when he said, "The best of you are the best of you to your wives."³¹

So if all of this is true, then why do we have certain laws in Islam that seem to treat women unequal to men?

The answer is the following:

- 1) Islam elevated the woman to where she belongs. To elevate her to a higher level is transgression, not justice. A woman is not equal to a man in so many ways. They were created with different features and roles. To give women features and roles that don't belong to their nature is doing injustice to them.
- 2) If there happens to be clear injustice to women attributed to Islam, we need to distinguish between what Islam actually teaches versus what some Muslim cultures practice. So don't judge Islam by people, rather judge people by Islam.

³¹ Sunan Tirmidhi (3895) and Sunan Ibn Majah (1977).

3) Those who make these accusations against Islam fall into errors and fallacies, like the straw man fallacy; there is no evidence to back the claim, just mere claims. When there is evidence, it is not understood properly. When there is evidence, it is selectively and biasedly chosen ignoring all the other evidences.

Chapter Twelve

Guidelines on Dealing with Modern Day Doubts

In conclusion, it is important for every student of Islamic knowledge and caller to Islam to understand how to deal with modern day doubts and how to deal with the average Muslim who comes to us with such doubts. The following are some helpful guidelines in that respect:

Guideline #1: Prevention before cure

This is how we deal with common diseases. We do not wait to become exposed to them, rather we take preventive measures so that we are not infected by them in the first place.

Likewise, we must give our children the necessary prevention from becoming affected by such doubts when they grow up. That is achieved by engraining *Iman* in our children from a young age, and not just by teaching them theoretical ‘*Aqidah*.

Jundub bin ‘Abdillah (ra) says, “We were with the Prophet (ﷺ) and were strong youths, so we learned *Iman* before learning the Qur’an. Then when we learned the Qur’an, our *Iman* solidified.”³²

We find the same thing from the life of the Prophet (ﷺ); he spent thirteen years in Makkah focusing on engraining *Iman* in the hearts, then in Madinah it continued through debating *Ahl-ul-Kitab* and responding to the doubts/allegations of the hypocrites.

Guideline #2: Do not try to confront dangerous doubts without knowledge

³² Sunan Ibn Majah (61).

Only reply if you feel you are well-grounded in knowledge and the skills necessary to reply. If you try to confront and reply to doubts without knowledge, you could end up attributing something to Allah that is incorrect. Allah says:

{ فَلِمَ تُحَاجُّونَ فِيمَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ }

**“But why do you argue about what you have no knowledge of?” [Aal
‘Imran 3:66]**

And Allah says:

{ قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ }

“Say: My Lord has only forbidden open and secret indecencies, sinfulness, unjust aggression, associating others with Allah—a practice He has never authorized—and attributing to Allah what you do not know.” [Al-A‘raf 7:33]

Guideline #3: Being gentle and patient

What drives people with doubts and questions further away from Islam is when they are faced with aggression and are silenced. Allah commanded Musa (as) and Harun (as) to approach one of the worst tyrants in human history with gentleness:

{ فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَيِّنًا لَعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى }

“Speak to him gently, so perhaps he may be mindful or fearful [of My punishment].” [Ta-Ha 20:44]

The least that will be achieved by using such a method is that if the individual is not guided, at least their evil and harm will be diverted.

Guideline #4: Do not bring up dangerous doubts in front of the general Muslim public

People are generally attracted to strange and weird opinions. When they hear them, they settle in their hearts for a long time. So let us not ruin the *Fitrah* of the people by exposing them to what goes contrary to the *Fitrah*. Even if you are able to reply to the doubts, perhaps they will not listen, or remember, or understand the response. As for the doubt that you exposed them to, it will surely remain with them. Then if that ruins their *Iman*, you will be held responsible, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Whoever calls to misguidance, he will have the sin similar to those who follow it, not reducing from their sins in any way.”³³

The only ones we should be discussing these doubts with are those who are affected by them, not the general Muslim public.

Guideline #5: Keep the doubt short and go in depth in the refutation

When discussing dangerous doubts with those affected by them, we need to mention the doubt briefly and then move onto a lengthy rebuttal of the doubt. This allows the reply to be strong and affective.

Unfortunately, some go in lengths explaining the misconception, but give a short summarized reply. This is contrary to the way of the messengers and the way of the Qur’an

³³ Sahih Muslim (2674).

Here is Ibrahim (as) who realized that it was not wise to reply to his opponent in what could turn out to be a long-winded debate:

{ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ ۖ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ }

“Are you not aware of the one who argued with Ibrahim about his Lord because Allah had granted him kingship? When Ibrahim said, ‘My Lord is the One Who has power to give life and cause death.’ He argued, ‘I too have the power to give life and cause death.’ Ibrahim challenged him, “Allah causes the sun to rise from the east. So make it rise from the west.’ And so the disbeliever was dumbstruck.” [Al-Baqarah 2:258]

Guideline #6: A Thousand lectures and only one debate

This guideline is a confirmation of the fourth guideline (not bringing up dangerous doubts in front of the general Muslim public).

