

Kitāb al-Tawḥeed

كِتَابُ التَّوْحِيدِ

*The Basis of Islam
and the Reality of Monotheism*

Vol. 2

By Professor Muḥammad ibn Abdullah al-Massari

Volume 2

The Foundations of Deen and its Fundamental Maxims

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Cover design: Nazim Uddin

ISBN: 9798346641612

Edition 1), December 2024
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Part IV

Tawḥeed - Definition and Proofs

1. Tawḥeed: Recognition & Worship

In the Arabic language the word ‘Tawḥeed’ (monotheism) is a verbal noun that is derived from the word ‘Wahāda’, carrying the meaning with emphasis, to be alone, singular. In essence, it can mean one of two things:

1. To collect or gather disparate units and consolidate them into one, in Arabic, it is expressed as ‘the leader of so and so came and placed disparate tribes/factions into one consolidated entity.’
2. To recognise and to express the single unity or oneness of something, acknowledging it as such. In that sense, that God, is one, a single entity. It is in the latter sense that the word is referred to here.¹

That word itself frequently appears in the texts of revelation, in both the Qur’ān and the Prophetic *Sunnah*, notably:

وَإِذَا ذَكَرْتَ رَبَّكَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ وَحْدَهُ وَلَّوْا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهِمْ نُفُورًا

*When you mention your Lord in the Qur’ān, and Him alone, they turn their backs and run away.*²

وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْمَأَزَّتْ قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ

¹ [د/ح/ذ] w-h-d one, single, unique, alone, to be alone; the same, one and the same; to be in solitude, to be singular, to be without equal, to be comparable, to make into one, to unite. Of this root, four forms occur 68 times in the Qur’an: *wahd* six times; *wāhid* 30 times; *wāhidatun* 31 times and *wahīd* once.’ See: Elsaid M. Badawi and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (2008), *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur’anic Usage*, (Brill: Leiden), [p. 1015]

² Qur’ān, 17: 46

*Whenever Allah is mentioned on His own, the hearts of those who do not believe in the hereafter shrink with aversion, but they rejoice when gods other than Him are mentioned.*³

ذَلِكُمْ بِأَنَّهُ إِذَا دُعِيَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ كَفَرْتُمْ وَإِنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ تُؤْمِنُوا فَالْحُكْمُ لِلَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْكَبِيرِ

[They will be told], ‘This is all because when Allah alone was invoked you rejected this, yet when others were associated with Him you believed [in them].’ Judgement belongs to Allah the Most High, the Most Great.⁴

Expressed within the authentic Sunnah

With regards to the Prophetic *Sunnah*, use of the word appears expressed in the famous *ḥadith* narrated from Ṭāriq ibn Ashyam:

حدثنا يزيد بن هارون قال أخبرنا أبو مالك الأشجعي عن أبيه أنه سمع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وهو يقول لقوم من وُحِدَ اللهُ تعالى وكفر بما يعبد من دونه، حرّم ماله ودمه، وحسابه على الله عز وجل

Yazeed ibn Hārūn narrated to us he said Abu Mālik al-Ashja’ee reported to us from his father that he heard the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him say to the people: *Whoever confesses to the oneness of Allah the Exalted and disbelieves in what is worshipped besides Him, his wealth and blood will be inviolable, and his reckoning will be with Allah, the Majestic and Sublime.*⁵

Similarly, Imām Muslim collected the following authentic tradition from Ibn Umar in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*:

وعن ابن عمر رضى الله عنهما عن النبي صلى الله عليه وعلى آله وسلم قال بُنِيَ الإسلام على خمس على أن يُوحَدَ اللهُ وإقام الصلاة وإيتاء الزكاة، وصوم رمضان

From Ibn Umar may Allah be pleased with him from the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, he said: *Islam is built upon five: the*

³ Qur’ān, 39: 45

⁴ Qur’ān, 40: 12

⁵ The narration / wording is taken from *Musnad Aḥmad* [*Musnad al-Makkieen, ḥadith* of Ṭāriq ibn Ashyam al-Ashja’ee Abu Mālik, no. 15,875]. In his commentary upon *Musnad Aḥmad*, Shu’ayb al-Arnā’uṭ said: ‘Its *isnād* is *Ṣaḥīḥ* upon the conditions of (Imām) Muslim.’ Muslim records the same in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* through several authentic channels in *Kitāb al-‘Imān*.

Oneness of Allah, the establishment of prayer; rendering charity and fasting in Ramaḍān.

In the long authentic *ḥadīth* that has been reported from Jābir may Allah be pleased with him in the farewell pilgrimage, he reported that the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him mentioned the ‘*people of Tawḥeed.*’ That is widely reported in the collections of Muslim, Abu Dāwūd, Ibn Mājāh, Aḥmad and many others. There is also the narrative which has been reported from Ibn ‘Abbās may Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him sent Mu’ādh to Yemen and he instructed him: ‘*You are going to a nation from the people of the scripture, so let the first thing to which you will invite them, be the Tawḥeed of Allah.*’ The *ḥadīth* is authentic and is reported by al-Bukhāri, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi and many others. Reporting for this authentic *ḥadīth* is varied from numerous channels, requiring some detailed study here. As recorded by Imām al-Bukhāri in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*:

حدثنا أمية بن بسطام حدثنا يزيد بن زريع حدثنا روح بن القاسم عن إسماعيل بن أمية عن يحيى بن عبد الله بن صيفي عن أبي معبد عن بن عباس أن رسول الله لما بعث معاذًا على اليمن قال إنك تقدم على قوم أهل كتاب فليكن أول ما تدعوهم إليه عبادة الله، فإذا عرفوا الله فأخبرهم أن الله قد فرض عليهم خمس صلوات في يومهم وليلتهم فإذا فعلوا فأخبرهم أن الله فرض عليهم زكاة من أموالهم وترد على فقرائهم فإذا أطاعوا بها فخذ منهم وتوق كرائم أموال الناس

Umayyah ibn Bisṭām narrated to us Yazid ibn Zureeh’ narrated to us Rawḥ ibn al-Qāsim narrated to us from Ismā’il ibn Umayyah from Yaḥya ibn Abdullah ibn Ṣayfi from Abu Ma’bad from Ibn ‘Abbās may Allah be pleased with him that when the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him sent Mu’ādh to Yemen, he said (to him): *You are going to people of a book. Firstly, invite them to worship Allah and when they come to know Allah, inform them that Allah has enjoined on them, five prayers in every day and night; and if they start offering these prayers, inform them that Allah has enjoined on them, the Zakāt. And it is to be taken from the rich amongst them and given to the poor amongst them; and if they obey*

*you in that, take Zakāt from them and avoid (don't take) the best property of the people as Zakāt.*⁶

Other notable Imām’s of *ḥadīth* have recorded this in their respective collections.⁷ Imām al-Bukhāri has the following narration in his collection of *Ṣaḥīḥ*:

حدثنا أبو عاصم حدثنا زكريا بن إسحاق عن يحيى بن عبد الله بن صيفي عن أبي معبد عن بن عباس رضي الله عنهما أن النبي، صلى الله عليه وسلم، بعث معاذًا إلى اليمن وحدثني عبد الله بن أبي الأسود حدثنا الفضل بن العلاء حدثنا إسماعيل بن أمية عن يحيى بن عبد الله بن محمد بن صيفي أنه سمع أبا معبد مولى بن عباس يقول سمعت بن عباس يقول لما بعث النبي، صلى الله عليه وسلم، معاذ بن جبل إلى نحو أهل اليمن قال له إنك تقدم على قوم من أهل الكتاب فليكن أول ما تدعوهم إلى أن يوحّدوا الله تعالى فإذا عرفوا ذلك فأخبرهم أن الله فرض عليهم خمس صلوات في يومهم وليلتهم فإذا صلوا فأخبرهم أن الله افترض عليهم زكاة في أموالهم تؤخذ من غنيهم فترد على فقيرهم فإذا أقرؤا بذلك فخذ منهم وتوق كرائم أموال الناس

Abu ‘Aāṣim narrated to us Zakariyā ibn Ishāq narrated to us from Yaḥya ibn Abdullah ibn Ṣayfi from his Abu Ma’bad from Ibn ‘Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him that the Prophet peace be upon him sent Mu’ādh to Yemen. And Abdullah ibn Abi al-Aswad narrated to me al-Faḥl ibn al-‘Alā narrated to us Ismā’il ibn ‘Umayyah narrated to us from Yaḥya ibn Abdullah ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṣayfi that he heard Abu Ma’bad, (who was) the *mawla* of Ibn ‘Abbās saying that Ibn ‘Abbās related the saying of when the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent Mu’ādh to Yemen, he said to him: *You are going to a nation from the people of the scripture, so let the first thing to which you will*

⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhāri [Vol. 2, no. 1389]

⁷ Ibn Ḥibbān has this in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in two places [Vol. 1, no. 156 and Vol. 6, no. 2419] with the *isnād*: al-Ḥasan ibn Sufyān al-Shaybāni reported to us he said Umayyah ibn Bisṭām narrated to us Yazid ibn Zureeh’ narrated to us Ruḥ ibn al-Qāsim narrated to us from Ismā’il ibn Umayyah from Yaḥya ibn Abdullah ibn Ṣayfi etc. In *Sunan al-Kubra* of al-Bayhaqy [Vol. 4, no. 7095] it is with the *isnād*: Abu Abdullah al-Ḥāfiẓ reported to us Abu Naḍr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yusuf al-Faqihī reported to me Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Sa’eed and al-Ḥasan ibn Sufyān narrated to us, they said: Umayyah ibn Bisṭām narrated to us Yazid ibn Zureeh’ narrated to us Ruḥ ibn al-Qāsim narrated to us from Ismā’il ibn Umayyah from Yaḥya ibn Abdullah ibn Ṣayfi etc. al-Ṭabarāni cites this in *Mu’jam al-Kabir*, [Vol. 11, no. 12207] with the *isnād*: Aḥmad ibn Ali al-‘Abār and al-Ḥussain ibn Ishāq al-Tastoori narrated to us, they said: Umayyah ibn Bisṭām narrated to us Yazid ibn Zureeh’ narrated to us Ruḥ ibn al-Qāsim narrated to us from Ismā’il ibn Umayyah from Yaḥya instead of where it’s said (ibn Abdullah ibn Ṣayfi) except where he said: ‘*when they come to know Allah, (it is) where they know Allah.*’

invite them is *the Tawḥeed of Allah the Almighty. If they learn that tell them that Allah has enjoined on them, five prayers to be offered in one day and one night. And if they pray, tell them that Allah has enjoined on them Zakāh of their properties and it is to be taken from the rich among them and given to the poor. And if they agree to that, then take from them Zakāh but avoid the best property of the people.*⁸

In *Sunan al-Kubra*, al-Bayhaqy records the narrative as:

أخبرنا أبو الحسن علي بن محمد بن علي المقرئ أنبا الحسن بن محمد بن إسحاق الإسفرائيني حدثنا يوسف بن يعقوب حدثنا محمد بن أبي بكر حدثنا الفضل بن العلاء حدثنا إسماعيل بن أمية عن يحيى بن عبد الله بن محمد بن صيفي أنه سمع أبا معبد يقول سمعت بن عباس رضي الله عنهما يقول لما بعث رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، معاذ بن جبل نحو اليمن فقال إنك تقدم على قوم من أهل الكتاب فليكن أول ما تدعوهم أن يوحّدوا الله عز وجل فإذا عرفوا ذلك فأخبرهم أن الله عز وجل قد افترض عليهم خمس صلوات في يومهم وليلتهم فإذا صلوا فأخبرهم أن الله عز وجل قد افترض عليهم زكاة في أموالهم تؤخذ من غنيهم فترد على فقيرهم فإذا أقروا بذلك فخذ منهم وتوق كرائم أموالهم

Abul'Ḥasan Ali ibn Muḥammad ibn Ali al-Muqri reported to us al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Ishaq al-Isfarā'ini reports, Yusuf ibn Ya'qub narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr narrated to us al-Faḍl ibn al-'Alā narrated to us Ismā'il ibn Umaya narrated to us from Yaḥya ibn Abdullah ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṣayfi that he heard Abu Ma'bad, (who was) the *mawla* of Ibn 'Abbās, saying that Ibn 'Abbās related the saying of when the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, sent Mu'ādh ibn Jabal to Yemen, he said: *You are entering upon a nation from the people of the book, so the first thing to which you invite them to take Allah, the Exalted and Majestic as One. If they recognise that, inform them that Allah the Exalted and Majestic has obligated upon them five-prayers in the day and night; if they pray inform them that Allah the Exalted and Majestic has obligated upon them zakāh upon their wealth and it is to be taken from the rich among them and to be given to the poor. And if they agree to that, then take from them zakāh but avoid the best property.*⁹

⁸ *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhāri [Vol. 6, no. 6937]

⁹ al-Bayhaqy *Sunan al-Kubra* [Vol. 7, no. 12891]

Commenting afterwards, he writes: 'It is reported by al-Bukhāri in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Abdullah ibn Abi al-Aswad from al-Faḍl ibn al-'Alā, and (also) reported by Muslim from (that) channel also from Ismā'il.' This wording is supported by what has come from what 'Abd al-Razzāq reports in his *Muṣṣanaf*.¹⁰ It is from an independent channel, although weak because of the *ikhtilāf* of Mūthanna ibn Ṣabbāḥ. As collected in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Imām al-Bukhāri cited the following:

حدثنا محمد أخبرنا عبد الله أخبرنا زكريا بن إسحاق عن يحيى بن عبد الله بن صيفي عن أبي معبد مولى بن عباس عن بن عباس قال: قال رسول الله لمعاذ بن جبل حين بعثه إلى اليمن إنك ستأتي قوما أهل كتاب فإذا جنتهم فادعهم إلى أن يشهدوا أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمدا رسول الله فإن هم أطاعوا لك بذلك فأخبرهم أن الله قد فرض عليهم خمس صلوات في كل يوم وليلة فإن هم أطاعوا لك بذلك فأخبرهم أن الله قد فرض عليهم صدقة تؤخذ من أغنيائهم فترد على فقرائهم فإن هم أطاعوا لك بذلك فإياك وكرائم أموالهم واتق دعوة المظلوم فإنه ليس بينه وبين الله حجاب

Muḥammad narrated to us Abdullah reported to us Zakariyā ibn Ishāq reported to us from Yaḥya ibn Abdullah Ṣayfi from Abu Ma'bad, *mawla* to Ibn 'Abbās from Ibn 'Abbās he said the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said to Mu'ādh ibn Jabal when he sent him to Yemen, *You will go to the people of the scripture. So, when you reach there, invite them to testify that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is his Messenger. And if they obey you in that, tell them that Allah has enjoined on them five prayers in each day and night. And if they obey you in that tell them that Allah has made it obligatory on them to pay the Zakāh which will be taken from the rich among them and given to the poor among them. If they obey you in that, then avoid taking the best of their possessions, and be afraid of the curse of an oppressed person because there is no screen between his invocation and Allah.*¹¹

Elsewhere in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Bukhāri has the same with the *isnād*: Ḥibbān narrated to me Abdullah reported to us from Zakariyā ibn Ishāq reported to us from Yaḥya ibn Abdullah Ṣayfi etc. Similar is also cited in other notable collections, such as in *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim: Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shayba, Abu Kureeb

¹⁰ *Muṣṣanaf* 'Abd al-Razzāq [Vol. 5, no. 9420]

¹¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhāri [Vol. 2, no. 1425]

and Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm, all of them narrated to us from Waki'; Abu Bakr said: Waki' narrated to us from Zakariyā ibn Ishāq, he said Yahya ibn Abdullah ibn Ṣayfi narrated to me, etc. Other collections of *Ṣaḥīḥ* record the tradition, such as that by Ibn Ḥibbān and Ibn Khuzaymah.¹² Reported widely too across the *Sunan* collections of *ḥadīth*,¹³ as well as other compilations too.¹⁴

Given the above, I would submit that Zakariyā ibn Ishāq al-Makki is *thiqa*, without doubt, being no less than Ismā'il ibn Umayya ibn 'Amr ibn Sa'eed ibn al-'Aāṣ al-Makki, this being the stronger. Rawḥ ibn al-Qāsim has the designation *thiqa Ḥāfīz* and *mashur* (well-known); above the *ṣaduq* (truthful) al-Faḍl ibn al-'Alā by the level of reported wording: 'invite them to worship Allah and when they come to know Allah.' Firstly, with submission and perhaps it is the root of the noble Prophetic wording. Thereafter what is reported by al-Faḍl ibn al-'Alā with the meaning where

¹² *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān [Vol. 11, no. 5081]: al-Ḥasan ibn Sufyān reported to us from his book, he said Ishāq ibn Manṣur al-Kawsaj narrated to us he said Abu 'Aāṣim narrated to us he said Zakariyā ibn Ishāq narrated to us he said Yahya ibn Abdullah Ṣayfi narrated to us with it. *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Khuzaymah [Vol. 4, no. 2275] with the *isnād*: Muḥammad ibn Bashār and Abdullah ibn Ishāq al-Jawhari narrated to us and this is the *ḥadīth* of Bundār, they said: Abu 'Aāṣim narrated to us Zakariyā ibn Ishāq narrated to us Yahya ibn Abdullah Ṣayfi narrated to me with it.

¹³ Imām al-Nasā'i, in the smaller *Sunan* [Vol. 5, no. 2435] and *Sunan al-Kubra* [Vol. 2, no. 2215] with the *isnād*: Muḥammad ibn 'Ammār al-Mawṣalī from al-Mu'āfa from Zakariyā ibn Ishāq al-Makki he said Yahya ibn Abdullah Ṣayfi narrated to us with it. *Sunan* al-Tirmidhi, [Vol. 3, no. 625] with the *isnād*: Abu Kureeb narrated to us Waki' narrated to us Zakariyā ibn Ishāq al-Makki narrated to us Yahya ibn Abdullah Ṣayfi narrated to us. *Sunan* Ibn Mājah [Vol. 1, no. 1783] with the *isnād*: Ali ibn Muḥammad narrated to us Waki' ibn al-Jarraḥ narrated to us Zakariyā ibn Ishāq al-Makki narrated to us from Yahya ibn Abdullah Ṣayfi. *Sunan* Abu Dāwud [Vol. 1, no. 1783] with the *isnād*: Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal narrated to us Waki' narrated to us Zakariyā ibn Ishāq al-Makki narrated to us from Yahya ibn Abdullah Ṣayfi.

¹⁴ *Musnad* Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal [Vol. 1, no. 2071] with the *isnād*: Waki' narrated to us Zakariyā ibn Ishāq al-Makki narrated to us from Yahya ibn Abdullah Ṣayfi. Bayhaqy reports this in his *Sunan al-Kubra* in several places with various channels of transmission: [Vol. 4, no. 7068] - Abu Abdullah al-Ḥāfīz reported to us Abul'A'bbās al-Qāsim ibn al-Qāsim as-Sayāri narrated to us in Merv Abul' Muwajihī narrated to us Abdān narrated to us Abdullah reports Zakariyā ibn Ishāq al-Makki reports from Yahya ibn Abdullah ibn Ṣayfi with it; [Vol. 7, no. 12907]: Abu 'Amr Muḥammad ibn Abdullah al-Adeeb reported to us Abu Bakr al-Ismā'ili reports al-Ḥasan ibn Sufyān reported to me Ḥibbān narrated to us Abdullah reports from Zakariyā ibn Ishāq from Yahya ibn Abdullah ibn Ṣayfi with it, and [Vol. 7, no. 12915] Abu Ṣāliḥ ibn Abi Ṭāhir al-Anbari reported to us my grandfather Yahya ibn Manṣur al-Qādi reports Aḥmad ibn Salma narrated to us Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm narrated to us Waki' reports Zakariyā ibn Ishāq al-Makki narrated to us from Yahya ibn Abdullah ibn Ṣayfi with it. Lastly, it is also in the *Muṣṣanaf* of Ibn Abi Shayba [Vol. 2, no. 9831] with the *isnād*: Waki' narrated to us he said Zakariyā ibn Ishāq al-Makki narrated to us he said Yahya ibn Abdullah ibn Ṣayfi narrated to me with it.

he said: 'first thing to which you will invite them, be the Tawḥeed of Allah. If they learn that,' and similarly as with al-Muthanna ibn Ṣabbāḥ or Tāwus. And as for Zakariyā ibn Ishāq al-Makki, certainly that is translated with what has corresponded to that by necessity, that they testify that there is no god/deity except Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.

Regardless of the matter, the conclusive argument that the predecessors from the class of the junior *Tābi'een* (fifth class, as per Ibn Ḥajar, and similarly the sixth class, those who did not receive from the *Ṣaḥāba*), namely the likes of: Yahya ibn Abdullah ibn Ṣayfi, Ismā'il ibn Umayya, Rawḥ ibn al-Qāsim and Zakariyā ibn Ishāq. And also, what comes from some of them from the *muḥaditheen* and *muṣṣanifeen*. They do not differentiate between the sentences above, they all have one meaning:

'Firstly, call them to the worship of Allah and if they come to know Allah,'

=

'Firstly, invite them to the Tawḥeed of Allah the Exalted, when they recognise that,'

=

'That they testify that there is no god/deity except Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.'

But the truth of the matter, is that these equivalencies or equations if you will, are indeed much older. In an earlier chapter from the previous volume that was entitled 'The Grades of Deen', we mentioned the famous *ḥadīth* of Jibreel that was reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah. It is cited in numerous notable collections such as al-Bukhāri, Muslim and others. That narration contains the answer to the question about al-Islam, namely: 'To not associate anything with Allah, to perform the prayer,' to the end of the narration. In the wording of al-Bukhāri: 'To worship Allah, and not partner anything with him, to perform the prayer,' again, to the end of the narration. In the other narration that Muslim cites with the fuller wording: 'To worship Allah and not to associate anything with him, to perform the compulsory prayer,' to the end of the narration. That wording also appears in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Khuzaymah as well as the other collections of notable scholars.

Concerning the *ḥadīth* of Jibreel from the narration of Abdullah ibn Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb that he heard from his father, it is cited in the book of

Muslim and all the notable collections, but not that of Bukhāri, the answer there that came in relation to the question that was posed: ‘*That you testify that there is no god/deity except Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah; to perform the prayer...*’ to the end of the narration. It is like that, or thereabouts in other reports too. Similarly, is that which is the response given to the question that comes by way of the narration reported by Abdullah ibn ‘Abbās in the *ḥadīth* of Jibreel: ‘*Islam is to turn your face towards Allah; to bear witness that there is no deity except Allah alone, with no partner or associate and to bear witness that Muḥammad is his slave and Messenger.*’

Indeed, Jibreel, may the blessings of Allah be upon him, came on more than one occasion and with that, the blessing of the diversity of wordings that were given to the infallible seal of the Prophets, may peace and blessings be given upon him and his family. And there has been one occasion showing the diversity of wording from the *ijtihād* of the *Ṣaḥāba*. The first words in the version that has been narrated by Abu Hurayrah are the most accurate, given his memorisation and accuracy in reporting. And that is agreed and outlined in the *ḥadīth* by the two Shaykh’s (al-Bukhāri and Muslim). Concerning the narratives by Abdullah ibn Umar it doesn’t appear that he attended the incident in person. Similarly, it is most likely that Ibn ‘Abbās didn’t either in all probability, but rather both of them had taken the narrative from the senior *Ṣaḥāba* who were in attendance.

By necessity, this implies that the full meaning of the sentence phrasing: ‘*That you submit your entirety to Allah, and that he has no partner whatsoever,*’ is identical in meaning to that conveyed in the sentence: ‘*Testifying that there is no god/deity except Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.*’

Contained within the earlier chapter that was entitled ‘The basis of Islam and its essential pillars - it’s most important shares and rituals,’ in Volume 1 one of this work, numerous narratives were mentioned, one of which being the important *ḥadīth*: ‘*Islam is built upon five,*’ being reported from several pathways, it says among those five: ‘*To testify that there is no god/deity except Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah,*’ or with the meaning ‘*Imān in Allah and his Messenger.*’ Some reports abbreviating this to only: ‘*Testifying that there is no god/deity except Allah,*’ and some perhaps by way of meaning, like ‘*The oneness of Allah,*’ or ‘*Worship Allah and*

disbelieve in all others beside him’. Imām Muslim reports in his collection of *Ṣaḥīḥ*:

حدثنا محمد بن عبد الله بن نمير الهمداني حدثنا أبو خالد يعني سليمان بن حيان الأحمر عن أبي مالك الأشجعي عن سعد بن عبيدة عن بن عمر عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، قال بني الإسلام على خمسة على أن يوحد الله وإقام الصلاة وإيتاء الزكاة وصيام رمضان والحج فقال رجل الحج وصيام رمضان قال لا صيام رمضان والحج هكذا سمعته من رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم

Muḥammad ibn Abdullah ibn Numayr al-Hamdāni narrated to us Abu Khālid, that is to say, Sulaymān ibn Ḥayyān al-Aḥmar narrated to us from Abu Mālik al-Ashjee from Sa’d ibn ‘Ubayda from Ibn Umar from the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, he said: *Islam is built upon five: the oneness of Allah, establishing the prayer, rendering the zakāh, fasting in Ramaḍān and pilgrimage.* A man said: pilgrimage and the fasting in Ramaḍān? He said: No. fasting in Ramaḍān and pilgrimage; (just) as it was heard from the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him.¹⁵

Also in the book of Muslim there is the following narration:

وحدثنا سهل بن عثمان العسكري حدثنا يحيى بن زكريا حدثنا سعد بن طارق قال حدثني سعد بن عبيدة السلماني عن بن عمر عن النبي، صلى الله عليه وسلم، قال بني الإسلام على خمس على أن يعبد الله ويكفر بما دونه وإقام الصلاة وإيتاء الزكاة وحج البيت وصوم رمضان

And Sahl ibn Uthmān al-Askari narrated to us Yahya ibn Zakariyā narrated to us Sa’d ibn Ṭāriq narrated to us he said Sa’d ibn ‘Ubayda al-Salami narrated to me from Ibn Umar from the Prophet (peace be upon him). He said: *Islam is built upon five: that you worship Allah and disbelieve in all others beside Him; establishing the prayer, rendering the zakāh pilgrimage to the house and fasting in Ramaḍān.*¹⁶

Other narratives concerning this can also be rendered here as well. In the *Sunan* of Imām al-Tirmidhi, he records as follows:

¹⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim [Vol. 1, no. 16]

¹⁶ Ibid.

Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il narrated to us Musa ibn Ismā'il narrated to us 'Abbān ibn Yazid narrated to us Yaḥya ibn Abi Kathir narrated to us from Zayd ibn Sallām that Abu Salama narrated to him that al-Ḥārith al-Ashar narrated to him that the Prophet peace be upon him said: *Verily Allah commanded Yaḥya ibn Zakariyā with five words to abide by, and to command the Children of Israel to abide by them. But he was slow in doing so. So, Jesus said: 'Indeed, Allah commanded you with five words to abide by and to command the Children of Israel to abide by. Either you command them, or I shall command them.'* Yaḥya said: *'I fear that if you precede me in this, then the earth may swallow me, or I shall be punished.'* He gathered the people in Jerusalem, and they filled the area and sat upon its balconies.

He said: *'Indeed Allah has commanded me with five words to abide by, and to command you to abide by. The first of them is that you worship Allah and do not partner anything with him. The parable of the one who partners others with Allah is that of a man who buys a servant with his own gold or silver, then he says to him: "This is my home and this is my business so take care of it and give me the profits. So he takes care of it and gives the profits to someone other than his master. Which of you would live to have a servant like that? And Allah commands you to perform prayer,'* [To the end of the narration].¹⁷

Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shayba cites the following in his *Muṣṣanaf*:

حَدَّثَنَا عُذْرٌ عَنْ شُعْبَةَ عَنِ الْحَكَمِ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ عُرْوَةَ بِنَ النَّزَّالِ يُحَدِّثُ عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ قَالَ أَقْبَلْنَا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْ عُرْوَةَ تَبُوكَ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْتَهُ خَالِيًا قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَخْبِرْنِي بِعَمَلٍ يَدْخُلُنِي الْجَنَّةَ فَقَالَ بِيْحٌ، لَقَدْ سَأَلْتُ عَنْ عَظِيمٍ، وَهُوَ يَسِيرٌ عَلَى مَنْ يَسْرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ تَقِيْمُ الصَّلَاةِ الْمَكْتُوبَةِ وَتُؤَدِّي الرِّكَاتِ الْمُفْرُوضَةَ، وَتَلْقَى اللَّهَ لَا تُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا، أَوْ لَا أَذْكَ عَلَى رَأْسِ الْأَمْرِ وَعَمُودِهِ وَذُرْوَةِ سَنَامِهِ؟ أَمَا رَأْسُ الْأَمْرِ فَالْإِسْلَامُ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ سَلِمَ، وَأَمَا عَمُودُهُ فَالصَّلَاةُ، وَأَمَا ذُرْوَتُهُ وَسَنَامُهُ فَالْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

Ghundar narrated to us from Shu'ba from al-Ḥakam he said I heard 'Urwa ibn al-Nazzāl narrate from Mu'adh ibn Jabal he said: We came back with the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him from the expedition of Tabuk. When I saw him free I said: O

¹⁷ *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* [Vol. 5, no. 2863]

Messenger of Allah, direct me to a deed which will admit me to paradise. *Bravo, verily you have asked me about a matter of great importance, but it is easy for one for whom Allah makes it easy; to offer the obligatory prayer, to render the obligatory zakāh and to meet Allah without associating anything with him whatsoever. Shall I not guide you upon the head of the matter, its column and its apex? As for the head of the matter, it is Islam, whoever accepts and submits. And as for its column, it's the Ṣalāh, as for its apex it is Jihād in the path of Allah.*¹⁸

Imām al-Ṭabarāni has the next narrative in his *Musnad Shāmiyān*; its channel of transmission contains the men of *Ṣaḥīḥ* reporting from Abu Hurayrah:

حدثنا محمد بن عمرو بن خالد الحراني حدثنا أبي عن عيسى بن يونس عن ثور بن يزيد عن خالد بن معدان عن أبي هريرة أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال إن للإسلام صوى ومنازا كمنار الطريق من ذلك أن يعبد الله لا يشرك به شيئا، وتقام الصلاة، وتؤتى الزكاة، ويحج البيت، ويصام رمضان، والأمر بالمعروف، والنهي عن المنكر، وتسليمك على أهل بيتك إذا دخلت عليهم، وتسليمك على بني آدم إذا لقيتهم فإن ردوا عليك ردت عليهم الملائكة وإن لم يردوا عليك ردت عليك الملائكة ولعنتمهم أو سكتت عنهم؛ ومن انتقص منهن شيئا فهو سهم من الإسلام تركه؛ ومن نبذهن فقد ولى الإسلام ظهره

Muḥammad ibn 'Amr ibn Khālid al-Ḥarāni narrated to us my father narrated to us from Esa ibn Yunus from Thawr ibn Yazeed from Khālid ibn Ma'dān from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *Verily like roads, Islam has a guidepost and a lighthouse. From that, that you worship Allah and do not partner anything with him; to establish the Ṣalāh, render the zakāh, to make pilgrimage to the house and to fast in Ramaḍān. To enjoin the good and forbid the evil, to give your (greeting of) salam to the people of your house when you enter upon them and to give your salam upon Bani Adam whence you encounter them. If the respondents don't reply, the angels will receive the salam and respond in kind despite their silence. And whosoever leaves anything from these shares of Islam it would be incomplete, and whomsoever would have their Islam would be ostracized by this.*¹⁹

¹⁸ *Muṣṣanaf Ibn Abi Shayba* [Vol. 15, no. 30950]

¹⁹ *al-Ṭabarāni Musnad al-Shāmiyān* [Vol. 1, no. 429]

Expressed equationally

Consequently, it is proven to the point of decisive certainty, that there is a diversity of wording and expressions. But these sentences can be matched together as it has come from the Prophet of Allah, the infallible seal of the Prophets, may peace and blessings be upon him. By undertaking this match, we can therefore discern the full meaning of the sentences, despite the variance of reported wording, namely:

«أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ»

Testifying that there is no god/deity except Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah

=

«أَنْ تُسَلِّمَ وَجْهَكَ لِلَّهِ، وَتَشْهَدَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ»

That you submit yourself to Allah, testifying that there is no god/deity but Allah, One/singular and He has no partner and that Muḥammad is His slave and Messenger.

=

«تَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا»

To worship Allah and do not partner anything with Him

=

«تَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ وَتُكْفِرُ بِمَا دُونَهُ»

To worship Allah and disbelieve in all others beside Him

=

«تَوْحِيدَ اللَّهِ»

The Oneness of Allah (Tawḥeed-Allah)

=

«(أَنْ تُحَقِّقَ) عِبَادَةَ اللَّهِ، وَمَعْرِفَةَ اللَّهِ»

That you achieve/attain, worshipping Allah and the recognition of Allah

And the wording in the narration reported from Ibn ‘Abbās, and it is: ‘*To submit your entirety Allah; to bear witness that there is no deity except Allah alone, with no partner or associate and to bear witness that Muḥammad is his slave and Messenger.*’ Within it being the repetition and emphasis ‘*no god/deity except Allah alone, with no partner or associate.*’ In his saying, ‘*and testifying that there is no god/deity except Allah, alone and He has no*

partner,’ not contained within it what’s originally set out, ‘*and testify that there is no god/deity except Allah.*’ But rather to provide an emphasis and like that, the sentence: ‘*to submit your entirety to Allah,*’ it’s repeated for emphasis with that particular wording; the style of the last sentence being: ‘*to bear witness that there is no deity except Allah alone, with no partner or associate and to bear witness that Muḥammad is His slave and Messenger,*’ until the wording ‘*slave*’, giving the assurance of what has been proven: there is no god/deity but Allah. For indeed with certitude, there is no god except Allah, we are slaves to his dominion by necessity. And with this, there can be another equivalency or equation that can be expressed with the following:

«تَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ»

You testify that there is no god/deity except Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah

=

«تَوْحِيدَ اللَّهِ»

The Oneness of Allah

=

«تَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ، وَلَا تُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا»

That you worship Allah and do not associate/partner anything with Him

=

«تَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ وَتُكْفِرُ بِمَا دُونَهُ»

That you worship Allah and disbelieve in all else besides Him

=

«تَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ، وَتَعْرِفُ اللَّهَ»

That you worship Allah and recognise/are cognisant of Allah

That essence can also be summarised in the form of the following equation that bares the equivalency:

شَهَادَةُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

Testifying that there is no god/deity except Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah

=

عِبَادَةُ اللَّهِ وَمَعْرِفَتُهُ

Worshipping Allah and recognising Him

=

عبادة الله والكفر بما دونه

Worshipping Allah and disbelieving in all else besides Him

=

عبادة الله غير مشرك به شيئا

Worshipping Allah and having nothing of idolatry with Him

=

توحيد الله

Tawḥeed-Allah - The Oneness of Allah

In the chapters to follow, there will be thorough examination of the decisive proofs that underpin the validity of these weighty sentences that have been expressed as equations. Thereafter, we may then properly begin to establish, to the level or rank of decisive certitude, what is the root and branches of the matters of *al-‘Imān* (faith) and *Kufr* (disbelief). Prior to reaching the level of certainty, we might find it simply providing a level of reassurance, even if only in a preliminary sense. Whatever the case though, there is enough in the present texts to deduce that the word, *Tawḥeed* is a legal word. And that its commensurate to the two testimonials, there being no difference when you say: *Monotheism of Allah* or when you say: *Testifying that there is no god/deity except Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah; or when you say: worshipping Allah, and disbelief in all else besides him, or when you say: Worshipping Allah and recognising him; or even when you say: worshipping Allah and having nothing of idolatry with him.*

2. Proofs underpinning there is no ‘other god’ except Allah

We have written this chapter with the primary intended audience being the people of Islam, those who have an absolute conviction and sincere belief that ‘there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is His Messenger.’ Each one of these folk should have established their belief upon certain evidence, which would make them sound and firm believers. We do not think that anyone holds firm beliefs without decisive evidence for them at least in their minds, even if the reality of those affairs may be false. For this reason, we shall not be engaging in a lengthy discussion on the proofs for the existence of God, or the veracity of the Prophethood of Muḥammad ibn Abdullah, peace and blessings be upon him. For those interested, we have left that discussion to be covered in a separate standalone work entitled *Ṭāreeq al-‘Imān (The Path to Faith)*, which is currently still in preparation.

Clear decisive proof for the soundness of the statement, ‘There is no god but Allah,’ is that man, from the moment he becomes self-aware, and aware of the world around them, recognises the necessity, immediacy, that they had a beginning, prior to which they did not exist. The same is true for their parents and grandparents and so on. In fact this principle applies to all things, they all had a point before which they did not exist, regardless of how long they have been around for. We shall also witness the death of our near and dear ones, and deal with the difficulty of it and the end of things; something we cannot escape from. As man ascends the ranks of thought and abstraction he realises that everything that can be intelligible from the senses is necessarily in need of something else for its existence; contingent, that is to say unable to come into being from its own essence, nor suffice itself without reliance on other things and beings. It is impossible for such a

contingent being to come into existence without recourse to some external cause or reason, with no doubt remaining of its actual existence. This type of existing thing can be termed: possibly existing, in other words something which is not able to come into existence by itself. In summary these things can be referred to as possible, because their existence is not impossible, and unless we do not find them in existence in the first place, they can be imagined to be existing by the power of thought.

As for the other type, it is that which is self-sustaining, independent of all other things, needing nothing or no-one other than itself for its existence, in any form or situation and is known as necessarily existing or self-established. This is because such a thing's existence is necessary in and of itself, independent of all others. All things fall into these two categories. As for that which is impossible to exist, it is a theoretical category as it cannot exist in reality, and simply rounds up all possibilities in the mind.

When the above is established as factual, we come to realise that the necessity of existence matters beyond physical things, that is to say beyond the limit of mind. Undoubtedly, at least one thing exists beyond matter and is necessarily existent. All other possible things would rely on this necessary being's *a priori* existence to exist themselves; if it didn't come to be they could not manifest in reality without it, being contingent and therefore reliant on an absolute origin. This underlying imperfection in creation makes clear that there must be an originator which is self-sufficient, independent, able to provide for itself and others in an absolute sense, and with creative and communicative powers. This is the self-establishing, Necessarily Existent being that we were searching for! If this being is possible, then our reasoning regarding it will follow the same lines preceding it: it is necessary the chain of cause and effect must originate from a single uncaused cause; the necessarily existent being. Failing that, reality would be contingent on a contingent being, which itself would require a cause. This in turn would entail an unending chain of cause and effect which could not exist as it had no beginning or a situation of circularity, which has the same logical problems (no prime mover or initial cause).

Causes

An important point of benefit to note regarding causes and their types - it is stated by the philosophers and logicians: 'Causes are the dependence of one thing upon another; they are divided into two principle types - antecedent and conjunctive.' Imām Ibn Taymiyyah states the following regarding this topic:

Causes are of two types: The first is antecedent, the impossibility of which is agreed upon by all rational folk. An example of an antecedent role would be: This can only occur after that and that can only occur after this. The reason why this is seen as impossible is because a thing cannot exist before it has come into existence and it cannot be delayed into coming to existence by the fact that it exists! This would be an error due to circularity. As for the second type: the conjunctive cause, an example of which would be: This cannot exist without this, either in the past or future, is rationally impossible. An example of which is: a child cannot exist without its parents.¹

Antecedent causes would be indeed impossible because an object is generally defined within the confines of itself, without requiring something external to define it. Said object will then exist and be delineated from all points of view. A clear example of the matter under discussion would be if someone said: An object created itself, that would necessitate the creator was existent before the created as well as not existing. This is a clear contradiction, from all points of view and demonstrates the impossibility of antecedent causes, e.g. things creating themselves.

Conjunctive causes are not impossible and do indeed occur, for they only require the existence of two separate things in reality or theory. A clear example of a conjunctive cause would be the impossibility of a father without a child or vice-versa. This is as expected as in reality both of these two states in a conjunctive cause arise as effects due to a third matter: a cause. So it is understood that birth requires the emanation of one entity from another, such that the first of them is called a parent and the second a child.

All things in existence have a beginning in time, for even existence itself was preceded by nothingness in the order of the existence of things. This can

¹ Ibn Taymiyyah has mentioned this in more than work. For example see: *Kitāb al-Ṣafḍīyah* [p. 12] and *Dar' Ta'arūḍ al-'Aql wal'Naql* [Vol. 3, p. 143].

be ascertained from a cursory survey of the vast observable physical universe, or those things that can be obtained via methods of mathematical proof. We can see that all things have a beginning, no matter how long they may continue to exist, from the stars in the skies to the most massive galaxies that contain them. It has been known for a very long time, and established from certainty from mathematical modelling, confirmed by observation that stars lose millions of tons of materials per minute. This would logically necessitate their death, even after millions of years, if they do not explode earlier than that. This is what has been observed in our galaxies and many others, which is easy to confirm as astronomers monitor the cosmos daily and publish their findings regularly. The aforementioned astronomers come from a variety of ethnicities, nationalities, political and religious affiliations, some of which hold beliefs in direct opposition to each other and make up a global scientific community, which consists of many thousands of members. It would be impossible to envisage a global conspiracy of such diverse actors to agree to falsify information, or all be unified in an incorrect conclusion from the data that has and is being gathered.

Contingency

The contingent nature of the observed universe necessitates the existence of a being outside of time and space, as these are attributes of contingency. This is congruent with the point of view forwarded by philosophers and theologians mentioned above, so modern science and mathematical research serves to confirm what was previously known from other fields. The glorious Qur'ān also presents us with a similar proof in a verse where He the Most High, may His names be blessed and His mention be sanctified says:

أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمْ الْخَالِقُونَ. أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ

Were they created without any agent? Were they the creators? Did they create the heavens and the earth? No! They do not have faith.²

So these *ayah* present a set of questions to dismiss objections. If Allah did not create man, and the heavens and earth and what surrounds them:

² Qur'ān, 52: 35/36

1. Did creation emerge spontaneously, without cause? No, this is logically impossible.
2. Perhaps man created themselves? This would necessitate an antecedent cause, and a thing cannot both exist and not exist simultaneously, so this is also impossible.
3. Did man create the heavens and the earth? That is impossible for the same reasons.
4. Did the universe emerge from nothingness? (see point 1). Again, that is impossible
5. It is impossible to assume that the universe created itself.

Let us present the argument more simply in the form of a dialogue. You know that you are an accident that came into existence after you were not, so either you came into being out of pure non-existence, or something else brought you into being?! It is impossible for you to have come from pure non-existence, so you must have a Creator! This creator must be either you or someone else. It is impossible to create yourself, as it would necessitate that you existed before you were created, it is therefore necessary that you were created by something else. This other thing must either be contingent or not, i.e. uncreated. It is also not possible for this thing to be in need of anything else, for the above reasons (it could not be the ultimate creator if it needs things outside of itself). Therefore, this thing must be self-sustaining, totally independent with complete powers of creation. This thing is the reality of Allah, the all-Powerful and Wise!

Argument from the nature of time

Arguing from another angle, the Imām, Abu Muḥammad Ali Ibn Ḥazm said:

The proof for that, is that the entirety of world with all its components is 'in time.' Time is an attribute of this world which hasn't been separated from it. Nothing can be imagined except for being in time. It cannot be imagined that anything can occur except in time. Time is a counting of events and movements; an attribute of things, how bodies move or are static, appearances and non-appearances of things. Since time is a duration by itself, it is countable (quantifiable) by itself (e.g. in minutes, seconds), a finite limited number. It increases with

the passage of time – adding in a distinct way. This increase cannot be for something except that it has a beginning, as well as an end.

That which has no beginning or no end, time doesn't apply to it. Numbers (by nature) have a beginning and end. Time is composed of its parts, (being) moments of time. Every part of time has a beginning and an end. The totality of time, is therefore nothing but the totality of its parts. Since every part of time has a beginning, all of it must have a beginning by necessity. Since time has a beginning by necessity, and the universe as a whole cannot be conceived except within the concept of time, the universe in its entirety has a beginning by necessity.

Whatever has a beginning, must have a beginner – an originator. The whole universe, its essence, matter, laws is therefore created by a Creator which is *outside* of time. He owns whatever He has Created and is the complete Master of all of that. He is the King of everything He has created. He is the God of everything that He has created and fashioned. Without doubt, there is no other god but Him.³

In summary: If you find what the noble Imām has said difficult to fathom, gather pen and paper, and write down in exhaustive detail, with practical examples until it becomes clear to you that: it is logically inescapable that all possibly existing things could not exist without a necessarily existing thing and this is the only possibility as we are in a physical reality, not a mere figment of imagination.

Fundamental universal laws

From the fields of mathematics and physics, we have been able to fathom a model of how the universe began in a detailed manner, and its primordial parts, which can be categorised as: fields, particles and forces. We also have a good description of the evolution of the universe from its first moments: the big bang. All of this has stood the test of time and has been rigorously criticised and tested, and has proved to be a robust model. When further subjected to controlled experiment, meticulous observation, mathematical

³ Ibn Ḥazm *al-Muḥalla* [Vol. 1, Issue 2, pp. 22/23]. This is from book one of *al-Muḥalla*, entitled *Kitāb al-Tawḥeed*. We have previously translated this in full, and it is currently available in both paperback and Kindle versions.

calculation and eventually applied in a wide range of engineering applications that are known in modern times.

While these theories are subject to further revision and development, they are all, as well as all their revisions, generalisations, developments, and theoretical future versions unable to solve the problem of initial conditions. This is because they are necessarily in the form of partial differential equations, which can only be solved by setting initial conditions or boundary conditions. In other words, modern physical theories give us a very good model of what happened early on in the universe and what happened just after the big bang. They cannot explain how it got there though.

This is because the mathematical equations that describe the structure of the universe, and the relationship of its components to each other, are not necessary or self-sufficient. In order to find solutions to these equations, you need to define initial or limiting conditions, and initial values for some ratios and free variables. These proportions, values and conditions are truly 'free,' that is, they are independent of the laws and equations describing the universe and its parts; different from them in essence. Neither laws nor equations determine those values, nor do values define or impose specific laws and equations, for they are two different things; independent concepts. These initial conditions, proportions, and values must be specified at the very moment of inception, the universe then evolves according to its laws as determined by those preliminary terms. Experimental observation and mathematical analysis has proven that the state of the universe now is related to the appropriate selection of those initial conditions and values, and that a slight change in some of them, even a part in a hundred million, million, million, is enough to produce a dead, desolate universe, where it would be impossible for life to exist.

Since laws and equations do not specify these initial conditions, values, and ratios, rather they are completely independent of them, and the initial conditions are 'set at the moment of initiation,' that is, they must be specific for a working universe to exist. These values must be set at the exact moment the universe began, unlike all of the physical values that emerge subsequently and can develop and change during the course of the universe and its evolution. So how do we explain that we are now here studying and contemplating. Who determined the initial values in such a way that the situation ends up as it is now: a land abounding with living things, and a man

of upright stature, head raised to the sky, thinking, speaking, philosophising, and seeking to conquer space?

Atheists would retort and say: 'This is by chance, without active action, or weighted preference.' So we would respond that such a retort is empty, pure nonsense. The word 'coincidence' is just a description of a situation, and it is not an explanation or proof of something. A coincidence is without cause in the first place, and this is sophistry and verbal acrobatics, as they are unable to explicitly state: it came from nothing. Rather they fraudulently claim it occurred by chance, but this is not an explanation. It is an escape from interpretation, and it is a demolition of the principle of sufficient cause, on which the structure of reason is based, and upon which all sciences are built, as well as all subsequent knowledge. If you have accepted for yourselves the destruction of the mind, i.e., madness, then congratulations to you. As for us, we cling to the mind, which is one of the greatest of Allah's blessings upon us, we do not accept irrationality as an alternative.

The Anthropic Principle

Another explanation is provided by what is known as the anthropic principle. The basic idea is that if we categorise the laws, and properties of the universe as a set or group and place that group in what is known as a probability space/field, which contains all sets of all possible configurations of all possible universes, then it is no surprise that we are in our universe as it the only one that would be possible for us to exist in. It is well known that many cosmologists promote the idea that there may be multiple universes, for which there is no direct observable evidence. If this were the case then yes, there would be universes where monkeys sat typing poetry on keyboards, and a Qur'ān like ours was written into the mountains by the wind. We however do not rely on such hallucinatory drug induced fantasies to provide an understanding of how we came to be. The anthropic principle, in its various guises, despite being a pure hallucination and superstition - does not solve the problem because, firstly the initial values of our universe are only one point precisely defined in an infinite space of possibilities, so that no number of points becomes an uncountable infinity, and exactly one specific point achieves its probability equal to zero, that is, it is impossible unless we assume a very abnormal and special distribution function. If this is the case,

we would ask atheists to show us this distribution function, and show us with proof in the scientific and mathematical sense that the multiverse is necessary in and of itself, self-sufficient, that it does not need to specify initial or limiting conditions, for physical constants and free variables. Otherwise, a sequence of infinite regression of causes will occur which cannot explain how they all got there in the first place!

Secondly, given that probability theory and statistics are descriptive theories, in the study of the properties of a given probability space or probability field, it is assumed that we already have something pre-existing to study. Probability theory does not therefore explain the emergence of the field or space itself. The subject of the study of existence, where it came from, and its properties; proof of its necessary existence, self-sufficiency, etc. is all an entirely separate discipline, more suitable to a philosophical treatment. Finally, because the hypothesis of an infinite number of universes is an uncountable infinity, each of them is possibly existing, not necessarily existing, it does not solve the problem of origin. This is because possibilities, no matter how they interact and combine, do not become necessities. Rather, the sum of possibilities is less probable and therefore less likely to exist.

The limitations of possibility existing things compound when combined, for example, something physical such as steel, cast from a single mold, is stronger than that made of two welded pieces, or fastened with screws. If the possibilities in question are completely independent of each other, and do not interact with each other they will not affect each other at all, whether they are large or small; mentally grouping them into a group, or not grouping them, does not affect their status as possibly existing instead of necessarily existing at all no matter however ingeniously they are considered.

There are within this universe in which we live such wonders that make the hypotheses of atheists seem more insane, perhaps the result of hallucinations or drunkenness. The most respectable explanation that can be given to the origin of reality, after a comprehensive survey of all its phenomena, which is consistent and free of contradiction, is that this universe has a Creator, with complete will and free choice, who determined the initial conditions, and then brought it into existence. He said: Be, and it was! This Creator, who created this universe in which we are now, is a chosen actor, i.e. possessor of unfettered, transcendent free will, free of every possible restriction or condition; This necessitates as we have previously

mentioned, that He is self-aware, and knows all things: mental, logical, mathematical. Furthermore it is only He who can make reality of all possibilities, for He encompasses them with knowledge, and chooses from them what He wills into creation. He knows with definitive, certain, comprehensive, and encompassing knowledge that these specific initial conditions produce that particular universe, then he brings it out of Non-existence in the manner and initial conditions that he chooses, so:

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

Your Lord creates what He pleases and chooses those He wills - they have no choice - so glory be to Allah, and may He be Exalted above the partners they ascribe to Him.⁴

⁴ Qur'ān 28: 68

3. The 'Necessarily Existent' cannot be other than a singular entity

The 'Necessarily Existent Being' cannot be other than a singular entity. This is because if there were two 'Necessarily Existent Beings,' one of them *has* to be distinguished from the other, at least in one attribute or consideration; otherwise, they would be identical with no distinction. Therefore, it will be impossible to refer to one of them without referring to the other, express one of them without expressing the other, or speak of one of them without speaking of the other. That is to say, the two would be one thing which contradicts the concept of dualism in the first place. Hence, the 'one' referred to would be 'two' at the same time, from the same vantage point and the same consideration and the 'two' referred to would be 'one' at the same time, from the same vantage point and the same consideration which is an impossible contradiction.

Accordingly, the two [Necessarily Existent Beings] must differ in at least one attribute or consideration. The latter is to be necessary to one of the Necessarily Existent Beings following the 'necessity of the Necessarily Existent Being' which is one of the necessities of His existence. It couldn't possibly be necessary without it in that way and that manner. Thus, the one who lacks this attribute is not necessary because he has lost one of the necessities of existence that his 'Necessarily Existent Being' requires. This fact is what makes him *mumkin* (contingent), not *wājib* (necessary). Therefore, we are left with one 'Necessarily Existent Being', not two, which is what is required to be proven.

Or, that this attribute is unnecessary for his existence; He does not need it to bring about His existence as a Necessarily Existent Being. Hence, it is to be necessary for another existent because His existence is purely a necessity not contingency, nor with any other consideration. This is the

meaning of the necessity of the Necessarily Existent Being which is an absolute conceptual necessity. Nevertheless, this cannot be possible because the ‘Necessarily Existent Being’ does, absolutely, not need another existent, otherwise it would be a necessity and possibility at the same time which is an impossible contradiction or even worse than that because we made the necessary in need of the contingent. This is mind-destroying; it is, rather, mind-relapsing, a reversal of concepts - in short, pure madness. Therefore, it becomes mandatory that the concept of the ‘necessity of the Necessarily Existent Being’ can only be applied to one being, at the very least, and it shall not be applied to two or more. It was demonstrated formerly that there should be at least one ‘Necessarily Existent Being’; otherwise, the existence of the universe or the creatures would be completely impossible including the writer and the reader of these lines, as opposed to the necessity of sense, reason, conscience and direct perception.

Consequently, there is only one ‘Necessarily Existent Being’, no more, no less, and it wouldn’t be possible otherwise. This is the absolute ‘Unity’ of the Necessarily Existent Being. ‘The One’ is a necessity: *Allah*, there is no god in existence except Him - the Almighty, All-Wise. This ‘Unity’ or ‘Uniqueness’ of the Necessarily Existent Being is absolute in himself which means that His existence does not depend on another existent. He is, by greater reason, not one of those who belong to a kind of multispecies genus. He is not ‘One’ ‘singular being’ in Himself only, but rather unique in His attributes. That is to say, no one is equal or equivalent to Him in any of these attributes not even in one aspect or consideration of any kind of ‘similarity’ or ‘equivalence’ at all. This is the absolute ‘Unity’ of the Necessarily Existent Being which can be illustrated in the miraculous revelation:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ، اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ، لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ؛ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

Say, ‘He is Allah the One. Allah the eternal He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him.’¹

¹ *Qur’ān*, 112: 1/4

4. The Necessarily Existent is a singular being, not composed of parts

The Necessarily Existent Being cannot be other than a singular being, which is not composed of parts, members, or separable independent essences in the first place. This is what the *Mutakallimūn* (theologians) and philosophers refer to by saying: ‘the Necessarily Existent Being is One in Himself.’ One of the intelligible examples, to Allah belong the finest attributes, is the following: the perfect geometric mathematical point is simple; it can reasonably never be separated or divided.

The proof regarding our former saying (the Necessarily Existent Being is One in Himself) is that if we assume that ‘the Necessarily Existent Being’ is dividable, which means He is composed of two essences, two parts and each part can be, even in principle, an independent essence, then one of the three following matters is inevitable:

- **First:** the two essences are separately necessary which is impossible [for two reasons]:
 - a) Due to the impossibility of having more than one Necessarily Existent Being, as mentioned above.
 - b) Even if we estimate this absurdity that is impossible, there would be no meaning to this composition, for each one of them is Necessary in Himself; His existence does not depend on another existent.
- **Second:** one of them, let us call it ‘the first’, is necessary and the other one is contingent; this is impossible as well because this composition is completely meaningless. To illustrate, ‘the first’ is Necessary in Himself, the basis of His existence is Himself not anyone else. In other

words, He does not need any addition or complement neither outside of Himself nor from anything external. This is absurd even more than the previous point because the composition requires the need of the necessary to the contingent; it is worse in the balance of mind than the need of the necessary to the necessary.

- **Third:** the two essences are contingents separately which is impossible as mentioned earlier; the *mumkināt* (contingents), no matter how composed they are, cannot become ‘necessary beings’ in the first place. Rather, the composed contingent, is weaker to be a Necessarily Existent Being because of his need for composition in addition to the contingency and weakness of each one of them separately. And if you wish, you can say that the composed needs his parts and an agent to compose and join the parts together. Hence, an existent who needs another existent cannot be a Necessarily Existent being. Here is a concrete example: a piece of cast steel moulded from one mould is stronger than another one which was made of two pieces welded or fastened with screws.

This proof also applies to the conceptual composition just as it applies to the actual composition, because the Necessarily Existent Being may not be composed of ‘existence’ and ‘quiddity’; His existence is pure with no quiddity. If you ask ‘what is it?’ the answer would be: He is the Necessarily Existent Being - the One and Only. With that in mind, the answer cannot be: it is of a specific kind, a specific category, or a specific type!

As for the composition, of ‘essence and attribute’, if it is accurate to call it composition, it is not forbidden based on this proof because the attribute is dependent on the thing being described; it is not an ‘essence’ in the first place, otherwise, it would not be an ‘attribute.’ There is no reasonable separation; there is no capability of separation at all. As such, by the absolute conceptual necessity required by the meaning of the word ‘attribute’, it is completely impossible for a separation to take place.

This is the absolute ‘*al-Ahadiyya*’ (the absolute Oneness) of the Necessarily Existent Being and ‘*al-Ahad*’ (the Absolutely One) is a necessity which can be illustrated in the miraculous revelation:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ، اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ، لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ؛ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

Say, ‘He is Allah the One. Allah the eternal He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him.’¹

Here, ‘*al-Ṣamad*’ (the Self-Sufficient Master), and its linguistic equivalence ‘*al-Ṣamat*’, which is referred to something that is solid with no holes, and this concept or meaning is a concrete example. As for everything else, it is anything with no emptiness, lack, or non-existence. In other words, anything that has no deficiency in its material, substance, element, or attribute. Additionally, by the necessity of perception and reason, we know that the solid steel bar is firmer, stronger, and more difficult to break than the steel tube (the tube is a hollow bar) which is similar to it in material, length and diameter; the less bore, the greater the strength and solidity. Even the least educated and simple-minded Arabs, realise that a solid stick is stronger than the common reed or the hollow bamboo stick. Thus, the Necessarily Existent Being is an absolute *Ṣamad*, a necessarily complete absolute existent, with no holes, emptiness, non-existence, defect, or lack thereof. He is strong and solid and His strength and durability have no end or limit: Allah, there is no god except Him, He is *al-Ṣamad*, the strong and firm.

¹ *Qur’ān*, 112: 1/4

5. Scholarly discourse on the Necessarily Existent

Earlier scholars adopted varying ways to prove that ‘the Necessarily Existent Being’ cannot be other than One singular being, not composed of parts. From a unique perspective, the genius Imām and outstanding scholar Abu Muḥammad, Ali Ibn Ḥazm, may Allah be pleased with him, said the following, some of which is similar to what we have briefly stated earlier and some parts are slightly different:

Abu Muḥammad (Ibn Ḥazm) said: He is Allah, there is no ‘other’ god except Him; that He the Almighty is One, without beginning, without end. The proof concerning that, we have established by necessity in the previous enquiry, is that the entire world is created, that it has a Creator. If there were more than one Creator, then they would be (mutually) limited by number, countable. What we have previously established is that what is countable has a beginning and an end, it is therefore created.

Moreover, (another evidence), for every two (entities) they must be different and differentiated. If completely identical it would not be possible to distinguish one from the other. One (entity) must be distinguished from the other by certain features that the other doesn’t have. If that is composed from itself and another attribute which is distinguishable from another; every composed being is contingent, therefore created. All arguments necessarily lead by necessity (to the conclusion) that the Creator is a single being, completely different from His creation in all respects. Hence, He the Exalted is contrary to that (arguments relating to multiplicity); He never ceases. If it had not been as such, then He would be part of the universe (a created component) – Allah is far above that. He is One, not of a multiple.

He the Almighty said: ‘*There is nothing like Him,*’ and ‘*No one is comparable to Him.*’¹

While commenting on the following verses, the great Imām Fakhr al-Deen al-Rāzi said in his seminal work *Mafātiḥ al-Ghayb*, or commonly referred to as *Tafsir al-Kabir*:

‘*Allah said: ‘Do not take two gods’ - for He is the One God - I alone am the One that you should hold in awe.’ Everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him: everlasting obedience is His right. Will you heed anyone other than Allah? Whatever good things you possess come from Allah, and when hardship afflicts you, it is to Him alone you cry out for help, Yet when He has relieved you of your hardship - lo and behold! - some of you attribute partners to your Lord. Let them show ingratitude for the favours We have shown them; ‘Enjoy your brief time - soon you will know,’ [16: 51/55].*

Know that Allah the Almighty showed in the first verse that everything except Him, whether in the world of spirits or in the world of bodies, belongs to Him and it is submissive and subjugated to the Majesty and Supremacy of Allah the Almighty. In the verse that follows, He forbade associating anything with Him in worship, and commanded that His Kingdom and everything except Him belongs to Him and He is not in need of anyone. He said: ‘*Do not take two gods,*’ *Ithnayn* (two). There is only One God. There are several points to be discussed in this verse:

¹ Ibn Ḥazm *al-Muḥalla* [Vol. 1, Issue 3, p. 23]. The verses quoted are [42: 11] and [112: 4]. In the introduction to his seminal *Tafsir* [Vol. 1, p. 3], Abu Ja’far Muḥammad ibn Jarir al-Ṭabari [d. 310AH/923CE] wrote: ‘All praise is due to Allah, whose exquisite command overpowers all minds and whose subtle arguments conquer all intellects. The wonders of His creation eviscerate the excuses of the extreme deviants, and the languages of His indicators cry out in the ears of all creation, testifying that He is Allah – there is no god but He, who has no peer who is equal, no similitude that is similar, no partner who aids Him, no child and no parent. He has no consort and nothing is equal to Him. He is *al-Jabbār* (the Compeller) to whose compulsion all tyrants are rendered submissive; He is *al-Aziz* (the Mighty) to whose might all mighty kings are abased. All who possess dread are humbled by His overwhelming might. All creation submits obediently to Him, be that willingly or unwillingly, as He, Majestic is His praise, sanctified are His names has said: *All that are in heaven and earth submit to Allah alone, willingly or unwillingly, as do their shadows in the mornings and in the evenings* [13: 15].’

The first point: One may say: the *Ilāhayn* (two gods) should be *Ithnayn* (two), so what is the point behind saying: *Ilāhayn* (two gods) *Ithnayn* (two). This question can be answered in the following ways:

The first: the author of *al-Nadhīm* said: there is proceeding and following [one of them goes first and the other goes after]. It is as though He said: *Do not take Ithnayn* (two) *Ilāhayn* (two gods).

The second: (this one is more accurate for me) when someone wants to exaggerate in expressing something that is denounced and repugnant s/he will use many words so that the succession of these words makes the mind stop at its ugliness. With that in mind, saying that there are two Gods is reprehensible in the mind. In this context, none of the rational people say that there are two Gods equal in necessity, eternity and the attributes of completeness. So, when He said: '*Do not take Ilāhayn* (two gods) *Ithnayn* (two),' what was intended from this repetition is to emphasise the alienation and make the mind stop at its ugliness.

The third: the word *Ilāhayn* (two gods) is one word which refers to two things (two gods); the affirmation of God and the affirmation of plurality [of gods]. When He said: '*Do not take two gods*,' it was not known from this expression whether the prohibition applies to the affirmation of God or the affirmation of the plurality [of gods] or both of them. And when He said: '*Do not take two gods*,' it was confirmed that '*Do not take Ilāhayn* (two gods) *Ithnayn* (two)' is a prohibition of affirming the plurality only.

The fourth: dualism is inconsistent with Divinity, and it can be explained from different aspects:

The first: if we assume that there are two existent beings and each one of them is Necessary in Himself, then they would have shared 'Self-existence' and differed in 'Necessity.' So, there is a difference between the two for each one of the existent beings is composed of two parts, and each composed is *mumkin* - 'contingent.' Then it was confirmed that saying 'there is more than one Necessarily Existent Being' denies the fact that they are 'Necessarily Existent Beings.'

The second: if we assume that there are two gods and one of them tried to move an object and the other one tried to do the opposite, neither of the actions would take place for one of them is worthier to

take the action than the other, and the movement and stillness do not accept division or disparity at all. If that is the case, then it becomes impossible for the capacity of one of them to be more complete than the capacity of the other one. If that was proven, then it becomes impossible because one of the two capacities is an ultimate capacity. And if that was proven, then [one of the three possibilities would happen]:

- Both of the gods' wishes would take place which is impossible.
- Neither of the gods' wishes would take place which is impossible as well.
- Or, neither of the gods' wishes would take place at all.

Thus, each one of them would be powerless, and the powerless cannot be a God. So, it was proven that the claim that there are two gods negates the fact that each one of them is a God.

The third: if we assume there are *Ilāhayn* (two gods) *Ithnayn* (two),' then one of them will either be able to cover up his Kingdom from the other or not; if He could do so then he is a God and the other one is weak, and if he could not He is weak.

The fourth: that one of them is either capable to disobey the other or not. [This gives rise to the following three scenarios]:

- If He is not strong enough to disobey Him then he is weak.
- If He disobeys Him then the other one, in case he could not defend himself, is weak.
- If he disobeys Him then the first (the defeated) is weak.

It was proven then that duality and divinity are antonyms. When He said: '*Do not take Ilāhayn* (two gods) *Ithnayn* (two)' the intention is to warn against the incompatibility and opposition between divinity and duality, and Allah knows best. Know that when the Almighty mentioned these words, He said: '*There is only One God*' meaning that when the foregoing proofs proved that the universe must have a God, it was proven that it is impossible to say that there are two gods, and it was proven that *there is no god except Allah*, (He is) *al-Wāhid* (the One), *al-Ahad* (the Only), *al-Ḥaqq* (the-Truth), *al-Ṣamad* (the self-sufficient master)].²

² al-Rāzi, *Tafsir al-Kabir* [Vol. 20, pp. 48/50].

It can be noticed that Imām al-Rāzi has briefly discussed what we have mentioned above from the absolute proofs about the Oneness [of God] with the following proof: the impossibility of dualism and composition of the Necessarily Existent being which is fully satisfactory; it is not based on any premises except for the concept of the necessity of existence only. In addition to that, he briefly mentioned some of the main aspects of another proof of the Oneness called: *Burhān al-Tamānu*, which is usually mentioned when interpreting His saying, may His Majesty be Glorified and Exalted:

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا لَدَّهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ، وَلَعَلَّا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ

*Allah has never had a child. Nor is there any god beside Him - if there were, each god would have taken his creation aside and tried to overcome the others. May Allah be Exalted above what they describe!*³

We will come back to simplify and complete [this proof] in one of the next chapters, not only for proving the Oneness [of Allah], but also for its paramount importance in defining the word ‘*Ilāh*’ - God.

³ *Qur’ān*, 23: 91

6. He does not beget, nor was He begotten

We have already outlined the definite proofs that underpin the concept that the ‘Necessarily Existent’ can only be One being, not two or more than two, ever. Indeed, this ‘being’ has names, attributes and characteristics which express or convey meanings and concepts that relate to His being or His self. They exist according to this self, being definitely connected to it, with no manner in which this could be separated. If that were ever ‘possible,’ even in one specific manner, characteristic or attribute, which invariably would contradict the notion of the ‘Necessarily Existent, which implies that it is a duty, necessary in itself; its attributes and their connectedness from every aspect, and in every consideration, eternally and forever, regardless of time and place, or in all times, if it is permissible, originally to express it in terms of time.

Moreover, in relation to this ‘being,’ it is impossible that it can be considered of consisting as parts. That is, capable of separation or separating, in a way that each part could be existing by its self. As it is the case with the limbs of a human being, who can cut off his hand, bury it and continue living for a long time even with this disability and arising deficiency. This would be impossible in respect to the ‘Necessarily Existent,’ as if there is any part of Him that is capable of separating, that means that He has something from among the various meanings of contingency, thereby contradicting the very basis notion of ‘necessity.’ This is quite evidently conveyed by the notion that the ‘necessarily existent,’ cannot be other than a singular entity or being, that is not composed of parts, as set out in a previous chapter. Perhaps in further recalling that an additional explanation to clarify this matter is required at this juncture to underline the importance of this: The presence of a ‘part’ relating to the ‘Necessarily Existent,’ would

mean accepting the idea of separation and conveying the meanings of possibility. It can be present in that particular part and it may remain after its separation, thereby meaning one of two things, firstly, this ‘part’ is not necessary for its existence and that the being itself can accept either such an increase or decrease. It means that it could be cut, in whole or in part, which means the entity could accept such a variance of decrease or increase. Ultimately that would be in stark contradiction to the meaning of ‘Necessarily Existent.’ It would mean that there is ‘necessity’ and ‘contingency’ at one and the same time, from the same point of origin which would be impossible. Second, it is complete, self-standing, absolutely sufficient in itself, without that part, so that part is not of it i.e. not some of it, and it is a piece of it at the same time, and of the same consideration, this is also a combination of the two extremes, resulting in impossibility.

The following is also not possible to say - perhaps it is a composite of two independent ‘selves’ or entities, each of which was on its own, a complete ‘Necessarily Existent,’ then decided to merge, choosing to be one being. This is also impossible for the following reasons:

1. Firstly, because we have cogently demonstrated that the ‘necessarily existent,’ applies only to One being or entity, not to two or greater than two. So there are no two ‘Necessarily Existent’ beings to begin with originally.
2. Knowing this as an impossibility and assuming for the sake of argument that there could be several ‘necessary’ beings – there will be no meaning for merging into one - because each one of them would have reached the farthest extent of perfection, not able to be improved by any additions or components. Then there would be no reason for being a component. A complete compound necessitates that each component considers the other; recognises him or it for its own ‘sake,’ giving the other the rights relating to ‘companionship’ even in one sense or in one action. Thus, this would be a kind of ‘limitation’ and ‘restriction’, therefore implying deficiency and incompleteness. That means that each one of the two components is incomplete; this is a ‘losing’ transaction and therefore such a situation is utterly impossible as it is built upon impossible premises and absurdities.

Furthermore, among the more extreme areas of impossibility would relate to a being or entity that is composite, or hybrid; one of necessity, the other from amongst the possibilities. The Necessary does not need the possible or merely probable, because it is self-contained, complete by itself, not requiring composite parts or the like. The Necessarily Existent therefore must, necessarily be ‘One,’ ‘Absolute,’ in every sense of oneness and absoluteness. Herein this means that it is a singular entity, which isn’t composed of parts, and it does not accept division or fragmentation in any sense of the word whatsoever, for all eternity. It was never originally composed of multiple ‘Necessary’ entities that existed before, nor does it break down or fragment into separate, independent entities, regardless of the nature of these entities that might arise from such fragmentation - whether they be necessary or contingent. All of this is impossible and cannot be applied to the eternal and everlasting ‘Necessarily Existent Being’ in any way.

No conceptualisation of offspring

From the previous line of reasoning, it is manifestly evident that it is impossible for the Necessarily Existent to be a ‘father.’ To argue that one entity, for example called ‘B’ is born from another - ‘A,’ readily implies that a *part of* ‘A’ has separated from it, forming ‘B.’ That could happen, firstly, by way of ‘division.’ In a direct manner, as is the case with some simple living organisms that ‘reproduce’ by way of splitting. The process involves the parent cell dividing into two daughter cells, and these cells begin to grow to full size. With this example, the ‘parent’ effectively disappears thereafter, ceasing to exist. Further elaboration shouldn’t be required here, because the process itself would be an impossibility for the Necessarily Existent. There is no division, sub-division nor any form of perishing.

Thereafter, even with the assumption based upon an impossibility, the ‘born’ or offspring entity would have come *into existence* after non-existence. Meaning therefore, it was preceded by non-existence, whether that is in terms of time or in the sequential order of existence. Such a being would not be considered ‘necessary,’ thus not being of the same essential nature of the ‘father.’ Instead, it would belong to the category of beings, either contingent or from among the possibilities. An entity that is born must

be of the same essential nature of the father, unless being an illegitimate child, therefore not truly the offspring of the one it is attributed to, and the attribution is false. If we find among countless beings one that arose in such a manner, it is indeed a created 'contingent being' without any doubt. Anyone who describes it with terms like budding, birth, or emanation, or any other similar terms, has made a grave mistake, grossly misrepresented reason and its concepts, misused language and its terminology, and has gone far astray.

Secondly, the notion of 'budding.' Many types of algae, fungi and even plants higher up the scale of ordering have this. The process occurs when a part of the 'parent' separates off, with the 'parent' remaining mostly intact or with only a slight reduction, and the separated part grows into an organism of the same type as the parent over a period of time. Once again, this is an impossibility for the Necessarily Existent Being, which cannot undergo division or fragmentation, as we have previously stated. Regarding the 'offspring,' it is in the same category as the offspring in the previous example - it is nothing more than a 'created being' that has been gravely misrepresented.

Thirdly, there is the matter of 'mating.' This is the case with animals and some plants of higher order. Two parents contribute to producing the 'offspring,' where a sperm from the father combines with an 'egg' or 'seed' from the mother. This idea is even more impossible than the previous mentioned, since there is *only one* Necessarily Existent Being in all of existence. So where could the *other party* in this strange union come from? Perhaps one of the two is a 'contingent' created being, while the other is a 'Necessary Being?' This would lead to all the impossibilities as we have previously mentioned regarding the 'Necessarily Existent Being' and additional impossibilities related to the merging or union of the necessary with the contingent, or even the idea of the Necessarily Existent Being 'inhabiting' the contingent. These issues require some further explanation and independent consideration, which we will address soon by the will and mercy of Allah.

Lastly, all other additional matters would be brought together here. Whether they are real with a corresponding model existing in the temporal world, or those that are imagined, being conceived only in the mind. Whatever is the case, it must involve the separation of a part from the

necessarily existent being, otherwise, the term 'birth' would be a misnomer. Again, any form of fragmentation or sub-division is impossible and cannot be applied to the necessarily existent. Alternatively, it would imply the participation of *another* entity in the realm of having necessity of existence, and that again, is an impossibility. Thus, there is only one singular necessarily existent being – nothing more, with no addition or subtraction.

The Nicene Creed

What we have outlined earlier in relation to the concept of being 'generated' from Allah, equally applies to other statements made of the same vein. Whether those statements purport to show that a certain entity 'emanated' from Allah, or 'radiated' or 'flowed,' and other similar type expressions. All such terms necessarily involve the concept of something *emerging* from something else, or something being *generated* from something else, just as water *emerges* from a rock or a liquid *flows* from a vessel.

All of this is impossible for the Necessarily Existing Being, except where it is a misuse of terminology to describe the 'creation' of an independent entity *separate* from its Creator. Anything else is false and impossible: all of this is impossible regardless of the concepts of time and space. 'Generation' from Allah is impossible whether it occurs now, in the past, or before all times and ages. Indeed, asserting such a notion *before* the ages, as it is found in the Nicene Creed, which is the belief held by the majority of Trinitarian Christians, only complicates the issue further and adds additional impossibilities to the contradictions and impossibilities we have previously covered.

Adherents to the Nicene Creed might level an objection by saying, "You have not been fair to us, because our use of terms like 'generation' and 'emanation' are but metaphors and allegories. We intend something akin to 'deriving' a logical, intellectual, or mathematical conclusion from another premise, which is then called the 'result,' while the original premise is called the 'premise.' For example, if we have a right-angled triangle in an Euclidean plane, it can be proven that the square of the hypotenuse equals the sum of the squares of the other two sides – the Pythagorean theorem. Accordingly, it would be permissible to say that the 'Pythagorean nature' of

the triangle ‘emanated’ or ‘was generated’ from the right-angled nature of the triangle, albeit figuratively.”

By way of a fitting response to that, we would argue we are conversant that many orators, writers, and poets often resort to various rhetorical techniques and figures of speech to stimulate the imagination, evoke emotions, and motivate will. This is necessary because human beings are not merely rational beings but complex entities, having both intellect and emotion, the latter often referred to as the ‘heart.’ They act with will and choice. However, emotions and will are like swift horses that, if not guided by the bridle of reason, will inevitably lead their rider over the precipice into the abyss - the abyss of sophistry and misguidance, which is manifest error and injustice. Allah the Exalted and Sublime says:

وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ، أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ، وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُونَ، إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَانْتَصَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ

Only those who are lost in error follow the poets. Do you not see how they rove aimlessly in every valley; how they say what they do not do? Not so those [poets] who believe, do good deeds, remember Allah often, and defend themselves after they have been wronged. The evildoers will find out what they will return to.¹

Secondly, whilst it is readily acknowledged that the human mind and intellect is limited, Allah has endowed it with a remarkable ability to grasp the abstraction of impossibilities and to express them in language with grammatically correct sentences and phrases. That can even extend to literary beauty and its appreciation. Such sentences and propositions may seem like they can be judged as true or false. For example, they may in reality, be devoid of meaningful content, such as the statement: ‘The human soul is green in colour,’ because the soul is not a material substance to which concepts of colour apply. In this case, the correct response is that this statement is meaningless - the soul cannot be described in terms of colour at all. If you were to say, ‘The human soul is not green,’ one might mistakenly think it is red, for example. They might also appear to be sentences and

¹ Qur’ān, 26: 224/227

propositions that can be judged as being true or false, but in actuality, they represent a mental estimation of certain impossibilities. For example, if someone says to their beloved: ‘I was overcome by longing and desire for you, and I rolled from the bottom to the top.’

When we recall and consider these fundamentals, we will find that the earlier Pythagorean example which was mentioned is a false analogy for several detailed reasons. Among these include the following - ‘birth’ is an inherent action of the parent, whether father or mother, from which the offspring, whether son or daughter, results, and through this action, the parent becomes a parent. If it were not for this action, the parent would not deserve to be called by this name. In contrast, ‘deduction’ is an action of the intellect, not of the premise, which here is the right-angled nature of the triangle, or the conclusion, which here is the Pythagorean nature of the triangle. These two are, in our example at least, concepts about the triangle, or properties or considerations of the triangle, that exist independently and are static, without activity or dynamism. The intellect, which is a third entity distinct from these, is the active and dynamic one. If there were to be a birth at all, it would be more appropriate to attribute it to the intellect.

Next, ‘birth,’ is a one-way direction: the parent is the agent who gives birth, and the offspring is the object being born. It is impossible for the nature of this direction to reverse, making the offspring the agent and the parent the object. However, deduction allows for reversal, in our example, it is quite possible to consider the conclusion - the Pythagorean nature of the triangle, as the premise and then deduce the result, the right-angled nature of the triangle, albeit with some difficulty and effort. The truth is that the ‘Pythagorean nature of the triangle’ and the ‘right-angled nature of the triangle’ are attributes or considerations of a *specific type* of triangle. They either both exist simultaneously or do not exist simultaneously - neither one gives birth to the other, nor does the second give birth to the first. The theoretical intellect is the one that needs to connect these two, in the process of ‘deduction.’ However, the *absolute* intellect comprehends both simultaneously, knowing them and their equivalence immediately, with certain, absolute certainty.

An important digression

With regards to the attributes of the Necessarily Existent Being, such as knowledge, power, will, and life, which are distinct concepts, the concept of knowledge is certainly not the same as the concept of power, and the concept of will is necessarily not the concept of knowledge, and so on and so forth. These attributes are not parts or components in the sense explained above; they are not independent entities that can be separated, such as a limb that could be cut off from a human being. Rather, they are qualities inherent to the appropriate essence. Decomposing or dividing them into independent entities or concepts, or discussing the essence as ‘abstracted’ from all its attributes as if it were something, is merely a mental construct, often to facilitate study, enable research on the subject, and allow for organisation and categorisation. All of this is a mental estimation or linguistic reference, similar to how the mind estimates and imagines the matter of impossibilities.

Similarly, the assertion that attributes are distinct from the essence - that is, the attributes, as conceived as independent things in the mind, are separate from the essence itself, abstracted from its attributes in mental estimation - such statements and expressions, and similar ones, pertain only to mental estimation or dialectical assumptions, meant to facilitate study and research. In actual existence, that is, outside of the realms of the mind, the attribute existing externally is inherent to the true essence that possesses that attribute. In other words, it is inseparably linked to it. Thus, it is universally agreed upon by all rational thinkers, philosophers, and studious researchers that the attribute cannot be said to be *separate* from the essence. The majority of philosophers, theologians, and scholars agree that attributes should not be considered ‘the essence itself.’ However, some of the more astute among them have claimed that attributes are ‘the essence itself’ only in the case of the necessary being, but this is not the case for any contingent beings.

Here, we would argue that these are matters which are essentially secondary philosophical discussions, not really discussions related to *Sharī’ah*, hence they aren’t of principal concern to us. Neither do they result in *Kufr* (disbelief) nor *al-’Imān* (belief). They neither increase *taqwa*’ (God-consciousness) nor certainty; they do not bring one closer to the Lord of the worlds by even a fraction. This is contrary to the claims of the extreme zealots amongst the renegade sect of Wahhābism, the sect which falsely and slanderously claims that only *they* follow the *Salaf*. Yet the true *Salaf* – the

righteous predecessors, are innocent of them; or the claims of some obsessed extremists among the dialecticians and theologians.

With regards to the point that Allah, may He be Exalted, was not born, it is self-evident from the definition, because the word, *Jalāla* - Majesty, can only be applied to the deity whose existence is eternal and necessary. The following has been mentioned in the acclaimed *Tafsir* of Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ameen al-Shanqīṭi, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*:

He the Almighty is praised where He says: ‘*And say, ‘Praise belongs to Allah, who has no child nor partner in His rule...’* [17: 111]. With regards to the fact that He was not born, no one has ever claimed that about Him, because it is rationally impossible, as proven by the well-known argument, which is as follows. If His existence, may He be Exalted, depended on being born, then His existence would require someone to bring Him into existence. Then, the one who brought Him into existence would also need a parent, and so on, leading to an infinite regress, which is utterly false. Moreover, the need for offspring negates the concept of absolute self-sufficiency ‘*al-Ṣamad*,’ as has been mentioned earlier. If He had a parent, the parent would be prior and more deserving of being the Necessarily Existent Being. Exalted is He above such matters.

It might be said, from the perspective of rational objection, that if we were to assume, as where He states: ‘*Say [Prophet], ‘If the Lord of Mercy [truly] had offspring...’* [43: 81]. (Here) we would argue, based upon the assumption – *If He had a child*, we would say, based on this assumption - what would be the origin and fate of this child? If the child came into existence, when did this occur? If the child is eternal, then there would be multiple eternal beings, which in turn is impossible. Then, if the child is everlasting, there would be multiple everlasting beings, and if the child were to come to an end, when would that end occur? And if the child were destined to end, what was the purpose of bringing it into existence without any need for it? Thus, the notion of having a child is utterly refuted both rationally and

textually, just as the notion of being born is also refuted (again both) rationally and textually.²

² al-Shanqīṭi, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*, [print version Vol 9, p. 281]. The Arabic edition continues thereafter with the quote that appears in the next chapter, and then repeats that quote from al-Shanqīṭi almost in entirety. For ease of reading, the quotation is split and the repetition avoided for the English translation.

7. Attributing ‘a child’ to Allah is the most heinous form of *Kufr*

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the words of explanation as set out by the Shaykh, Muḥammad al-Ameen al-Shanqīṭi in *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*, are of critical importance worthy of deep review and contemplation. After he wrote those comments, within the same work he continued with the following:

Some of the *mufasssireen* (exegetes) have posed a question in relation to this verse, which is: Why did the denial of the child take precedence over the denial of the birth? In the reply that is set out, it is one of the most important, because it is a response to the Christians concerning their claim: ‘Jesus is the son of God’; and in relation to the statement of the Jews, that ‘Ezra is the son of God,’ and upon the (Arab) *mushrikeen* who said: ‘The angels are the daughters of Allah.’ And because no one claimed that He, glory be unto Him, was begotten of anyone, their claim that the child belongs to Allah was a great lie.

As the Almighty has said: ‘*They have no knowledge about this, nor did their forefathers—it is a monstrous assertion that comes out of their mouths: what they say is nothing but lies*’ [18: 5]. He has also said: ‘*The disbelievers say, ‘The Lord of Mercy has offspring.’ How terrible is this thing you assert: it almost causes the heavens to be torn apart, the earth to split asunder, the mountains to crumble to pieces, that they attribute offspring to the Lord of Mercy*’ [19: 88/91]. For the heinousness of this lie, He mentioned it before, and then responded to its impossibility by saying: ‘*It does not befit the Lord of*

Mercy [to have offspring]; there is none in the heavens or earth who will not come to the Lord of Mercy except as a servant,' [19: 92/93].¹

It is also stated in the *Tafsir, al-Jāmi' al-Bayān* of al-Ṭabari:

The saying of the Almighty, Exalted in His remembrance where He said: Those who disbelieve say about Allah *'The Lord of Mercy has offspring; how terrible is this thing you assert.'*² He the Exalted in His remembrance says to those who say that this is from His creation: O people, you have come up with something stupendous from saying something so repugnant. Concerning which, we say, (that) the people of interpretation said (etc.).³

Some of the narrative accounts which are identical are then detailed by al-Ṭabari, thereafter he comments as follows:

Within the (Arabic) language there are three-ways to express this – *'how terrible is this thing you assert.'* (Regarding the word) [ألف] the first, by breaking the *alif*, and [ألف] with a *fattaḥ*' on the *alif*; and [ألف] with a *fattaḥ*' on the *alif* and extending it. It is similar to *mādd fā'il*. As per the reading from the reciters of the garrison cities [ألف], and with that we read it. It was mentioned from Abu 'Abdar-Raḥman al-Sulami that he read that with a *fattaḥ*' on the *alif*. I do not see the reading of such (as having utility) as well, because it differs from the reading as per the reciters of the garrison cities. The Arabs say regarding any great matter, (using the terms) *Idd* [ألف], *Imr* [ألف] and *Nukr* [ألف]. And from it, (the poet) expressed it (the style of) *Rajaz*:

*'Enemies have faced from me, something astonishing
A fierce calamity, dreadful and formidable.'*

And from that, as said from another (poet):

*'Leaving them panting and overwhelmed,
Breathless, struggling, overwhelmed.'*⁴

¹ al-Shanqīṭi, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*, [Vol 9, p. 281]

² *Qur'ān*, 19: 88/89

³ *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari, [Vol. 18, p. 257]

⁴ *Ibid.*

The following has also been mentioned in a chapter of *Tafsir* by Ibn 'Aādil:

Chapter: And know that those who attribute offspring to Allah the Almighty are of three denominations: 1) The disbelievers from among the Arabs, those who said: 'The angels are the daughters of Allah. 2) The Christians, as they said 'The Messiah is the son of Allah.' 3) The Jews, where they said 'al-Uzayr is the son of Allah.' Know therefore that attributing offspring to Allah is *Kufr* 'Azeem (great disbelief). Earlier this was discussed in *Surah al-An'ām*, in relation to his saying: *'and without any true knowledge they attribute sons and daughters to Him.'*⁵ Completion (of the discussion) will come, Allah willing concerning *Surah al-Maryam*.⁶

Also cited in *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*:

And He says in this blessed versed: *'What a monstrous thing for you to say!'* [6: 100]. Within this He has stated that the claim of attributing offspring to Allah the Glorious and Exalted is indeed a very great matter. He has stressed the enormity of this where He the Almighty says: *'The disbelievers say, 'The Lord of Mercy has offspring.' How terrible is this thing you assert. It almost causes the heavens to be torn apart, the earth to split asunder, the mountains to crumble to pieces, that they attribute offspring to the Lord of Mercy. It does not befit the Lord of Mercy [to have offspring]: there is no one in the heavens or earth who will not come to the Lord of Mercy as a servant. He has counted them all: He has numbered them exactly - and they will each return to Him on the Day of Resurrection all alone,'* [19: 88/95]. Indeed, the *mushrikeen*, who Allah has cursed, they made the angels, who are the servants of *al-Raḥman*, feminine. Then, they claimed that they were the 'daughters of Allah,' and worshipped them. Hence, they committed the greatest calamity in the three-levels of existence.⁷

⁵ *Qur'ān*, 6: 100

⁶ *Tafsir* Ibn 'Aādil, p. 3394. Ibn 'Aādil - Abu Ḥafṣ Umar ibn Ali ibn Aādil al-Dimishqī al-Ḥanbali, [d.880 AH]

⁷ al-Shanqīṭi, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*, [Vol 3, p. 158]

As cited in *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, by Ibn al-'Arabi:

The fifth verse: He the Almighty says – ‘*There is no one in the heavens or earth who will not come to the Lord of Mercy as a servant.*’ Within this, there are two issues. The first issue: Muḥammad ibn Ka'b said: The enemies of Allah were about to bring down the Hour upon us by uttering such sayings. (And) this for the saying of He the Almighty – ‘*It almost causes the heavens to be torn apart, the earth to split asunder, the mountains to crumble to pieces, that they attribute offspring to the Lord of Mercy.*’ And He spoke the truth. For indeed He spoke of a great matter that precedes judgement and *al-Qadr*. If not for (the Majesty of) *al-Bāri*, He is not diminished by the *kufir* of the *kāfir*; the ‘*Imān* of the *Mu'min* does not raise Him. Neither adds to His kingdom, nor diminish from His dominion. Whatever may be spoken upon tongues, but (He remains) *al-Qudus*, *al-Hakeem* and *al-Haleem*. He has no regard after that about whatever the purveyors of falsehood say.⁸

Claims without knowledge

Making the attribution of a offspring to Allah, is speaking about Him without knowledge. He the Exalted says:

قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَانَهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ بِهَذَا
أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

They say, ‘*Allah has children!*’ *May He be Exalted! He is the Self-Sufficient One; everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him. You have no authority to say this. How dare you say things about Allah without any knowledge?*⁹

Statements about Allah without requisite knowledge are a violation of the highest of sanctities, the most severe of forbidden matters. Glory be to Allah and His Majestic station.