Debates are one of the top reasons for the spread of doubts because it provides the opponent a platform to spread his ideas among us when he never had that ability before. This is why deviants love debates.

Debates should only be held with deviants who have many followers who are deluded by such deviants, and they should be held in front of those followers only, not the general Muslim public.

Also, only the right people from our side should be debating. Ibn Taymiyyah says in this regard, “Not anyone who has found some knowledge is necessarily able to express it; for knowledge is one thing and explaining it

is another, and debating with it is yet a third thing, and then refuting the arguments of its opponents is yet a fourth thing.”³⁴

Guideline #7: Staying away from reading or investigating dangerous doubts

The only ones who should be reading up on the doubts and allegations against Islam are the specialists who plan on tackling them, not every Muslim.

Just like one who does not know how to swim does not go close the waves of oceans, similarly no one should be listening to these doubts except those who know how to reply and they plan on doing so.

Allah warned us from listening to the falsehood of the enemies of Islam:

{ وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ۚ إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا مِتُّمْ }

“He has already revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allah’s revelations being denied or ridiculed, then do not sit in that company unless they engage in a different topic, or else you will be like them.” [Al-Nisa’ 4:140]

There are many prominent scholars in history who were affected by doubts due to them being in the company of such people, including many today who study Islamic Studies in Western universities where they are exposed to deviants and heretics explaining Islam to them.

³⁴ Jawab al-I’tiradat al-Misriyyah ‘ala al-Futya al-Hamawiyyah, Ibn Taymiyyah (p. 44).

So we must avoid coming in the way of the attacks of the enemies of Islam to protect our own *Iman*.

Guideline #8: Differentiating between a dead doubt and a widespread doubt

It is not permissible to give life to a false view that has already died. It shouldn't even be mentioned. On the other hand, a false view that is widespread and the minds are being affected by them, they should be dealt with and countered at the same level of publicity.

Guideline #9: Refuting doubts is by both concise refutation as well as a detailed refutation

There are many examples where certain doubts carry proof of the truth of Islam that we must point out to our opponent. For example, the critics of Islam will often mention the story of the Jews of Bani Quraydha and how the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered for them to be killed, claiming that it was a massacre. We can respond to this doubt in the following two ways:

- 1) Concise refutation: the source that you are quoting from (hadith literature) is the same source that is filled with the truth of the message. So if you accept the story, then you must accept that Muhammad was a true messenger from Allah.
- 2) Detailed refutation: we mention the entire story and the context in which the killing occurred.³⁵

Guideline #10: Differentiating between whisperings of Shaytan and genuine doubts

³⁵ Sahih Muslim (1768).

Every believer comes across thoughts that pass his mind which are objectionable, and its source is Shaytan. These whisperings are not like real doubts and should not be treated the in the same manner.

The Prophet (ﷺ) taught us the method of dealing with these whisperings. He said, “People will keep on asking questions until someone will say: ‘Allah created the universe, but who created Allah?’ Whoever encounters anything like that, let him say: *Amantu Billah* (I believe in Allah).”³⁶

In another narration, he said, “Shaytan will come to one of you and say, ‘Who created such and such?’ until he says to him, ‘Who created your Lord?’ When it reaches that stage, let him seek refuge with Allah (by saying: *A ‘udhu billah min ash-Shaytan ar-Rajim*) and stop thinking about it.”³⁷

We see the following from this hadith:

- 1) Where this question comes from: Shaytan.
- 2) How to deal with it:
 - a) Stop pursuing these thoughts and tricks of Shaytan.
 - b) Say, “I believe in Allah”.
 - c) Seek refuge in Allah from Shaytan.

On the other hand, a real doubt is what requires an explanation and response. If the response is right and affective, the doubt will go away. On the other hand, whisperings of Shaytan will not go away by trying to respond to them even if you had a hundred answers. The only way to deal with them is by turning away and ignoring them, as the Prophet (ﷺ) advised.

³⁶ Sahih Muslim (212).

³⁷ Sahih al-Bukhari (3276) and Sahih Muslim (214).

THIS BOOK

The aim of this book is to help us deal with the challenge of the wave of doubts and false allegations that we are witnessing today against Islam and its principles, whether you yourself are exposed to these doubts, or you want to help those who have been affected by them, or you want to equip yourself with the knowledge required to deal with these doubts. By going through this book, you will see that belief in Islam as being the truth is not something emotional, based on simply following our ancestors, but rather it is a reality based on a wide range of evidence, proofs and convincing arguments that submit to our minds and hearts.

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