⁸ Ibn al-'Arabi, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* [Vol. 5, p. 347]. The ‘fifth verse’ referred to is at 19: 93

⁹ *Qur'ān*, 10: 68

قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّي الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ وَإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ، وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا، وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Say ‘*My Lord only forbids disgraceful deeds— whether they be open or hidden—and sin, and unjustified aggression, and that you, without His sanction, associate things with Him, and that you say things about Him without knowledge.*’¹⁰

Is it any wonder that speaking about Allah without any requisite knowledge is the key demand that *Shayṭān* insists upon?

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ
إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوءِ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

*O mankind - eat what is good and lawful from the earth, and do not follow Satan's footsteps, for he is your sworn enemy. He always commands you to do what is evil and indecent, and to say things about Allah that you do not really know.*¹¹

Allah issued a stern rebuke to Nuḥ (Noah) by saying:

قَالَ يَا نُوحُ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ فَلَا تَسْأَلَنِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنِّي أَعِظُكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ
مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

*Allah said: Nuḥ he was not one of your family. What he did was not right. Do not ask Me for things you know nothing about. I am warning you not to be foolish.*¹²

This was because he speculated by thinking his son was among his family who were covered by the good promise made; yet Allah warned His Prophet here, giving the address with a general warning too.

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا

*Do not follow blindly what you do not know to be true: ears, eyes, and heart, you will be questioned about all these.*¹³

¹⁰ *Qur'ān*, 7: 33

¹¹ *Qur'ān*, 2: 168/169

¹² *Qur'ān*, 11: 46

¹³ *Qur'ān*, 17: 36

Given the import of the verse, how can one say about Allah without knowledge to do so? Rather, making the attribution of offspring to Allah is far grievous, indeed heinous, as it is not only from among the statements made about Allah without knowledge, but it is also a manifest lie – lying about Allah. That is an affront to the proofs of rationality. Allah the Mighty and Sublime has made lying about Him to be one of the most severe forms of *kufr*. One can amply see this borne out where He says this in the following verses:

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَذَبَ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَذَّبَ بِالصِّدْقِ إِذْ جَاءَهُ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْكَافِرِينَ

*So who could be more wrong than the person who invents a lie about Allah and rejects the truth when it comes to him? Is there not ample punishment for the disbelievers in Hell?*¹⁴

وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تَرَى الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ وُجُوهُهُم مُّسْوَدَّةٌ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ

*On the Day of Resurrection, you will see those who told lies against Allah, their faces darkened. Is there not ample punishment for the arrogant in Hell?*¹⁵

Attribution of offspring, denial of the hereafter

Any claim that Allah has offspring, a son, daughters, is not merely a lie against Allah and a clear defiance of rational evidence, but it is also a great insult and slander levelled against Allah the Almighty, in clear violation of His Exalted position. The following has been reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī in two places:

حدثنا مسدد حدثنا يحيى بن سعيد عن سفيان قال حدثني الأعمش عن سعيد بن جبيرة عن أبي عبد الرحمن السلمي عن أبي موسى رضى الله عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال ليس أحد أو ليس شيء أصبر على أذى سمعه من الله، إنهم ليدعون له ولدا، وإنه ليعافيه ويرزقهم

Musadad narrated to us Yahya ibn Sa'eed narrated to us from Sufyān he said al-'Amash narrated to me from Sa'eed ibn Jubayr from Abu Abdar-Raḥman al-Sulami from Abu Musa, may Allah be pleased with him, from the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, he said: *None*

¹⁴ *Qur'ān*, 39: 32

¹⁵ *Qur'ān*, 39: 60

*or nothing is more patient than Allah against the harmful saying - He hears from the people they ascribe children to Him, yet He gives them health and (supplies them with) provision.*¹⁶

The narration is *Ṣaḥīḥ*, being reported widely across the corpus of *aḥādith*.¹⁷ Next is the narration that is also cited in *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī:

حدثنا إسحاق بن منصور قال وحدثنا عبد الرزاق أخبرنا معمر عن همام عن أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كذبني بن آدم ولم يكن له ذلك، وشتمني ولم يكن له ذلك أما تكذيبه إياي أن يقول إني لن أعيده كما بدأت، وأما شتمه إياي أن يقول اتخذ الله ولدا وأنا الصمد الذي لم آلد ولم أولد ولم يكن لي كفوا أحد لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا أحد كفوا وكفيئا وكفاء واحد

Ishāq ibn Manṣūr narrated to us he said and 'Abd al-Razzāq narrated to us Ma'mar reported to us from Hammām from Abu Hurayrah he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *The son of Adam tells a lie against Me and he hasn't the right to do so; and he abuses me and he hasn't the right to do so. His telling a lie against Me is his saying that I will not recreate him as I created him for the first time; and his abusing Me is his saying that Allah has begotten children, while I am the self-sufficient Master, whom all creatures need, Who begets not nor was He begotten, and there is none like unto Me.*¹⁸

Further references for this tradition appear in numerous collections, such as the *Ṣaḥīfa* of Hammām ibn Munabih, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Hibbān, and the *Musnad* of Aḥmad, as well as others.¹⁹ The following is cited by Imām al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in two places:

حدثني عبد الله بن أبي شيبه عن أبي أحمد عن سفيان عن أبي الزناد عن الأعرج عن أبي هريرة قال قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أراه يقول الله شتمني ابن آدم وما ينبغي له أن

¹⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī [Vol. 5, no. 5748] and [Vol. 8, no. 6099]

¹⁷ Also cited by al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* [Vol. 6, no. 6943], as well as being in *al-Adab al-Mufrad* [Vol. 1, no. 389]. It is also in *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim [Vol. 4, no. 2804]; *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Hibbān [Vol. 2, p. 409], *Musnad* Aḥmad [Vol. 4, no. 19604 and 19650]; the *Musnad* of al-Ḥumaydi [Vol. 2, no. 774], and in *al-Sunan al-Kubra* of al-Nasā'i [Vol. 4, no. 7708].

¹⁸ *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī Vol. 4, no. 4691

¹⁹ *Ṣaḥīfa* Hammām ibn Munabih [Vol. 1, no. 106]; *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Hibbān [Vol. 3, no. 848], *Musnad* Aḥmad [Vol. 2, no. 8204]

يشتمني، وتكذبني وما ينبغي له، أما شتمه فقول له إن لي ولدا. وأما تكذيبه فقول له ليس يعبدني كما بداني

Abdullah ibn Abi Shayba narrated to us from Abi Aḥmad from Sufyān from Abu Zinād from al-‘Araj from Abu Hurayrah he said the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him said: *Allah said: The son of Adam slights Me, and he should not slight Me, and he disbelieves in Me, and he ought not to do so. As for his slighting Me, it is that he says that I have a son; and his disbelief in Me is his statement that I shall not recreate him as I have created (him) before.*²⁰

There is also the following narrative as recorded in the *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal with a good *isnād*:

حدثنا حسن حدثنا بن لهيعة حدثنا أبو يونس عن أبي هريرة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال ان الله عز وجل قال كذبني عبدي ولم يكن له ليكذبني؛ وشتمني عبدي ولم يكن له شتمني فأما تكذيبه إياي فيقول لن يعيدني كالذي بداني وليس آخر الخلق أهون على ان أعيده من أوله فقد كذبني ان قالها؛ واما شتمه إياي فيقول اتخذ الله ولدا انا الله أحد الصمد لم ألد

Ḥasan narrated to us Ibn Lahiya narrated to us Abu Yunus narrated to us from Abu Hurayrah from the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him he said Indeed, Allah the Mighty and Sublime said: *My slave has lied about me, and it was not for him to lie about me. My servant insults me without any right to do so. As for his denying Me, it is his saying that I will not resurrect him as I created him in the beginning, but resurrecting him is not more difficult for Me than creating him in the first place. As for the insult he levelled at Me, he says: ‘Allah has taken a child.’ I am Allah, Aḥad, al-Ṣamad, I beget not.*²¹

Imām al-Bukhārī records the following in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*:

حدثنا أبو اليمان أخبرنا شعيب عن عبد الله بن أبي حسين حدثنا نافع بن جببر عن بن عباس عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال قال الله كذبني بن آدم ولم يكن له ذلك؛ وشتمني ولم يكن

²⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī [Vol. 3, no. 3021] and [Vol. 4, no. 4691]. Further references for this tradition are to be viewed in the following collections: *Sunan* al-Nasā’i [Vol. 4, no. 2078], as well as *Sunan* al-Kubra [Vol. 1, no. 2205, Vol. 6, no. 11338] and [Vol. 4, no. 7667]; *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān [Vol. 1, no. 267], and others.

²¹ *Musnad* Aḥmad [Vol. 8, no. 8595]. The original Arabic text mistakenly records the reference as being in Volume 2.

له ذلك فأما تكذيبه إياي فزعم أنني لا أقدر أن أعيده كما كان؛ وأما شتمه إياي فقول له لي ولد فسبحاني أن أتخذ صاحبة أو ولدا

Abul’Yamān narrated to us Shu’ayb reported to us from Abdullah ibn Abi Ḥussein, Nāfi’ ibn Jubayr narrated to us from Ibn ‘Abbās from the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, he said: Allah said: *The son of Adam tells a lie against Me though he has no right to do so, and he abuses Me though he has no right to do so. As for his telling a lie against Me, it is that he claims that I cannot recreate him as I created him before; and as for his abusing Me, it is his statement that I have offspring. No! Glorified be Me! I am far from taking a consort or offspring.*²²

Given the compelling evidences mentioned, I would submit that the authentic narrations marshalled by al-Bukhārī show that the worst act of transgression committed by the *mushrikeen* against Allah the Exalted was their doubt in His ability to resurrect the dead, which is a clear denial of His statement, as well as them attributing offspring to Him. The text of the Qur’ān confirms this, denying that Allah has offspring in over twenty different places, which will be outlined, together with the confirmation that the resurrection is true, in countless other places. The point here did not escape the notice of the acclaimed scholar, Shaykh ‘Abdar-Rahman ibn Yaḥya al-Mu‘allimī al-Yamāni, in fact he wrote as much in his book:

And the *ḥadith* of al-Bukhārī indicates that the worst act of transgression committed by the *mushrikeen* against Allah, Blessed and Exalted that He is, was their doubt in His ability to resurrect (the dead), despite being informed of it, and their attribution of offspring to Him. The Qur’ān supports this, as it affirms the resurrection and denies the concept of offspring in many places.²³

Despite all of this, Imām Ibn Taymiyyah rejected all the decisive and certain texts which converge upon this matter. This includes the authentic narratives

²² *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī [Vol. 4, no. 4212]. al-Ṭabarāni has this in his *Mu‘jam al-Kabir*, [Vol. 10, no. 10751] in addition to the *Musnad al-Shāmi‘een* [Vol. 4, no. 2941].

²³ Mu‘allimī, *al-Tankeel bi‘ma’ Tā’neeb al-Kawthari min al-Ibāteel* [Vol. 2, p. 283]. al-Mu‘allimī [d. 1385AH/1966CE]. Originally from Yemen, after travelling to India he eventually settled in Mecca becoming trustee of the library in Mecca.

which are *mutawātir* that will be shortly outlined that decisively show that the Arab *mushrikeen* believed that the angels were the ‘daughters of Allah,’ and they worshipped them for that very reason, not for any other matter. In contrast, Ibn Taymiyyah let his research become focused upon the dead, graves, and rocks. The sect of Wahhābism followed suite, given he was their totem, except for a few intelligent scholars like al-Mu‘allimī. The following is cited in the *Athār* of the Shaykh al-Mu‘allimī:

With regards to their *Shirk* in matters of *Uluhiyyah*, it was tied to their assertion of offspring (to Allah), as it evident from several verses. I have explained this in the book which is entitled *al-‘Ibādah* (the worship). (Therein) it became clear to me that one of the first things that occurred to the Arabs regarding Allah was the attribution of offspring to Him, in fact they would say, ‘the angels are the daughters of Allah.’²⁴

Broadly this is a good summation, but it isn’t without problems. Even a scholar such as this became trapped by his Wahhābi background when he said ‘their *shirk* in matters of *Uluhiyyah*.’ He meant by that, their *Shirk* in matters of *‘Ibādah*. He meant by that: (their association of partners in worship); then he claimed: [they say: (the angels are daughters of Allah), meaning that they are close to Him. He writes: ‘They did not say: sons of Allah, fearing that they would be equal to Him. They said – ‘daughters of Allah’ because females were considered weak among them and did not inherit from their fathers. As time passed, their successors continued to say – ‘daughters of Allah’ without understanding the meaning, and they did not provide evidence that Allah, Exalted had a consort.’²⁵ All manner of delusions and nonsense will be addressed, uprooted and obliterated from the root, by the permission and mercy of Allah.

²⁴ *Athār* Shaykh Abdar-Raḥman ibn Yaḥya al-Mu‘allimī al-Yamāni [Vol. 11, p. 443]

²⁵ *Ibid*.

8. Invalidity of Incarnation and Union with the Divine

The statement that the attributes of Allah the Glorified and Exalted - including His most beautiful names - have become attributes of other existents or beings, and therefore, this ‘other’ is necessarily a created servant because the ‘Necessarily Existent’ is only one being - no more no less. He is Allah the Blessed and Exalted, as we have proved and explained in detail thus far. Therefore from this statement, it necessarily implies one of two meanings, namely:

1. The attributes themselves
2. Or that which is similar to them.

So if what is meant [by this saying] is the attributes themselves, which is the first main category, then it is necessarily either:

1. A. Through the transfer of attributes from the Lord to the servant.
1. B. Or without transference

If it is not through transference, then it must be either:

1. B.1. by uniting the servant’s essence with the Lord’s essence so that they are the same with the same attributes.
1. B.2. or through *al-Ḥulool* (incarnation), and they are three types: *al-Intiqāl* (transference), *al-Ittiḥād* (union with the divine) and *al-Ḥulool* (incarnation).

And if what is meant by [this saying] is something similar to it, then the meaning must include:

2. A. Absolutely the same in every aspect.
2. B. Or what is meant is the same in terms of the name and the sharing in connecting the attributes in general and not their specific

meanings. Thus, these are two sections derived from the second main category.

So, these are five categories of what is construed as possible, one of which, numbered (2.B.) - meaning, it is proved for the created [being] that these attributes are suitable in general and share the name, but are not completely identical to them.

As for the second category, numbered (2. A), it is impossible to attribute such qualities to anyone else in an absolute sense. For instance, it would imply that a created being possesses knowledge that encompasses all things, so that not a single atom in the earth or the heavens escapes their awareness. Or that this being has perfect, absolute life that is untouched by the notion of death, untainted by any deficiency. Or, that they have a singular power that encompasses all of creation, so that they would be the creator of the earth, the heavens, and everything between them. How could such attributes be imagined for anyone *other* than Allah the Almighty?

Moreover, how can a servant be the creator of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, bearing in mind that he is among them – e.g. the temporal plain? How can he be the creator of himself? If these attributes were affirmed for two servants, each one of them is the creator of the other. So, each one of them is the creator of the one who created him. And how can a possible, created, originated, being limited by an attribute be characterised by the same way, manner and degree that the absolute, eternal and unlimited Necessarily Existent was characterised in that manner and that degree because He is a Necessarily Existent!? And how can a limited essence carry an unlimited attribute?! All that is nonsense, impossible, or rather a madness and obsession.

As for the third category numbered (1. A), which is the transference of the divine attributes themselves, it is also impossible because the attributes cannot be separate from the thing being described. This is not particular to the Necessarily Eternal essence, that is the essence of Allah the Blessed and Exalted only, but it is not possible that Zayd's knowledge would be transferred to 'Amr, rather it is not possible for the attributes to exist except with the thing being described. Additionally, because the transference necessitates the emptiness of the one from whom it was transferred, it makes it necessary for the essence to get rid of that attribute that was transferred

from it so that it is no longer its attribute and it is not permissible to attribute it to it. This is absolutely impossible when it comes to the ancient, eternal Necessarily Existent, and it contradicts the concept of 'the Necessity of Existence' in the first place. Besides, what results from the transference of the divine attributes is that he would get rid of divinity, so he is no longer a Lord nor a God, which is obviously impossible.

Union with the divine

As for the fourth category, numbered (1.B.1), which is *al-Ittiḥād* - union with the divine, it is proved invalid as well, because if we contemplate, reflect, reason deeply and with enlightenment, and realise two independent essences: Zayd alone and 'Amr alone, and it was said that Zayd became 'Amr and united together, it is necessary when uniting, either both of them exist or both of them do not exist; or Zayd exists and 'Amr does not exist or the opposite. There cannot be any category beyond these categories.

If they exist, then none of them becomes the same as the other, rather the core of each one of them exists, but the purpose is that their place or locus be united, which does not mean *al-Ittiḥād*, for knowledge, will and capability may come together in one essence. However, their locus would not differ, the capability would not be knowledge and the knowledge would not be will, rather each of these things would remain independent and different from each other, and nothing would have united with one another. It is a union that can be cancelled by differentiation and discrimination, even if by mental differentiation and discrimination.

It may be a mixture or 'blending,' as what results from mixing water and alcohol, or a mixture of hydrocarbons that make up the oil liquid, petroleum. These compounds can be obtained from the mixture by distillation or dissolution, as is the case with salt in seawater, and the final product is called a solution, and its parts can be obtained through evaporation or precipitation. All of that is not *al-Ittiḥād* and it is not permissible to be called *Ittiḥād* as a way of verification. And if an arrogant obstinate individual calls it *Ittiḥād*, s/he is mixing words; one should not start a conversation with him/her until s/he defines the meaning of the words s/he uses.

If they were non-existent, they would not unite but rather, not exist. Maybe what happened is a third thing that is a third essence other than Zayd

and ‘Amr, with whom we started. As is the case in a union between two countries, that do not exist and no longer have an independent existence in the international situation. Thus, a new entity is established, and maybe each of the previous countries turns into a state in the new entity. Consequently, we have a new country in the international situation and two affiliated states that do not exist in the international situation and do not deal directly with the other independent countries.

This is also what happens in chemical reactions, for instance, if we burn hydrogen gas in the air that hydrogen would no longer exist, and also an amount of oxygen gas is gone, and a new substance is created that is water, which is fluid. It is not hydrogen gas or oxygen gas, and it is not possible to obtain the two gases again except by making water non-existent and analysing it chemically or electrically so that it can return to its original status from which it originated in the first place.

All of this is absolutely impossible when it comes to the eternal Necessarily Existent. He is an Eternal whose existence will never have an end. If one of them is non-existent and the other is existent, then there is no *Ittiḥād* because an existent does not unite with a non-existent, as if a country swallowed another country, and completely removed it from existence as an independent entity. This is ‘*Ibtilā*’ (swallowing) not *Ittiḥād* which is impossible when it comes to the Eternal Necessarily Existent, for He is eternal, will never perish and it is impossible for Him to perish. Thus, it is impossible that He is the one who ceased to exist. He is complete in Himself, Necessarily in Himself and Self-Sufficient, so He does not need to swallow something other than Himself, then why ‘*al-Ibtilā*’? And *al-Ibtilā*’ leads to the emergence of a new essence composed of the original essence and all or some of what was swallowed. This composition is impossible when it comes to the ‘Necessarily Existent’ as we already mentioned.

Therefore, the *Ittiḥād* - union with the divine, of the Necessarily Existent with other contingents is an extreme impossibility, because the non-existence of the eternal Necessarily Existent is impossible as well, and the need of the eternal Necessarily to other than himself – so that he unites with him for this reason - is impossible too. If the contingent no longer exists, then he has gone and disappeared, which means there is no *Ittiḥād*. Then we are left with only the Eternal Necessarily Existent, purified of any impurity.

This is not ‘*Ittiḥād*,’ but rather ‘*Ifnā’a*’ – annihilation of the created possible, and a complete *Idām* - extinction!

Here, we hasten to say that we are aware that the non-Chalcedonian churches which in the past, at the time of schism after the Council of Chalcedon, included the Coptic Church, along with the Abyssinian Church, the Church of Antioch, the Church of Jerusalem, the Churches of Asia Minor (except for Constantinople). It currently includes the Sister Churches of the Coptic Orthodox Church, and these are the Abyssinian, Eritrean, Syriac, Indian, and Armenian churches will protest and claim that they have clung to the decisions of The First [Seven Ecumenical] Councils and the beliefs of Athanasius, Cyril and Dioscorus in ‘one nature of Christ,’ that is, the *Ittiḥād* - union with the divine, of divinity with humanity without mixing, blending, or changing. This is not the *Ittiḥād* that we have already proved invalid!

Then we would argue that this formulation is even worse. Yes, it is linguistically correct, constituting of a subject (the *Ittiḥād* of divinity and humanity in Christ) and an object (‘he’ without mixing, blending, or changing), just like the linguistic validity of the sentence: ‘this circle is squared.’ However, it is either self-contradictory, as when you say – ‘*Ittiḥād* is not ‘*Ittiḥād*,’ or they are meaningless, as when you say – ‘*Ittiḥād* is Abracadabra,’ and we do not know what ‘Abracadabra’ means.

The Nicene Creed

The belief of the Eastern Churches in the ‘One Nature of Christ’ - which has necessarily arisen from the concept of *Ittiḥād* of divinity and humanity in Christ – is necessary in their view, in order for redemption and salvation to have a meaning. As it is in the Nicene Creed:

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance

with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

Furthermore, it was added to it at the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople:

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who comes forth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son, is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets, And in one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, And I confess One Baptism for the remission of sins, And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the coming age. Amen.

Some Western Churches may have added [the word] ‘Son’ in the sentence of the crucifixion of the Holy Spirit: ‘Who comes from the Father and the Son.’ So, if the one nature is proved invalid - meaning the *Ittiḥād* is proved invalid - then the very notion of salvation loses its meaning, and the crucifixion becomes meaningless, except by destroying the divinity of Christ. Thus it would only be a matter of martyrdom, as happened to Yaḥya ibn Zakariyā’, peace be upon him.

The Chalcedonian Churches- which in the past used to include the Church of Rome, the Church of Constantinople, and more recently the general Western Churches, said that Christ has two natures and two wills, and this is consistent with *al-ḥulool* (incarnation), so it does not require *al-Ittiḥād* as a way of getting rid of *al-Ittiḥād* and its impossible contradictions and terrifying requirements. We will see soon if the people succeeded in getting rid of the impossibilities and contradiction.

Incarnation

As for *al-ḥulool* – incarnation, which is the fifth category - it is also impossible, and the aspect of the impossibility of *al-ḥulool* cannot be understood except after a thorough understanding of the meaning of *al-ḥulool*. Thus, if the single meanings are not recognised through conceptualisation, even in a general way, it is not possible to negate or prove it. Accordingly, who does not know the meaning of *al-ḥulool*, how does s/he

know that the *ḥulool* of the Creator in the created being, or the *ḥulool* of the Necessarily Existent within the possible existent, possible, or impossible? What can be understood from the *ḥulool* is two things.

Firstly, the ratio between the extended body, to which the concepts of ‘*makān*’ (place) apply, meaning which has length, width and height, and its *makān* (place) where it is. This can only be between two extended bodies to which the statements of ‘*makān*’ (place) apply. Thus, the real meaning of the *ḥulool* is that a body or boundary occurs in something or on something, so what results from that is called *hāl*, the place where the action took place is called *mahal* (locus), and the ratio between them is called *ḥulool* - incarnation. Hence, it is impossible for the one who has nothing to do with the meaning of a body because the concepts of ‘*makān*’ (place) do not apply to him in the first place.

From that, the Christians gave an example of the *ḥulool* – incarnation, of water in the bottle. The reality of this is that the bottle is hollow; it has an internal void filled with air. Thus, if water is poured into it, air goes out and water takes its place. As for the bottle, it is, as it was, without any change. So water is not placed in the bottle, but rather replaced the air in the hollow that was determined by the structure of the bottle, for it was made hollow for this purpose, meaning to be a vessel. And the *ḥulool* of God’s essence in a place in this sense is impossible because He, May He be Glorified and Exalted, is the Truth; the concepts of time and place do not apply to Him. He is not in a *makān* at all. And if we assume the other, for the sake of argument, and that it applies to Him, then it is not permissible for Him to be limited and confined to a material ‘vessel,’ unlike liquids, including water, that need vessels to preserve it and determine its shape and texture, but rather it is then a necessity ‘everywhere;’ this is for the divine essence.

As for the attributes, they exist by themselves, not separate from them by necessity as long as they exist, and as long as the essence deserves that attribute or adjective, which is impossible when it comes to the divine essence because He, May He be Glorified and Exalted - *is* the Necessarily Existent, whose essence does not separate from His attributes, nor His attributes from His essence, eternally and until the Day of Judgment. He is always and eternally deserving of those attributes, so how can His attribute be separate and different from Him, and how can His attribute incarnate

within a created being, without Him being incarnated with His ‘essence’ within that created being?

If we suppose the impossible, meaning that the attribute is separate from the thing being described and that the Necessarily Existent is deprived of it and lacks it, so knowledge or wisdom is separate from it, for example. As a result, he becomes ignorant or foolish, Exalted is Allah above that. Then another impossibility emerges that an attribute has reached the very end of the imaginable perfection of its concept. This means, it is infinite and it was incarnated within a limited finite created being that has an end; an eternal [being] incarnated and gathered in a [being] that has an end, that is, the limited that has an end has become capable of carrying the eternal, unlimited. Therefore, he is more, greater, or more capable than the eternal absolute, even from one angle, or one consideration. Then there is no harm that the part becomes greater than the whole. Or perhaps the attribute was not separate from the first thing being described, but rather subsists at the same time and place, and from the same consideration by two distant essences – one may need to be in the mental hospital with such acrobatics!

The second thing that can be understood from the *ḥulool* (incarnation) is: the ratio between the attribute and the thing being described. The attribute subsists by the thing being described, so it may be expressed (the attribute) as being incarnated within the thing being described, as a way of leniency in expressing when it comes to features and attributes. So, it is said: ‘the substance took its place,’ meaning the place has become attributed with it and the substance subsists by it and exists in it, or that ‘the attribute took its place.’ Namely, the place has become attributed by it, and the attribute subsists by it and exists in it, or something similar to these expressions, but it is preferable and more accurate to say: ‘the attribute is placed in the thing being described,’ because it has always been like that and will remain like that, as long as it exists.

As for the one who subsists by himself, it is impossible. It is impossible for everything that subsists by itself to incarnate within something that subsists by itself, except through the juxtaposition of the bodies, as we have mentioned earlier. So, if it is inconceivable for the *ḥulool* to take place between two created servants, then how can it be conceived between the servant and the Lord? Let alone the Almighty and Sanctified Lord in this matter in the first place. Then how can it be conceived to be said ‘the Lord,

Blessed and Exalted, incarnate within the servant or the servant incarnates within the Lord?’ Exalted is the Lord of lords above the words of the wrongdoers.

Christian mental acrobatics

Throughout the ages, Christians have tried to get out of the problems of *the ḥulool* (incarnation) and the *ittiḥād* (union with the divine) by saying – ‘The occurrence of divinity over humanity,’ or ‘The occurrence of divinity in humanity,’ or perhaps they expressed this by overflow and other ambiguous and meaningless expressions. They tried to represent that in several ways. Some of them said ‘an example of that is what is reflected on polished objects from the things that meet them, meaning like the appearance of something in the mirror.’ Perhaps they called it ‘apparition’ or ‘overflow.’ This is a manifestation or formation of an image; it is not *ḥulool* nor *ittiḥād*. The owner of the image -in front of the mirror- is separate from it, as he is not united with it, nor is he inside it.

Rather, there are two independent essences - the owner of the image, and the reflector or the mirror. If a person hits the mirror and cracks it or breaks it, nothing will happen to the person (whose image is reflected on the mirror) at all; s/he would not say that s/he was cracked, in pain, or removed after his/her image disappeared if the mirror was shattered. Thus, it is neither said nor reasonable that the mirror has become a person, nor the person has become a mirror. If someone said that, s/he would have possibly been sectioned for mental health reasons. The Creator, may He be Glorified and Exalted, is manifested in all His created beings in this sense, for they are all manifestations of the sublime divine capacity. However, realizing this requires deep enlightened thought in a caring and sensitive manner. He is manifested in His Prophets and guardians, where guidance and divine grace can be found. And to Christ, before my father and my mother, the great share belongs, and he is not the only one in that. So, what does it mean to single him out with it?

The body of Jesus son of Mary, peace and blessings be upon him and his mother, is not a mirror, nor is he of its kind, and the ‘Word’ was not manifested in him as the image in the mirror, otherwise, everyone who sees him would have been shocked and stunned, and forcibly believed in him. All

this did not happen, rather he was betrayed by one of his closest students for a low price, a few *dirhams*, as narrated in the people's narrations.

Among them those who said: 'an example of that is the engraved stamp if it touches wax or something similar to it, the inscription of the stamp appears on it, even if nothing of the stamp is incarnated within it.' This example is not far from the example of the mirror; the seal or stamp did not incarnate within wax or merge with it, rather, the stamp remained independently present, as it used to be before using it; it did not change at all. Wax exists independently after sealing it with a seal, except that the image of the stamp was manifested in it, as is the case in the mirror except that it is an image that was created through the formation and displacement of wax under the pressure of the seal. It remains constant after returning the seal to its box, unlike the image of the mirror that disappears if the person in front of it goes. Wax, purely like that, is the only thing that changes. If we understand the overflow of divinity over humanity or the occurrence of divinity in humanity like that, then there is no harm [with that], and it results in the elevation of humanity to the higher levels of humanity with a divine nature or characterized with a divine character. This is out of Prophecy and selection, and it has nothing to do with *ḥulool* or *ittiḥād*.

Some of them said 'The meaning of the occurrence of divinity over Jesus is like the establishment of God on the Throne for the Islamists.' This makes no sense as well, and it has nothing to do with the *ḥulool*, the *ittiḥād* or manifestation because no matter how much the people of Islam disagreed about it, the establishment did not transform the Throne into a divine or half-divine being, and Allah did not manifest in it, nor did He incarnate, nor unite with it. Furthermore, the saying that Allah is established on the Throne is not confined to the people of Islam, as *they also say* that the Father is established on the divine Throne and that Jesus the son ascended after his crucifixion and then his resurrection, so he sat on the right of the father above the divine Throne. However, they do not say that the Throne is a divine being, so where did they get this analogy from?

They may express the *ittiḥād* through 'shielding,' as if they took it from the word shield, indicating that divinity took humanity of Jesus as a shield. This is similar to the aforementioned example of the bottle or vessel, because the shield is a vessel for the one who wears it, surrounding it from all or some of its sides, and separating it from the outside, and we have already discussed

this in detail. Although in this word, which is shielding, there is something of impoliteness, as if divinity needs a shield for protection, which is impossible.

Some of them have said, 'The Word mingled with the body of Christ and blended with it, just as wine mixes with milk.' This analogy is fruitless because, according to them, 'the Word' is a hypostasis of the Trinity. The best that can be said about this is that the 'Word' is a metaphor for 'divine knowledge.' Divine knowledge is neither a body, nor a substance, nor an independent entity. Therefore, as we have previously stated, it is impossible for it to separate from the One it describes, Exalted be He. Otherwise, the Lord would become ignorant, like the dead, knowing and perceiving nothing, including His own sacred essence, in other words, He would become like the dead or actually die!

Even if we assume that impossibility and claim that the 'Word' is completely mixed with the body of Jesus so that a new being has arisen, which is not only the 'Word' nor only the 'body,' we would have fallen into endless impossibilities and contradictions. What happened to the original 'Word?' Did it perish? This is impossible because He is a Necessarily Eternal Existent according to the hypothesis that we claimed at the beginning; has there been a fundamental change in its essence? This is impossible because it is Necessarily Existent, so all its attributes are necessarily connected to it and do not deviate from it. Therefore, it is impossible for it to be changed or united, so there has not been *ittiḥād* nor mixing. As for the body, it is easier, for it may have perished and gone, and what is left is a fictional image that people see with no real existence. Accordingly, Jesus is a pure God in whom there is no humanity at all. If that was the case, then upon whom did the crucifixion and torture take place and who suffered from that?

Some have argued that the 'Word,' which they consider to be an eternal being and a divine hypostasis, was transformed into flesh and blood. This, however, is a wild and unfounded fantasy; indeed a diseased imagination with no meaning or substance behind it. It is impossible for the eternal Necessary Being to *transform* into anything else, and even more so to turn into something finite, created, and composite. If such a transformation were possible, then the idea of the world coming into existence without a Creator would be more reasonable and closer to the nature of intellect.

Among them are those who claimed they proved the *Ittiḥād* but they said ‘None should question [his existence] nor could he be adapted,’ because it is ‘a Divine Secret.’ As for these people, thank Allah, they have removed our trouble of responding to them because they admitted their ignorance. However, the question remains: how did you *prove* that to Jesus when you do not know anything about him at all? There must be in your minds, at least in its entirety, a perception, a concept, or a definition of the *ittiḥād*. You must be able to express it, even in a confused, vague and incomplete way, otherwise, why did you claim to have proved it in relation to Jesus then?

Summation

These are the doctrines of the well-known Christian sects, as for the difference between their individual and common people, it is hardly adjusted or related, and it is deeper in confusion and imagination. Even if we concede, for the sake of the argument, that divinity is incarnated within humanity in any sense (like oil in a bottle, or the *jinn* in the one who is possessed). As for the flow of the soul in the body, it is not suitable as a model because it produces two natures with one will, and the two natures and wills that results in it, the supposed redemption and salvation would be invalid because it is inevitably related to the crucifixion and suffering of Jesus, as expressed earlier in the excerpt from the Nicene Creed: ‘*And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried. And on the third day, He rose from the dead, according to the scriptures.*’ The crucifixion, the pain and death inevitably happened to humane [nature] only.

As for divinity, it is impossible for it to be affected by harm, deficiency, or damage. Accordingly, it is impossible for him to feel or be affected by pain or something related to it because it (the feeling of pain) is in the created animals a warning of the presence of a disease or harm so that they can take the appropriate action, such as escaping from the fire, scratching the place of the pinch, or using medication for the disease. Feeling is a relative perfection in animals compared to plants and inanimate objects, but it is a conditional perfection on the existence of imperfections, or rather deficiencies - vulnerability to damage, which is a deficiency in ‘*al-Ṣamadiyah*’ (Self-Sufficiency) or ‘*al-Matāna*’ (solidity). A need for the ability to feel, which is a lack of knowledge, for it is not originally mentioned when it comes to

Allah the One and Only, the All-Wise, the All-Knowing, the Powerful and Firm. And if the *ḥulool*, the transference, the *ittiḥād*, and being characterised by attributes similar to Allah’s attributes, He the Exalted and Glorified, were proved invalid, then there is nothing left for the one saying: ‘That the servant took the attributes of the Lord,’ or ‘That the attributes of the Lord were transferred or copied in the servant,’ or ‘That the divinity was embodied in someone,’ or ‘That someone was embodied by divinity,’ or other such expressions similar to that. The meaning is valid except for what we have indicated, namely: ‘That some attributes are to be affirmed as a whole for the created being and share the same name, but it is not completely similar to it.’ Even Paul of Tarsus’s saying about Jesus that ‘The complete divinity was embodied in him,’ despite its exaggerated flattery and glorification must be interpreted appropriately.

What we have mentioned makes it impossible for generalising that the meanings of the names of Allah the Almighty become attributes of the servant, except with a kind of restriction to avoid any illusion that may occur, otherwise, the generalisation of this word is delusional, and it may contain a kind of expansion and metaphor. The meanings of the names are attributes of Allah the Almighty; His attributes cannot become attributes of others, but what it means is that He obtains what fits those attributes, as it is said: ‘Someone acquired the knowledge of his teacher, although the knowledge of the teacher *itself* is not what his student acquired, but rather the *like* of his knowledge, or a *copy* of it.’

Perhaps this is the reason for the error of the majority of Trinitarian Christians, followers of Paul of Tarsus. They saw those perfect qualities and splendid attributes in the person of Christ, Jesus, the son of Mary, honoured and brought close to Allah, peace, blessings, and prayers be upon him and his mother, and the extraordinary miracles he performed, and thus they said, ‘He is God.’ But this is the mistake of one who looks at a mirror in which an image is reflected, coloured by the mirror’s hue, and imagines that this image *is the mirror itself*, or that the colour belongs to the mirror. Far from it. The mirror itself has no colour; its *nature* is simply to reflect images of colours in such a way that it deceives those who focus only on outward appearances into thinking that the image is that of the mirror. Even a small child, when seeing a person in the mirror, might think that the person is truly inside the mirror or behind it. This confusion can even happen to an

experienced adult in certain situations, especially if caught off guard and unaware of the mirror's presence

All what we have mentioned above in this chapter, which was devoted to proving the invalidity of *ḥulool* and *ittiḥād*, then is, in its essence, a transmission from the esteemed Imām, Abu Abdullah Shams al-Deen Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abu Bakr ibn Farraḥ al-Anṣārī al-Khazraji al-Qurṭubi [d. 671 AH] in his valuable book: '*Revealing the Corruption and Delusions in the Religion of the Christians and Showing the Beauties of Islam*.'¹ Thereafter it was noted that what the Imām had transmitted, albeit with some revision and modification, what was in fact the work of Abu Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī during his discussion of the purported *ḥadīth* '*Takhallaqu bi-akḥlaq Allah Ta'ala*,' at the conclusion of the first chapter of his seminal work on the Ninety-Nine Names of Allah. May Allah reward the two Imām's and have mercy on them.

However, there remained one ambiguity that the saying of those who believe that Allah has a son, or that he incarnated within someone, or that Allah or some of him or his Word has turned into flesh and blood; saying that this is impossible means limiting Allah's capability, so Allah is no longer 'Most Capable of everything.'

¹ Originally titled in Arabic as: *al-'Ilām bi'ma al-Naṣāra min al-Fasad wal' Awhām wa' Idthār Maḥāsīn al-Islam*. Revised edition by Dr Ahmad Ḥijāzi al-Saqqā, (Dar al-Turath al-Arabi: Cairo). The text can be accessed from [p. 127] onwards.

9. Does Divine Power extend to rational or logical impossibilities?

A matter that has confused even perplexed some, is whether the power of the divine can extend to cover that which is logically or rationally impossible. Yet the absolute truth, concerning which there shouldn't be anything resembling the slightest doubt, is that divine power *only* relates to the logical and rationally possible. It cannot relate to the illogical or rationally impossible whatsoever.

Concerning what is perceived as impossible in the temporal domain, it is usually a matter of habit or nature, that is, in accordance with prevailing customs or the laws of nature, like the instantaneous transformation of a stick into a snake. This is not among the logically or conceptually necessary impossibilities because the stick is 'possible,' in other words, it exists now, and its existence began after non-existence. In reality, there are many sticks, and a living snake is possible, it exists now, and its existence began after non-existence. The absence of the stick or the snake and their transformation into 'nothing' is possible, and likewise, the emergence of the stick or the snake from 'nothing' is also possible. The entire universe has originated from 'nothing,' an absence of existence, at its beginning, regardless of the long complex chain of causes and effects between that beginning and this present moment.

Hence arising from the example of the stick and the snake, it is firmly established that such a transformation – a stick into a living snake and vice versa is conceptually possible, thereby within domain of the power of Allah. Indeed, this has happened to Musa, peace be upon him, occurring despite the seeming impossibility according to the usual course of nature, in other words, according to the laws of nature, it is still logically possible, and thus, it is not among what can be construed as the absolute logical impossibilities.

To assert that divine power can or does extend to logical impossibilities, opens the notion that Allah can have true offspring with a divine essence and substance, and that the divine word can transform into flesh and blood. Saying this or anything similar leads to making Allah, the Exalted and Majestic a falsity. It implies that Allah can change from necessary existence to that of contingent existence, and it further extends to the notion that Allah does not exist at all. The idea that the universe can originate from nothing without a Creator is more acceptable and easier to comprehend. By accepting this, reason collapses, languages lose their meaning, and religious principles are invalidated, Allah forbid all of that.

Criticality

This topic about the nature of power, will, divine decree, and command is one of the most critical issues in *al-‘Aqeedah*. For that reason, it has been challenging to grasp and understand. Power is not contingent on necessity in and of itself, meaning the necessity of existence, nor is it contingent on impossibility in and of itself. If it were related to the existence of necessity, it would necessitate the acquisition of what already exists, which is a meaningless concept. If it were related to non-existence, it would require a real change in the nature of necessity, and the nature of necessity inherently does not admit non-existence due to absolute conceptual necessity, because the absence of the necessity of existence is absolutely impossible. Ability is not related to the impossible, because if it were related to the impossible to execute it, it would also be necessary to achieve the result, which is nonsense. Moreover, if it were related to finding it, it would require a real transformation of the impossibility itself, and its reality does not accept existence at all, necessarily in absolute conceptual terms. Therefore it is necessary that ‘ability’ is only related to the possible.

Allah is Exalted and Majestic, He is the clear truth who knows all things. He is free from all notion of faults or deficiency. Thus it is impossible and inconceivable that His will and intention would ever be directed towards falsehood. His will and intention cannot be obligated itself or towards the impossibility itself. Based on this, both ability and will are not related to impossibility itself or being obligated by itself. The presence of neither ability nor will does not imply a lack of ability or will. This is only required

in what ability and will can be related to. However, this is not the case here, as ability was not related to it from the beginning, and will did not turn towards it initially.

Perplexed

No doubt, this issue has perplexed many thinkers, philosophers, and scholars. Here is what Abu Muḥammad, Ibn Ḥazm said regarding this in his seminal work on comparative religion entitled: *al-Fiṣal fi al-Milal wal-Niḥal* (The Separator Concerning Religions, Heresies and Sects):

Abu Muḥammad (Ibn Ḥazm) said: One of the leaders from the reforming group within the Mutazilites, Abdullah ibn Aḥmad al-Ka’bi al-Balkhi, responded to this issue by arguing: ‘Indeed, we differ not in relation to the affirmation that Allah the Exalted and Sublime is capable of placing the moving body at rest and moving the static body, but He is not described with the power to make them (both bodies) moving and stationary simultaneously.’

Abu Muḥammad said: This is not like how the ignorant atheist laid claim concerning how Allah the Almighty described himself. Allah the Almighty is capable of making something both static and moving simultaneously, in one instance from one particular aspect. But, the words of al-Ka’bi are but brazen *kufir*, to assert that Allah the Almighty is not described with the power to do the impossible. It is said unto them, ‘Why is He not described with the power to do that? Is it because He has the power to do so, or is it because He has no power to do so?’ There is no escape for them from this position.¹

May Allah have mercy upon Ibn Ḥazm given this tremendous exaggeration, to the extent of labelling it a matter of brazen *kufir*. Criticism as such doesn’t necessarily mean the complete invalidation of how al-Ka’bi argued, particularly in terms of the best way to express it. Similarly, Ibn Ḥazm’s assertion that it results in this dual response or proposition, provides confusion above and beyond obfuscation. In fact, the definitive textual expression in this regard is:

¹ Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal fi al-Milal wal-Niḥal* [Vol. 3, p. 22]

إن الله على كل شيء قدير

*Indeed Allah has power over all things.*²

Thus, the answer is that the ‘impossible’ is not something fundamentally from that. The divine comprehensive power is not related to that which is impossible. Given this, the claim, whether by Ibn Ḥazm here or others that there isn’t an escape from this essential dualism – ‘He has the power to do the impossible,’ or ‘He has no power to do the impossible,’ is not valid at all.

Apprehension

Without doubt, many people from the adherents of Islam have been apprehensive, tentative or even weary about definitively affirming what we have stated above. Namely, that divine power *is only* related to that which is logically or rationally possible, not to that which is logically or rationally impossible. Naturally, this hesitation in expressing this is out of reverence, glorification and respect for Allah. We would argue, that this is well meaning and proper etiquette when speaking about such matters related to Allah, the Exalted and Glorious. Yet such fear should not prevent the unequivocal statement in this matter, since there is an explicit text from the revelation concerning it. Allah the Exalted and Majestic says:

لَوْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا لَاصْطَفَىٰ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ سُبْحَانَ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

*Had Allah desired to take to Him a son, He would have chosen whatever He willed of that He has created. Glory be to Him! He is Allah, the One, the Omnipotent.*³

The verse provides affirmation regarding the impossibility of what is clearly impossible. If, hypothetically, it were claimed that Allah desires or desired to have a child, wishing to adopt one, it would be more feasible for Him to choose from among His creation, whatever He so willed. Allah is far above

² Qur’ān 2: 109

³ Qur’ān 39: 4. Here we have departed from Abdel Haleem’s translation opting for that of Arberry given the nature of the discussion.

such desires and intentions, may He be Exalted and Glorified. Such selection, perhaps metaphorically dubbed as being ‘adoption,’ is within the bounds of the possible. That which extends beyond that, firmly sits within the realms of the impossible, namely:

- a) Birth or offspring from the divine essence or being is not possible at all.
- b) Adopting or taking another supposed ‘divine being’ as a divine child or offspring is also, equally, completely impossible. There is only one divine entity, Allah the Almighty.
- c) Real or actual adoption in the sense of a created finite being becoming or transforming into something divine, is also completely far-fetched and another facet of impossibility.

Our statement or rather position, is clear. All praise is due to Allah, who revealed the final revelation as a healing for what is in the hearts, a guidance and mercy for people who believe. Such is the guidance and light that Allah has sent down upon the finality of Prophethood, the Seal of all Prophets, Muḥammad ibn Abdullah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family. Moreover, setting this position out lucidly, clarifies that Allah the Majestic does not need, desire or want any ‘offspring’ whatsoever. Therefore, He does not ‘adopt’ them at all. Given this, it is not permissible to describe any mortal on earth, let alone an angel within the heavenly domain as being the ‘son’ or ‘daughter’ of Allah. The claim that Jesus, son of Mary, peace and blessings be upon him and his mother, is supposedly ‘the son of God’ even in terms of this adoption, is utterly false. Whoever asserts this after the revelation of the Qur’an is considered a *kāfir*, as they are denying Allah the Exalted.

Previous sects

There were some sects from the Christians, such as the followers of Arius and Paul of Samosata (Bishop of Antioch), as well as the majority of early converted Jews, who made such assertions in the past. Evidently, they were wrong, but they are not strictly speaking considered as being *kāfir* or *mushrikeen*, by the will of Allah. Previous earlier scriptures didn’t mention anything like this. Rather, there were expressions in the older ancient scriptures that seemed to suggest the notion of ‘adoption’ in the sense of a

specific selection. Others have termed it as being ‘the elect.’ They were on the whole considered as believing in the Oneness of Allah, without lying or attributing a lie to Allah; not associating partners and idols with Him, and in truth, they weren’t strictly speaking, attributing a notion of ‘real offspring,’ meaning of divine nature, equal in essence to that of the Father, as the Trinitarians and other groups of *Shirk* and *kufir* did, as will be elucidated in due course.

Even those who held the concept of their being a real matter of offspring, or a ‘real son’ which undoubtedly is a clear inherent expression of *kufir* and *Shirk*, it could well be possible that some of the impediments may apply to them, given the misinterpretation, ignorance or other such areas. All of this occurred before the dawn of the message brought by the Prophet Muḥammad, and the radiant light of the Prophetic evidence. It is appropriate to entrust their matter to Allah, as Jesus, son of Mary, may Allah's prayers, peace, and blessings be upon him and his mother, will say on the Day of Judgment:

إِنْ تُعَذِّبُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ وَإِنْ تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

‘And if You punish them, they are Your servants; if You forgive them, You are the Almighty, the Wise.’⁴

Here, we would reiterate as such, hoping for the second option which is forgiveness. None will perish except those who deserve destruction as per the decree of Allah.

It was indeed supposed to be sufficient to deny the divinity of Christ by adhering to the statement of Paul of Tarsus regarding Christ, namely that ‘the full divinity manifested in him,’ metaphorically. Especially since Paul explicitly declared that ‘there is only one God.’ He never claimed that Christ *is God*. Instead, he bestowed upon him the title ‘Kyrios’ [κύριος] in Greek, which translates to ‘Lord’ or ‘Master.’ The term ‘lord’ is a title habitually used to address monarchs or high-ranking feudal nobility. It is employed by servants when addressing their masters, both in ancient and modern times. Similarly, he frequently referred to Christ as the ‘Son of God,’ a term that can be understood in the context of adoption and selection. This should have

⁴ *Qur’ān* 5: 118

been sufficient to resolve all the issues related to the nature of Christ. If the mortal nature of Christ is affirmed, there is no need to assert the divinity of the Holy Spirit in the first place. If this is established, there is no need for the concept of the Trinity at all.

Yet history unfortunately did not unfold in this manner. It evolved at the hands of Christian philosophers and theologians into a comprehensive theory of the Trinity, characterised by extreme philosophical obscurity and complexity. It requires a structured philosophical critique to complete the rational argument for *Tawḥeed*. Upon reviewing the topic of the Trinity, to understand all opinions and theories, it became evident that it is extensive to the degree that a single chapter in this volume may well be insufficient. Therefore, an independent, albeit less significant study is necessary, as mentioned earlier. Perhaps we will produce it as a separate research, by the mercy and permission of Allah.

10. Understanding the verse - 'If the Lord of Mercy had offspring'

While perhaps more of a digression, the present chapter here covers the meaning of the verse, as mentioned earlier:

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدٌ فَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْعَابِدِينَ

*If al-Raḥman (the Lord of Mercy) [truly] had offspring I would be the first to worship.*¹

The correct meaning for the verse, as we have mentioned earlier, is: Say O Muḥammad, if Allah had a child, *as you claim* – I'd be the first of the worshippers, so there isn't a need to persist in your false claims. However, the *claim itself* is false, since Allah is far above having such deficiencies, let alone imperfections.

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

*Exalted be the Lord of the heavens and earth, the Lord of the Throne - He is far above their false descriptions.*²

The matter concerning the existence of 'a son' of Allah is impossible and not from that which is possible. Similar has been said upon this, for example that which Imām al-Ṭabari outlined in his *Tafsir*:

¹ *Qur'ān* 34: 21. When read together with verse 22: 'Say [Prophet], 'If the Lord of Mercy [truly] had offspring I would be the first to worship [them], but, Exalted be the Lord of the heavens and earth, the Lord of the Throne - He is far above their false descriptions.'

² *Qur'ān* 43: 82

The interpretation which is closest to that of the intended meaning of the verse is (essentially) conditional. Given this, it clarifies the soundness of our explanation of the meaning underpinning the verse, (which is): Say O Muḥammad to the *mushrikeen* of your people who claim that the angels are daughters of Allah: if *al-Raḥman* had a child then I am the first of the worshippers, but He has no child, so I worship Him as He has no child, and He should not have one. And if the speech is directed to what we said from this perspective it would not be on an aspect of doubt, but it would be on the aspect of gentle talk and good speech, as the Almighty said: 'Say, 'Allah does,' and '[One party of us] must be rightly guided and the other clearly astray,' [34: 24]. He knew that the truth was with Him, and that those who opposed Him were in clear misguidance.³

After this, al-Ṭabari mentioned other statements from the *Salaf* together with various channels of narration. Regardless of whether these channels are authentic or not, we have overlooked them, as they will follow in what is laid out by Imām al-Rāzi, coupled with its inconsistency and ultimate downfall. The citation for this is lengthy, and is as follows:

The second issue: Know that people thought that His saying: 'Say [Prophet], 'If al-Raḥman (the Lord of Mercy) [truly] had offspring I would be the first to worship,' [34: 21], if we take it on its apparent meaning, then it could lead to the existence of doubt in proving a son for Allah the Almighty. That is impossible and surely they lacked (comprehension in) interpreting the verse. In my opinion, that is not the case and there is nothing in the apparent meaning of the wording that necessitates deviation from what it reports. It confirms, that His saying, if the *al-Raḥman* had a child then I am the first of the worshippers, is a conditional proposition and the conditional proposition consists of two predicates. In one of them, the letter of the condition is inserted and in the other a letter of recompense, so it became one proposition by adding them together, and this verse is an example of it. It is a proposition which consists of two: one of them: His saying 'if *al-Raḥman* had a child,' and the second: 'then I am the first of the worshippers.'

³ *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari [Vol. 20, p. 658]. al-Ṭabari's analysis is extensive and covers [pp. 653/659].

Then, the conditional particle [إِنْ] was applied to the first proposition, and the particle of consequence, [فَإِنَّ] (indicating a sequential ‘then’) was applied to the second proposition. Combining both, results in a single conditional statement. When you understand this, we say – ‘a conditional statement only indicates that the condition necessitates the consequence, without implying whether the condition is true or false, or whether the consequence is true or false.’ Moreover, we further clarify that a valid conditional statement may be composed of two-true propositions, or two false propositions; or a false condition with a true consequence, or a true condition with a false consequence. Regarding the fourth case, where a valid conditional statement consists of being made up of a true condition with a false consequence – that is impossible.⁴

If you grasp this core principle, we then return to the verse at hand and say, His saying, ‘*If al-Raḥman [truly] had offspring I would be the first to worship,*’ is a true conditional statement made up of a false condition, together with a false consequence. This is because the statement, ‘*If al-Raḥman [truly] had offspring,*’ is false. Our saying ‘I’d be the first to worship that child,’ is also false. However, as explained, both the condition and consequence (arising) are false, doesn’t bar one from logically implying the other. As per the example, ‘If five were even, it would be divisible by two.’ Hence it is established there’s no issue in comprehending this statement as per its manifest apparent meaning. Namely, the intended meaning is that ‘*If al-Raḥman had a child, I would be the first to worship.*’ Just as a servant is required to serve its master, (like for example a king), then likewise the obligation would also follow for the servant to be in service to the offspring. Moreover, clarification has been set out that this composition (of sentence) doesn’t necessarily imply any acknowledgment of whether a child *actually exists*.

What is nearer in approximation to the topic under consideration is where He says: ‘*If there had been in the heavens or earth any gods*

⁴ Here at this juncture al-Rāzi sets out a series of logical statements by way of example to demonstrate the veracity of the earlier points that were made. For the sake of abbreviating an already exceedingly long quotation, these have been omitted for the present translation. Notwithstanding, the need for ease of reading given the rather turgid way al-Rāzi has written this.

but Him, both heavens and earth would be in ruins,’ [21: 22]. The statement made in the verse, is a conditional proposition. The condition is ‘*If there had been any gods,*’ then the consequence is laid out – ‘*both heavens and earth would be in ruins.*’ The condition itself is false and the following consequence is also false, because the truth (underpinning the matter) is that *there are no gods* (plural) in the heavens and the earth. The word ‘if’ [إِنْ] demonstrates the *absence* of something, based on the negation of something else, as they – the temporal earth and heavens, haven’t been corrupted. (Again) despite the fact that both the condition and its necessary consequence are false, the implication of this condition *leading* to this consequence is true. The same (reasoning also) applies here.

If they said the difference is that in this respect, Allah the Almighty has mentioned this conditional phrasing with the wording of ‘if’ [إِنْ] when He said ‘*If there had been in the heavens or earth any gods*’; the word ‘if’ [إِنْ] means negating the thing when other thing does not exist. In the verse which we are interpreting, Allah the Almighty has mentioned the word ‘if’ [إِنْ] and this word does not mean negating the thing when other thing does not exist. Rather this means the doubt in whether the condition has occurred or not, and the occurrence of this doubt for the Messenger is not possible. We say, the difference which you mentioned is correct even though our intention is to expound that the conditional does not have to be true for both parts being true or false upon what we decided. As for His saying that the word ‘if’ [إِنْ] means occasioning the condition whether it has occurred or not, we said this is forbidden because the particle ‘if’ [إِنْ] is a particle of condition only signifying that the condition is necessary for the consequence. With regards to whether the condition is known to occur, or is doubtful, the word by itself provides no indication of that. From the discourse we have elaborated upon, it is evident that wording expressed here can be understood in the *Dhāhir* (its apparent meaning) in all aspects, without the need for (overly excessive) *Ta’weel* (interpretation).

The meaning (underpinning) what He the Almighty has said is: ‘Say, O Muḥammad, if *al-Raḥman* had a child, then I am the first to worship, being the first to serve him.’ The meaning of this saying is to clarify that I do not deny His ‘child’ because of opposition and

stubbornness. If there was in fact evidence that could *prove* the existence of such a child, I would readily acknowledge him, admitting the necessity of serving him. Yet no child is in existence, nor is there evidence proving as such. Hence, how could I affirm and acknowledge it? Instead, the conclusive evidence is based on *non-existence* - so how can I lay claim to such a matter and acknowledge its existence? This discourse is complete and clear. There's absolutely no need for (further) *Ta'weel* and deviation from the *Dhāhir* upon the matter. It was narrated about al-Suddi, from among the *mufasssireen*, that he used to say it is entirely possible to interpret this verse as it appears, and there is no need for interpretation. The statement which we mentioned indicates that what he said is the truth, as for those who say that interpretation is necessary they mentioned many aspects:

Firstly

The first aspect was that al-Wāḥidi said 'There are many ways in interpreting this verse, and the strongest is to say that the meaning is this: If *al-Raḥman* had a child, as you claim, then I am the foremost of *al-Muwahḥideen* (adherents of monotheism), and the first to reject your claim of attributing a child to Him.' Someone may claim that the interpretation of the saying could either be (one of the following): 'If it were established, that *al-Raḥman* had a child, then I'd be first in denying that,' or 'If it is established that you have claimed *al-Raḥman* had a child, then I'd be foremost in denying that.' (Here) the first (viewpoint) is invalidated because of the existence of a thing in reality doesn't require the Prophet's denial. Given the statement 'If something is true then I am the first to deny it,' (which would) imply an insistence upon falsehood, which is in no way fitting for the status of a Prophet. The second (viewpoint) is invalidated because regardless of whether they affirm or deny that Allah has a child, the Prophet would *still* utterly reject the very notion that Allah had a child. Their claim thus has no bearing upon the Prophetic rejection. It cannot be construed as an occasioning factor in that Prophetic denial of the child.

Second

They said the meaning (of the verse) 'Say [Prophet], 'If *al-Raḥman*, the Lord of Mercy [truly] had offspring I would be the first to

worship,' [34: 21] is a rejection of the notion that he has a child. (From the wording) '*Abida, Ya'budu* [عَبِدَ يَعْْبُدُ] indicating strongly rejecting a matter. The person being, one who rejects, '*Abida* [عَبِدَ] and '*Aābid* [عَابِدَ], emphatic rejection. Some of them read this as being '*Abideen* [عَبِيدِينَ]. Know, that the issue mentioned here has arisen because if the intended meaning is 'If *al-Raḥman* in actuality had a child, I'd be the first to deny it,' implies persistence in falsehood and ignorance. However, if the meaning is 'If *al-Raḥman* as per *your claim*, I'd be the first to reject it.' Such a connection is flawed, because this rejection is there whether that claim and belief has happened or did not happen, and if the matter was like that, then this comment would not be permissible.

Third

Some argued that the word if [إِن] here, is to negate, (hence) the meaning is thus '*al-Raḥman* doesn't have a child, so I am the first of *al-Muwahḥideen* from among the people of Mecca, to affirm this.' Know, that resorting to interpretations (like this) which are far-fetched arises only from necessity. We have clarified and explained no such necessity arises, so it is not permissible to adopt as such. And Allah knows best.⁵

Summary analysis

From the lengthy quote it is noted that Imām al-Rāzi didn't spend much time responding to the third aspect or point – at the end of the long quotation, because to make 'if' [إِن] with the meaning of a negation [لَا] is a very distant interpretation that I do not know to be commonplace in the speech of the Arabs. It is rather perhaps falsely attributed, so it should not be taken, if it was permissible to do so at all, except out of absolute necessity.

With regards to the second aspect, we would say, do take time to ponder over the deep and enlightened thought which Imām al-Rāzi only reached because of his expertise in the science of logic and rhetoric. Ponder over it, to know the truth, not only in our partial case, but also in the reality of disillusioned and disappointed sayings from the sect of Wahhābism, such as '*Ilm al-Kalām* is ignorance and ignorance of *Ilm al-Kalām* is knowledge';

⁵ *Tafsir* al-Rāzi [Vol. 27, p. 645 (Shamela edition)]

‘Whoever speaks upon matters of logic falls into heresy.’ We seek refuge in you, O Allah from the disillusioned. We humbly ask you by your beautiful names, and your Most High attributes, to make us enjoy our minds with all their strengths in general, and to master the sciences of the logic and philosophy, and *Ilm al-Kalām* in particular; and to enjoy all our powers, senses, hearing and sight as long as you keep us alive!

The correct viewpoint is that the word ‘if’ [إِنْ] in this verse is conditional, and the distinction from using the word ‘law’ [لَوْ] which would imply impossibility arising from mutual exclusivity, to [إِنْ] is done for purposes of rhetoric, as Imām al-Ṭabari mentioned some of them. The verse is not, in full context if it is combined with the one that follows it, allegorical or ambiguous, as some may have thought previously, falling into error and invalid interpretations. Rather it is from the category of clear decisive verses, to which those that are ambiguous are referred back to. The verse shows that the matter of a ‘biological child or offspring’ is necessarily of the same type and essence of the father, definitively. Therefore, *if* the father was ‘a god, deserving of worship,’ then the child/offspring is likewise too by necessity. No wonder the other verse relating to mutual exclusivity, namely the impossibility of there be *more than one* God, is of a similar import:

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا أَذَّهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ، وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ

*Allah has never had a child. Nor is there any god beside Him. If there were, each god would have taken his creation aside and tried to overcome the others. May Allah be Exalted above what they describe!*⁶

The verse completely negates the notion of ‘having the child’ or ‘offspring,’ thereby totally nullifying any notion of a ‘race of gods,’ or ‘divine offspring.’ Contained therein is the explicit nullification that that there is a multiplicity of deities or gods, regardless of the nature. Moreover, the verse through the guidance it provides - to people of enlightened minds, such as Imām al-Rāzi, outlines the truth regarding conditional propositions / statements, in the easiest wording, with concise expression. Indeed, this is one of the key

⁶ Qur’ān 23: 91

features of the miraculous nature of the Qur’ān. He the Exalted and Majestic says:

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

Say, ‘Even if all mankind and jinn came together to produce something like this Qur’ān, they could not produce anything like it, however much they helped each other.’⁷

⁷ Qur’ān 17: 88

11. The Acts of Allah

The actions of Allah and His decrees are not subject to being conditioned or influenced by any external factor. Rather, He does what He wants and chooses, and He decrees what He wills. With regards to the acts that Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted undertakes, they are not subject to questioning. Indeed, He the Almighty says:

فَعَالَ لَمَّا يُرِيدُ

*He does whatever He wills.*¹

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَخُصُّ مَا يُرِيدُ

*Allah commands what He wills.*²

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

*Your Lord creates what He pleases and chooses those He wills - they have no choice - so glory be to Allah, and may He be Exalted above the partners they ascribe to Him.*³

لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ

*He cannot be called to account for anything He does, whereas they will be called to account.*⁴

Therefore He, Glorified by His Name and Exalted by His Rank, is the Creator, the Doer, the (One) Commanding, the Judge, with absolute and

¹ *Qur'ān* 85: 16

² *Qur'ān* 5: 1

³ *Qur'ān* 28: 68

⁴ *Qur'ān* 21: 23

unrestricted free will and choice. He does whatever He wills and chooses, and judges according to what He desires, without any constraint or condition, except for those that He has imposed upon Himself or those that He has made necessary for Himself. There is no power behind or above Him that can obligate Him, no victor can overcome Him, and none can fathom to try and even escape Him. This is what is understood from the verses of the *Qur'ān*, which are all clear in themselves and in their meanings when considered as a whole, and from the interpretation of some verses through others. The same is also understood from the entire corpus of the Prophetic *Sunnah*, which is also clear in itself and in its meanings when considered as a whole.

As noted earlier in the verse '*Your Lord creates what He pleases*,' [28: 68], in other words, Allah is the Creator through His absolute and unrestricted free will, without any cause or necessity compelling Him to do so. This is a logical necessity, affirmed by revelation, and it is impossible for the mind to conceive of anything else. Writing in *al-Muḥalla bil' Athār*, the noble learned Imām, Ali ibn Aḥmad ibn Sa'eed Ibn Ḥazm, may Allah have mercy upon him, said:

That He (Allah) is the Creator of everything, without any reason that (obligates) or compels Him to create. The proof of this, is that if there was a matter among what He had undertaken that was done for a reason, this reason would be either eternal or (it would be) a new creation and there is no way to divide the matter into a third category. If this reason is eternal, that would require two impossible matters:

First: that there has always been something other with Allah, which revokes the notion of the *Tawḥeed* of Allah, which we have already proved, in particular that He is the Necessarily Existent.

Second: if we supposed the reason behind creation existed eternally, the creation itself must be eternal, because a reason is never separated from what it caused; if a reason is separated from what it has caused, it would not be its reason and as we have explained above the whole universe is created. Also, if the reason here was a necessitating reason for Him, i.e. the Necessary Being, to do what He did, He would be obliged, compelled or subdued by means of this reason and that abolishes the notion of godhood/divinity. If this

reason was new, it would be either created or not created. If it was not created, we have already explained that everything must be created which abolishes this suggestion altogether. If it was created, it would be created either by another reason or created without a reason.

If it was created by another reason, this other reason must be created by a third reason itself and so on, which will create infinite regress, and this is null, because as we mentioned above, every matter that is turned to an action is limited to a finite number. Based on what we mentioned before that everything that comes out of infinity is invalid and that everything that comes into existence is necessarily limited by its quantity or its time, and everything that is limited by quantity is finite. So, this category is also invalid, and what we have said is correct, and all praise is due to Allah the Exalted. And if they were to say: Rather, ‘the reason was created without a reason.’ They are asked (in response): Why is it necessary for things to be created for a reason, and the reason to be created without a reason? There is no way to provide a proof for this.⁵

These are the stated words as set out by Abu Muḥammad (Ibn Ḥazm), which contain necessary succinct proofs, albeit presented in brief. One should contemplate over them carefully. We will add further clarification and explanation here to that by saying that those who claim that there are reasons or causes for Allah’s actions and judgments - either in the realm of the divine, or in the realm of legislation, are asked: ‘Tell us about any of these necessary, causative reasons that you claim exist.’ Moreover, we provide addition to that by saying anyone who claims that the actions of Allah and his judgments or the legislation that He has formulated has reasons, and that these reasons are necessary, they are told: Tell us about any of these ‘necessary reasons’ that you claim:

1. Is it from the action of someone else or the judgment of someone else, or the judgment of someone else or the command of someone else?
2. Or is it not from His action, ruling, judgment, or command, but not from the action, ruling, judgment or command of someone else?
3. Or is it from the action of Allah and His ruling, judgment and command?

⁵ Ibn Ḥazm *al-Muḥalla* [Vol. 1, Issue 4, pp. 23/24]

It is impossible to find a fourth category originally. If they were to say it is from the action of someone other than Allah, or from the judgment of someone else, they have tried to make another creator and judge here, and this is pure *Shirk* (polytheism), manifest *kufṛ* (disbelief). Rather, it is more insidious than that. They have made the action of that doer, or the judgment of that judge, *necessary* for Allah to do what He has done and to judge with what He has judged, so there are no partners with Allah, but among them is someone who is higher in rank and stronger in power and more honourable in position. And if they say it is not from his action or the action of someone else, they are compelled to accept that there are eternal things in existence that have no doer, or that they are the ones who judge over Allah with these things and they are the ones who make the determination of what is lawful and forbidden and stand as judge over the Lord of all existence, and this is also manifest *Shirk* and *kufṛ*. Moreover it is in complete contradiction to the following:

- a) The existence of multiple eternal causes is impossible, as proven by the evidence, and the necessary eternal first cause without beginning is only one single entity and not from a multiple.
- b) With the assumption of the existence of multiple eternal causes, which is impossible, it is also impossible for some of them to have power over others, for some of them to be above others, and for some of them to judge over others, because they are all necessarily in the same rank.
- c) It is also impossible for something to come into existence while the eternal causes are preventing each other and are equal in rank in terms of power and *Ḥākimiyyah* (ultimate sovereignty and prerogative of command), because each one is able to prevent the other, and each one of them is able to nullify the action of the other, as detailed in the discussion underpinning the proof relating to mutual hindrance. If it were so, then where did these potentialities that cannot be counted in this vast universe come from?

Therefore, the doctrine of those who adhere to denying the existence of a Creator, such as both the naturalists and materialists, is the most similar to this and the most reasonable and the least contradictory, because they say that one eternal nature is the necessary effective creator, not by choice, and

this only contradicts reality, that is, the current perceived state of the universe, and does not require the sea of contradictions and impossibilities. If they were to return to the truth and say: rather, it is from the action of Allah, Glorified and Exalted, and His judgment alone, with no partner whatsoever, we say to them: tell us about any of those reasons, and perhaps we can assume a specific reason and make it the focus of our attention and the subject of our study, this specific reason is the subject of the lesson:

- a) Did Allah do it or judge it for another reason?
- b) Or did He do it and judge it for no reason originally?

If they stumble upon the truth and say, rather, Allah did it, or judged it for no reason originally, they abandoned their wicked statement and acknowledged that He, the Blessed and Exalted, does things for no compelling or obligated reason in terms of principle. And if they were to say that the secondary actions or judgments are for a reason, but the first ones, which are the reasons themselves, are like this without a reason, it is said to them - what *necessitates* that the secondary actions and judgments be for reasons, and that the first actions and judgments, which are the reasons for those secondary actions and judgments, be without a reason or cause? This is a judgment without evidence and a baseless claim. But it is a 'possible matter' in and of itself, not contradictory. So if news comes from Allah about it, we accept it and stop at it. In any case, this destroys their original principle - that He, Glorified and Exalted does not do or judge absolutely except for a reason!

If they say that Allah did it, or judged upon it for 'other reasons,' they are asked about these 'reasons' as well as the ones before them, and so *ad infinitum*. Therefore, they are necessarily required, by absolute intellectual necessity, to choose one of two things, with no third option being available:

1. Either they determine actions and rulings, and say that it was done without a cause, thereby leaving behind their false and invalid statement - that He the Exalted does not do or command, order or judge anything without a cause, so the Lord does not act, order, command or rule without a cause in the final analysis. And if perhaps the Lord made something a cause for something, or something a reason for something,

in the intermediate view or intermediate stages, no matter how numerous these means are, but in the final analysis and view, no!

2. And they say that there are actions, rulings, commands, and judgments with no beginning, with some of them necessarily being based on necessity or causality, and this is a chain in causes and needs, it is impossible by the consensus of reason, because it destroys the mind and shatters it. Indeed this is *kufṛ*, going beyond the bounds of Islam by the consensus of the *Ummah*. So Allah has denounced a statement that leads to the impossible, which is rejected by reason, and it is a matter of *kufṛ* since it contradicts the *Sharī'ah* from all aspects.

This is the necessary proof that cannot be separated from the soundness of our statement which underpins the theme of this present chapter, that Allah the Exalted and Majestic does what He wants and chooses; He legislates what He wants. And all of this is not because of a cause that *obligates* Him to do so. Rather, He is the absolute free agent, acting and judging in a manner of His choosing. All other statements being false based upon deep underlying contradictions. The necessarily existent is a single entity, not of multiplicity, thereby being of no increase or decrease. He is not a lifeless entity, in other words, He is not a dead, blind, or deaf power that is creating devoid of feeling. Thus it is not comparable to 'nature' as being the creating force of necessity as the *kuffār* (disbelievers) would mislead others into thinking. As outlined earlier, those things are impossible. The necessarily existent is the ultimate actor with absolute free will, by intent and deed, not being subject to limit or condition. As such, this necessitates the idea of being self-aware, knowing, and has retaining certain comprehensive knowledge which encompasses the facts of all necessities and all possibilities. Choosing from them what is wanted from all possible worlds and entities, then bringing that out of non-existence into existence by the manner and initial conditions that have been chosen. As He the Exalted says:

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

Your Lord creates what He pleases and chooses those He will - they have no choice - so glory be to Allah, and may He be Exalted above the partners they

ascribe to Him.⁶

The entity as described with knowledge, awareness, will, intention, and ultimate choice over action is thus deemed living, and the necessarily existent, with the complete meanings of 'life,' has an ultimate goal and eternal, everlasting life. It is not imagined for Him to have death, forgetfulness, sleep, weakness, illness, or deficiency. Allah is *al-Ḥayy* (the Ever Living), the necessarily existent, self-sufficient by His own nature, and this is *al-Qayyum* (the Ever Watchful). Indeed, He is as He says:

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ

*Allah: there is no god but Him, the Ever Living, the Ever Watchful. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him.*⁷

All praise is due unto Him, for He is glorified, His blessed names and attributes sanctified.

⁶ Qur'ān 28: 68

⁷ Qur'ān 2: 255

12. *al-Qadr*

We have mentioned that the entire world, including the visible and other invisible universes; the ancient universes that disappeared before this universe, if that happened at all, and the universes that will come and do not exist yet, that is, all of that is contingent. In other words, all the beings and existents - except Allah the Ever-Living, All-Sustaining, the Necessarily Existent, the One and Only - were created by Allah the Almighty. He who created the system, wrote down their destinies, determined their initial conditions that determine the path of their development. He knew in detail what would or could happen in them, and granted all of that permission to happen. And if He did not grant that permission to happen and come into existence, it would not have actually come into existence, as it is necessary by the necessity of reason, and there is no choice but to submit to it.

There are no 'two gods' one of which is good and creates good, and the other being evil and creating as such.¹ No, rather, there is only *One* God, the Creator and Possessor of all things. The One with dominion, protection, and ultimate, supreme sovereignty; no victor can defeat Him, and no fugitive can escape from Him. Consequently, the sacred law of Islam came commanding belief and submission to the statement: '*al-Qadr*, its good and its evil, is from Allah the Almighty.'

The problem of evil

¹ Illustrative here, is the Qur'ānic verses at 16: 51/52, '*Allah said: Do not take two gods— for He is the One God— I alone am the One that you should hold in awe.*' *Everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him: everlasting obedience is His right. Will you heed anyone other than Allah?*

Naturally, one can understand and comprehend a matter when it pertains to the ‘good.’ That much should be relatively clear. But what of the judgment when it pertains to the matter of evil? How is that comprehended? Regardless of the fact that a person may judge things incorrectly or relatively as ‘evil’ from the limited human point of view, because it is painful, such as a lion attacking a human, which is not the case, it is not evil, or not evil at all, but rather some of what the harmony of the universe’s order and the consistency of its rules require.

What a person calls ‘evil’ may be truly evil, such as disobedience to Allah’s command by some creatures who are endowed with reason, perception, and distinction and to whom Allah has granted freedom of will and choice, which is true freedom, as they are doers by choice within this universe and the framework of its system. Hence, instead of thanking the bestowed through obedience and being kind to His creation, suddenly this human becomes a sworn adversary. Therefore, he disobeyed and rebelled, became a criminal and a tyrant, spread corruption and destruction, and destroyed crops and cattle. This is definitely evil! This could not have happened and come into existence without Allah’s permission and will, despite the dismay of Allah and His wrath on its perpetrator. And it is impossible, either by reason or by the Sacred Law of Islam, for it to be otherwise.

One might say that this is a small price to pay in exchange for the blessings of reason, distinction, and free will, and it necessarily results in it. As it is impossible for a creature to enjoy having reason, distinction, and free will, then be prevented from choosing what s/he wants while being fully responsible. Accordingly, we say: yes, but this does not explain why Allah chose a universe like this; had He not created a universe of forced machines or infallible, subjected, and controlled angels? The answer is, because Allah, may His Majesty be Glorified and His Names be Blessed, is like this, as He in Himself: *‘He cannot be called to account for anything He does, whereas they will be called to account.’*²

You try to understand, and reason grapples with it, but you cannot fully comprehend it unless you are well acquainted with it, which is impossible. Therefore, you have no choice but to accept this truth, by the necessity of

² Qur’ān 21: 23

reason, and before the sacred law of Islam. So, just as you accepted that He exists and that He is the Eternal, the First Necessary Existence, also accept this, namely, *‘al-Qadr, its good and its evil, is from Allah Almighty’*; and that, *‘He cannot be called to account for anything He does, whereas they will be called to account.’* If you reach this point, then stop and withhold; there is no authority above Allah, nor is there accountability for His action, nor is His judgment subject to criticism or review, because He is the ultimate goal, and the end of everything. So, imagine that you want to review, criticise, sue, or litigate. To whom does petition lie with, in your opinion? To *another* Necessarily Existent who is higher or equal to Him in status? But there is no Necessarily Existent being other than Him. Hence, it becomes impossible!

Or is the matter limited to judgement ‘to your mind,’ or to the minds of the majority of rational creatures. This mind itself is Allah’s creation; it is final and possible, lower than Allah in status, so how can the inferior judge the superior? And if you are impudent enough to judge with your lower mind and claim that what you call evil is unacceptable and that it is an injustice and a transgression from Allah, Exalted is He above that, so is your mind, untrustworthy. Perhaps it was disturbed in the origin of its creation; just as you believed that Allah, the Almighty and Sanctified, Had been unjust, it is also possible that He manipulated, tampered with, and created your mind a dysfunctional machine that is unqualified to make a judgment, as some of its judgments contradict the truth. Rather, truth and honesty become meaningless, as well as good and evil – one therefore finds no recourse but to the domain of the mentally insane.

Or to His ‘mind’, or more precisely, His *‘hilm’* (forbearance), that is to say, ‘His awareness and consciousness,’ that encompass everything? This is a fascinating methodical reasoning, but it actually happened and became unquestionable. And had He, the Blessed and Exalted, not judged (before you were even created and came arguing and criticising) that this universe is fascinating (from ‘His point of view,’ of course, and necessarily, The Almighty and Sanctified), and it deserved to be created like this, with this quality; otherwise, He would not have created it in the first place, and you would not have been here arguing, asking questions, and requesting judgment. Hence, just your presence here today and the fact that you are

asking questions and arguing, is ‘itself’ the answer to your question and the final judgment in your case.

Consequently, the problem of *al-Qadr* is, as you see – and mankind can be very argumentative, the problem of the existence of what is called ‘evil’ in the world, or more generally, why is the world like this in this way and not in another way? Although it is one of the contingents, not the necessary [beings], it is an instable sea that no one can reach its depths, except for those who have fully understood and fully comprehended the essence of the One and the All-Prevailing One, the King and the Supreme in Might. That knowledge is not comprehensive knowledge, and fully understanding it is impossible (if we accept the fact that it is possible, and not impossible rationally or logically), except for one being: Allah the Ever-Living, All-Sustaining, the Almighty, and Most Forgiving. So, stop and withhold, and submit yourself [to Allah] and give up!

This then, is the only rational solution to the problem of *al-Qadr* – namely, to have conclusive knowledge and to be firmly certain that *al-Qadr*, its good and its evil, is from Allah Almighty. Thus, there is no reality to the existence of two or more gods – be that a ‘god of good’ and a ‘god of evil.’ Rather, there is only One God, the Creator of all things. This is not necessary by the necessity of reason only, but this is also what the sacred law of Islam requires. The sacred law of Islam came with a firm command to believe and accept the truth: *al-Qadr*; its good and its evil, is from Allah Almighty. Therefore, you know that ‘what has come to you could not miss you, and that what has missed you could not come to you,’ so it became one of the pillars of faith. Whoever dies not believing in it, after receiving the message of Islam and establishing the proof, will be among the people of Hell on the Day of Resurrection. He the Exalted and Almighty has said:

إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعْرٍ، يَوْمَ يُسْحَبُونَ فِي النَّارِ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ ذُوقُوا مَسَّ سَقَرَ، إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ
خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ، وَمَا أَمْرُنَا إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ

Truly the wicked are misguided and quite insane. On the Day when they are dragged on their faces in Hell. ‘Feel the touch of Hell.’

*We have created all things in due measure; When We ordain something it happens at once, in the blink of an eye.*³

³ Qur’ān 54: 47/50

Perils of atheism

Perhaps some people think that atheism, i.e., denying the existence of Allah - the Ever-Living, All-Sustaining, All-Knowing, All-Wise, the Creator by free will and choice, the absolutely free - and attributing all existing things to a dead, deaf, blind, and mechanical necessity of nature, is the ideal solution to the problem of *al-Qadr*. Accordingly, we say in reply, regardless of the presence of conclusive proofs pertaining to the existence of Allah, the Ever-Living, and the Creator by free will and choice, which were mentioned previously and will be mentioned later in the discussion of Prophecies. Regardless of all that, there is no comfort for you - assembly of atheists, in this imaginary emotional solution, which may be suitable to tickle the feelings of some superficial and naïve people. Here is the universe, as it is in its reality a necessity, with all its evils and misfortunes, and it is, as you claim, like a stormy sea of events from eternity to perpetuity. And you, O human being, suffering from the problem of *al-Qadr*, i.e., the problem of good and evil, are nothing but a bubble in the midst of this stormy sea with mighty waves in the theatre of time and space— an enormous, meaningless play that has no beginning or end. So enjoy, if you wish, a life limited, full of annoyance, with absolute despair of any salvation or eternity, or drown your misery and worries in alcohol and drugs, or commit suicide. What a dismal solution.

As for those who are true believers, those who believe in Allah, the Day of Judgement, and in *al-Qadr*, the good and bad of which that has been decreed by Allah the Exalted, they retain an absolute trust in the wisdom as set down by Allah and the choices He has made. That brings them peace of mind, tranquility of heart; a life that is good in this world, coupled with the greatest hope for the everlasting eternal life to come:

فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَهَرٍ فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ

*The righteous will live securely among Gardens and rivers, secure in the presence of an all-powerful Sovereign.*⁴

Prior to mentioning these blessed verses, He the Exalted had said:

⁴ Qur’ān 54: 54/55

إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ، يَوْمَ يُسْحَبُونَ فِي النَّارِ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ ذُوقُوا مَسَّ سَقَرَ، إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ
خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ، وَمَا أَمْرُنَا إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ، وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا أَشْيَاعَكُمْ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ، وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَعَلُوهُ
فِي الزُّبُرِ، وَكُلُّ صَغِيرٍ وَكَبِيرٍ مُسْتَنْطَرٌ

Truly the wicked are misguided and quite insane; on the Day when they are dragged on their faces in Hell. 'Feel the touch of Hell.' We have created all things in due measure; when We ordain something it happens at once, in the blink of an eye; We have destroyed the likes of you in the past. Will anyone take heed? Everything they do is noted in their records: every action, great or small, is recorded.⁵

⁵ Qur'ān 54: 47/53

13. Proofs concerning Mutual Hindrance

The proof underpinning that of *al-Tamānu* - mutual hindrance, is a key proof concerning the Oneness of Allah.¹ It is based on His saying, may His majesty be Glorified and Exalted:

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذًا لَذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ، وَلَعَلَّا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ

Allah has never had a child. Nor is there any god beside Him - if there were, each god would have taken his creation aside and tried to overcome the others. May Allah be Exalted above what they describe!²

The Imām, Abul-'Abbās Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyyah said, not literally but rather paraphrased and adapted from multiple references:

If two Eternals or two necessarily existents were supposed, and each one of them becomes capable because of the other, this is impossible in the necessity of reason because it necessitates the precedent circular cause. The first is not capable until the second makes him

¹ For a quick introduction to the topic of 'mutual hindrance,' readers in English can also consult the translation of *Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafī* by al-Taftāzāni (d. 1390CE). He writes: 'The One, that is to say, the Maker of the World is one. The idea of the Necessarily Existent cannot be true except of one essence. The most noted of the proofs for the unity of Allah among the *Mutakallims* is that of mutual hindrance (*al-Tamānu*)...The explanation of this is that if two gods were possible, mutual hindrance of each other would be possible. This powerlessness is an indication of being originated and of possibility, because in it there is the defect of being in need of something. Plurality necessitates the possibility of mutual hindrance, which [in turn] necessitates the impossible, so it is impossible.' See: *A commentary on the Creed of Islam: Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzāni on the Creed of Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī* (1950), Translated by Earl Edgar Elder, (Columbia University Press: New York), [pp. 37/38].

² Qur'ān, 23: 91

capable and the second is not capable until the first makes him capable. Thus, none of them is capable, because the fact that the capable is capable in himself precedes making others capable. So, who is not capable in himself cannot make others capable, then the impossibility is twofold:

First: The invalidity of the precedent circular cause.

Second: One who is not capable cannot make others capable.

Hence, from what was mentioned earlier, we know the Necessarily Existent must be capable in Himself which means that his capability is essential. Therefore, His capability does not depend on anything other than Himself, and it should be completely and absolutely connected to all that over which He (the Necessarily Existent) has power, otherwise, it would have been possible to complete it and add [something] to it. And this possibility contradicts the concept of the necessity of existence.

Thus, if two capable [beings] were supposed; each one of them is completely capable in himself and independent of the other, meaning, in short, if two gods were supposed (because who is truly a god is an existent whose capability is essential; he is completely capable in himself, the fā'il (doer) who has the complete freedom of will and choice, completely independent of anything other than himself), then being together in doing al maf'ool (that which is done) is impossible in itself in accordance with pure reason and the consensus of the rational people. Because if one of them does this thing, it becomes necessary for him to be independent which makes it impossible for him to have a partner, let alone there will be another independent doer.

For this reason, it was known by the rational people in accordance with pure reason that it is impossible for two complete impactful [beings] to come together on one impact. It is impossible for two complete causes to come together on one effect. And if it was thought otherwise, then it is one cause expressed in different sentences which creates the delusion that they are two causes, or that both of them are not complete. Thus, each one is a part of a cause or an incomplete cause, and the complete cause is only the result of their combination. That is because if the two complete basic causes come together, it is not permissible to say: the one ruling is proven in each

one of them in the case of coming together as a matter of independence.

That is, because the basic cause being independent in ruling is to be proven without anything other than itself, then if it is said: 'it was proven by this without anything other than it, and proven by that without anything other than it,' it becomes a combination of two contradictions; it is as though it is said, that is, the real meaning of the speech: 'it is proven and not proven by this, and proven and not proven by that.' Thus, it is a combination of proving the Ta'leel (assigning a basic cause) in both of them and denying it for both of them. Here is the meaning of what is said: assigning a basic cause in each of them as a way of being independent denies proving it in one of them, and that which proving it results in denying it is invalid because it is contradictory in itself.

If that is the case, then if two gods were supposed, it becomes impossible for each one of them to be independent in doing one specific thing, but rather if one of them does something, the other will do something else, and this is the verification of what Allah the Almighty said: '*If there were, each god would have taken his creation aside.*' Also, if they are capable, then if it was possible for one of them to do something *without the other*, then it is possible for him to want the opposite of what the other wants. Hence, mutual hindrance is necessary [in this case], because if the two intentions exist, it becomes necessary that two opposites unite, and in case the intention of one of them does not exist (the matter is not achieved), it necessitates the powerlessness of both of them. In addition to that, it becomes necessary for the locus to be free from one of the two opposed contraries that the body cannot be without. For instance, one of them wants to bring a body to life and the other wants to cause it to die, or one of them wants to move it and the other wants it to remain still, etc.

And if it is said that neither of them can perform [an action] without the other, then it is necessary for them to agree on the action. Hence, we say this contains several meanings:

The first: is to be in the sense that if one of them does something the other will not oppose him in doing it. Meaning, each one of them has a free and independent intention; neither of them was capable unless

the other empowered him and did not oppose him, and this requires that neither of them is capable in himself which is impossible as stated earlier.

The second: is that their wills are identical which is obviously impossible even more than the impossibility of two independent essences, except for a matter other than themselves forced that upon them. For example, a group of people ran away in one direction from a fire that surrounded them, and they were left with only one way out, which is impossible when it comes to God because He is completely capable in Himself. Therefore, we are left with the fact that both of them are forced and powerless. And it may have been said: ‘rather, they are *aqnūmān* (meaning, two origins or two persons) intending, completely in love, in complete agreement on intention, in one essence which is the One God.’ This is not negatory of *Tawḥeed*, and it is not related to this proof. Then we say: yes, but the plurality of persons, *aqāneem*, or facets in one necessarily existent essence is impossible for other necessities as divided in its place, and praise be to Allah we have discussed [this issue] in detail earlier.

The third: if the agreement in action was interpreted as association, and this is conceivable in two branches:

1. Sharing the same *fi`l* (action): sharing the *maf`ool* (that which is done), meaning that each one of them is independent in the *maf`ool*, which is impossible as mentioned previously.
2. And association means that one of them has a *fi`l* and a *maf`ool* different from the *fi`l* and the *maf`ool* of the other which necessitates each god to take his creation aside.

The visible, tangible world is strongly interconnected, and each part is dependent on the other parts in a way that makes it impossible for some parts to be *maf`ool* to one of them and other parts *maf`ool* to the other.³

One may think that the aforementioned proof makes having a plurality of gods possible, in such a manner that each god has his own creatures, universes and his own completely independent kingdom. Meaning, ‘taking

³ Essentially being based upon what Ibn Taymiyyah outlined in *Majmu` al-Fatawā`* (Compendium of *legal responsa*), [Vol. 2, pp. 32/37 and Vol. 20, pp. 170/183].

each god’s creation aside’ saves from the trouble ‘that one would overcome the other,’ but it is not as such because ‘taking each god’s creation aside’ goes under [the category] of the possible things. Thus, it must be under the power of each one of them, and it can be connected to the will of each one of them in stopping, acting and precluding the other from performing [the action]. So, if one of the gods intends to create an independent kingdom then it is possible that the other intends to preclude him [from doing so]. This gives rise to the following three scenarios:

- Either one of them would need the permission of the other which makes him incapable, dependent not independent.
- Or the other would fail in precluding him which makes him incapable, not completely capable.
- Or mutual hindrance will take place, just as explained above.

One cannot say that they should agree because it was literally proved invalid above when we said that “neither of them can perform an action without the other, then it is necessary for them to agree on the action” with its three meanings discussed in detail above; the first, the second and the third with its first branch, as for the second branch, it is not mentioned here at all. Therefore, it becomes necessary that if two gods were supposed, each one of them takes his creation aside, and it is also an absolute rational necessity at the same time that they dominate one another as Allah, may His Majesty be Glorified said:

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذًا لَذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ، وَلَعَلَّا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ

Allah has never had a child. Nor is there any god beside Him - if there were, each god would have taken his creation aside and tried to overcome the others.

*May Allah be Exalted above what they describe!*⁴

He said ‘and tried to overcome’ (*wa la`alā*), he did not say ‘or tried to overcome’ (*aw la`alā*). Thus, taking each god’s creation aside because the first one’s *maf`ool* is different from the other’s *maf`ool*, and dominating one

⁴ *Qur`ān*, 23: 91

another because being capable necessitates that each one of them is capable and not in need of the other, and he can act without him.

Accordingly, it becomes impossible for them to do something whether they agree on it because it is impossible for an action to come out from two doers, or they do not agree because it necessitates mutual hindrance. So, it is necessary that one of them is capable and the other is not. Thus, the capable reigns supreme over the other and overcomes him, as Allah the Almighty said: ‘*and they would have tried to dominate one another,*’ so even if each god takes his creation aside, it is inevitable that they overcome each other.

The earlier extensive quote from Ibn Taymiyyah was revised in part, especially by replacing the word *Rabb* with that of ‘*Ilāh,*’ which was frequently used by the Shaykh, despite it opposing and on occasion clashing with the explicit text of the *ayah*. This inevitably resulted in an unsuccessful attempt to apply his erroneous definition of *al-Rububiyyah* and *al-Uluhiyyah*, in order to maintain his outrageous faulty definition of *Tawḥeed*, which bedevils us to this day. As will be seen from subsequent chapters in this present work, that division cannot objectively stand, being rendered invalid by copious evidences that will be presented, by the will and mercy of Allah. However, this does not concern us here, and it does not affect the validity of our proof.

Imām al-Rāzi, who was preceded in this point by Imām al-Maturidi, was aware of a doubt that may arise that one of the gods may have wanted to cover up one of his creatures or his kingdom, so that the other does not know about it. Hence, there is no possibility for mutual hindrance at all. His (Imām al-Rāzi) response to this point is: the one [god] who is capable of covering up his kingdom is All-powerful, All-knowing, and the other is incapable, and if their capabilities to act, cognise, and knowledge become equal, mutual hindrance becomes inevitably a necessity. The truth is that what Imām Ibn Taymiyyah previously stated is a failure in [interpreting] the following verse, where Allah the Exalted and Majestic says:

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا لَدَّهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ، وَلَعَلَّا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ

*Allah has never had a child. Nor is there any god beside Him - if there were, each god would have taken his creation aside and tried to overcome the others. May Allah be Exalted above what they describe!*⁵

So, what about the first part - *Allah has never had a child?* There is no doubt that the son of god is of the same kind as his father with the obviousness and necessity of reason. Otherwise, he would not have been a child at all, for he is necessarily a god. In this case there are two possibilities, either:

1. He has no will in the first place, and if he has a will, then his will absolutely belongs to his father and it is not independent at all. The same applies to the creatures; he does not have the ability to create at all, and even if he has this ability, his creatures absolutely belong to his father and they are not independent at all. Rather, perhaps he is the machine of creation, as the Christians believe that Christ the Son is the Word by which the Father is created. Therefore, this kind of son has reached the ultimate goal of submission to his father, and the ultimate goal of intimacy, love, and mutual harmony with his father. Thus, he cannot have an independent influence on creatures at all by which he can prove his existence, and there is no possibility for mutual hindrance as an evidence of his non-existence. The impossibility of the existence of this type has already been demonstrated, but if we estimate the impossible for the sake of the argument, then there is nothing left but the true report of His existence. Here is true report from the loving father, who was slandered, denied the existence of such an alleged beloved son in the first place.
2. Or he has independent self-will, self-creation and independent self-power. Therefore, mutual hindrance is inevitable, as [illustrated] in the second part: ‘*if there were, each god would have taken his creation aside and tried to overcome the others,*’ and it has been previously explained.

The truth is that the verse has an addition to what we have mentioned before; Allah the Exalted and Majestic said - *Allah has never had any offspring* instead of saying: ‘Allah has never had an offspring,’ and ‘any’ (*Min*) herein

⁵ *Qur’ān*, 23: 91

is not for partition, but rather refers to gender. This is a wonderful rhetoric that necessitates that He has never had anything that can be considered offspring, then it would deserve to be called offspring in the Arabic language. And this invalidates even the figuratively adopted child whose non-existence is known only from god, unlike one's own child whose non-existence is known to be impossible through the rational proof:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ، اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ، لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ؛ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

Say, 'He is Allah the One. Allah the eternal He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him.'⁶

The same applies to 'any' (*Min*), which the grammarians call unnecessary *zāida*, in Allah's saying, may His Majesty be Glorified: 'Nor is there any god beside Him,' which has essential rhetorical purposes that necessitates that there is nothing that has any kind of divinity beside Allah even if it was partial or limited, in such a manner that it deserves to be called *Ilāh* in the Arab language at the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān.

⁶ Qur'ān, 112: 1/4

14. The meaning underpinning the verse of *Fasad*

Indeed, without doubt, the necessity of reason and rationality prevents Allah from being considered as anything other than eternal. Notwithstanding this, there are various forms of *Shirk* that tend to provide attribution of some form of divinity to what is the contingent, that which is not eternal or ancient. Naturally this is a clear defiance of reason. However, the text of the Qur'ān provides a decisive and categorical refutation of this matter. These arguments are presented in the 'verse of *Fasad*,' which is outlined in the following verses, where He the Exalted and Majestic says:

*Everyone in the heavens and earth belongs to Him, and those that are with Him are never too proud to worship Him, nor do they grow weary; they glorify Him tirelessly night and day. Have they chosen any gods from the earth who can give life to the dead? **If there had been in the heavens or earth any gods but Him, both heavens and earth would be in ruins: Allah, Lord of the Throne, is far above the things they say: He cannot be called to account for anything He does, whereas they will be called to account.***

Have they chosen to worship 'other gods' instead of Him? Say, 'Bring your proof. This is the Scripture for those who are with me and the Scripture for those who went before me.' But most of them do not recognise the truth, so they pay no heed. We never sent any Messenger before you [Muhammad] without revealing to him: 'There is no god but Me, so serve Me.'

And they say, 'The Lord of Mercy has taken offspring for Himself.' May He be Exalted! No! They are only His honoured servants: they do not speak before He speaks and they act by His command. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot intercede without His permission. Indeed they themselves stand in awe of Him. If any of them were to claim, 'I

*am a god beside Him, 'We would reward them with Hell: this is how We reward evildoers.'*¹

In order to give this noble verse its due, while invalidating Imām Ibn Taymiyyah's understanding of it and invalidating the absurdities of his imitators, such as Ibn Abi al-'Izz al-Ḥanafi in his commentary on *al-Ṭahāwīyyah*, we must have a glimpse of the historical reality at the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān in relation to people's attitudes and opinions regarding the problem of *al-Qadr*, which is exclusively: 'How can there be evil in the temporal world when the Creator is the Good, the Pure One, the Most Holy, and the Source of Peace?'

The problem relating to the existence of evil

This problem of *al-Qadr* has been a topic of controversy since the emergence of the first Magi and the victory of the first Persian (Kurdish) dynasty in the days of Cyrus the Great, more than a thousand years before Islam. The controversy over *al-Qadr* spread throughout the ancient world, and the Jews and Greek philosophers participated in this debate. Then, the Christian theologians, who strained themselves to understand the alleged crucifixion of Christ, and whether it was a 'redemption for humanity' and a 'deliverance from the clutches of Satan,' or was it to be an atonement for the alleged 'inherited sin' that brought death and destruction to the world, or it is also one of Satan's handiwork, etc. The heated debate continued until the advent of Islam. This is an established historical fact that you can find in the books of the people of Islam, the People of the Book, the Persian Magian books, the Pagan Greek books, and the deliberations of philosophers, as well as in archaeological inscriptions and monuments.

Of course, Islam settled this issue decisively. Allah inspired His Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, to make the belief in *al-Qadr* one of the central pillars of faith, notably seen from the famous *ḥadīth* of Jibreel which makes this issue seem extremely important.

¹ *Qur'ān*, 21: 19/29. Given the extent of the verses cited, the Arabic text has been omitted. The Arabic edition quotes the earlier three verses from but these have been omitted here. Translations can on occasion vary in conveying the meaning of the word '*Fasad*.' In the present translation, Professor Abdel Haleem uses '*in ruins*.' Other translations, like Shakir have used the word 'disorder'; Picktall 'disordered.'

Turning to the verses quoted earlier, starting with the first three mentioned, outside the context in the narrow sense, although it is a necessary precursor to confirm that the state of the universe, as it is now, it is mentioned not for fun nor haphazardly. Rather it is consistent with wisdom; in this regard, His saying: '*Everyone in the heavens and earth belongs to Him, and those that are with Him are never too proud to worship Him, nor do they grow weary,*' is a confirmation that all those '*in the heavens and earth*' are servants and belong to Him. Then He singled out those in heaven, i.e., angels, or the *Ruhāniyun*, or the *Nurāniyun*, as being - contrary to the claims of the *mushrikeen* - witnesses to Allah of His divinity and to themselves of worshiping; being submissive, pleased, joyful, and unforced: '*they glorify Him tirelessly night and day.*' So, they are servants and are *not* in any sense 'divine beings.' It is worth stating that heaven, according to the people of that era, is the place of perfection, goodness, and where there is no corruption.

After accomplishing the matter of heaven, and proving that it is empty except for one divine being, who is called by the majestic name – Allah, with everyone's agreement, He turned to the matter of earth: '*Have they chosen any gods from the earth who can give life to the dead?*' Here, He did not use the word '*Arbāb*' following the pathway of Ibn Taymiyyah's hideous method of innovation. These people are most likely '*Dhalāmiyun*' (obscurantists), or '*Sharāniyun*,' so to speak, and must be of the kind of *Jinn* and devils. Perhaps the supposed 'six earthly gods' of Ḥuṣayn al-Khuza'i, father of 'Imrān Ibn Ḥuṣayn, are in this category. The *Jinn* and devils are *Iblees* (Satan) and *Ahriman* (the spirit of evil), and whoever comes out of him, inevitably. In this philosophy, he is Allah's enemy and opposes Him in every way. He is the one who rebels against Him, makes Him displeased, creates evil and diseases, and causes infection, as they claim. So, if that was the case, then he must be all-powerful, or infinite in power; otherwise, he would not be able to defeat Allah either in big or small matters at all, because the final compared to the infinite is nothing, or zero if we speak in the language of mathematics.

Continuing in that vein and according to that philosophical view, that '*Iblees*' – Satan the accursed, is either of the following; firstly, ancient and eternal, which makes it impossible for universes to exist at all, as proven by the verse of mutual hindrance category is not what is meant here. Second, if

it occurred *after* the creation of the heavens and the earth in the first place, in a precise and perfect way, as is the saying of the dualistic Magians.²

If this *Iblees* (Satan or *Ahriman*) is new and not ancient, then he is of the second type. Hence, corrupting some of the affairs of the earth only is meaningless; rather, he spreads corruption between all creatures and what is in them. But the reality is that corruption, by your admission, does not exist in the heavens, at the very least. Therefore, your saying that ‘there are gods with power’ and dominance on earth is invalid. Besides, it was proven that what you call evil in the world - regardless of whether it is truly evil or merely a deficient human assessment of the order of the universe - is, with Allah’s knowledge, design, creation, and cosmic permission, a necessity. And you do not have the right to ask Allah: ‘Why did He create the world like this?’ This is because, the verses state – ‘*He cannot be called to account for anything He does, whereas they will be called to account.*’ He, the Blessed and Exalted, is the ultimate truth and has ultimate knowledge. So, calling Him to account or criticising Him leads to the destruction of reason. There is no longer reason or madness, and there is no difference between speaking and remaining silent, nor calling to account or being submissive. We have discussed [this issue] in detail in the present work, with a bespoke chapter on *al-Qadr*.

The rest of the verses are rich, Praise be to Allah, without explanation, but we note the denial of the existence of a child, once again, from Allah at all: ‘*And they say, ‘The Lord of Mercy has taken offspring for Himself.’ May He be Exalted! No! They are only His honoured servants.*’ At the same time, it invalidates the idea that angels, or any of the Prophets like Jesus, being for example, a son of Allah at all:

بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُونَ لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنْ ارْتَضَىٰ وَهُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَتِهِ مُشْفِقُونَ

² Here in the Arabic text the Professor cites one of the legends that such people held in a mocking fashion. He remarks: ‘They say, when god finished creating, he looked at what he created and admired it, then thought deeply: Is there anyone who can compete with my kingdom and spread corruption in this firmly fixed universe? This malicious idea turned into a willful devil, pure and absolute evil, whose existence has no meaning but to spoil god’s affairs and contend with him over his kingdom.’

*They are only His honoured servants: they do not speak before He speaks and they act by His command. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot intercede without His permission —indeed they themselves stand in awe of Him.*³

If we assume for the sake of the argument, that among them there are some who claimed that he is ‘a god’ besides Allah by any consideration whatsoever, as *Iblees* did, for example. Hence, he is a liar, a fabricator, and a wrongdoer; his final return is to Allah’s condemnation and hellfire: ‘*If any of them were to claim, ‘I am a god beside Him,’ We would reward them with Hell: this is how We reward evildoers.*’

This interpretation of the verse of *Fasad*. It is the only one, as far as we know, that shows the relevance of the astonishing verse, ‘*He cannot be called to account for anything He does, whereas they will be called to account,*’ to the exact context. Therefore, all other sayings make it intrusive, as if it has nothing to do with the topic, which is what the miraculous eloquence of the Qur’ān rejects.

The inversions of Ibn Taymiyyah

Ibn Taymiyyah was not correct in much of what he tried to argue concerning the meaning of this verse. Some of what he wrote is correct and true, but that is not specifically connected to the verses in question. We will examine here the problems that his line of argument has caused. To begin, in *Jāmi’ al-Rasā’il Ibn Taymiyyah*, the following is said:

And the divinity mentioned in Allah’s book is worshipping and divinity; one of the necessities of that is that He is the Lord, the Creator. As for what sects of theologians think: that *al-Uluhiyyah* is the same as *al-Rububiyyah*, and that what was mentioned in the Qur’ān regarding the denial of the existence of another god in addition to the clear examples. So, what is meant is denying another Lord who shares with him the creation of the world as what they used to show in the books of theology. This is a shortcoming and negligence on their part in understanding the Qur’ān and the arguments and

³ *Qur’ān*, 21: 26/28.

examples that it contains. They tackled this issue on the ground that the extent of their knowledge was the theological method they followed, so they thought that what was meant was one, but this is not the case.⁴

At this juncture, by way of comment, we have established cogent evidence that *al-Rububiyyah*, with its correct linguistic and Qur'ānic definition, represents some of *al-Uluhiyyah*, if you know the correct Qur'ānic definition (this issue will be discussed in detail throughout this series). As for what Ibn Taymiyyah called '*al-Uluhiyyah*,' its real name is '*al-Ma'budiyyah*.' Ibn Taymiyyah's action is a distortion of the facts, a dangerous falsification of the rhetoric from its proper meaning, and opposition against Allah's verses; it is, in fact, one of the statements of disbelief. Then he said:

Rather, the Qur'ān denies that one should worship anyone other than Allah or take him as a God and love him and submit to him with love and submission towards a God, as various Qur'ānic verses made that clear, such as the Almighty's saying: '*Even so, there are some who choose to worship others besides Allah as rivals to Him.*' For this reason, Abraham said, '*I do not like things that set.*'⁵

Here I comment, this is bordering on incredulity, what is the meaning of the expression as made, relating to 'God's love'? Doesn't this necessitate defining Allah first in a way that is independent of the concept of 'love'? Otherwise, the definition is circular. Then he said:

It is known that every living thing has a will and action according to it, and the origin of the movement of every moving thing is love and will; there is no good for existing things except that their love and movements are not complete without Allah Almighty, just as they cannot exist unless Allah creates them.

⁴ *Jāmi' al-Rasā'il Ibn Taymiyyah* [Vol. 2, p. 200]

⁵ *Ibid.* The verses mentioned are [2: 165] and [6: 76].

While this is true, but it should be in the books of parchment and sermons, and there is no benefit at all in knowing the essence of *al-'Imān* (faith) and *Kufr* (disbelief), or *Shirk* and *al-Tawḥeed*.

And for this reason, the Almighty said: '*If there had been in the heavens or earth any gods but Him, both heavens and earth would be in ruins (corrupted).*' And he did not say they would have surely disappeared, since He is capable of keeping them in the direction of corruption, but it is impossible for it to be good unless Allah is worshiped alone with no partner, for the righteousness of the living is only the righteousness of his intention and desire, and the righteousness of actions and movements is the righteousness of its will and intentions.⁶

By way of a concluding comment, nothing is correct in the aforementioned excerpt bar perhaps the sentence: 'They would have surely been corrupted, and he did not say they would have surely disappeared.' Although it is more accurate to say: 'They would have surely been corrupted, and he did not say they would have surely remained non-existent, and they would not have existed in the first place.' The rest is just mere rhetoric, in which there is some truth but it has nothing to do with the verse in any way whatsoever, as we explained above. And Ibn Abi al-'Izz al-Ḥanafī in his commentary on *al-Ṭahāwiyyah* did not break any new ground, but rather repeated Ibn Taymiyyah's words in essence like a parrot.

There is no doubt that [the one] who worships other than Allah—if it is truly worshipping—and preceded by the belief in some form of *al-Uluhiyyah* (including *al-Rububiyyah*, as will be discussed in detail Allah willing, in the following chapters) in other than Allah indicates the corruption of the mind of [this person], his dumbness, and the deviation of his intellect. This results, in accordance with the established laws of Allah, the stable order of the universe, and Allah's creation, His design, and His universal permission - in corruption of the conditions of the *mushrikeen*, and perhaps the emergence of relative corruption on land and sea '*as a result of what people's hands have done.*' As for the corruption of the heavens and the earth, as in the

⁶ *Ibid.*

Qur'ānic verse, no, and Allah forbid, rather, the definitive truth is, as per the words of Moses, the truthful Prophet of Allah, in the true book of Allah:

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِنَّ تَكْفُرُوا أَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

*And Moses said, 'Even if you, together with everybody else on earth, are thankless, Allah is self-sufficient, worthy of all praise.'*⁷

In addition to what the truthful Prophet narrated on the authority of His Lord, Allah the Almighty, as mentioned in *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim:

يا عبادي إنكم لن تبلغوا ضري فتضروني ولن تبلغوا نفعي فتنفعوني؛ يا عبادي: لو أن أولكم وأخركم وإنسكم وجنكم كانوا على أتقى قلب رجل واحد منكم ما زاد ذلك في ملكي شيئاً؛ يا عبادي: لو أن أولكم وأخركم وإنسكم وجنكم كانوا على أفجر قلب رجل واحد ما نقص ذلك من ملكي شيئاً

O My servants, you will not attain harming Me so as to harm Me, and you will not attain benefiting Me so as to benefit Me. O My servants, if the first of you and the last of you, and the humans of you and the jinn of you, were all as pious as the most pious heart of any individual amongst you, then this would not increase My Kingdom an iota.

Reinforcing

Therefore, given the above, the verse of *Fasad* complements and supports the verse concerning the matter of *al-Tamānu*, mutual hindrance. Both of them prove the certainty of the validity of the definition of 'God' as being the following, the *Ilāh* is:

- a) Either the existent doer who has the complete freedom of will and choice; He is completely and absolutely free by His own capability, in Himself. For instance, He is the one who creates, the one who overcomes, and the one who reigns supreme over the others. So, He neither competes nor is He defeated; no victor can defeat Him, and no fugitive can escape from Him.
- b) Or, he is that existent, born from another god, so he is one of 'the divine species' or the 'divine race.'

⁷ Qur'ān, 14: 8

Hence, by the necessity of reason, it is discerned that:

- i. The chain of coming out of an existent who was not born must come to an end, and then it is necessarily of the first type.
- ii. In this definition, there is no difference between an ancient god and an originated god. This includes all the 'gods' and myths of the *mushrikeen*.
- iii. All these considerations mentioned in the definition of 'the *Ilāh*' are existential matters related to the essence of that existent, its attributes, and its actions, and have no relation at all to the existence or non-existence of other existents who submit, lower themselves [before Him]; of love, devotion and flattery; or glorify and stand in owe [of Him]; or ask to bring benefits and ward off harm, or prostrate, bow down, and humble yourself, or clap and dance, or light candles and incense, or sacrifice an animal, send offerings for sacrifice, and vows to this 'existent' whom we have called '*Ilāh*.'

Every human being realises, with internal sense, i.e., conscience and introspection, and with unwavering certain and firm self-reflection that his ability to act is not completely independent of others. He also realises with unwavering certain and firm awareness that, although he is a doer - *fā'il*, by choice, he is not *completely* free with absolute will and choice, and without restriction or condition other than himself. He also realises, with unwavering certainty and firm awareness through his intuitive feeling and experience and by the necessity of reason, that this is the case with all other tangible, concrete things in the universe. Hence, there is no being in 'nature' that the definition of '*the Ilāh*' applies to, as mentioned earlier. So, '*the Ilāh*,' if He exists - is a 'supernatural' existent.

It seems that the commentators from the *Salaf* understood the verse of *Fasad* based on instinct, and they did not speak much about it. However, it seemed problematic for Imām al-Ṭabari who claimed that '*have surely been corrupted*,' is a metaphor for 'the people of the heavens and earth,' just like that - an alleged claim without any significant proof to change the reality of the speech by turning it into a metaphor. As has been cited in the *Tafsir* of Imām al-Ṭabari:

Said concerning the interpretation of the Almighty's saying: '*If there had been in the heavens or earth any gods but Him, both heavens and earth would be in ruins; Allah, Lord of the Throne, is far above the things they say,*' [21: 22]. He, the Exalted in His remembrance says if there were 'gods' within the realm of the heavens and earth, other than Him, deserving of worship, (yet He) is the Creator of all things; the One to be worshiped, and to whom belongs divinity that is only suitable for Him, (then each) realm would be corrupted. He says the people of the heavens and earth would have surely been corrupted '*Allah, Lord of the Throne, is far above the things they say.*' He the Sublime says it is an exaltation and evidence that Allah is free from the lies of the *mushrikeen*. As Bishr narrated to us he said Yazeed narrated to us he said Sa'eed narrated to us from Qatādah (concerning where) He says '*If there had been in the heavens or earth any gods but Him, both heavens and earth would be in ruins,*' [21: 22] 'He glorifies Himself when a slander was said about Him.'⁸

Next, the following has been mentioned in the *Tafsir* of Ibn Abi Ḥātim regarding the statement of Qatādah but without the accompanying *isnād*:

From Qatādah (regarding where) He said: '*Have they chosen any gods from the earth,*' [21: 21], meaning (gods) which they have taken from wood and stone. And (regarding where) He said: '*If there had been in the heavens or earth any gods but Him,*' [21: 22] had there been with them 'gods' except Allah, they would have surely been corrupted. '*Allah, Lord of the Throne, is far above the things they say,*' He glorifies Himself, the Blessed and Exalted, when slander is said about Him.⁹

The majority of commentators afterwards considered it to be a matter relating to 'mutual hindrance,' *al-Tamānu*; that is until Imām Ibn Taymiyyah came forth with his heinous mistake and his reprehensible innovation. The following is mentioned in *Laṭā'if al-Ishārat* (*Tafsir* al-Qushayri):

⁸ *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari [Vol.16 , p. 246]. In the latter portion of the quote we have avoided the repetition of the verse, leaving the reference in parentheses.

⁹ *Tafsir* Ibn Abi Ḥātim [Vol.6 , pp. 223/224].

It was reported that every matter entrusted to a group is not carried out according to the system as conflict and disagreement arise between them. Since the affairs of the world are in order, it indicates that it happened by the decree of an All-Wise controller. The sky with its orbits revolving around in the solar system with no pillars to hold them, and the earth is settled with its realms in the order of the succession of its night and day. The sun, the moon, and the moving stars revolve around in constellations, and the expanse of the sky expands without any gaps. This is a sign of the design of the All-Mighty, All-Knowing, and an indication of His Oneness.¹⁰

Moreover, it has been mentioned in *Tafsir* al-Samā'ni:

(Essentially) its meaning: had there been 'other gods,' in addition to Allah *also* in the heavens or the earth, they would have surely been corrupted. The meaning of corruption in the heavens and the earth - if there are two gods, (it) is the corruption of management and the irregularity of things because of disputes and opposition. It is also the meaning of the Almighty's saying: '*Each (god) would have taken his creation aside and tried to overcome the others,*' [23: 90]; and His saying: '*Allah, Lord of the Throne, is far above the things they say,*' [21: 22]. He Exalted Himself from the claims of the *mushrikeen*, such as the (attribution of) a partner and offspring.¹¹

The writings of Ibn Taymiyyah

Given the aforementioned passages quoted, we now provide to you, the discerned reader, several matters regarding Ibn Taymiyyah, lest the accusation be levelled that we have either wronged him or made something fallacious about him. The following is mentioned in *Jāmi al-Masā'il* of Ibn Taymiyyah:

It has become clear based upon the qiyās al-'aqli (rational analogy) that taking other gods besides Allah is impossible, as it is impossible for there to be a lord except Allah. This is what He meant when He

¹⁰ *Laṭā'if al-Ishārat* (*Tafsir* al-Qushayri) [Vol. 2, p. 497]

¹¹ *Tafsir* al-Samā'ni [Vol. 3, p. 374]

said: ‘If there had been in the heavens or earth any gods but Him, both heavens and earth would be in ruins,’ [21: 22]. He intended to deny ‘any god’ other than Him. That is why it was said, ‘would be in ruins,’ and this includes denying the existence of a lord other than Him. The *mutakalimun* (theologians) failed to understand the meaning of this verse in two ways: Firstly, is that they think that it only means denying the multiplicity of lords, as they themselves have established evidence for that. Second, they think that the evidence of that is the ‘mutual hindrance’ that they have mentioned, but it is not. As mutual hindrance necessitates inaction, it is as though it is said that the action occurred, then sharing the action necessitates the incapability of both of them, and the Qur’ān only mentioned their corruption, not their non-existence. Corruption is caused by corrupted wills, and it is the opposite of righteousness that results from righteous wills; Allah commanded righteousness and forbade corruption in more than one verse.¹²

Here I would argue that Ibn Taymiyyah not only made a huge mistake in understanding the verse, which resulted in distorting its meaning and bringing it out of context, he even accused the theologians of negligence - like that, with all boldness and even rudeness, even though he is the negligent, heretical, and the one at fault. Next, the following is mentioned in *Majmu’ al-Fatāwa*:

And it is known that those who falsely attributed offspring to Him - sons and daughters - (did so) out of ignorance. And those who said: ‘Allah has begotten a son,’ they are liars. And those who said: ‘The Messiah is the son of God, and Ezra is the son of God,’ their rational people did not intend (*sic.* in meaning) a physical birth of the same type as the birth of an animal, with copulation between the male and the female, which results in the birth of an offspring. The Christians and the Sabians agree in denying that, as did the Arab mushrikeen. I do not think their rational people believed that. Rather, they described the spiritual, intellectual birth, as the Christians say: the essence, which is god from one side and ‘the Word’ from another side, which

¹² Ibn Taymiyyah *Jāmi al-Masā’il*, [Vol. 6, p. 174]

was shielded by a human being created from Mary. So, they say the shielding of divinity by humanity is the outward, he is the shield and the clothed; a human being is the inward, he is the shielded divinity. He is the son, who is the Word from which the Father, who is the essence of existence, was created.

Hence for them, this ‘sonship’ is composed of two origins: First is that the essence, which is the Word, is born from the essence, which is the Father, in the same way that knowledge and speech are generated from the one who possesses knowledge and speaks. Second, is that this essence was united with the Messiah and shielded by Him, and that essence is the Father from one side and the Son from another side. For this reason, Allah sometimes said that they say: ‘*The Messiah is the son of God*,’ and sometimes they say, ‘*Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary*.’ As for His narration about them, when they said: ‘*Allah is one in a Trinity*,’ the interpreters say: god, the Messiah, and his mother, as He said: ‘*Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to people - Take me and my mother as two gods alongside Allah?*’ [5: 116]. He also said of this discourse: ‘*The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a Messenger; other Messengers had come and gone before him; his mother was a virtuous woman*,’ [5: 75].

This means that the highest status of the Messiah is that of a Messenger, and the highest status of his mother, a devout woman of truth. They do not reach the level of divinity. This is the argument for this position, and it is evident. However, some people claim that what is meant by this are the three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but this interpretation is questionable.¹³

The first portion from the quote regarding the Arab *mushrikeen* is emphasised so the reader can see how weak and shallow Ibn Taymiyyah’s analysis of pre-Islamic *Shirk* was.¹⁴ Even though elsewhere in his writing he specifically argued the following:

¹³ Ibn Taymiyyah *Majmu’ al-Fatāwa* [Vol. 1, pp. 231/232]. The latter portion of the quote where Ibn Taymiyyah makes mention of the verses at [6: 100/101] has been omitted here for the translation.

¹⁴ Despite providing the quote at length, the original Arabic edition re-quotes the highlighted portions. For the English translation, but also for ease of reading, these are omitted.

Whomsoever wishes to learn about the conditions of the *mushrikeen* in their worship of *Awthān* (idols); to understand the reality of *Shirk*, associating partners with Allah – a matter that Allah has condemned in its different guises; in order to understand the *ta'weel* (interpretation) of the Qur'ān, to know what Allah and His Messenger have rebuked, one should look into the *Seerah* of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. And (concerning) the condition of the Arabs during his time, to consider what al-Azraqi has mentioned (in his book) *Akhbār Makkah*, and other than him from the scholars.¹⁵

If only he himself had committed to that, as per his words. One will see clearly the catastrophic additional blunders he made concerning the *Shirk* of the Arabs later in this present work. With regards to the other highlighted portion about the beliefs of the Christians, this leads one to doubt too in his knowledge in this area. Elsewhere Ibn Taymiyyah writes:

And since the soul inevitably needs a desired object, beloved for its own sake, without which it cannot be upright or complete, and that is its deity, then there is no deity that can bring it righteousness except Allah. For this reason, Allah the Almighty said: 'If there had been in the heavens or earth any gods but Him, both heavens and earth would be in ruins,' [21: 22]. This does not apply only to mankind, but also to the angels and *Jinn*, for they are all alive, rational and speaking. They acquire knowledge and act by choice, and they cannot be righteous without their desire, which is loved for itself. It is their deity, and it is forbidden for anything to be worshiped and loved for itself except Allah. Hence, had there been 'other gods' besides Allah in the heavens or the earth, both of them would have surely been corrupted. For this reason, the *Deen* of all the Messengers was to worship Allah alone, He has no partner.¹⁶

Returning to his work entitled *Jāmi al-Masā'il* he says after quoting verse 22 of *Surah al-Anbiyā'*:

¹⁵ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Iqtidā' al-Ṣirāt al-Mustaqem* [Vol. 2, p. 289]

¹⁶ Ibn Taymiyyah *al-Jawāb al-Ṣāḥiḥ li'man Baddala Deen al-Maseeh* [Vol. 6, p. 36]

We have previously written about principles related to this in the context of *Tawḥeed al-Rububiyyah*, *Tawḥeed al-Uluhiyyah*, and how, just as it is impossible for creation to have two lords, it is also impossible for it to have two gods. We also discussed the effective and final causes and reasons. Concerning His statement: 'It is You we worship; it is You we ask for help,' [1: 5]. (We discussed) how all actions arise from love, which is the essence of worship. We elaborated upon these topics in a noble, beneficial, and enlightening manner - all praise is due to Allah.

He did not say, 'They were abolished,' because if it were permissible for created beings to be gods, sought and worshiped for their own sake, it would entail permitting the worship of everything and every action and intention. This would inevitably lead to the corruption of the heavens and the earth. Allah Almighty says: 'And fight them until there is no more fitnah and the Deen is for Allah,' [8: 39]. If the *Deen* were not for Allah, then the actions of the worshippers would be for 'other' than Allah, leading to *fitnah* and corruption. Therefore, it is righteous for actions to be for Allah, and corrupt for them to be for other than Allah. This, (and) Allah knows best, is one of the most excellent matters, but it requires further elaboration and completion.¹⁷

In perhaps his most famous work, *Dar' Ta'arūḍ al-'Aql wal'Naql* he says the following after citing the verse:

He did not say, 'Had there been two gods.' Rather, the intended meaning is gods other than the known Allah, who is acknowledged as the true deity. No one disputes that Allah is the true *Ilāh*; the dispute is - whether one can take another as a god alongside Him while He is the Sovereign?¹⁸

The next quotes from Ibn Taymiyyah are all from his *Majmu' al-Fatāwa*. They are detailed as follows:

¹⁷ Ibn Taymiyyah *Jāmi al-Masā'il*, [Vol. 6, p. 87 and p. 126]

¹⁸ Ibn Taymiyyah *Dar' Ta'arūḍ al-'Aql wal'Naql* [Vol. 9, p. 369]. Here the quotation from the original Arabic is curtailed. After this portion, Ibn Taymiyyah goes on to cite the following Qur'ānic verses: [30: 28] and [39: 3, 43/45].

For their existence depends on the true deity being worshiped. If there were ‘gods’ other than Allah, then Allah would not be the true God, since Allah has no equal or likeness. Their existence would be corrupted due to the absence of what ensures their proper function. This is from the perspective of *al-Ilāhiyyah* (godhood). As for the perspective of *al-Rububiyyah* (lordship), it is a different matter, which we will clarify in its appropriate place.

Rather, it is not permissible to love any of the existing beings for its own sake, except by Him; glorified is Allah, and He is to be praised. Every beloved thing in the world can only be loved for the sake of something else, not for its own sake. The Lord, Exalted be He, is the One who must be loved for His own sake. And this is one of the meanings of His *Uluhiyyah*: [21: 22]. Hence, loving something for its own sake is *Shirk*. Nothing should be loved for its own sake except Allah. This is a characteristic unique to His divinity, and only Allah alone deserves this. Any other beloved object, if it is not loved for the sake of Allah then that love is corrupted.¹⁹

Broadly, Ibn Taymiyyah has similar sayings on many other topics, and the aforementioned lengthy quotations should suffice. Otherwise, the matter would have been very long; all of them are either correct but have no relation to the verse, or they are wrong and confusing.

¹⁹ The three-citations are from *Majmu’ al-Fatāwa* [Vol. 1, p. 24, 55 and Vol. 10, p. 607].

15. The verse - ‘If there were other gods’

To conclude the study of the verse concerning *al-Tamānu’* and that of the verse of *al-Fasad*, it is pertinent to carefully study the words of His Majesty, may He be glorified and Exalted, where He has said:

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ مَعَهُ آلِهَةٌ كَمَا يَقُولُونَ إِذَا لَابْتَغَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِي الْعَرْشِ سَبِيلًا

Say, ‘If there were other gods along with Him, as they say there are, then they would have tried to find a way to the Lord of the Throne.’¹

Cited in the *Tafsir* of al-Samā’ni the following is of note:

And He has said: ‘They would have tried to find a way to the Lord of the Throne.’ Contained therein are two interpretations of the statement, the first of which, is that they seek to obtain a pathway to the Lord of the Throne (in an attempt) to gain closeness to Him. The other, which is more appropriate, (if) they were to seek a way pursuant to the possessor of the Throne, finding that way in order to prevail and gain dominance in pursuit of the kingdom. Indeed, this is similar to where He the Almighty has said: ‘If there had been...any gods but Him (both heavens and earth) would be in ruins.’²

It is cited also in *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*:

¹ *Qur’ān*, 17: 42

² *Tafsir* al-Samā’ni [Vol. 3, p. 243]. Al-Samā’ni is Abul’Muzaffar Maṣūr ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad al-Marwazi al-Sama’ani al-Tamimi, al-Hanafī, then al-Shāfi’i [d. 489 AH]

The majority of the readers have recited (the verse) *kama taquloon*, with a ‘*ta*’ of address. The recitation of Ibn Kathir and Ḥafṣ from Aāṣim (has) ‘*kama ya’quloon*,’ with a ‘*ya*’ of hiddenness. Regarding the meaning of this noble verse, two interpretations exist, both of which statements are true, the Qur’ān attesting to both. Within the meaning of this noble Qur’ānic verse, there are two modes or aspects of interpretation, both of which are true, being attested to by the text of the book, the entirety of which is manifestly true.³

The first of the two interpretations as mentioned, is that the meaning of the noble verse is – if there were ‘other gods’ with Allah, as claimed by the *kuffār*, they would seek a means to Him, in other words, meaning that the alleged gods would be seeking to find a way to the Throne (meaning Allah) in order to try and defeat Him; to try and remove His dominion, as they would then be His partners. This is similar to what earthly kings have done to each other. Glory be to Allah who is Exalted and far above what they claim. This interpretation of the verse seems manifestly apparent, and it is the meaning which comes to mind when considering other verses that support this interpretation, such as where He the Almighty has said:

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذًا لَذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

*Allah has never had a child. Nor is there any god beside Him - if there were, each god would have taken his creation aside and tried to overcome the others. May Allah be Exalted above what they describe!*⁴

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ

*‘If there were other gods along with Him, as they say there are, then they would have tried to find a way to the Lord of the Throne.’*⁵

The intended meaning of this verse has been narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās, Sa’eed ibn Jubayr, Abu Ali al-Fārisi, al-Nakhash, Abu Maṣṣūr and other scholars from the *mutakalimeen*. The second latter aspect of the meaning of

³ al-Shanqīṭi *Aḥwāl al-Bayān* [Vol. 3, p. 158]

⁴ *Qur’ān*, 23: 91

⁵ *Qur’ān*, 17: 42

the noble verse is that the phrase ‘*find a way to the Lord of the Throne*,’ carries the meaning that it is a means and method by which to approach Him in order to recongrise His favour. That is indicated by His saying, may He be Exalted:

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ

*Those [angels] they pray to are themselves seeking a way to their Lord, even those who are closest to Him. They hope for His mercy and fear His punishment.*⁶

This is narrated from Qatādah, being also that which was highlighted by Ibn Kathir in his *Tafsir*. Without doubt, the apparent meaning that springs to mind from the verse according to the Arabic language is the first statement, because the verse implies an impossibility – the impossible assumption that there are ‘gods’ besides Allah seeking a share with Him. This does not imply an approach to Him, but rather a conflict with Him *if* they were to exist. However, in reality, they have no existence, being impossible to exist in the first place, and all knowledge is with Allah the Exalted. It is important though to consider the context in which the verse appears, as the collection of verses demonstrates this most eloquently, since He the Exalted says:

This is some of the wisdom your Lord has revealed to you: do not set up another god beside Allah, or you will be thrown into Hell, blamed and rejected.

What? Has your Lord favoured you people with sons and taken daughters for Himself from the angels? What a monstrous thing for you to say! We have explained things in various ways in this Qur’an, so that such people might take notice, but it has only turned them further away.

*Say, ‘If there were other gods along with Him, as they say there are, then they would have tried to find a way to the Lord of the Throne.’ Glory to Him! He is far above what they say! The seven heavens and the earth and everyone in them glorify Him. There is not a single thing that does not celebrate His praise, though.*⁷

⁶ *Qur’ān*, 17: 57

⁷ *Qur’ān*, 17: 39/44

Here Allah denies their claims based upon their lies, fabrication and falsehood that the angels are divine beings, feminine, and posited as the ‘daughters of Allah.’ This matter will be addressed exhaustively in due course. I would argue that it is of no surprise that the extremist sect of Wahhabism has concurred upon the claim that the means of approach is one that seeks closeness, harmony, and not of disagreement and conflict. They believe it conforms to the falsehoods they have adopted, despite the fact that it is tenuous. The truth is that it is completely false, with no real debate concerning it, when evidenced by the following proofs:

1. It would lead to the invalidation of the argument made by Allah against the *mushrikeen*, or some of them, who said of their gods – ‘*We only worship them because they bring us nearer to God.*’⁸ They would have the retort – ‘This is exactly what we mean – our gods used to, and still do, approach the Lord of the Throne, by seeking every means to reach Him, be that by submission, imploring Him or seeking closeness; this is in order to achieve His satisfaction. So we approach Him by approaching them.’ If such an absurdity were true, it would end up invalidating the very principle of *Tawḥeed*, may Allah protect us from such a thing!
2. It is an anomalous saying of Qatādah from the early *Salaf*, there is a disagreement regarding it from Ibn ‘Abbās and Sa’eed ibn Jubayr, who are far more versed in the text of the Qur’ān and language of the Arabs.⁹ Thereafter, it has been opposed by the *ijmā’* of the later scholars, particularly among the *mutakalimeen*.
3. The speech of Allah does not contain contradictions, so this verse must be in harmony with the verses of *al-Tamānu’* and *al-Fasad*, which require that the ‘gods’ are either:
 - a) the type that creates by its own independent power and dominance, which surpasses others, subduing them by its own independent power, without competition or defeat. This type would be considered ancient, so there implies a sense of aloofness in all circumstances of agreement or disagreement.

⁸ Qur’ān, 39: 3

⁹ See *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari [Vol. 14, p. 603]

- b) Or a created being, which nonetheless either has complete/infinite power within themselves, is an enemy of Allah and opposes Him in every way. Be that by rebellion, seeking to deceive Him and trying to obfuscate His Command. Or, it has power equal to the power of Allah, even if only in some limited acts, such as being able to escape Allah by flight. In any case, the only appropriate response is to abstain – there would be no meaning in seeking a way or means of approach to the Throne of Allah by way of closeness.
- c) Or, it is a being born of another god, being considered as a divine species or genus, it cannot have independent power of creation or independent superiority and dominion, or independent will and choice; otherwise there would inevitably be contradictions arising and conflict. Therefore, its creation is only that of the creation from its father, if it were to create at all. The will being that of the father, if there is a will at all. Reaching the ultimate proximity would be to the extent that the entities are two-faces of one and the same thing. Such a species cannot be intended here, because it is as if he himself is the owner of the Throne, so it would have completely reached its destination and purpose. Hence, it would be impossible for that entity, born of a god to be originally among those who seek a way to the owner of the Throne, being already there. Such existence is invalidated by other evidence, including the previous verse in the same context, namely: ‘*What? Has your Lord favoured you people with sons and taken daughters for Himself from the angels? What a monstrous thing for you to say!*’¹⁰

In any event, the aforementioned discussion is but a short glimpse into the most important issues that relate to *Tawḥeed al-Rabb*, Glorified is His name, Exalted is His station. What is set out here is a generic summary. In order to expand upon the topic at hand would require a separate volume in itself, which is beyond scope for the present work. We ask Allah to give us the health, mental wellbeing and life to complete such a task – there is no god except Allah, upon Him we trust and rely. Prior to outlining the overview of the evidences which establish that Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon

¹⁰ Qur’ān, 17: 40

him, is the Messenger of Allah, it is important to refute a satanic misconception that the text of the Qur'ān implies the possibility that there is/could be another god except Allah. Naturally, such a claim is baseless and insidious, we seek refuge in Allah from such an evil statement.

16. Is the existence of another god possible?

In relation to the two Qur'ānic verses which will be considered here, it could come to mind at first glance by some, that the wording as expressed may not necessarily entail a clear prohibition of *Shirk*.¹ Moreover, the second verse under consideration may to the casual reader imply that there is somehow 'another god' or deity in existence alongside Allah - may Allah forbid. This *may* at the casual glance come to mind, particularly for non-Arabic speakers who haven't grasped the intricacies and nuances of the Arabic language. The text of the Qur'ān, the book of Allah, has been revealed in clear Arabic language, which reaches the ultimate level of eloquence and clarity. Hence, to dispel any notion regarding dangerous misconceptions of these two verses, a detailed review is required. Principally the verses which require consideration here are the following:

وَمَنْ يَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا بُرْهَانَ لَهُ بِهِ

*Whoever prays to another god alongside Him - a god for whose existence he has no evidence.*²

وَأَنْ تَشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَنْزِلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا

¹ Originally the chapter is titled as the following in the Arabic edition: 'Clarifying the meaning of the words of the Almighty: *Whoever prays to another god alongside Him - a god for whose existence he has no evidence*, [23: 117], *And that you without His sanction, associate things with Him, and that you say things about Him without knowledge* [7: 33], and similar verses.' This is significantly streamlined for the present translation.

² *Qur'ān*, 23: 117

*And that you without His sanction, associate things with Him, and that you say things about Him without knowledge.*³

Perhaps one of the best ways to begin this study is by way of reflection upon the blessed verses as revealed in *Surah al-Kahf*, where He, the Exalted and Sublime has expressly said:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا، فَيَمَّا لِيُنذِرَ بَأْسًا شَدِيدًا مِّن لَّدُنْهُ وَيُبَشِّرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا، مَا كَثِيرٌ فِيهِ آيَاتٌ، وَيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا، مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا لِآبَائِهِمْ كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ إِنْ يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا كَذِبًا

*Praise be to Allah, who sent down the Scripture to His servant and made it unerringly straight, warning of severe punishment from Him, and [giving] glad news to the believers who do good deeds – an excellent reward; that they will always enjoy. It warns those people who assert, ‘Allah has offspring.’ They have no knowledge about this, nor did their forefathers - it is a monstrous assertion that comes out of their mouths: what they say is nothing but lies.*⁴

The following has been mentioned in the *Tafsir* of al-Zamakhshari:

‘They have no knowledge about this,’ namely, about having a son or taking one. It means that their statement was not borne of (actual) knowledge, but rather stemming from excessive ignorance and the imitation of their forefathers, who had inherited this (viewpoint) from the delusions of the *Shayṭān*. If you were to say that Allah taking a child is inherently an impossibility, then how is it said – ‘They have no knowledge thereof’? I would argue it means that they have no knowledge of it because it is not a matter *that can be known*, given it is an impossibility. The lack of knowledge about something is either because of ignorance of the path leading to it, or because it is inherently impossible, making it impossible for knowledge to be connected to it.⁵

³ *Qur’ān*, 7: 33. In full, the verse reads: *Say [Prophet], ‘My Lord only forbids disgraceful deeds - whether they be open or hidden, and sin and unjustified aggression, and that you without His sanction, associate things with Him, and that you say things about Him without knowledge.’*

⁴ *Qur’ān*, 18: 1/5

⁵ *Tafsir* al-Zamakhshari [Vol. 2, p. 676]

Note the last sentence which al-Zamakhshari mentions and its critical importance. Next, the following is mentioned in the *Tafsir* of al-Rāzi:

In the verse there are some matters of inquiry. The first of which, know that the saying of the Almighty: ‘*It warns those people who assert, ‘Allah has offspring,’* [18: 4], co-joined to His statement, ‘*warning of severe punishment from Him.*’ The element which is cojoined must be different from that which it is cojoined with. So the first is general upon whomsoever deserves the punishment, the second being specific upon whomsoever purported to attribute a child to Allah. The usual practice in the Qur’ān is that when a general statement is mentioned, some of its particulars are then conjoined to it to highlight that these are the most significant particulars of that general statement. For example, in His saying: ‘*His angels, His Messengers, Gabriel, and Michael,*’ [2: 98]. Similarly, the conjunction here indicates that *the most* abhorrent types of *kufr* and *ma’siyah* (disobedience) are to attribute offspring to Allah the Almighty.

The second issue relates to the fact that there are three-groups who attributed offspring to Allah the Almighty. The first group, are the disbelieving Arabs who said that the angels were the ‘daughters of Allah.’ Second of the groups are the Christians, who said that Christ is the son of Allah. Third, is the group from the Jews who said that Ezra is the son of Allah. The discussions relate to the matter that those attributing offspring to Allah is a matter of great kufr, entailing significant impossibilities. Indeed, we have mentioned it in relation to *Surah al-An’ām*, and the *Tafsir* of where He the Almighty said: ‘*And without any true knowledge they attribute sons and daughters to Him,*’ [6: 100]. Concluding the matter, it is mentioned further in *Surah Maryam*, then He the Almighty refutes the claim of those who attribute offspring to Allah in two-respects. Firstly, He says ‘*They have no knowledge about this, nor did their forefathers,*’ [18: 5]. If it is said that (the matter of) Allah taking a child is one which is inherently impossible, then how can it be said (*sic.* in the phrasing of the verse), ‘*They have no knowledge about this?*’

(In response) we say: the lack of knowledge about something can be due to ignorance of the path leading to it, or it can be because it is

inherently impossible, hence making it impossible for knowledge to be connected to it. Its counterpart is where He the Almighty said: ‘*Whoever prays to another god alongside Him - a god for whose existence he has no evidence,*’ [23: 117]. Know, that the opponents of *qiyās* cling to the verse and argue that it indicates speaking about the *Deen* without requisite knowledge is *bāṭil* (invalidated), and viewpoints derived of *qiyās* is a discourse about the *Deen* without knowledge, thus *bāṭil*. That is their complete argument. It is mentioned where He says: ‘*Do not follow blindly what you do not know to be true,*’ [17: 36] and ‘*They have no knowledge about this, nor did their forefathers,*’ [18: 5]. That is to say, none of their predecessors. This is an exaggeration of the fact that this matter is invalidated and corrupt.

The second type, is what Allah the Almighty mentioned invalidating their discourse, He says: ‘*It is a monstrous assertion that comes out of their mouths: what they say is nothing but lies,*’ [18: 5].⁶

Thereafter, al-Rāzi goes on to comment with the following:

The fourth (point) of research, (where) He says: ‘*that comes out of their mouths*’ indicates that this discourse is utterly detestable to the mind. It is as if He says, this thing that they are speaking upon isn’t judged by their intellect or thought, given that it is utterly corrupt and false. It merely flows from their tongues by way of imitation. Although they speak it, their intellect and thought (at base) is averse to it. Thereafter, Allah says: ‘*What they say is nothing but lies*’ – a meaning manifestly apparent.

Know, that people have differed regarding the true nature of lying. According to us - it is a report which doesn’t correspond to the reality it describes; whether the speaker believes it to be so or not. Some people have said that the condition for it to be a lie is that it does not correspond to the reality and the speaker knows it to be so. This condition, according to us, is invalid. The evidence for this is this verse, wherein Allah describes their statement asserting that Allah has a child as a manifest lie, even though many of them say it without

⁶ *Tafsir* al-Rāzi [Vol. 10, p. 156]

knowing it is false. Thus, we understand that any statement that does not correspond to the reality it describes is a lie, whether the speaker knows it to be falsehood or not.⁷

Similar is also reflected in the *Tafsir* by Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Shirbini, *al-Sirāj al-Munir*. He wrote:

‘*No knowledge about this*’ the meaning being essentially that it is something that can’t be known because it doesn’t exist and (in actuality) cannot possibly exist. Thereafter, Allah emphasised this meaning by saying, ‘*nor did their forefathers*’ who they have taken pride in imitating concerning matters of religion; even for which no rational person can actually conceive of. Should they have made a mistake concerning a worldly matter, they wouldn’t follow them in that. If it should be asked – given the notion of Allah taking a child is inherently impossible, how can it be said that they have no knowledge thereof?

(Here) the answer is that the absence of knowledge of something can either be due to ignorance of the means to attain it or because it is inherently impossible and knowledge cannot actually pertain to it. The counterpart to that is the statement of the Almighty where He said: ‘*Whoever prays to another god alongside Him - a god for whose existence he has no evidence,*’ [23: 117].⁸

Analysis

In general, the analysis provided by al-Rāzi in the citations above, and those who followed his broad theme, are very good. The exception to that is where al-Rāzi said: ‘There are three-groups who attributed offspring to Allah the Almighty...’ Unless he was seeking to limit the scope of the discussion to the groups mentioned within the text of the verses at hand, one could argue

⁷ Ibid. The Arabic edition provides a follow-on quote repeating from a direct quote what al-Rāzi said earlier, the reference for this being, *Tafsir* al-Lubāb by Ibn ‘Aādil [Vol. 12, pp. 421/422]

⁸ *Tafsir, al-Sirāj al-Munir* by al-Shirbini [Vol. 2, p. 272]. al-Shirbini [d. 977AH]. Here, the quotation has been considerably abbreviated only to the relevant portion related to the discussion. The Arabic edition carries the citation in full with the repetition (including Qur’ānic verses) of what al-Rāzi argued.

that there is a tendency towards a slight lapse here. In actuality, the *majority* of the world's *Shirk*, be that among the Indians, Romans, Greeks, Egyptians or others, related to attributing offspring to Allah. Within a broader sense, many of these civilisations held that the notion of the divine is a type with multiple entities, or even a genus with multiple species.

Despite affiliation to the sect of Wahhābism, Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥman ibn Sa'di comprehended some of these points. In one of his works on *Tafsir*, he wrote:

منه قوله تعالى في الإنكار على من جعل مع الله إلهاً آخر، وإبطال زعمه الكاذب الذي هو أساس الوثنية: أن هؤلاء الأولياء والألوية أبناء الله؛ لأنهم النور الذي انبثق منه تجسدوا بشراً ثم عادوا إلى النورانية، فيقول (مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا لِآبَائِهِمْ)

This includes the statement of the Almighty to condemn those who made alongside Allah, another god. And a refutation of such a lying claim, which is the foundation of idolatry, that these 'Awliyā and gods are the children of Allah, because they are the light which emanated from Him, taking human form, then returning to being light again. Thus He says: 'They have no knowledge about this, nor did their forefathers,' [18: 5].⁹

Regretfully, the Shaykh didn't dwell further upon this point. Nor for that matter did he ask himself – is this the actual belief of those whom his deviant Wahhābi sect labels as being 'grave worshippers'? Shackled by the chains which the sect imprisoned him with, he could not break free of this to strive towards the core truth. That much will become evident in the litany of references carried in the present work.

With regards to the critically important sentence – 'the lack of knowledge about something can be due to ignorance of the path leading to it, or it can be because it is inherently impossible, hence making it impossible for knowledge to be connected to it,' it is indeed a rational necessity, ultimately stemming from the correct definition of knowledge. That was something which al-Rāzi and al-Zamakhshari were attuned to. Broadly, it is prevalent in classical works after the era of Imām al-Ṭabari. By way of an example, it can be discerned in the *Tafsir* of al-Khāzin:

⁹ Shaykh al-Sa'di, *al-Qawā'id al-Hissān al-Muta'alqah bi-Tafsir al-Qur'ān*, [Shamela edition, p. 149]

If you say that Allah having a child is (a matter which) is inherently impossible, how can it reasonably be said they have 'no knowledge' of such? I would argue, the absence of knowledge can be due to ignorance regarding the path to achieve it, or it can be because it is (related to a matter) that is inherently impossible for knowledge to relate to it.¹⁰

Regarding other classical authorities like Imām al-Ṭabari and those following him, they readily grasped this matter intuitively, less additional abstract theorisation. Writing in his acclaimed *Tafsir* he sets out the following:

Ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us he said Salamah narrated to us from Ibn Ishāq (regarding the verse): *It warns those people who assert, 'Allah has offspring.'* Namely, the (tribe of) Quraysh, in relation to their statement 'But we worship the angels, and they are the daughters of Allah.' And He says to them 'They have no knowledge about this,' saying – what they express by this statement, namely as they say: 'Allah has offspring' (is that they) have no knowledge of Allah. (The wording) *bi-hi* means by Allah, meaning one who has knowledge; in this saying meaning the remembrance of Allah.

Despite mentioning this, al-Ṭabari seems to have disapproved of this line of reasoning, because immediately thereafter he said: 'The meaning of the statement is that those who are making this claim, have no knowledge of Allah, (namely) that it is impossible for Him to have a child. (This is) due to their ignorance of Allah and His Greatness, they made this statement.'¹¹ Later scholars followed in a similar vein, for example, al-Qurtubi echoed this also in his *Tafsir*:

He the Almighty said: *It warns those people who assert, 'Allah has offspring.'* Among them are the Jews, who said that Ezra is the son of God, and the Christians, they said Jesus is the son of God. The

¹⁰ *Tafsir* al-Khāzin [Vol. 4, p. 191], by 'Alāuddin Ali ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhim al-Baghdādi, known as al-Khāzin.

¹¹ *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari [Vol. 17, p. 595]

Quraysh said that the angels are the daughters of Allah. The warning in the beginning of the *Surah* is general, and this is specific upon who said Allah has offspring.¹²

Refinement of the principle

Perhaps we can further refine and improve the wording of this critical and important sentence that has arisen in the present discourse. It is a critically important epistemological principle: ‘The absence of knowledge about the existence of something can be due to ignorance of the means to attain that knowledge; or it can be because the thing is non-existent and thus knowledge cannot relate to it - either because it was never existent; is not currently existent, or is inherently impossible and cannot exist at all.’ With regards to the addition that has been made to the wording, its origin stems from the wording as expressed in the Qur’ān, where He the Exalted and Almighty says:

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شُفَعَاؤُنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَلَا تُنْبِئُونَ اللَّهَ بِمَا لَا يَعْظُمُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

*They worship alongside Allah things that can neither harm nor benefit them, and say, ‘These are our intercessors with Allah.’ Say, ‘Do you think you can tell Allah about something He knows not to exist in the heavens or earth?’ Glory be to Him! He is far above the partner-gods they associate with Him!*¹³

Here in the verse, the mention of the heavens and the earth suggests that the subject is focused on the current non-existence of additional entities at the time the discourse is outlined. Regarding the idea that they are *impossible* to even exist, implies they cannot exist in the temporal realm, in the heavens and the earth, or even any other realms. In any event, the statement of He the Exalted ‘*Do you think you can tell Allah about something He knows not to exist in the heavens or earth,*’ shows the outright denial that there is any partner with Him. In a similar manner, a ruler or governor of a town may

¹² *Tafsir* al-Qurtūbi [Vol. 10, p. 353]. A follow-up reference to the *Tafsir* of Ibn Kathir [Vol. 5, p. 135] is also provided, essentially repeating the same: *It warns those people who assert, ‘Allah has offspring.’* Ibn Ishāq said: And it relates to the pagan Arabs concerning their statement, ‘We worship the angels, and they are the daughters of Allah.’

¹³ *Qur’ān* 10: 18

say – ‘I know of no other governor than myself.’ Stated in an emphatic way to deny the existence of *another* governor, both falling within the same category of outright rebuke. He the Exalted and Majestic says:

أَفَمَنْ هُوَ قَائِمٌ عَلَى كُلِّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ قُلْ سَمُّوهُمْ أَمْ تُنَبِّئُونَهُ بِمَا لَا يَعْظُمُ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ بَظَاهِرٍ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بَلْ زَيْنٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مَكْرُهُمْ وَصُدُّوا عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ

*Is He who stands over every soul marking its action [in need of any partner]? Yet they ascribe partners to Allah. Say, ‘Name them,’ or, ‘Can you tell Him about something on the earth He does not know to exist, or is this just a display of words?’ But the things they devise are made alluring to the disbelievers and they are barred from the [right] path: no one can guide those Allah leaves to stray.*¹⁴

Additional scholarly discourse

In the contemporary era of scholarship Muḥammad ibn al-‘Amin ibn Muḥammad al-Mukhtār al-Jakani al-Shanqīṭi addressed the issue at hand, in a similar manner to al-Rāzi, but he provided some critical expansion that is worthy of merit and detailed reflection. The following has been mentioned in his acclaimed work, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*:

‘It warns those people who assert, ‘Allah has offspring.’ They have no knowledge about this, nor did their forefathers - it is a monstrous assertion that comes out of their mouths: what they say is nothing but lies,’ [18: 4/5]. This is an example of *khaṣṣ* (specification) upon the ‘*amm* (general), due to His (earlier) statement of ‘*warning of severe punishment from Him.*’ It is inclusive of those who said that Allah has offspring, as well as other disbelievers. As mentioned within *Fann al-Ma’ani* (the art of rhetoric), it is established that specification of the particular occurs after mentioning the general – when the particular stands out from the general, with either commendable or objectionable qualities. It is considered an acceptable form of elucidation. Here, because the distinction in qualities is treated as a distinction in the matter of essence. An example of this is when the particular stands out from the general with commendable qualities.

¹⁴ *Qur’ān* 13: 33

For example, where He the Exalted said: ‘*If anyone is an enemy of Allah, His angels and His Messengers, of Gabriel and Michael, then Allah is certainly the enemy of such disbelievers,*’ [2: 98]. And He said: ‘*We took a solemn pledge from the Prophets - from you [Muhammad], from Noah,*’ [33: 7].

His saying, the Almighty in this noble verse: ‘*They have no knowledge about this, nor did their forefathers,*’ means that what they attributed to Him, taking a child – they have no knowledge of, because it is an impossibility. The verse clearly indicates that denying an action does not indicate its possibility. Among the verses demonstrating this is where He the Almighty said: ‘*It was not Us they wronged; they wronged themselves,*’ [2: 57] because their transgression to our Lord and claim of knowledge about Him taking a child – all of that is impossible logically. Thus, negating it does not imply its possibility. This is similar to the logicians' saying: a negative statement does not imply the existence of the subject, as we have explained elsewhere. What He has denied them and by extension their forefathers - is the knowledge of Him taking a child. Glory be to Him, and He is greatly Exalted above that. He has clarified this in other verses... ‘*It is a monstrous assertion that comes out of their mouths,*’ meaning, what they said from their mouths that Allah had taken a child was an enormity. We also mentioned the verses indicating His greatness previously.¹⁵

From this lengthy quotation we can see that al-Shanqīṭi, may Allah have mercy upon him, was more circumspect than that of al-Rāzi. Perhaps because he is from the contemporary era, having had the opportunity to access other branches of knowledge, including archaeology, contemporary religions and the like, which were not as yet available to Imām al-Rāzi. Concerning the mention of the three-groups attributing offspring to Allah, with mention of the verse in *Surah al-Tawbah*, and the third category are the Arab *mushrikeen*, we should acknowledge, as has been already mentioned,

¹⁵ al-Shanqīṭi *Aḥwāl al-Bayān* [Vol. 4, pp. 8/9]. Here, the quotation has been significantly abbreviated to only its most relevant parts when compared to the Arabic edition. al-Shanqīṭi covers many of the points which al-Rāzi and the other exegetes have. The section omitted covers where he mentions about the groups which have attributed offspring to Allah, citing the following verses: [19: 88/92], [9: 30], [17: 40], [16: 57], [5: 104] and [6: 100].

most of the *Shirk* that has existed, across countless ancient civilisations, stems from the belief that the nature of the divine or divinity itself, is a kind that has multiple individuals. Or it is a genus containing multiple species. The attribution of a child or offspring to Allah is a specific case for those who had already acknowledged a single central deity, God – Allah.

Moreover, al-Shanqīṭi, may Allah have mercy upon him, provided even greater elaboration upon this topic, in his valuable work entitled - *Dafau’ Iyhām al-Iḍḍirāb ‘an Ayāt al-Kitāb*:

And a similar verse to this statement is His saying, may He be Exalted ‘*No intercessor’s plea will benefit them now,*’ [74: 48]. That is, they have no intercession at all that could benefit them. And His saying: ‘*Whoever prays to another god alongside Him - a god for whose existence he has no evidence,*’ [23: 117]. (Here) because the existence of *another* deity is impossible in the first place, there cannot be proof for or against it. The author, may Allah forgive him, said: ‘This latter point is known among logicians by their statement that a negative proposition does not imply the existence of the subject.’ To clarify, a negative proposition, according to them, is true in two scenarios, because its purpose is the absence of the subject's qualification by the predicate, and this absence is realised in two scenarios.

Firstly, the subject exists, but the predicate is absent from it, as in the statement: ‘The human is not a stone.’ Here, the human exists, and matter of being from stone is absent from it. Second, the subject is non-existent in the first place because if it does not exist, the absence of its qualification by the existent predicate is realised. This is because non-existence cannot be qualified by existence. For example, when you say: ‘There is no counterpart to Allah deserving of worship,’ the subject, which is the counterpart, is non-existent from the start, and if its non-existence is realised, its qualification by the deservingness of worship is necessarily absent.’

I have clarified the issue that the negative proposition does not imply the existence of the subject in my treatise on logic in the discussion of the deviation of forms. I have also explained in the discussion of realisation and deviation that some affirmative propositions do not imply the existence of the subject, such as: ‘A sea of mercury (is possible)’ and ‘The impossible (is non-existent),’ as

both are affirmative propositions, yet the subject of each is non-existent. We have elaborated there on the details of what necessitates the existence of the subject and what does not.¹⁶

The following has been mentioned in *Aḍwā' al-Bayān* by al-Shanqīṭi:

'Whoever prays to another god alongside Him - a god for whose existence he has no evidence - will face his reckoning with his Lord. Those who reject the truth will not prosper,' [23: 117]. *al-Burhān* (the proof): Evidence that leaves no ambiguity regarding the truth, and His saying: *'he has no evidence,'* is like his saying *'Yet beside God they serve that for which He has sent no authority,'* [22: 71]. And *al-Sulṭān*, is an explicit standing-proof; and that means, *al-Burhān* and His statement, the like thereof: *'will face his reckoning with his Lord.'*

And He the Almighty has said: *'Set up no other god beside Allah, or you will end up disgraced and forsaken,'* [17: 22]. The verses of similar meaning are very numerous, and there is no disagreement among the scholars that His statement here: *'whose existence he has no evidence,'* does not imply the opposite meaning. Thus, no one can rightfully say – regarding someone who worships another god alongside Him with proof, that is permissible,¹⁷ because it is impossible for there to be proof of worshipping another god alongside Him. Rather, the definitive and successive proofs indicate that He alone, Glorified and Exalted, is to be worshipped, and it is impossible for there to be any evidence of worshipping anyone other than Him.

An example of this in the Qur'ān is this verse, because His saying – *'he has no evidence,'* is a description that matches reality, since they claim alongside Him other deities without any proof. Therefore, the description is mentioned due to its alignment with reality, not to exclude the implication from the ruling of the explicit text.¹⁷

¹⁶ al-Shanqīṭi *Dafau' Iyḥām al-Iḍṭirāb 'an Ayāt al-Kitāb* [p. 47]. Again, the quotation here is significantly abbreviated to its most essential core. The earlier portion which al-Shanqīṭi covers mentions the verses [4: 137, 168] and [10: 96]. Prior to the last portion of the quotation, the poetic lines of 'Imrul Qays are omitted.

¹⁷ al-Shanqīṭi *Aḍwā' al-Bayān* [Vol. 5, p. 566]. Here again, the quotation has been significantly abbreviated to only its most relevant parts when compared to the Arabic edition.

Again, the following has been mentioned in *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*:

He the Almighty said: *'These people of ours have taken gods other than Him. Why do they not produce clear evidence about them? Who could be more unjust than someone who makes up lies about Allah?'* [18: 15]. (The) *why do they not,* in this noble verse is for *takḥṣiṣ* (specification); it denotes an emphatic and intense request. The purpose of this request is to demonstrate incapability, given that it is known none can bring forth (any) clear authority proving the permissibility of worshipping other than Allah the Almighty. By (mention of) *clear evidence,* what is meant is a manifest proof. What He, the Exalted, mentioned in this noble verse about their incapability to produce any proof for their *Shirk* and *kufr,* (together with) the invalidation of the arguments of the *mushrikeen* for their *Shirk,* is explained clearly in many verses.¹⁸

Writing in his *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, al-Jaṣṣāṣ has mentioned the following:

He the Almighty has said: *'Do not consume usurious interest, doubled and redoubled,'* [3: 130]. It does not indicate permissibility if it is not multiplied. And the Almighty said: *'Whoever prays to another god alongside Him - a god for whose existence he has no evidence,'* [23: 117]. This does not indicate that anyone can provide proof for the validity of claiming that there is (somehow) 'another god' alongside Allah. He is far Exalted above that.¹⁹

Returning to al-Shanqīṭi, he lucidly expresses the following in *al-Qawā'id al-Ḥissān fi Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*:

From among them, He the Exalted says: *'Whoever prays to another god alongside Him - a god for whose existence he has no evidence,'* [23: 117]. A matter well known, that whoever invokes 'another god' alongside Allah is a *kāfir* and has no proof whatsoever. Allah included

¹⁸ Ibid., [Vol. 4, p. 22]. A series of additional verses are mentioned in the quotation from al-Shanqīṭi which include the following: [6: 148], [46: 4], [43: 21], [30: 35], [35: 40], and [23: 117].

¹⁹ al-Jaṣṣāṣ *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* [Vol. 2, p. 197/198].

this condition (in the verse) to emphasise the heinousness of *Shirk* and the *mushrik*, highlighting that *Shirk* has absolutely no legitimate or rational proof. The *mushrik* has nothing that justifies any of it. The benefit of this condition is to severely denounce the *mushrikeen* for their obstinacy and opposition to both religious and rational proofs, (thereby) underscoring that they have nothing but selfish desires and malicious intent. That if they were to reflect even a little, they would realise that what they are doing cannot be justified by anyone with the slightest faith or logic.²⁰

Next, the following has been mentioned in *al-Durr al-Ma'sun fi 'Ilm al-Kitāb al-Maknun* by al-Sameen al-Ḥalabi:

His statement '*Whoever prays to,*' a condition. In its answer, there are two-pathways, the most correct of them is, that He says – '*will face his reckoning.*' Accordingly, there are two-aspects to the previous statement, which is where He says '*whose existence he has no evidence,*' one of which, is that it is an attribute of 'god,' which is an intransitive attribute. Namely, the 'invoked god' other than Allah, cannot be except as such, as it has no valid meaning due to the corruption of the meaning. In a similar manner, 'nor a bird that flies with its wings,' (here) doesn't imply that there is another invoked god besides Allah who (they have) evidence for – nor that there is a bird that can fly without its wings.

Secondly, is that it is an interjection between the condition and its answer. al-Zamakhshari referred to these two interpretations by saying: 'It is an essential attribute, as in the phrase: 'flies with its wings,' given for emphasis, (but) not to suggest that among the gods there might be one who could have proof.' It can also be an interjection between the condition and the consequence, as in the phrase: 'Whoever is kind to Zayd - no one is more deserving of kindness, Allah will reward him.'

Secondly, (regarding) the two-aspects, is that the conditional clause appearing in His statement, '*whose existence he has no evidence,*' is as if he has avoided the meaning of the attribute because

²⁰ al-Shanqīṭi *al-Qawā'id al-Hissān fi Tafsir al-Qur'ān*, [p. 93].

of the corruption that it necessarily entails. Thus, ending up in something permissible only in the realm of poetic license, which is the omission of the conjunction '*fa*' in the nominal sentence. As it is in the verse, 'Whoever does good deeds, Allah rewards them.' Explaining '*whose existence he has no evidence,*' as an attribute, has been discussed previously. There is no problem within it, as it is an intransitive adjective, or on that it is an intercepting phrase.²¹

Follow-on analysis

Some additional clarifications are required in relation to the interpretation as set out in the preceding quotation above by the author of *al-Durr al-Ma'sun*. The origin of the poem begins as – 'Whoever does good deeds *then* Allah rewards them.' But the conjunction letter '*fa*' is omitted out of necessity for the requirement of the poetic line. To begin, 'the essential attribute' where the intended meaning conveyed by the Qur'ānic verse would thus be – 'Whoever invokes another god besides Allah, whose essential and necessary attribute is that there is no substantive evidence for it, then his reckoning ultimately is with his Lord.' This is the second interpretation which appears in al-Māwardi's *Tafsir* which is entitled *al-Nukat al-'Uyun*: 'His saying – *Whoever prays to another god alongside Him - a god for whose existence he has no evidence,* in that there's two aspects....The second of which, that this attribute of a god that is invoked upon besides Allah, that there is no evidence for it.'²² The rhetorical purpose here is for confirmation and emphasis.

Secondly, regarding 'the objection,' assessing the wording of the verse then becomes: 'Whoever prays to another god alongside Him— a god for whose existence he has no evidence' which is due to the impossibility of having such proof or evidence, then he 'will face his reckoning with his Lord.' This is the first aspect that was mentioned by al-Māwardi's in his *Tafsir*, 'His saying – *Whoever prays to another god alongside Him - a god for whose existence he has no evidence,* in that there's two aspects, one of which means that there is no proof or validity that there is another god with

²¹ al-Sameen al-Ḥalabi *al-Durr al-Ma'sun fi 'Ilm al-Kitāb al-Maknun*, [Vol. 8, pp. 375/376].

²² *Tafsir al-Māwardi, al-Nukat al-'Uyun* [Vol. 4, p. 69].

Allah.²³ The rhetorical purpose here, is to amplify the ubiquitous state of the individual calling on a supposed deity that doesn't exist.

Thirdly, in relation to the conditional clause with the omission of the particle 'fa.' The statement consists of two-sentences 'Whoever prays to another god alongside Him—a god for whose existence he has no evidence,' and 'whoever invokes another god besides Allah, then his account is only with his Lord.' Repeat of the condition is then omitted, and the first 'fa' dropped so it suffices with the second. Again, the rhetorical purpose is to harmonise the two-sentences into one, while outlining the disgraceful state of the individual seeking to try and invoke 'another god,' all the while, strongly censuring him.

Similar has been outlined in many verses, some of which are set out below for perusal:

سَنَلْقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ وَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى
الظَّالِمِينَ

*We will strike panic into the disbelievers' hearts because they attribute partners to Allah although He has sent no authority for this; their shelter will be the fire - how miserable is the home of the evildoers!*²⁴

وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُم بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ
بِالْأَمْنِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

*Why should I fear what you associate with Him? Why do you not fear to associate with Him things for which He has sent you no authority? Tell me, if you know the answer, which side has more right to feel secure?*²⁵

قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّي الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ
يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

*Say [Prophet], 'My Lord only forbids disgraceful deeds - whether they be open or hidden, and sin and unjustified aggression, and that you, without His sanction, associate things with Him, and that you say things about Him without knowledge.'*²⁶

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *Qur'ān*, 3: 151.

²⁵ *Qur'ān*, 6: 81

²⁶ *Qur'ān*, 7: 33

قَالُوا أَجِئْتَنَا لِنَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَحْدَهُ وَنَذَرَ مَا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا فَأْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ
قَالَ قَدْ وَقَعَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ رِجْسٌ وَغَضَبٌ أَتُجَادِلُونَنِي فِي أَسْمَاءِ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ
بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ فَانْتَظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِينَ

*They said, 'Have you really come to tell us to serve Allah alone and to forsake what our forefathers served? If what you say is true, bring us the punishment you threaten.' He said, 'You are already set to receive your Lord's loathing and anger. Are you arguing with me about mere names you and your forefathers invented, names for which Allah has given no sanction? Just wait; I too am waiting.'*²⁷

مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ الْخُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ
أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

*All those you worship instead of Him are mere names you and your forefathers have invented, names for which Allah has sent down no sanction. Authority belongs to Allah alone, and He orders you to worship none but Him: this is the true faith, though most people do not realise it.*²⁸

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَا لَيْسَ لَهُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ نَصِيرٍ

*Yet beside Allah they serve that for which He has sent no authority and of which they have no knowledge; the evildoers will have no one to help them.*²⁹

أَمْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا فَهُوَ يَتَكَلَّمُ بِمَا كَانُوا بِهِ يُشْرِكُونَ

*Did We send them down any authority that sanctions the partners they ascribe to Allah?*³⁰

إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ يَشْعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى
الْأَفْسُسُ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ الْهُدَى

These are nothing but names you have invented yourselves, you and your forefathers. Allah has sent no authority for them. These people merely follow

²⁷ *Qur'ān*, 7: 70/71

²⁸ *Qur'ān*, 12: 40

²⁹ *Qur'ān*, 22: 71

³⁰ *Qur'ān*, 30: 35

*guesswork and the whims of their souls, even though guidance has come to them from their Lord.*³¹

More from the exegetes

The following is mentioned by al-Rāzi in his *Tafsir, Maḥāṭib al-Ghayb*, and he provides the following commentary regarding the highlighted portions of the Qur'ānic verses as previously set out:

The second issue. His saying 'for which He has sent no authority,' might give the impression that *there is* authority for it, except that Allah has not sent it down or made it evident. However, the response to this is (the following) - If there were (such authority), Allah would have sent it down; thus, since He has not sent down any authority for it, it must not exist. The essence of this statement aligns with what the *mutakalimeen* say, (namely that) this is something for which there is no evidence, so it is not permissible to assert its existence. Some of the *mutakalimeen* go further and argue that because there is no evidence, it must be denied altogether.

Others have used this point to argue for the Oneness of the Creator, stating that the only way to establish the existence of the Creator is through the necessity of contingent beings needing Him, and it suffices to establish the necessity of (there being) One Creator. Anything beyond that cannot be established, so it is not permissible to assert its existence. The third issue. This verse indicates the fallacy of *taqleed* in relation to that. This is because the verse shows that *Shirk* has no evidence supporting it, so asserting it must be false. This is valid only if asserting something without evidence of its validity is false, which leads to the conclusion that relying on *taqleed* is also false.³²

Given the above, I would argue that al-Rāzi's statement 'since He has not sent down any authority for it, it must not exist' is quite curtailed and containing some shortcomings. It would be preferable to argue that 'If there were to be proof in this vital issue, which is the most significant of the issues

³¹ *Qur'ān*, 53: 23

³² *Tafsir* al-Rāzi [Vol. 9, p. 28]

for which the Messengers were sent and the books were revealed, Allah would have provided proof with every Prophet sent, especially in the Qur'ān which He revealed as being an explanation for everything. But since He did not provide proof of it, by necessity it must be considered false.'

Next, the following has been mentioned in *Tafsir al-Baḥr al-Muḥiṭ* by Abu Ḥayyān al-Andalusi.

And 'mā' [مَا] is utilised for causality. Meaning here, because they associate 'other gods' with Allah for which He has not sent down any authority or proof. The negation is applied to the revelation, and the intended meaning is the negation of authority. In other words, for the (supposed) gods for which *there is* no authority in their association with Him. It is similar to the phrase 'On a clear path that has no guiding markers.' Here meaning there are no markers to guide by; and the phrase 'You will not see a lizard burrowing in it,' meaning the lizard does not burrow there to be seen. The intended meaning is the negation of both the authority and the revelation together.³³

The following has been mentioned in *al-Taḥrīr wal'Tanweer*:

'For which He has sent no authority,' namely, what has no authority to substantiate it. Authority here means evidence and proof because it exerts control over the mind. The negation of its revelation implies the negation of its existence. If it were true, Allah would have revealed it to people, for Allah does not withhold guidance about what they need to believe through the Messengers tongues. Revelation here could mean divine inspiration or the establishment of evidence, as in the saying, 'Wisdom was revealed through the tongues of the Arabs, the minds of the Persians, and the hands of the Chinese.' Since truth can only be known either through revelation or through indications, the denial of the revelation of authority in *Shirk* is a figurative way of denying the authority itself, similar to the words of the unknown poet - 'The rabbit is not frightened by its own terrors, nor do you see the lizard burrowing there.'³⁴

³³ *Tafsir al-Baḥr al-Muḥiṭ* [Vol. 3, p. 62]

³⁴ *al-Taḥrīr wal'Tanweer* [Tunisian edition, Vol. 4, p. 126]

However, in spite of the above, the following has been mentioned in *Tafsir* al-‘Alusi:

‘For which He has sent no authority’ namely, associating partners with Him. Or it is said, by worshipping Him. (Here in the verse) ‘mā’ [مَا] is an indefinite noun described, or a relative noun. It is not a verbal noun. ‘*Sulṭān*’ meaning evidence or substantive proof. Mention of evidence here indicates that what is followed in the matter of *Tawḥeed* is divine proof as opposed to false viewpoints and desires. Named as such because it strengthens and empowers one over the opponent...It is said, it is original. The mention of the absence of a revealed proof together with the impossibility of its occurrence falls under the category of negation of something, due to the absence of its necessary condition. Meaning, there is no proof until it is revealed. This is like the couplet: ‘The rabbit is not frightened by its terrors, and you do not see a lizard burrowing there.’ The intended meaning is that there is no lizard there to burrow. Thus, the intended meaning is the negation of both. Similar to the logical statement - a negative proposition does not imply the existence of the subject.

What we mentioned about the impossibility of establishing proof for associating partners with Allah is almost necessarily known from the *Deen*. As for associating partners in *al-Rububiyyah* (lordship), it is evident, for how could Allah the Exalted command the belief that the Creator of the world is two beings sharing the necessity of existence and possessing all perfections? Regarding associating partners in *al-‘Uluhiyyah* (divinity), which was the belief of most *mushrikeen* during the time of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, it leads to commanding the belief in things contrary to reality, which the *mushrikeen* believed about their idols and which he refuted. So, the viewpoint of Eṣṣām al-Millāh: ‘And we say that the proof for associating partners is under His power; if He willed, He would have revealed it. For if He commanded the association of idols with Him in worship, then their worship would have become obligatory,’ - I see it only as a solution for ‘Eṣṣām al-Deen because - there is no god but Allah, directed at dualists and idolaters, reject the possibility of that.

This is evident to anyone who understands the meaning of this blessed phrase.³⁵

Here, I would argue that the statement made by al-‘Alusi regarding the beliefs of the *mushrikeen* about their idols is a weak viewpoint. It lacks the necessary details in this critical situation, and he himself has said it strongly in relation to another subject matter elsewhere in the same *Tafsir*, namely: ‘without His sanction, associate things with Him,’ by His existence. *Sulṭān* means any substantive proof, since there is no evidence for its existence until He revealed it, to materialise its nonexistence according to itself.’³⁶

With regards to statements he quotes from ‘Eṣṣām al-Millāh, it is nonsense, nothing but meaningless speech. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, because the *mushrikeen* did not worship *al-Aṣnām* (the idols) except that they believed in their divinity. This is notwithstanding what their understanding or definition of either divinity or worship was. Secondly, Allah has expressly testified that there is no ‘other god’ except Him. He alone is to be worshipped. He has commanded that within the testimony of faith and stressed its importance. Lastly, *Shirk* is to associate *another god* with Allah, or to worship any other than Allah, as per the text of the Qur’ān and the unanimous *ijmā’* of the people of Islam, and indeed others.

If Allah the Exalted had commanded the worship of *Aṣnām* (idols) – and we make complete disavowal from any such ludicrous accusation – it would in effect mean, ‘Obey Me, by disbelieving in Me’; or ‘Obey Me by disobeying Me.’ Such an incredulous statement doesn’t even come from the insane, so how on earth could it be claimed it comes from Allah, Lord of all creation?

Similar to the flawed statement sprouting from ‘Eṣṣām al-Millāh, is that made by Ibn Ḥazm, where he said: ‘And this is the height of corruption, because if Allah the Exalted commanded us to do that, it would not be a return to the *Deen* of *Kufr*. Rather, it would be remaining steadfast in faith, increasing in it.’ That statement was made in response to the viewpoints of the Mutazilites, and expressed in his famous work entitled *al-Faṣl fil’ Milāl wal’ ‘Awā wa Niḥāl*.

³⁵ *Tafsir* al-‘Alusi [Vol. 2, p. 301]. The extended quotation from the original Arabic has been slightly abridged to the most relevant parts related to the discussion.

³⁶ *Ibid*.

And He the Almighty said, when praising a people and affirming their statement: ‘If we were to return to your religion after Allah has saved us from it, we would be inventing lies about Him: there is no way we could return to it - unless by the will of Allah, our Lord,’ [7: 89]. The Prophets, peace be upon them and their adherents who spoke the truth which Allah the Almighty confirmed, they were saved from *Kufr* because Allah the Almighty rescued them from it. He did not rescue the disbelievers from it. If Allah the Almighty had willed for them to return to disbelief, they would have returned to it. It is certain that He willed that for those who returned to disbelief.

The Mutazilites said about this verse that it means: ‘Unless He commands us to venerate idols as He commanded us to venerate the Black Stone and the *Ka’ba*.’ Abu Muḥammad (Ibn Ḥazm) said, And this is the height of corruption, because if Allah the Exalted commanded us to do that, it would not be a return to the *Deen* of *Kufr*. Rather, it would be remaining steadfast in faith, increasing in it.’³⁷

In response to this, I would argue that this statement arises from a state of confusion, an absence of reason due to obstinacy in argument. Indeed, the correct response is that the Black Stone and the *Ka’ba* are not ‘idols’ - even the Arab *mushrikeen* understood this point. They had reverence for both, but did not worship them. As for the veneration of idols, it is ‘worship.’ The response to the Mutazilites should be similar to our response to ‘Eṣṣām al-Millah, and not with the phrase of Abu Muḥammad Ali ibn Ḥazm, which is a grievous slip, if not outright bald blasphemy!

³⁷ Ibn Ḥazm *al-Faṣl* [Vol. 3, p. 83]

17. Proofs underpinning Muhammad being the Messenger of Allah

Everything which is absent from us in our present time, in other words, that which we did not directly bear witness to, or that which has occurred prior to us, cannot be known or determined except through information that has been reported to us. The report which is *tawātur*, namely, that which is multiple and continuously recurrent, is by necessity, knowledge which is necessary and established. There is no escape from knowledge which is transmitted by *tawātur*, lest doubt enters into that which doesn’t reach that threshold. Should doubt enter into the matter, such as by way of the question, prior to us were human beings from the progeny of Adam or not? Knowledge such as this is not known except by way of the report reaching the threshold of *tawātur*. To doubt this concept results in the collapse of necessary reason. One falling into that trap ends with those lacking mental capacity, resulting in no serious discourse or dialogue taking place.

Concerning the nature of that which is textually recurrent as *tawātur*, it relates to the transmission of a number whose collusion in seeking to fabricate such an instance becomes impossible. This is to its upper most limit in terms of what falls within the bounds of perception. In other words, meaning, what the bearer of news could reliably transmit from among those narrating it, as if being present and witnessing it first hand, by perception, sight or hearing. With regards to concurrence upon a particular viewpoint or belief, that doesn’t fall within the bounds of the present definition. That *ijmā’*, or consensus as such, holds no value, nor does it substantively prove anything. It is not part of the categorisation of *tawātur*. As for the matter of *tawātur*, it is a matter of transmission reaching a definitive level, providing a witnessing or attestation by sight, hearing and perception also, nothing

more. Thus, *tawātur* – the matter of the continuously recurrent transmission, is what is described above which ends with what can be sensed; that ends with testimony built upon sight and hearing, even perhaps by other senses too.

Accordingly, by way of this definition, throughout the ages of mankind, there have been people who have made claim to their people to have had a direct message and warning from Allah, the Creator of all existence. He has ordered them to warn their people with His divine order and to follow what He is instructing them with. In turn, when they were asked to provide proof or evidence to substantiate the claim that they were advancing, they performed unusual and strange acts that appeared to manifestly be at odds with the natural order of the world as known. None can perform or imitate it except by the express command of the Creator of all existence. He creates whatever He wishes. Some examples of this are:

- Turning an inanimate stick into a snake.
- Dividing the sea in front of a great number of people in order for them to pass and to drown whoever followed them while they were being pursued by a great army led by tyrannical despot.
- Resurrecting of the dead after the individual had deceased for several days most which means that the corpse had begun to already rapidly decompose
- Curing the blind.
- Producing a she-camel, alive, from flesh and blood, which eats and drinks and gives milk from out of a lifeless solid piece of rock.
- A man that was thrown into a blazing fire, yet wasn't burned and emerged unscathed.
- Hundreds of people being fed from a single measure of corn
- And a fountain of water flowing from a single hand that managed to quench the thirst of an entire army.

Hence it was established by necessity that Allah the Almighty bore witness to the miracles that these individuals brought forth to their people. This demonstrated the veracity and authenticity of what those individuals were reporting from Him, and that He, the Almighty provided the affirmation to the words they uttered.

The proof that underpins Prophethood does so too for the message that the Prophet conveys. In other words, meaning that it is originating with Allah, the Creator of the universe and all mankind. The signs therefore that the Prophet brings establishes the proof for the One who has sent him, thus in an instant, establishing the existence of the sender in origin. By way of this, it dispenses the immediate requirement of setting out the proofs for the existence of the Creator, the Blessed and Exalted. Prophethood as a whole provides both sets of proof with immediacy. But to reiterate, the evidences which prove and substantiate the matter of Prophethood, together with its message, provide cogent proof of the existence of the Creator that sent that Prophet, Allah the Almighty.

Objections to this that were posited by some philosophers in relation to these cogent rational proofs seem to only concern the limits of rationality with the concept of time and space. Such objections aren't fatal. Prophethood and its message provide the conclusive evidence of the divine entity who has sent it – the Sender. That message provides proof about His attributes and nature. All praise is given to Allah the Exalted who has given us abundant evidence showing His existence. There is no 'other god' except Him. Muḥammad ibn Abdullah ibn Abdul-Muṭṭalib al-Hāshimi al-Qurayshi is the final Messenger sent by Allah to all of mankind and the *Jinn*. Proofs underpinning the veracity of his Prophethood are indeed many. Here in this chapter some of the key proofs will be outlined.

The miraculous nature of the Qur'ān

Undoubtedly the miracle of the Qur'ān is the greatest and most important of miracles. The text is transmitted by *tawātur*, each letter and vowel. It is protected, preserved, and that extends to its recitation and pronunciation. The challenge went out widely – those disagreeing with it to try and produce something the like thereof, mocking them in a manner full of rebuke and derision that they will fail miserably in trying to do so. Indeed, they all failed in this endeavour. This miraculous challenge, prevented all Arabs from producing its likeness, from beginning to end, is present in the text of the Qur'ān in numerous instances. The challenge to produce its likeness was extended to all the *Jinn* and mankind in general, then it was affirmed that they could not do so, even if they supported each other. They failed in this

endeavour and continue to fail, and they will remain unsuccessful until the Day of Judgment.

It does not matter what the precise nature of this miracle entails, whether it is according to the intrinsic nature of the Qur'ān itself, which is intrinsically inimitable or because of Allah by 'divine intervention' has thwarted them in any attempt. It does not matter because either of that is a miracle relative to the system of our present universe. The challenge with the Qur'ān was done and the Arabs were unable to bring anything the like thereof. This is a historically provable fact. Both scenarios show that this is only within the capability of the Divine being to ensure this.

The evidence stands clear with no doubt that the 'pure Arabs' who spoke correct classical Arabic died out by the middle of the fourth-century after Hijrah (tenth-century Christian era). There aren't any people that speak this way now except by thorough extraneous effort and detailed education, and not one of them has the right to judge the pure Arabic. Their judgment is not to be accepted whether he said that it is a miracle or not from the linguistic side. The challenge in the Qur'ān remains till this day and shall remain forever, concerning its meanings including its literary and rhetorical creativity, true stories of the previous nations, scientific miracles, free from any faults, amazing effect and influence on the human souls even in its relatively poor translations. Allah the Exalted says:

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

*We shall show them Our signs in every region of the earth and in themselves, until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that your Lord witnesses everything?*¹

All which the Qur'ān has brought is from Allah, just as that which was brought by Muḥammad peace and blessings be upon him, is from Allah and it is all truth revealed as a whole and in all its parts. Similar has been mentioned about the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān by previous exegetes, with additional details. For example, as set forth by Imām al-Fakhr al-Rāzi in his seminal work of *Tafsir* regarding the challenge postulated by the verses below:

¹ Qur'ān, 41: 53

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ

*If you have doubts about the revelation We have sent down to Our servant, then produce a single sura like it - enlist whatever supporters you have other than Allah - if you truly [think you can]. If you cannot do this, you never will, then beware of the Fire prepared for the disbelievers, whose fuel is men and stones.*²

Upon which he writes about the discourse relating to Prophethood in these issues:

The first issue: Know that He, all Glory to Him and He is the Almighty, when He has provided compelling firm evidence to substantiate the (existence of) a Creator, and thereby nullifies the viewpoint of *Shirk* with what has been established by way of Prophethood. And that shows the corruption of *al-Tahlimiyah*, those who made recognition of Allah acquired from recognition of the Messenger. And the viewpoint of *al-Hashuwiyah*, who had said there is no recognition of Allah which is obtained except by way of the Qur'ān. When the Prophethood of Muḥammad peace and blessings be upon him is established by way of the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān, evidence was provided for its miraculous nature. Know, that the miraculous nature (of the text) is established by way of two-pathways:

The first: It is said that this Qur'ān must be viewed as being within one of a possible three-categories; a) being equal to the speech of others similarly eloquent; b) surpassing that (eloquent) speech, but within bounds of not breaking norms, and c) surpassing it to such an extent that it defies convention. The first two divisions are invalid, so the third is affirmed. We only said that the first two are invalid because if it were so, it would have been necessary for them to produce a *Surah* like it, either collectively or individually. If there were disagreement and fear of non-acceptance, then witnesses and judges would remove doubt, and that would be the end of the

² Qur'ān, 2: 23/24

argument because they were knowledgeable in language and well-versed in the laws of eloquence to the utmost.

And they were extremely eager to invalidate its matter, to the extent that they sacrificed lives and wealth and committed various types of catastrophes and trials. They were staunch and arrogant to the point of not accepting the truth, so how could falsehood prevail? All of this necessitates presenting what challenges their statement, and opposition is the strongest form of challenge. Since they did not provide it, we understood their inability to do so, thus it was established that the Qur'ān does not resemble their speech. The disparity between it and their speech is not a customary disparity; therefore, it is a contradictory disparity, hence it must be miraculous.

This is the intended meaning of establishing this indication, revealing that He, the Exalted, did not suffice in understanding *Tawḥeed* through imitation, just as He did not suffice in understanding Prophethood through imitation. And know that in the Qur'ān, many aspects converge that would imply a deficiency in its eloquence. Yet, despite that, it reaches the utmost limit of eloquence, beyond which there is no further limit, indicating its miraculous nature. One aspect is that the eloquence of the Arabs mostly lies in describing scenes such as describing a camel, horse, maiden, king, strike, stab, war, or raid, and there is nothing of these things in the Qur'ān. Therefore, it was necessary that the eloquent expressions, agreed upon by the Arabs in their speech, not occur in it.

The second aspect is that the Most High observed truthfulness in it and refrained from falsehood altogether. Every poet who abandoned lying and adhered to truthfulness, his poetry flourished. It is noteworthy that Labid ibn Rabi' and Ḥassan ibn Thābit, upon embracing Islam, continued their poetry, yet their Islamic poetry did not match the quality of their pre-Islamic poetry. Despite Allah, the Most High, maintaining distance from lying and exaggeration, He brought forth the Qur'ān as eloquent, as you can see.

And the third aspect: Eloquent speech and eloquent poetry only agree in the poem in the couplet or couplets. The rest does not follow suit, and the Qur'ān is not like that because it is all eloquent to the extent that creation is unable to match it, just as they were unable to match its entirety.

And the fourth aspect: Whoever speaks eloquent poetry in describing something, if they repeat it, their second speech in describing that thing is not equivalent to their first speech. In the Qur'ān, there is much repetition, yet each instance reaches the pinnacle of eloquence, and the variance does not appear at all.

Fifth: It confined itself to enjoining worship, prohibiting abominations, exhorting noble ethics, forsaking worldly pursuits, and choosing the Hereafter, and such words necessitate a reduction in eloquence.

Sixth: They said that the poetry of Imrul'Qays is excellent in entertainment, mentioning women, and describing horses. The poetry of al-Nabigha excels in times of fear, while al-A'sha's poetry is best suited for requests and describing wine, and Zuhayr's poetry is suitable for desires and hopes. In general, every poet excels in his art, and weakens in other arts. However, the Qur'ān came eloquent in all arts, reaching the utmost eloquence. Don't you see that He, the Exalted, said in the context of encouragement: *'No soul knows what joy is kept hidden in store for them as a reward for what they have done,'* [32: 17]; *'With all that their souls desire and their eyes delight in,'*³

Seventh: The Qur'ān is the origin of all sciences. The science of rhetoric is all in the Qur'ān, and the entire science of jurisprudence is derived from the Qur'ān, as well as the science of the principles of jurisprudence. The science of grammar and language, the science of asceticism in worldly matters, and the news of the Hereafter, along with the application of noble ethics. From contemplating 'our book in the evidence of miracle' one learns that the Qur'ān has reached the pinnacle of eloquence in all its aspects.

The second approach: To say that the Qur'ān is either said to have been exceedingly eloquent to the point of being miraculous, or it was not so. If the former is established, then it is miraculous. And if the

³ *Qur'ān*, 43: 71. Further to this, al-Rāzi quotes a series of verses to show the how the Qur'ān addresses aspects to the peak of eloquence, whether that is in relation to the promise of reward [17: 68], the matter of warning and rebuke [67: 16/17, 14: 15/17, 29: 40 and 26: 205] or knowledge related to the unseen [13: 8]. Given the length of the citation and for the sake of brevity, these are summarised here as opposed to quoting them in full.

latter, opposition to this estimation is possible. Their failure to provide opposition despite its possibility and the availability of their reasons for providing it is extraordinary, thus making it miraculous. Therefore, it is established that the Qur'ān is miraculous in every aspect. This method, in our view, is closer to correctness.⁴

Internal cohesion

Here it is worth stressing a critical fundamental truth, in that the Qur'ān is absent all manner of contradictions. In fact, the emphasis upon this point is mentioned by way of challenge to its opponents – scrutinise it meticulously and try to show that there is any inconsistency, with the intention of seeking its refutation. Yet the challenge cannot be met, because it is from Allah the Almighty, Lord of all Majesty, may He be Exalted. Each of the verses is manifestly clear upon this, one should ponder upon them very carefully:

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

Will they not think about this Qur'an? If it had been from anyone other than Allah, they would have found much inconsistency in it.⁵

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ

If you have doubts about the revelation We have sent down to Our servant, then produce a single sura like it - enlist whatever supporters you have other than Allah - if you truly [think you can]. If you cannot do this, you never will, then beware of the Fire prepared for the disbelievers, whose fuel is men and stones.⁶

قُلْ: لَئِنْ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا، وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ فَأَبَىٰ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ إِلَّا كُفُورًا

Say, 'Even if all mankind and jinn came together to produce something like this Qur'an, they could not produce anything like it, however much they helped

⁴ Tafsir al-Rāzi [Vol. 2, pp. 347/348, Shamela edition]

⁵ Qur'ān, 4: 82.

⁶ Qur'ān, 2: 23/24

each other.' In this Qur'ān, We have set out all kinds of examples for people, yet most of them persist in disbelieving.⁷

Without equivocation, it is an open and clear challenge. Yet it is not for assertions based upon no evidence. Rather, it seeks to affirm the principle of invalidation and falsification. In other words, anything which *doesn't* properly hold up to anxious scrutiny will be deemed void and rejected. Attempts to falsify will also come within scope of that. Here again, the message in the verse is categorical:

هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

Show me your evidence then, if what you say is true.⁸

The verse was Meccan in origin. That appearing in *al-Baqara*, 'Produce your evidence, if you are telling the truth,'⁹ being revealed at Medina. Thus, the truth, being inherently valuable, a sought after matter, doesn't crystallise in the mind of the believer or produce thought which is enlightened, let alone effective action, *unless* it is based upon substantive evidence. Without that, it can be easily swept away. Whenever someone makes a claim, being convinced of its purported truth yet without recourse to substantive evidence, it is an assumption, not a cogent proof. This is even if the statement itself being made is true. A person making the assertion would be deemed as traversing into the path of being liar, because it has been made without evidence. As the aforementioned verse shows, evidence must be brought forth. There is no middle ground between truth and abject falsehood. He the Almighty and Exalted mentions the following:

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

We shall show them Our signs in every region of the earth and in themselves, until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that your Lord witnesses everything?¹⁰

⁷ Qur'ān, 17: 88/90

⁸ Qur'ān, 27: 64

⁹ Qur'ān, 2: 111

¹⁰ Qur'ān, 41: 53

What a magnificent verse. If this is taken into serious consideration with the other points previously made, then it inevitably becomes a clear invitation to deeply contemplate the spectrum and nature of humanity itself. To undertake an open minded search to see if there can be anything that stands against the message of the Qur'ān. As its detractors would hold, by the claim that it is not a revealed book from Allah. Yet Allah has here promised to marshal more evidence to bolster the truthfulness of the Qur'ān within the temporal world. Indeed, a great deal of this has been realised and manifested.

Evidence bolstered

Many aspects are detailed in the text of the Qur'ān well beyond the knowledge that was available at the time of revelation. One clear example of this relates to the formation and development of the human foetus. Such detail was not possible through mere dissection that was available, but actually requires the use of modern scientific instruments. Much of this has been documented by countless researchers. It has been presented with the utmost precision, demonstrating the proofs scientifically, intellectually and showing its religious underpinnings. One example is from Dr Keith Moore, Professor of Embryology at the University of Toronto. Astonished by the accuracy given in the Qur'ānic description, he published his research findings, showcasing them on public outlets for greater impact, attracting media coverage with headings like 'Amazing discoveries found in an ancient book.'

Moreover, the Qur'ānic text states that all living beings were created *from* water. Here this doesn't only imply that living organisms 'require' water, as has been known to everyone since antiquity, but rather that they are *fundamentally composed* of water, and that water is an essential component for them. In recent years this has been confirmed through a microscopic study of all living cells, which has shown that cellular cytoplasm contains 80% water. All known life functions are impaired except in an aqueous environment. It has also been established that life began on earth initially in an aquatic environment, after which terrestrial organisms emerged over a long period of time.

Splitting of the moon

Among the miracles that were made for him, peace and blessings be upon him and his noble family, was the splitting of the moon. Here, the text of the Qur'ān says:

اِقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَالْقَمَرَ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُسْتَمِرٌّ وَكَذَّبُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ
وَكُلُّ أُمَّرٍ مُسْتَفِرٌّ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَنْبَاءِ مَا فِيهِ مُرْدَجَرٌ حَكْمَةً بِالْعَهَّةِ فَمَا تَعْنِ النَّذْرُ

*The Hour draws near; the moon is split in two. Whenever the disbelievers see a sign, they turn away and say, 'Same old sorcery!' They reject the truth and follow their own desires - everything is recorded although warning tales that should have restrained them have come down to them - far-reaching wisdom but these warnings do not help.*¹¹

The Meccans witnessed this event with their own eyes. Some have been confused with this event, perplexed that how did no one else on earth witness it. In other words, was it only seen in Mecca and its environs, didn't anyone on earth at that specific moment witness this too? Several points need elucidation here. We would argue the following – firstly, the incident of the splitting of the moon lasted only a few seconds and was witnessed by the people of Mecca and those around them. They were the ones addressed by it, and no one else. We have established in a separate study that this event took place in Mecca itself at night, during the time of dawn, just before the sun rose, when the moon was full. By that time, the moon had already set, and the sun had actually risen in all the lands to the east of the central Arabian Peninsula. Therefore, the people of Iraq and every country to the east of Iraq, all the way to China and Japan, passing through India - none of them could have possibly witnessed the occurrence. These countries were civilized at that time and known for their attention to observing the sky, astronomical observations, and recording phenomena.

As for the lands west of Mecca, like most of Africa - with the exception of Egypt and Abyssinia, these were uncivilised regions, not known for astronomical observations, and their people had no interest in such matters. In fact, they did not even have written languages. As for Egypt, Abyssinia, Asia Minor, and Southern Europe, they had, centuries before, fallen under the control of warring Christian churches and barbarian invasions, leading

¹¹ Qur'ān, 54: 1/5

them into the darkness of the Middle Ages. Observatories were closed, libraries were burned, and philosophers and scholars were persecuted.

If we were to follow the weather forecast on television, we would realize that entire continents can be covered by clouds, with only a few clear spots, multiple times throughout the year. It is possible that the lands west of Mecca, on our side of the globe, were covered by clouds at the time. Especially considering that the event likely occurred in early winter, a season when clouds and rain are common in Egypt, Asia Minor, and Southern Europe.

The event occurred at night when the vast majority of people were asleep. The few who were awake, perhaps due to insomnia, illness, or religious devotion like monks in their monasteries, would typically be indoors, under a roof in their homes, monasteries, or caves, especially during winter. They would be preoccupied and unlikely to look up at the sky. Unless a person deliberately raised their head to the sky and observed it carefully, they would not have noticed or been aware of the event, even if the sky was clear. It is possible that a rare few people witnessed the event but did not dare to speak about it, fearing they would be disbelieved or considered insane. After all, the event lasted only a few seconds or, at most, a few minutes.

As for those who claim that this event will occur at or just before the Day of Judgment, they are mistaken - this is a serious error. The clear text of the verse states that *they saw* the sign, turned away, and accused Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of sorcery. So why deny or overcomplicate the matter? Moreover, authentic reports have come from several Companions, recorded in al-Bukhāri and other sources, which affirm that this event took place in Mecca.¹² We have conducted a separate study on this, which can be perused for further details.

Challenge to the People of the Book

¹² For example, the author of the single, standardised translation of the Qur'ān we have used for this translation, Professor M Abdel Haleem, takes this view. He writes as a comment for a footnote on chapter 54 (p. 350): 'One of the signs of the Day of Judgement. The Arabic uses the past tense, as if that Day were already here, to help the reader/listener imagine how it will be. Some traditional commentators hold the view that this describes an actual event at the time of the Prophet, but it clearly refers to the end of the world: cf. the same expression with reference to the sky, [55: 37; 84: 1].'

The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him called upon the Jews during his era to publicly wish to be embraced by death if they were truthful in their claim that they were 'the children of God,' the supposed 'chosen people.' He informed them that they would never do so, despite their protestations that paradise is only reserved for them, because of their lies and evil acts. All of them were publicly unable to express this desire for death, thus remaining a disgrace upon them for eternity.

He peace and blessings be upon him, also called upon the Christians of his era, specifically the Christians of Najrān, to engage in *Mubāhala* - a mutual curse to settle the dispute over the nature of Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, peace and blessings be upon him and his mother. The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him described them as liars and disbelievers and warned them of the fire. They all refused and agreed to submit to his authority, paying the *jizya* in humility, without resistance or fighting. This disgrace also remained with them for eternity. Years later in a vain attempt to address that humiliating defeat, Saint Francis of Assisi (d. 1226 CE) traveled from Italy to Egypt, demanding a *Mubāhala* with the scholars of al-Azhar. However, they responded by saying that such a *Mubāhala*, regardless of its outcome, could not change the historical reality of what had occurred many centuries earlier, rendering a new request as being meaningless.

The father of flames

Abu Lahab ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the uncle of the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him was cursed by him. He declared that both he and his spouse, Umm Jamil, were destined for the fire of hell, as per chapter 111 of the Qur'ān. That *Surah* is recited to this day. Despite being aware of this, his uncle remained in stubborn misguidance, years after it was revealed. In fact, he openly continued in his disbelief, obstinacy and hostility towards the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him until the day he died, as an avowed enemy of Islam.

Surely, it would have been the easiest thing in the world for Abu Lahab to approach Prophet, declare repentance and express a desire to follow him. If that had been done, then there would have been a manifest contradiction between his act and that of the *Surah*. Yet none of that happened. Despite the fact that Abu Lahab's entourage among the *mushrikeen* included many

cunning and devious individuals, skilled in diplomacy and accustomed to the tactics of monarchs, such as ‘Amr ibn al-Aāš. Allah blinded them all to this simple and easy manoeuvre even though they were relentless in their combined effort to try and undermine the veracity of Prophethood which Muḥammad peace and blessings be upon him held. Day and night they conspired against him, torturing and persecuting his noble Companions.

Preserving the Pharaoh

The Qur’ān states that the Pharaoh who was drowned while pursuing the Children of Israel was saved in his body. The text reads:

فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيكَ بِبَدَنِكَ لِتَكُونَ لِمَنْ خَلْفَكَ آيَةً وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا لَغَافِلُونَ

*Today We shall save only your corpse as a sign to all posterity. A great many people fail to heed Our signs.*¹³

This event though *is not mentioned* in the books of the Children of Israel, who bore witness to the incident. They only reported that the Pharaoh and his army drowned, and then news from Egypt ceased to reach them. Indeed, the bodies of all the Pharaohs from before and after that time have been found preserved, with none of them having been lost. This has posed significant problems for archaeologists trying to verify the accuracy of the Old Testament.¹⁴ This alone stands as a major sign for Muḥammad ibn Abdullah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, and serves as definitive proof of his Prophethood.

¹³ Qur’ān, 10: 92

¹⁴ Knowledge of the dynastic rulers of Egypt is broadly based upon the lists that have come down to us, as recorded by the Egyptians themselves. There are several of note, in particular the king list of the Turin Papyrus which lists columns of ‘gods and spirits’ and mythical kings who ruled predynastic Egypt. Elsewhere there is the Palermo stone, which records the reign of the last 120 kings who ruled Egypt before the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt in 3100 BCE. There is also the Abydos king List at the Temple of Seti I. Perhaps more controversial for modern archaeologists is the ‘Building Texts’ as inscribed on the walls of the Temple of Edfu in upper Egypt which speak of an earlier primordial civilization which survived a cataclysm, upon which the civilisation of Egypt was eventually built. Several modern writers have pioneered work in this area with the ‘Zep Tepi theory,’ and the Orion Correlation theory. The latter, showing a correlation between the alignment of the major pyramids of Giza and the three largest stars forming the Belt of Orion. That direct alignment occurred in the year 10,450 BCE.

Byzantium

The Qur’ān which contains verses still read to this day, foretold that the Romans – Byzantium, the eastern Roman Empire, who had been defeated by the Persians and suffered a severe loss that nearly wiped out their empire, and who were besieged in their capital, Constantinople, would eventually have a reversal of fortune and triumph over the Persians. The *mushrikeen* of the Quraysh at the defeat of the Romans, who were People of the Book, by the Persians, who were *mushrikeen* like them, believing in the notion of ‘two warring gods,’ the god of light and the god of darkness. The Quraysh, feeling optimistic, said something to the effect of: ‘Just as the Persians defeated the Romans, the People of the Book, and are about to eradicate them, we too will eradicate Muḥammad and his followers.’

The defeat of the Romans by the Persians was a crushing loss at the famous Battle of Antioch in 613 CE. Subsequently, the Persians conquered much of the Levant, took Jerusalem, and captured the True Cross in late 614 CE. The Qur’ān contradicted the Quraysh’s optimism, announcing that the situation would turn against them within a few years. Abu Bakr al- Ṣadeeq, may Allah be pleased with him, made a bet with a *mushrik* that the Romans would be victorious after three years, and he informed the Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him, about it. The Prophet asked him, ‘*What does 'a few' mean in your language?*’ Abu Bakr replied, ‘From three to nine.’ The Prophet instructed him to increase the bet in proportion to the increased time, so Abu Bakr did so, and the bet was set for nine years. The bet was won when the Romans were victorious in 622 CE, before the prohibition of gambling and betting was revealed. These events are recorded in the *History of the Byzantine State* by George Ostrogorsky. Accounts are also given by the famous English historian Edward Gibbon in his work entitled, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

Past nations and civilizations

The Qur’ān provides some information about past nations that do not exist at all in the scriptures of the previous People of the Book, and that were unknown to historians and chroniclers at the time of the revelation of the Qur’ān. In particular, the Qur’ān mentions that one of the ministers of the

Pharaoh or perhaps one of the leading figures in his tyrannical regime was named, or rather had the title of ‘Hamān.’ Multiple verses confirm this, one such example being:

وَقَارُونَ وَفِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كَانُوا سَابِقِينَ
 [Remember] Qārūn and Pharaoh and Hamān: Moses brought them clear signs, but they behaved arrogantly on earth. They could not escape Us.¹⁵

That reference in the verse has perplexed many who claim that Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him, derived his historical information from earlier scriptures. However, those do not mention this name when discussing Moses and Pharaoh. There is *another* Hamān, but he was a minister of one of the Babylonian kings, after the Babylonian exile of the Children of Israel. Consequently, many Orientalists were quick to seize upon the point, asserting that Muḥammad had confused the details and mistakenly transferred this minister into the story of Moses, which predates the Babylonian exile by almost a millennia. However, the undeniable truth is that the name ‘Hamān’ is indeed an Egyptian term, and it has been found exactly as such inscribed on the famous Rosetta Stone, which was the key to deciphering hieroglyphic writing. Not only that, but he is described as being the ‘Chief of the stone-cutters,’ which is akin to the modern title of a Minister of Public Works. Therefore, he was responsible for the large-scale construction projects of the Pharaoh's state, just as he is described in the aforementioned Qur’ānic text.

Moreover, there are other indicators in the verses, the most important of which is that this specific ‘Hamān’ who was present during the time of Pharaoh, played a prominent political role similar to that of a Prime Minister or Chief Minister, which typically does not align with the position of ‘Minister of Public Works’ in ordinary circumstances. Therefore, it must have been an era of massive construction and significant architectural projects, where the impact of the ‘Minister of Public Works’ was substantial and notable. Or it could be that the Prime Minister *retained* this important ‘portfolio’ for himself. This fits well with the idea that the time of Moses

¹⁵ Qur’ān, 29: 39. Only one of the verses is quoted here for the translation. The remainder references made are: [40: 36], [28: 6, 8, 38], and [40: 23/24].

was, most likely, during the reign of Thutmose III, his royal name being: ‘Men-Kheper-Ra,’ around 1450 BCE; the legendary Pharaoh and the sixth ruler of the Eighteenth Dynasty. He is considered as being one of Egypt’s greatest rulers and one of the most powerful in history, having established the first Egyptian empire of that era.

The City of Iram

Allah the Exalted states in *Surah al-Fajr*:

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ

Have you [Prophet] considered how your Lord dealt with [the people] of ‘Aād, of Iram, [the city] of lofty pillars, whose like has never been made in any land?¹⁶

The aforementioned text leads us to conclude that ‘Iram’ was an important city, possibly the capital of the people of ‘Aād or one of their major cities, and that it was unparalleled in the world at that time. Other Qur’ānic texts that mention the Prophets in chronological order lead us to confirm that the people of ‘Aād, as well as Thamud, preceded the time of Moses and Aaron, and even the time of Abraham, peace and blessings be upon them all, by a considerable period of time.

This reference is singular in the entire text of the Qur’ān. No mention or trace of it has been found in *any* other historical sources or artifacts. However, a reference to ‘Iram’ was found on one of the cuneiform tablets, which were part of a collection of over fifteen thousand, making it the largest archive ever discovered. This archive dates back to the third millennium BCE. The ‘library’ was discovered in the ruins of a palace in Ebla which was destroyed in the 23rd century BCE, as reported in the 1978 edition of the *National Geographic*.¹⁷ So where did Muḥammad, peace and blessings be

¹⁶ Qur’ān, 89: 6/8.

¹⁷ Howard La Fay, ‘Ebla: Splendour of an Unknown Empire,’ *National Geographic* (1978), [Vol. 154, no. 6, pp. 730/759]. Two lines within the original piece grabbed much attention at the time, the first (p. 733) ‘Epigraphist Giovanni Pettinato says the tablets mention the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and include the name of David found in no other ancient text except the Bible,’ and (p. 736): ‘Also included is Iram, an obscure city referred to in Sura 89 of the Koran.’

upon him, obtain knowledge of a city destroyed thousands of years before his birth; a city no longer even mentioned? Even if we were to concede for the sake of argument that it was among the legends of the Arabs, how did he reliably confirm its existence and include it in the Qur'ān?¹⁸

The mention of Iram in the Qur'ān is even more intriguing given that Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is not known to have referred to *any* of the Arab legends except to disprove and deny them. It is even narrated that he would stop the trace of his lineage at Adnān and only affirm that Adnān was a descendant of Ismā'il without mentioning any further lineage, and then say – ‘*The genealogists are liars.*’ How then, did he assert the existence of Iram and include it in the Qur'ān?¹⁹

¹⁸ In *The Oxford Companion to Archaeology* (ed) Brian M. Fagan, Charlotte Beck (1996) (Oxford: Oxford University Press), the entry for Ebla (p. 191) notes that the modern name for the area is Tell Mardikh, located in northern Syria, south of Aleppo. Originally discovered by an Italian Archaeological Mission to Syria, excavation work began in 1964. Further in the entry: ‘The archive, unique in northern Syria, shows Ebla to have been the capital of a prosperous, administratively sophisticated state, deriving much of its wealth from its trade in textiles and metals. Ebla’s destruction, originally attributed to Naram-Sin of Agade (2254-2218 B.C) is now generally placed earlier, either shortly before Sargon, Naram-Sin’s grandfather, came to power, or early in his reign (2234-2279 B. C.).’ Stieglitz writes: ‘The numerous cuneiform texts unearthed at Tell Mardikh by the Italian Archaeological Mission to Syria record in remarkable detail many aspects of life in the city-state of Ebla at the end of the Early Bronze III period (2600-2350 BC). These well-preserved clay tablets, found in a complex termed by the excavators Royal Palace G, revealed truly far-reaching political and economic networks, maintained by an elaborate bureaucracy of officials.’ See: Robert R Stieglitz, (2002) ‘The Deified Kings of Ebla,’ in: *Eblaïtica: Essays on the Ebla Archives and Eblaïte Language* (ed). Cyrus H Gordon and Gary A Rendsburg [Vol. 4, p. 215].

¹⁹ With regards to the specific tablet entries which mention Iram or Irim these appear to be on **TM.75.G.2367** [‘TM’ is designated as being siglum for texts from Tell-Mardikh-Ebla], in particular: ‘I set siege to the towns of Raeak and **Irim** and Asaltu and Badul, and I defeated the king of Mari. Near the borders of Nahal I raised heaps of corpses.’ Also, with reference to the various deities that are referred to in the tablets - concerning the mention of ‘Dagan’ it is noted: ‘Dagan: *Be i-rum* (Lord of **Irim**).’ See Giovanni Pettinato (1981), *The Archives of Ebla: An Empire Inscribed in Clay*, (New York: Doubleday & Co), (p. 99). There has been scholarly disagreement as to the *exact* location of Iram. Some have tried to place this within South / Southeast Arabia but have faced heavy criticism in seeking to demonstrate this conclusively. Others, like Ahmed Jallad, have argued that Iram is not in South Arabia but in fact located in southern Jordan. There, fragment Nabataean inscriptions were found by the archaeologists Raphael Savignac and George Horsfield. Some of the inscriptions refer to the ‘great goddess of Iram,’ another which states: ‘May Abdallahi son of ‘Atmo be remembered for all time before Allat the goddess of Iram.’ See: M. R. Savignac and G. Horsfield, ‘Le Temple De Ramm,’ *Revue Biblique* (1935) [Vol. 44, pp. 245/278] and Savignac, ‘Le sanctuaire d’Allat à Iram,’ *Revue Biblique* (1932), [Vol. 41, pp. 581/597].

Divergence from the previous scriptures

The Qur'ān provides numerous accounts of past nations in a manner that resembles, but does not exactly match, the earlier ancient scriptures, and sometimes it fundamentally contradicts what is found in previous scriptures stemming from the People of the Book. One clear example of this is where the Qur'ān exonerates the Prophet Sulaymān (Solomon). The Jews, and even the Christians when pushed, level accusations of apostasy, *kufir* and dabbling in black magic against the Prophet Sulaymān peace be upon him. From the perspective of the Christians, they would argue he was a ‘wise king’ who was led into idolatry through his many ‘foreign wives.’

The question therefore arises, where did Muḥammad obtain this from? If he were a deceitful and cunning false Prophet, surely he would not have involved himself in such controversies without necessity or a compelling reason. If he were a deluded, believing himself to be a Prophet due to uncontrolled emotions or a disturbed imagination, what could possibly be his motivation? Or the motivations of his so-called ‘subconscious mind’ in fervently supporting Sulaymān *and* describing him as a Prophet, contradicting what was widely accepted among the Jews and believed even by their children about Solomon being a magician and setting up the worship of idols? Moreover, there was no kinship, affection, or any practical connection between them; perhaps over a millennium and a half separated them, with Sulaymān and Muḥammad belonging to two different peoples who despised and looked down upon each other.

Similarly, the Qur'ān exonerates Hārūn - Aaron, peace be upon him, from the Jewish accusations, as found in the Old Testament, that he was the one who made the ‘golden calf.’ How and why did this come about? What were his motivations? And why did he contradict what he supposedly ‘learned from the People of the Book,’ if he had indeed learned from them, as his detractors in all eras, especially some of the more spiteful Orientalists, claim?

Also in the story of Yusuf – Joseph, and his brothers, the Qur'ān diverges on several significant points from what is presented in the Old Testament, as it exists in the hands of the Jews and Christians. For example, the Old Testament states that Yusuf’s brothers sold him to a caravan of ‘Ishmaelites.’ However, the Qur'ān indicates that they did not directly sell

him; instead, they threw him into a well, hoping that some passing travellers, or caravans would find him. They might have seen a caravan approaching from a distance and then decided to throw him in. Regardless of the specifics, the Old Testament account seems implausible and suggests dishonesty. The Ishmaelites, being the older brothers of Ishāq - Isaac, the direct ancestor of Yusuf and his brothers, could not have multiplied in such a short time to form a caravan traveling to Egypt for trade, deserving to be called a caravan of 'Ishmaelites,' especially since they were located deep in the Arabian Peninsula. This is a later fabrication, after the Ishmaelites had become a large nation with organised caravans, and had engaged in skirmishes, hostilities, and wars with the Israelites. Some later fabricators among the descendants of the Israelites created this myth to portray the Ishmaelites in a negative light, following the tactics of false propaganda and psychological warfare. Since Yusuf's brothers, the sons of Ya'qub - Jacob, peace be upon him, committed that heinous act against their own brother, why not include the 'Ishmaelites' in the blame, so that everyone appears equally villainous and criminal?

Spitefulness of the Orientalists

Orientalists, together with their slave-minded missionaries will say that this reflects the brilliance of Muḥammad and that he was 'genius.' On occasion, he is portrayed as an 'exceptional genius,' a great 'philosopher,' and a 'skilled politician' who deliberately and masterfully practices deceit, while pretending to be unlettered and unrefined. Indeed this is scandalous and few today openly maintain this view. Muḥammad's entire life from beginning to end demonstrates that he was firmly convinced and unwavering in his belief that he was a sent Prophet.

On other occasions, the Orientalists and those following in their wake, have depicted him as an 'ignorant fool' who makes fundamental mistakes, such as failing to recognise that Aaron was not the maker of the golden calf; that there was no such thing as a 'Samaritan' during Moses' time, and that crucifixion was a Roman punishment that did not exist in the world at that time, so how could Pharaoh have crucified the magicians? Given that he studied the previous scriptures, he must, necessarily, be a 'failed student' with frequent errors even in basic matters. Alternatively they have argued

that he studied with the Christian and Jewish scholars, memorised their teachings, hence why he narrates with great accuracy, yet he did not introduce anything significantly new; rather, he merely reiterated what they had invented. Some of the more bizarre claims over the centuries is that he might be considered a 'Christian bishop,' well-versed in Christian doctrines, who rebelled against the Church and followed the heretic Arius, who denied the divinity of Christ.

The dilemma, or rather the scandal in this case is even greater because it contradicts the well-established historical account that he was illiterate and had no connection whatsoever with Christian churches or Jewish scholars. It also conflicts with the absence of any Qur'ānic text or authentic *ḥadith* that seems to have been copied, even with modification, from the stories in the earlier scriptures or resembles their narrative style. Naturally, very few openly claim today that it was the devil who inspired Muḥammad with the Qur'ān. Such an assertion is considered 'shameful' in secular, 'polite' liberal society as it doesn't formally align with modern rationality, which denies the existence of *Jinn*, demons, and even the devil himself.

However, it is worth noting - how remarkable is this supposed 'devil' who inspires a Qur'ān filled with exhortations, wisdom, commands for justice and kindness, maintaining family ties, and compassion for orphans, the poor, and the weak. What an extraordinary 'devil' this is, who knows the secrets of the future and the depths of the past. Perhaps people will soon present us with a new theory to explain the 'phenomena of Muḥammad.' In any case, there is no value in any interpretation that does not meet the following criteria, that a) it must be comprehensive in explaining all aspects of the phenomenon without exception; and b) it must be internally consistent, free from inherent contradictions.

Other proofs

There are other proofs which are notable, also transmitted by *tawātur* but sit outside of the text of the noble Qur'ān. Notably among them are the following:

- When the (she)camel was braying after its offspring had been lost. That was heard by all who were present, including many crowds.
- Gushing water sprang forth from the hands of the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, on more than one occasion. He, peace and

blessings be upon him, managed to quench the thirst of an entire army by way of this. Some performed ablution, others bathed to replenish themselves.

- The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, fed hundreds of people with a small amount of food that could barely satisfy a dozen. All ate and were full and still there were leftovers.

Various kingdoms submitted to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, including those of Yemen, Bahrain and Oman. Submission born from his command and given the signs that were confirmed by them. He did not seek their conquest, neither was he of ‘royal’ stock in that sense, but an orphan. Some had claimed Prophethood in those lands, like the leader of Sana’a and that of al-Yamamah. However despite both having strong armies and territories, they didn’t get any to succumb to them. Taken on that material view, the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him would have been perceived as the weakest among them.

Unlike anyone in known history, he, peace and blessings be upon him, brought civility and humility to the Arabs. Prior to Islam, the Arabs were a racist, arrogant, and rebellious people who did not recognise central authority; despised obedience and discipline, and looked down upon other nations. Yet they were brought by him to establish prayer, pay alms, abandon pride and arrogance, embrace humility and patience in seeking retribution for wrongs committed against themselves or others, regardless of their status, whether low or high.

Replicated by none, he, peace and blessings be upon him, established the rule to listen and obey legitimate constituted authorities. He prioritised knowledge and virtue, even if they were black slaves, despite having neither great wealth nor tribal support to assist him. Indeed, his own tribe was the first and foremost in denying him, chasing his followers, and torturing them, to the extent that they fled to the Negus in Abyssinia. Among the foremost deniers were his uncle and his extended family. Yet, everyone who followed him did so willingly, impressed by the signs he presented, and he never took a town by force or domination except for Khaybar and Mecca alone.

Many future events were prophesied by him. Unlike statements of soothsayers or alleged ‘seers,’ these prophesies were accurate, detailed, and well outside the purview of what could have been known. While there are

others to follow, a great many prophesies have already come to pass – hundreds of years after these were foretold, notwithstanding those within his own lifetime. Noteworthy is that these prophesies came to pass long after the compilation and dissemination of the corpus of *aḥādīth* to the corners of the globe. Given this, no credible allegation of tampering or ‘putting back’ can be advanced.

That point requires emphasis. While some *may* have tried to argue, raising an objection that these narratives were fabricated and ‘re-inserted’ into the corpus after the event, not before. Yet this is impossible. Such prophesies multiply the truthfulness of his noble mission, as has been mentioned and covered exhaustively here and in many other works. Many original manuscripts from the corpus of *aḥādīth* exist to demonstrate veracity, and that these were ‘canonised’ long before such prophesies came to pass. Approximately, the date for this canon or corpus can be marked as 450 AH [1050 CE]. Given the corpus had been compiled and spread to the far corners of the world, no credible allegation can be made that all were repealed, tampered with, and then reissued.

18. Proofs of Prophethood (I): Fire from the Hijaz

Among the signs of his Prophethood, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, is that it has been authentically established that he said: ‘*The hour will not be established until a fire comes out of the land of Hijāz, it will throw light upon the necks of the camels at Buṣra.*’ Some of the narrations have provided additional details indicating that this will occur in a valley named Ḥarrat Bani Sulaym, which is southeast of the city of Medina, called ‘*Habs Seel.*’ There are many narrations which have been reported throughout the corpus of *aḥādith*, on the authority of different Companions, like Abu Hurayrah, Aāṣim ibn ‘Ady al-Anṣārī and Bashir al-Sulamī, may Allah be pleased with them all. There is a crucial point here regarding the veracity of this Prophecy. The books in which these narratives were recorded are numerous and very widespread. They were transmitted by continuous recurrent transmission – *tawātur*. The books in question, cover a substantial portion of the corpus of Prophetic *Sunnah*, such as *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān, *Musnad* Ahmad and *al-Mustadrak ala’ Ṣaḥīḥayn* by al-Ḥākim. Thousands of copies of these works spread throughout the Muslim world therefore it would have been impossible for all books to have been recalled, tampered with, and then re-issued. With certitude it is thus known that this Prophecy originated from Abul’Qāsim, Muḥammad the final Messenger of Allah and Seal of the Prophets, peace and blessings be upon him.

A summary study of this topic is outlined herein. To begin, the following authentic tradition has been recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī:

حدثنا أبو اليمان أخبرنا شعيب عن الزهري قال سعيده بن المسيب أخبرني أبو هريرة أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال لا تقوم الساعة حتى تخرج نار من أرض الحجاز تضيء أعناق الإبل ببصرى

Abul’Yamān narrated to us Shu’ayb reported to us from al-Zuhri - Sa’eed ibn al-Mussayib said Abu Hurayrah reported to me that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: *The hour will not be established until a fire comes out of the land of Hijāz, it will throw light upon the necks of the camels at Buṣra.*¹

Other scholars have cited the same tradition in their respective collections, such as Imām Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Ḥākim; it has also been narrated by way of ‘Uqayl ibn Khālīd and others from al-Zuhri.² In *al-Mustadrak*, al-Ḥākim recorded the following:

أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو أَحْمَدُ بْنُ كَامِلٍ الْقَاضِي حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ سَعْدِ بْنِ الْحَسَنِ الْعَوْفِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا عُثْمَانُ بْنُ عَمَرَ بْنِ فَارِسٍ أَنبَأَنَا عَبْدُ الْأَحْمِيدِ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ عَنْ رَافِعِ بْنِ بَشِيرِ السُّلَمِيِّ عَنْ أَبِيهِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ تَخْرُجُ نَارٌ مِنْ حَيْسٍ سَيِّئٍ تَسِيرُ بِسَيْرِ بَطِينَةٍ، تَكْمُنُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَتَسِيرُ بِالنَّهَارِ، تَعْدُو وَتَرُوحُ، يُقَالُ: غَدَبَتِ النَّارُ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ فَاغْدُوا، قَالَتِ النَّارُ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ فَيَقْبَلُوا، رَاخَتِ النَّارُ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ فَرُوحُوا، مَنْ أَدْرَكَتْهُ أَكَلَتْهُ

Aḥmad ibn Kāmil al-Qāḍī reported it to us Muḥammad ibn Sa’d ibn al-Ḥasan al-‘Awfī narrated to us Uthmān ibn Umar ibn Fāris narrated to us ‘Abd al-Ḥameed ibn Ja’far reports from Abu Ja’far Muḥammad ibn Ali ibn al-Ḥussain, may Allah be pleased with them, from Rā’fih ibn Bishr al-Sulamī from his father, that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: *A fire will come out from the direction of Habs Seel, moving slowly, hiding in the night and moving in the day. It will appear in the morning and disappear in the evening. People will say, 'The fire has appeared, so be alert.' The fire will then say, 'O people, the fire has gotten what it wants, so you may go.' Whoever is caught by it, it will consume him.*³

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī [Vol. 6, no. 6701]

² References include: *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim [Vol. 4, no. 2902], *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān [Vol. 15, no. 6839], *al-Mustadrak* al-Ḥākim [Vol. 4, no. 8369].

³ *al-Mustadrak* al-Ḥākim [Vol. 4, no. 8367].

Again, other scholars cited this tradition in their respective collections.⁴

Location

With regards to the location of ‘Ḥabs Seel’, that can be gleaned from the sources. Firstly, al-Ḥākim recorded the following tradition in his *Mustadrak* which contains the following wording:

The Shaykh Abu Bakr ibn Ishāq narrated to us al-‘Abbās ibn al-Faḍl al-Asfāṭī reports Ismā’il ibn Abi Aways narrated to us ‘Abāyat ibn Bakr ibn Abi Layla al-Muzani narrated to us from Ibrāhīm ibn Ismā’il ibn Muḥammīḥ’ from Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr ibn Hazm from his father he said Abul’Baddāh ibn Aāṣim al-Anṣārī narrated to me from his father that he said: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him asked us about the recent arrivals, and he said, ‘Where is *Ḥabs Seel*?’ We replied – ‘We don’t know.’ Then a man from Banī Sulaym passed by me, and I asked him, ‘Where have you come from?’ He replied: From *Ḥabs Seel*.

So I called for my sandals and hurried to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, and said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, you asked us about *Ḥabs Seel*, and we had no knowledge of it. But this man passed by me, and I asked him, and he claimed that his people are there.’ The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, asked him, ‘Where are your people?’ The man replied, ‘In *Ḥabs Seel*.’ The Prophet then said, ‘Move your people away, for soon a fire will emerge from it that will light up the necks of camels in *Buṣra*.’

⁴ Half a dozen additional references are provided for this including: *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad [Vol. 3, no. 15696], *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān [Vol. 15, no. 6840], *al-Mustadrak* al-Ḥākim [Vol. 4, no. 8367] and *Musnad* Abu Ya’la [Vol. 2, no. 934]. A glimpse of this is to be found in *al-Tārikh al-Kabir* by al-Bukhārī [Vol. 2, no. 1943]. He writes: ‘Busheer, al-Salami, Ḥijāzi. Abu Aāṣim said to us ‘Abd al-Ḥameed reported to me, he heard ‘Esa ibn Ali from Rā’fih ibn Busheer al-Salami from his father, from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him (regarding the) fire coming out of *Ḥabs Seel*.’ It is also in *Ma’rifah al-Ṣaḥāba* by Abu Nu’aym [Vol. 1, no. 1209]: Yahya ibn Ma’een mentioned – ‘I witnessed a ḥadīth (narrated) from ‘Abd al-Ḥameed ibn Ja’far, the fire coming out of *Ḥabs Seel*. He said: It is narrated by Uthmān ibn Umar who said as such. And it is narrated by Abu Aāṣim and Ali ibn Thābit.’ So Yahya said ‘Ali ibn Thābit is the most reliable and discerning of them.’

al-Ḥākim said: ‘This *ḥadīth* has a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*, but they did not cite it.’⁵

The following has been cited in *Mu’jam al-Buldān* by Shihāb al-Deen Abu Abdullah Yāqut ibn Abdullah al-Rumi al-Ḥamawi:

al-Zamakhshari said: ‘*al-Ḥubs* with a *ḍamma*, is a mountain which belongs to Bani Murrah.’ Others said: ‘*al-Ḥubs* rests between the volcanic region of Bani Sulaym and al-Suwāraqiyyah.’ In the *ḥadīth* of Abdullah ibn Ḥabashi, ‘A fire will emerge from *Ḥabs Seel*.’ Abul’Fath Naṣr said ‘*Ḥabs Seel*,’ and he narrated it with *fatha*, it is one of the two volcanic regions of Bani Sulaym, having two such regions with an open space in between, each being less than two-miles wide.⁶

Obtained from a studious reading of the authentic texts, we can discern that the eastern volcanic region of Medina which is also known as Ḥarrat Bani Sulaym, Ḥarrat Wāqim, Ḥarrat Bani Quraydtha, or Zahra, is the northern part of the large Ḥarrat Raḥat, appears to be divided into two separate volcanic regions. The first, al-Ḥidhriyah, which is adjacent to Medina. After a fairly small space, possibly once a valley, which might be *Wādi Aḥyalayn*, which was destroyed by volcanic lava and thus disappeared and vanished, lies *Ḥubs Seel*. The road to al-Suwāraqiyyah, which is now named al-Suwayriqqiyah, used to go eastward from city of Medina until it passed beyond the first volcanic region al-Ḥidhriyah and the open land. Then it turned southward along the eastern side of the Ḥarrah - *Ḥubs Seel*, and then met the modern paved road leading to Mahd al-Dhahab and al-Suwayriqqiyah.

This fire indeed appeared, its portent was that of an enormous earthquake which occurred on the evening of Tuesday (the night of Wednesday), after the *Esha* prayer, on the 3rd of *Jumāda al-Thani*, 654 AH. This corresponds to the 27 June 1256 in the Gregorian Christian calendar, CE. Historians and authors recorded its events and described it in a vivid and precise manner that evokes admiration. From their accounts, it is clear

⁵ *al-Mustadrak* al-Ḥākim [Vol. 4, no. 8368].

⁶ al-Ḥamawi *Mu’jam al-Buldān* [Vol. 2, p. 213]. al-Ḥamawi (d. 626AH). Here, the cited quote has been abbreviated only to the parts relevant to the discussion of the chapter.

that it was a volcanic eruption that lasted several months, during which a large amount of magma and lava flowed. Some contemporary researchers have put the estimate on this being around half a cubic-kilometre. Naturally, ash and gases followed. The eruption emerged from a fissure about one and a quarter mile long, although the flow was concentrated around six points, forming six scoria cones, the most prominent of which is Jabal al-Malsā' - possibly referred to in diminutive as al-Mulaysā. The magma flowed northward for a considerable distance in the valley or open land, Wādi Aḥyalayn, until it touched the Ḥaram of Medina, and then veered eastward.⁷

Historical accounts

Arguably one of the most comprehensive accounts which exists for this events is to be found in the work of al-Samhūdī. He penned an incredibly valuable piece of work entitled: *Wafā' al-Wafā bi- 'Akhbār Dār al-Muṣṭafā*. Contained within that work, he quoted extensively from a book which was specifically on this event, by the famous Imām and historian Quṭb al-Deen Muḥammad ibn Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Abdullah ibn Maymun al-Qaṣṭallānī. Originally a resident of Tozeur (*sic.* modern day Tunisia), he later became domiciled in Egypt then settled in Mecca. An account of some of what al-Samhūdī wrote is as follows:

The earthquake in the noble city of Medina began at the start of *Jumāda al-Akhirah* or at the end of *Jumāda al-Awwal* in the year 654 AH [*sic.* 1256 CE]. However, it was mild at first, to the extent that some people did not notice it despite its repeated occurrence

⁷ For a simple definition, one can refer to the entry made in the *National Geographic* magazine entitled, 'Types of Volcanic Cones.' 'Cinder cones, sometimes called scoria cones or pyroclastic cones, are the most common types of volcanic cones. They form after violent eruptions blow lava fragments into the air, which then solidify and fall as cinders around the volcanic vent. Usually the size of gravel, these cinders are filled with many tiny bubbles trapped in the lava as it solidifies. Cinder cones stand at heights of tens of meters to hundreds of meters. Cinder cones may form by themselves or when new vents open on larger, existing volcanoes. Mauna Kea, a volcano on the U.S. island of Hawai'i, and Mount Etna, a volcano on the Italian island of Sicily, are both covered with hundreds of cinder cones.' Accessible via : <<https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/types-volcanic-cones/?>> The Smithsonian Institute (Global Volcanism Program) has an entry for Harrat Rahat, accessible here: <<https://volcano.si.edu/volcano.cfm?vn=231070>>

thereafter. The intensity increased on Tuesday, as reported by al-Quṭb al-Qaṣṭallānī, becoming so significant that both the general public and the elite alike could feel it. Then, on the night of Wednesday, the 3rd or 4th of the month, in the last third of the night, a great earthquake struck Medina, causing people to fear for their lives and deeply unsettling their hearts. The tremors continued throughout the rest of the night and persisted until Friday, accompanied by a sound louder than thunder. The ground swayed, walls trembled, with as many as eighteen tremors occurring in a single day, as has been recounted by al-Qaṣṭallānī.

al-Qurṭubi said: A fire broke out in the Ḥijāz near Medina, and its beginning was marked by a great earthquake on the night of Wednesday, after the Esha prayer, on the 3rd of *Jumāda al-Akhirah* in the year 654 AH. It continued until midday on Friday, when it subsided. The fire appeared in the region of Quraydtha, at the edge of the volcanic area - al-Ḥarrah. It looked like a great city, surrounded by a wall with battlements, towers, and minarets...it destroyed any mountain it passed over, melting it down. From the combination of these elements emerged something resembling a river, red and blue in colour, with a roar like thunder. It carried rocks before it and reached the place where the Iraqī caravans would camp. The accumulation of debris became like a huge mountain, and the fire extended to the vicinity of Medina. Despite this, a cool breeze was felt in Medina, and the fire was observed boiling like the sea. One of my companions told me he saw it rising into the air for about five days, and I heard that it was seen from Mecca and from the mountains of Buṣra.

In the book of *al-Shareef Sinān*, the judge of the noble city of Medina, and others, it is recorded that on the night of Wednesday, the 3rd of *Jumāda al-Akhirah*, a great earthquake struck Medina in the last third of the night. We were so fearful of it, and the earthquake continued throughout that night. Then it continued to shake the ground every day and night about ten times - though in some accounts, it was (upward of) fourteen times. He said: 'By Allah! The earth shook once while we were around the Prophet's chamber, and the pulpit shook so violently that we heard the sound of the iron within it, and the lamps of the sacred sanctuary trembled.'

al-Quṭb said: ‘Then on the third day - Friday, a great earthquake shook the ground, causing the minarets of the mosque to sway, and a loud creaking sound was heard from the roof of the mosque. On Friday, at midday, **that fire appeared, and from the place where it emerged, a dense smoke rose into the sky, darkening the horizon. As the darkness accumulated and night fell, the fire's glow became visible, appearing like a great city in the east.**’ He then mentioned the people's panic and their quickness - both leaders and common folk - to repent, return wrongfully taken property, and gather around the noble Prophet's chamber, with their heads uncovered, confessing their sins, imploring, and seeking refuge with their Prophet, peace be upon him. Even the women and children participated, and no one remained in the palm groves; everyone came to the sacred sanctuary. Then he said: ‘Allah the Exalted diverted that great fire to the north, and they were saved from destruction. The fire then moved from where it emerged, flowing like a great sea of fire. It passed through the valley of Ahyaleen, and the people of Medina could see it from their homes as if it were near them.

Abu Shāma reported from observing the writings of the Judge Sinān al-Ḥusseini, that the flow of fire descended with the *Wadi al-Shatha* until it aligned with Mount Uhud. The fire nearly reached the volcanic region of al-‘Areeḍ, causing great fear among the people. Then the intensity of the fire near Medina diminished, and it extinguished near al-‘Areeḍ by the power of Allah. It then returned to move eastward, confirming what Quṭb had mentioned, and the observation of its remnants today corroborates this.

al-Qaṣṭallāni said: ‘Its light spread evenly across the lowlands and over the fortresses, making it seem as if the Prophet's sanctuary was illuminated by the bright sun, and the entire area of Medina was surrounded by its light. The flames continued burning so intensely that they affected even other fires, causing the sunlight on the ground to take on a yellowish hue, while the colour of the flames turned reddish due to the rising heat, and the moon appeared as if it had been eclipsed due to the diminishing of its light.’ He added: ‘A group of people who were traveling to visit (the Prophet's mosque) on foot told me that they saw its light from three stages away for those who were

hastening their journey, and others said they saw it from the mountains of Sayā.’

I say: Abu Shamā reported from observing the writings of al-Sharif Sinān, the judge of Medina, that this fire was seen from Mecca and from all the surrounding desert areas, and that the people of Yanbu' also saw it. Abu Shamā said: ‘Someone I trust, who witnessed it in Medina, told me that he heard it was possible to write letters in Tayma' by its light.’

Abu Shamā said: ‘In Damascus, we observed the effects of this eclipse, as the light on the walls was dim, and we were puzzled about the cause until we received news about this fire.’ Everyone who mentioned this fire concluded by saying: The wonders and magnitude of this fire are beyond description, defying the ability of fingers and pens to describe, and exceeding the capacity of speech and words to fully explain.’ **Thus, its appearance served as a miracle of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, as it fulfilled what he had foretold. No fire like it had ever appeared before or after his time.** al-Qaṣṭallāni said: ‘However, there were reports of people seeing it from Taymā, which is about the same distance from Buṣra as it is from Medina.’

I noted earlier that al-Qurṭubi mentioned hearing that it was seen from the mountains of Buṣra, and Shaykh ‘Imād al-Deen Ibn Kathir explicitly stated that the fire illuminated the necks of camels in Busra. He said: ‘Judge of Judges, Ṣadr al-Deen al-Ḥanafī reported to me, he said his father Shaykh Ṣafi al-Deen reported to me (he was) a teacher at the *madrassa* in Buṣra, that more than one of the Bedouins who were in Buṣra on the morning when the fire occurred *and* reported seeing the necks of their camels lit up by its light. This confirms that it was indeed the foretold fire.’

Historians reported that the fire continued for its duration, consuming stones and mountains and flowing as a violent torrent through a valley about four miles wide, and one and a half yards deep. It moved across the ground, melting rocks until they resembled

molten metal. Once cooled, the molten rock turned black from its previous red colour.⁸

Not to be outdone, Imām al-Dhahabi reiterated some of the testimonies as recorded in *Wafā' al-Wafā'*. Together with that, he made some noteworthy additions. One can consult the source work for this which is entitled as the 'Great History of Islam.'

Abu Shāma said: Correspondence came to Damascus from Medina reporting the emergence of a fire there on the fifth of *Jumāda al-Akhirah*. The letters were written on the fifth of *Rajab*, and the fire was still ongoing. The letters reached us in *Sha'bān*. A trustworthy person who witnessed it in Medina reported to me that it was so bright that letters were written in Taymā' by its light. He said: 'We were in our houses in Medina during those nights, and it was as if there was a lamp in each one of our homes. It had no heat or burning effect despite its great size; it was merely a sign.'

Abu Shāma said: 'This is a copy of what I found in the correspondence: On the night of Wednesday, the third of *Jumāda al-Akhirah*, a great noise was heard in Medina, followed by a severe earthquake that continued intermittently until the fifth of the month. Then, a great fire appeared in the Ḥarrah near Quraydtha, visible from our homes within the city as if it were right next to us. Valleys flowed with fire as if they were rivers of water, filling *Wādi Shadthā* and blocking its flow. By Allah, a group of us went out to see it, and we witnessed mountains flowing with fire. It was a manifestation of what Allah described: 'It shoots out sparks as large as tree-trunks, and as bright as copper,' [72: 32/33].

⁸ Ali ibn Abdullah al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-Wafā' bi-'Akhbār Dār al-Muṣṭafā* [Vol. 1, pp. 115/121]. Often translated in English as: 'The Fulfilment of Faithfulness on the Reports of the City of the Chosen One,' this is a comprehensive multi-volume work about the city of Medina. In the original Arabic text, the quotation from al-Samhudi runs to over seven pages in the original source text; a total of three A4 size pages in the present Arabic edition of *Tawḥeed*. Here, this has been substantially abbreviated to the most relevant areas pertinent to the present discussion. For readers in English, a short book review of this work is accessible in English in the *Journal of Islamic Studies* [Vol. 15, No. 2 (May 2004), pp. 217 / 219] by Abdul-Nabi Isstaif.

The fire consumed the land, and it has been growing for a month now. It has returned to the hot springs in Quraydtha, and the entire path of the Iraqi pilgrims is ablaze with fire. We can see it at night from Medina as if it were torches. As for the largest of the fires, it is like mountains of red flames, and I cannot adequately describe this fire. From another correspondence: In the east of Medina, a great fire appeared, about half a day's distance from the city. It erupted from the ground, and a valley of fire flowed from it until it reached the vicinity of Mount Uhud, then it stopped. We do not know what to do. When it appeared, the people of Medina entered the Prophet's mosque, peace and blessings be upon him, seeking forgiveness and repenting to their Lord.

It was in a place called *Aḥyalayn*. From this fire, a valley flowed, about four miles in width, and one and a half fathoms deep. It moved across the surface of the earth, with small mounds and hills emerging from it. The ground would melt into something like molten metal, and when it cooled, it turned black, but before cooling, it was red.

From another correspondence by someone from the Bani al-Fāshāni, it is written: 'A great event occurred among us. Regarding the fire, he said - A massive smoke appeared in the sky, forming until it looked like white clouds by the end of the day. The fire produced tongues that rose into the air, red like blood, and it grew in size, causing the people to rush to the mosque and plead with Allah. The red colour of the fire covered the entire sky, leaving people in a light similar to that of the moon, and we were certain of impending punishment. I (al-Dhahabi) said: The occurrence of this fire is reported by tawātur. It is among the events foretold by the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, where he said: 'The Hour will not come until a fire emerges from the land of Ḥijāz, which will illuminate the necks of camels in Buṣra.' Several people who were in Buṣra at night have reported seeing the necks of camels illuminated by its light.⁹

In addition to the reports which are provided by the historians, I would also place the following in addition to that. Firstly, in one of the statements of al-

⁹ al-Dhahabi *Tārikh al-Islam* [Vol. 14, pp. 7/9]. Again, the quotation has been significantly abbreviated to those areas relevant to the topic of the chapter.

Quṭb al-Qaṣṭallāni, may Allah have mercy on him, he said: ‘If someone comes reporting that they saw it in Buṣra, then there is no argument; otherwise, it is possible that this was mentioned in the *ḥadīth* as a form of magnification in its visibility, implying that it was so visible that it could be seen from afar. Someone indeed reported seeing it from Taymā, which is as distant from it as it is from Medina.’ Here this indicates the precision and trustworthiness of Muslim scholars generally, notwithstanding their honesty in reporting.

Secondly, the historians statement that the magma filled a valley four *farsakhs* long, four miles wide, and one and a half fathoms deep - also demonstrates their precision and honesty. The fathom is four cubits = 4 * 45 cm = 180 cm = 1.8 m; and the *farsakh* = three nautical miles = 1852 * 3 = 5556 meters. This implies that the volume of that magma was = 4 * 5556 m * 4 * 1852 m * 2.7 m = 444,515,558.4 cubic meters = 0.44 cubic kilometers; and this is close to contemporary geological estimates. Despite all these horrors, that volcanic eruption was only moderate or even below moderate. Geologists classify it as a level four on the Volcanic Explosivity Index = VEI 4, at most, and some may even say it was only a level three (VEI 3) on the volcanic intensity scale, which has eight levels in total. Some contemporary researchers, who are experts in geology, have studied the rocks formed by that volcanic eruption, estimated their volume, and determined their ages. Several follow-on references are provided should the reader wish to gain more insight into this area.¹⁰

¹⁰ Among the references listed in the original Arabic edition are the following: H O Sindi, ‘The Geochemical - Geophysical aspects of the tectonism in the Arabian Shield,’ Workshop on the Geophysics and its tectonic implications in the Arabian Peninsula and the Red Sea region.’ Held during 25/31 Oct-1986, Dept of Geology, Sana’a University, Yemen. Bulletin of the Faculty of Science (Special Volume) Sana’a University, Yemen, 1987. H O Sindi ‘Geochemical Evolution and Basement Tectonism of the Arabian – Nubian Dome,’ Proceeding of the 9th International Conference on Basement Tectonics. Australian National University, Canberra, Jul-1990. *International Basement Tectonic Association Inc.* Publication no. 7. M. J Rickard et al. (ed) Salt Lake City, Utah; and Kluwer Academic Publishers, Netherlands, [pp. 161/168, 1982]. H O Sindi, ‘The Geology and Geochemistry of the Red Sea, Saudi Arabia and its relation to the Pacific Region.’ Proceeding of the 5th International Conference and Exhibition of the Circum-Pacific Council for Energy and Mineral Resource Transactions. Convened at the Hilton Hawaiian Village, Hawaii, [29 Jul/3 Aug, 1990]. Gerald P. Salisbury and Alice C. Salisbury (ed), Cosponsored by the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPIC), Gulf Publishing House, Texas [pp. 411/420, 1996]. Victor E. Camp et al. (1986), ‘The Madinah Eruption, Saudi Arabia: Magma Mixing and Simultaneous Extrusion of Three Basaltic Chemical Types.’ *Bulletin of Volcanology* [Vol. 49, pp. 489/508].

19. Proofs of Prophethood (II): The Mongol Attacks

Reported wording from numerous *aḥādīth* set out the calamitous encounter with the people who have broad snub noses, small eyes, reddish faces, as if their faces are like ‘hammered shields.’ This is an accurate description of the Chinese / Mongolic / Turkomanic peoples. Moreover, a clear statement has been reported in the textual corpus that they are ‘Turks.’

The narratives confirm that there will be, at the very least, attacks in three major waves. That progeny of mankind will form the vast majority for the troops of the Antichrist - *al-Masiḥ al-Dajjāl*. Therefore, it will surely be a great attack. Some of them are the *Yājuj Mā’juj*, - Gog and Magog - who will have a great attack just after the destruction of the *Dajjāl* (may Allah curse him). Perhaps it would be instigated in revenge for his defeat and destruction. However, the texts mentioned great attacks, which have no connection with the battle of *Dajjāl*, or with the attacks of *Yājuj Mā’juj*, for they would swoop down from every conceivable area. The narrations have described some of the horrific tragedies that will occur in these attacks. Summarised from the plethora of narrations, these can be assembled into the following:

First wave of attacks

لا تقوم الساعة حتى تقاتلوا الترك صغار الأعين، حمر الوجوه، ذلف الأنوف، كأن وجوههم
المجان المطرقة؛ ولا تقوم الساعة حتى تقاتلوا قوما نعالهم الشعر

*The Hour will not be established until you fight with the Turks; people
with small eyes, red faces, and flat noses. Their faces will look like*

*shields coated with leather. The Hour will not be established till you fight with people whose shoes are made of hair.*¹

لا تقوم الساعة حتى تقاتلوا خوزا وكرمان من الأعاجم، حمر الوجوه فطس الأنوف صغار الأعين، وجوههم المجرى المطرقة نعالهم الشعر

*The Hour will not be established till you fight with the Khudh and the Kirmān from among the non-Arabs. They will be of red faces, flat noses and small eyes; their faces will look like hammered shields, and their shoes will be of hair.*²

لا تقوم الساعة حتى تقاتلوا قوما صغار الأعين، عراض الوجوه، كأن أعينهم حدق الجراد، كأن وجوههم المجرى المطرقة، ينتعلون الشعر ويتخذون الدرق: حتى يربطوا خيولهم بالنخل

*The Hour will not begin until you fight people with small eyes and wide faces, as if their eyes are the pupils of locusts and as if their faces are hammered shields. They will be wearing shoes of hair, using leather shields and tying their horses to date-palm trees.*³

يجيء قوم صغار العيون عراض الوجوه كأن وجوههم الحجب، فيلحقون أهل الإسلام بمنابت الشيح، كأنني أنظر إليهم وقد ربطوا خيولهم بسواري المسجد

*There would come some people whose eyes are small, having broad faces, as if their faces are like hammered shields. They will drive to the desert plains. It is as if I am looking at them while they have tied up their horses to the columns of the mosque.*⁴

إن أمتي يسوقها قوم عراض الوجوه، صغار الأعين كأن وجوههم الحجب، ثلاث مرار حتى يلحقوهم بجزيرة العرب؛ أما الساقاة الأولى فينجو من هرب منهم، وأما الثانية فيهلك بعض وينجوا بعض، وأما الثالثة فيصطلون كلهم من بقي منهم، قالوا: يا نبي الله: من هم؟! قال: هم الترك، قال: أما والذي نفسي بيده، ليربطن خيولهم إلى سواري مساجد المسلمين

Verily, my nation would be driven out into the Arabian Peninsula three times, by some people, who are broad faced, small eyed, as if

¹ Agreed upon. Cited in most of the well-known six-books, including *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī (*Kitāb al-Jihād*) and *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim (*Kitāb al-Fitan*), narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah. In the Arabic edition only the Prophetic statements are listed, without the full referencing and *isnād*'s.

² Ibid.

³ *Sunan* Ibn Mājah, (*Kitāb al-Fitan*), narrated on the authority of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri

⁴ al-Ḥākim, *Mustadrak* [Vol. 4, no. 8529]

*their faces are like hammered shields. As for the first round of the battle, those who escape among them would be saved. As for the second one, some would be ruined and some would be saved. As for the third, they would ruin all those who survived of them. They (the Companions) asked: O Prophet of Allah, who are they? he said: They are the Turks and then he said: By Him in whose hand my soul is, they would tie up their horses to the columns of the mosques of the Muslims.*⁵

وقال أبو هريرة: ليسوقهم حمرا غضابا كأنما وجوههم المجرى المطرقة، حتى يلحقوا ذا الزرع بزراعته وذا الضرع بضرعه

Abu Hurayrah said: 'Red and angry people, whose faces are like hammered shields, would certainly drive them out until they take (appropriate) the owner of a field his field and the owner of sheep his sheep.'⁶

وقال عبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص: ليوشكن بنو قنطوراء بن كركري خنس الأنوف صغار الأعين كأن وجوههم المجرى المطرقة في كتاب الله المنزل أن يسوقونكم من خراسان وسجستان سياقا عنيفا. قوم يوفون اللمم وينتعلون الشعر، ويحتجزون السيوف على أوساطهم، حتى ينزلوا الأيلة، ثم قال وكم الأيلة من البصرة؟! قلنا أربع فراسخ! قال: ثم يعقدون بكل نخلة من نخل دجلة رأس فرس!

Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Aāṣ said: 'The children of *Qanṭurā*' *ibn Karkary*, who are snub nosed, small eyed, as if their faces are like hammered shields, as revealed in the book of Allah, would drive you out from Khurasān and Sijistān in a mighty battle. They are the people who wear shoes made of hair, attaching swords to their waists, until they arrive in al-Aylah.' And then he said: 'How far is al-Aylah from al-Basra?' We said: Four leagues. Then he said: 'Then they would tie to each palm tree of Dijlah the tether of a horse.'⁷

وقال شداد بن معقل: قال عبد الله: يوشك أن لا تأخذوا من الكوفة نقدا ولا درهما! قلت وكيف يا عبد الله بن مسعود؟! قال: يجيء قوم كأن وجوههم المجرى المطرقة، حتى

⁵ al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthur* [Vol. 6, p. 33]. al-Suyūṭī notes that this is recorded in the collections of *Musnad* Aḥmad, Abu Ya'la as well as by al-Bayhaqy and al-Ḥākim; narrated upon the authority of Burayda.

⁶ al-Bukhārī *al-'Adab al-Mufrad* [*Kitāb al-Aqwāl*]

⁷ al-Ḥākim *Mustadrak* [Vol. 4, no. 8618, *Shamela* edition]

يربطوا خيولهم على السواد، فيجلوكم إلى منابت الشيح، حتى يكون البعير والزاد أحب إلى أحدكم من القصر من قصورك هذه

Shaddād ibn Ma'qil said - Abdullah said: 'It seems to be approaching the time when the riches of Kufa will no longer be yours!' I said: How come, O Abdullah ibn Mas'ud? He said: 'There would come some people, whose faces are like hammered shields. They would tie up their horses to the pillars. They would force you out to *Manābit al-Sheeh* till you would prefer camel and provisions to you than these palaces of yours.'⁸

Location

وقال الربيع بن ناجذ عن ابن مسعود قال: يأتيكم قوم من قبل المشرق، عراض الوجوه صغار العيون كأنما ثقبت أعينهم في الصخر، كأن وجوههم المجان المطرقة، حتى يوثقوا خيولهم بشط الفرات

al-Rabi' ibn Nājid said from Ibn Mas'ud, (that) he said: 'Some people from the east would come to you. They are broad faces, small eyes, as if their eyes have been dug in the rock, as if their faces are like hammered shields, till they tie up their horses at the shore of al-Furāt (the Euphrates).'⁹

وقال ابو هريرة أعينهم كالودع ووجوههم كالحجف، لهم وقعة بين الدجلة والفرات، ووقعة بمرج حمار، ووقعة بدجلة، حتى يكون الجواز أول النهار بمائة دينار للعبور إلى الشام، ثم يزيد آخر النهار

Abu Hurayrah said: 'Their eyes are like moles, and their faces are stripped, they will have a battle between the Tigris and the Euphrates, and a battle at the *Marj Himmār* (Donkeys' Field), then a battle at the Tigris so that the (cost of the) crossing at the beginning of the day will be 100 dinars to go to Syria, then it will increase at the end of the day.'¹⁰

وقال حذيفة لأهل الكوفة: (ليخرجنكم منها قوم صغار الأعين، فطس الأنف، كأن وجوههم المجان المطرقة، ينتعلون الشعر، يربطون خيولهم بنخل جوا، ويشربون من فرض الفرات

⁸ *Muṣṣanaf* Ibn Abi Shayba [Vol. 7, no. 37584]

⁹ *Ibid.* [Vol. 7, no. 37626]

¹⁰ al-Marwazi *Kitāb al-Fitan*, [Vol. 2, no. 1909] and *Kitāb al-Fitan*, Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād

Ḥudhayfah said to the people of al-Kufa: 'A small-eyed, snub-nosed people, as if their faces were beaten shields, wearing shoes of hair, will expel you from it [the city], and will fasten their horses on the palm of Jokhā' (river) and they will drink from the mouth of al-Furāt (the Euphrates).'¹¹

In the commentary upon *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, the following is cited:

al-Nawawi said: It has been found in our time in this way, and in another, red faces; i.e. white faces, mixed with redness. All these are miracles of Allah the almighty for His Messenger peace be upon him. The fight of these Turkic troops (Tatars) has been discovered. They are just as their descriptions have been mentioned by the Prophet peace be upon him: small eyes, red faces, snub-nosed, broad faced, as if their faces are like hammered shields, wearing shoes made of hair.

They have found with all these descriptions in our time. The Muslims fought them several times, and they are fighting with them now. We humbly supplicate to Allah the Most Generous to make Muslims successful in all their affairs, and remain His Kindness and Protection upon them. And peace be upon his Messenger who did not speak of his own desire, but it was only a Revelation revealed.¹²

Cited in *Fatḥ al-Bāri Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, is mention of, 'Then came the great calamity':

Genghis Khan appeared after 600 years. The world was inflamed by them (the Mongols), especially the whole of the east, till their evil entered all towns. And then Baghdad was destroyed, and the Caliph al-Musta'ṣim, their last Caliph, was killed by them in the year 656 AH. Then their remainders kept leaving, till the last of them was Timur the Lame. He went along to Syria and ravaged in it. He set Damascus on fire till it was all destroyed. He entered Byzantium, India and what is between them. He remained so long that the Almighty Allah made him die.

¹¹ Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād *Kitāb al-Fitan*, [Vol. 2, no. 1916]

¹² *Sharḥ Sunan Ibn Mājah* [Vol. 4, p. 473]

His offspring divided the countries. All what I have mentioned appeared in confirmation of the Prophet's statement, peace and blessings be upon him, 'Certainly, the children of Qanṭurā are going to be first to strip my nation of their reign.' It is a ḥadīth recorded by al-Ṭabarānī on the authority of Mu'āwiyah. What is meant by the tribe of Qanṭurā' are the Turks (Tartars).¹³

As one can appreciate, a large body of literature has arisen over a millennia of Islamic scholarship covering this issue.

The attack of the Antichrist – al-Masih al-Dajjāl

The series of events is Prophesised across the corpus of aḥādīth. Of note, are the following Prophetic statements in this regard:

إن الدجال يخرج من أرض بالمشرق يقال لها خراسان، يتبعه أقوام كأن وجوههم المجان المطرقة

*The Dajjāl will emerge from a land in the east called Khurasān and he will be followed by peoples whose faces are like hammered shields.*¹⁴

يهبط الدجال خوز وكرمان في ثمانين ألفا ينتعلون الشعر ويلبسون الطيالسة كأن وجوههم المجان المطرقة

*The Dajjāl would come down upon Khudh and Kirmān with 80,000 (troops), wearing shoes made of hair and palliums, as if their faces are like hammered shields.*¹⁵

لا تقوم الساعة حتى تقاتلوا خوزا وكرمان من الأعاجم، حمر الوجوه فطس الأنوف صغار الأعين وجوههم المجان المطرقة نعالهم الشعر

The Hour will not be established till you fight with the Khudh and Kirmān from among the non-Arabs. They will be of red faces, flat

¹³ Ibn Ḥajar *Fath al-Bāri* [Vol. 7, p. 509]

¹⁴ al-Ḥākim *Mustadrak* [Vol. 4, no. 8673]. Summarised also by al-Suyūṭī in *Durr al-Manshur* [Vol. p. 224]

¹⁵ *Musnad* Abu Ya'la [Vol. 10, no. 5972, (Shamela edition)]

*noses and small eyes; their faces will look like flat shields, and their shoes will be of hair.*¹⁶

Details of these events, the wave of attacks, are to be found in considerable detail in books specialising in the signs of the final hour, replete with references across the entire corpus of aḥādīth. There are many more specific details, further calamities and signs which have yet to be witnessed, including that of the *Dajjāl*. Evidently at the time of writing, the attack of *al-Masih al-Dajjāl* remains in the future. May Allah preserve us from and protect us from his insidious evil.

The attack of the Yājuj - Mā'juj: Gog and Magog

إنكم تقولون لا عدو، وإنكم لا تزالون تقاتلون عدوا حتى يأتي بأجوج ومأجوج، عراض الوجوه، صغار العيون، شهب الشعاف، من كل حدب ينسلون، كأن وجوههم المجان المطرقة

*And you would never cease fighting an enemy until Yājuj and Mā'juj appear: (they are) broad faced, small eyed, gray haired, swooping down from every mound. As if their faces are like hammered shields.*¹⁷

There are many channels of authentic aḥādīth and narrations referring to this.

¹⁶ Recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī in several places including *Kitāb al-Jihād* and *Kitāb al-Manāqib*.

¹⁷ *Musnad* Aḥmad [Vol. 17, no. 11461, Shamela edition], narrated on the authority of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri.

20: Proofs of Prophethood (III): The advent of mobile phones

Contained within the proofs of Prophethood is that he, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned some of the key signs underpinning the coming of the final hour. One of these signs, is the speech of animals to humans – ‘*The hour shall not be established until the beasts of prey from the earth speak to the people.*’ Here it is worth noting the specific reported wording; the plural is used for both beasts [السَّبَاعُ] and people [الْإِنْسَانِ], which seemingly indicates that this extraordinary event to happen, even if once, would be major news. There are some instances of this phenomenon occurring during his lifetime, as well as after that. Thus, the Prophecy has been fulfilled and its matter concluded, while leaving open the possibility of similar occurrences in both the present or future. Moreover, within the same firmly established *Ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth* it is outlined that he said several statements, of which the following are listed:

صَدَقَ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى يُكَلِّمَ السَّبَاعُ الْإِنْسَانَ؛ وَيُكَلِّمَ الرَّجُلَ عَذْبَةَ سَوْطِهِ،
وَشِرَاكُ نَعْلِهِ، وَيُخْبِرُهُ فِجْدُهُ بِمَا أَحْدَثَ أَهْلُهُ بَعْدَهُ

*In truth, by the One in whose Hand is my soul - the Hour will not be established until predators speak to the people and until the tip of a man's whip and the straps upon his sandal speak to him, and his thigh informs him of what occurred with his family after him.*¹

¹ As recorded in the *Sunan* of al-Tirmidhi, [*Kitāb al-Fitan*]. The *isnād* Abu Esa al-Tirmidhi provides is: ‘Sufyān ibn Waki’ narrated to us my father narrated to us from al-Qāsim ibn al-Faḍl, Abu Naḍra al-‘Abdi narrated to us from Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri, he said the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said.’ It is also recorded in the *Musnad* of Aḥmad [Vol. 3, no. 11383] and *Musnad al-Shāmiyān* of al-Ṭabarāni [Vol. 4, no. 2944]. The Arabic edition only lists the Prophet statements.

لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى يَخْرُجَ أَحَدُكُمْ مِنْ أَهْلِهِ، فَتُخْبِرُهُ نَعْلُهُ أَوْ سَوْطُهُ أَوْ عَصَاهُ بِمَا أَحْدَثَ أَهْلُهُ
بَعْدَهُ

*The hour will not be established until one of you goes forth from his family, yet his shoe, or whip or staff informs him about what his family has done after he has departed.*²

وَيُكَلِّمُ الرَّجُلُ نَعْلَهُ، وَعَذْبَةَ سَوْطِهِ، وَيُخْبِرُهُ فِجْدُهُ بِحَدِيثِ أَهْلِهِ بَعْدَهُ

*While the man's shoe will speak to him, the strap of his whip will converse with him, and his thigh will inform him about the news of his family after him.*³

وَتُكَلِّمُ الرَّجُلَ عِلَاقَةَ سَوْطِهِ، وَشِرَاكُ نَعْلِهِ، وَيُخْبِرُهُ بِمَا أَحْدَثَ أَهْلُهُ بَعْدَهُ

*And the man's whip's tassel will speak to him, and the buckle of his sandal will converse with him, and they will inform him about what his family has done after him.*⁴

يُخْبِرُهُ سَوْطُهُ أَوْ عَصَاهُ أَوْ نَعْلُهُ بِمَا أَحْدَثَ أَهْلُهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ

*His whip, staff, or sandal will inform him about what his family has done after him.*⁵

فَتُخْبِرُهُ نَعْلُهُ، أَوْ سَوْطُهُ، أَوْ عَصَاهُ بِمَا أَحْدَثَ أَهْلُهُ بَعْدَهُ

*His sandal, whip, or staff will inform him about what his family has done after him.*⁶

يُوشِكُ الرَّجُلُ إِذَا غَابَ عَنْ أَهْلِهِ أَنْ يُحَدِّثَهُ مِثْلَ عَذْبَةِ سَوْطِهِ بِمَا صَنَعُوا بَعْدَهُ

*A man is about to be informed when he is away from his family, by way of his whip's strap, about what they have done after him.*⁷

² *Musnad Aḥmad* [Vol. 3, no. 11670], with the *isnād*: Abul'Yamān narrated to us Shu'ayb reported to us Abdullah ibn Abi Ḥussein narrated to me Shahr narrated to me that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri narrated it from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him.

³ *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* [Vol. 4, no. 3739, *Shamela* edition], narrated by Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri.

⁴ Abu Nu'aym *Hulyat al-Awliyā'* [Vol. 8, no. 3374]

⁵ Ibn Sa'd *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra* [Vol. 1, p. 146]

⁶ al-Bayhaqy *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah* [Vol. 6, p. 43]

⁷ al-Ṭabarāni *Musnad al-Shāmiyān* [Vol. 4, no. 276, *Shamela* edition]

How do we understand these Prophetic statements taken together? What do they imply? They outline, that the world will not come to an end *until* there exists something or a device, or multiple things and devices:

1. That can be spoken to by humans, and it speaks back to them, just like how humans speak in their own language to each other. It informs them about what their family has done in their absence, on a daily basis, in a routine and customary manner.
2. This thing or device, or these things and devices, can be represented by familiar objects among the people of the noble city of Medina during the time when this speech is addressed to them. These objects belong to various types.

To begin, the first category includes items that are made from leather that can be said to be worn or used by humans, such as footwear. This category naturally encompasses various types of shoes and sandals. It also includes belts, leather accessories, and others. These items were rare at that time, but with the development of industry, leather became widely available and affordable, to be used by everyone. Also, this category can include modern equivalents made from synthetic leather and high-density, durable fibres like Kevlar and others.

Next, the second category can include items that a person *carries* for their daily needs when they leave their home for certain purposes, such as a stick, a whip, or a hanger. These were among the prominent items carried by men in the noble city of Medina at that time. This category has evolved with the increasing complexities of industrialisation and mass urbanisation. It now includes bags related to belts and accessories (some of which may be integrated into the structure of the belt or worn as an accessory, thus belonging to both the first and second categories simultaneously). It also includes wallets and their pouches, handheld or shoulder bags, and often backpacks.

Thirdly, that relating to the thigh, which could be intended as itself, or it may refer to its location on the body. It could also be an example of something similar in function, such as the upper arm, although I would consider that to be less likely. In my opinion, the intended meaning *primarily* refers to the location. Thus, what is meant by ‘thigh’ is the bags

hanging by the thigh, which are suspended by belts and accessories, regardless of whether they are independent or part of the belt or accessory structure. Accordingly, the bags hanging by the thigh, whether they are standalone or part of the belt or accessory structure, are among the clearest examples of the three categories simultaneously. Additionally, closely related to them are the standalone bags suspended by the belt or accessory, which dangle by the thigh.

Any astute reader who doesn’t need any form of genius will realise that this was fulfilled around 1990, with great precision in mobile cellular phones, especially in their early days until around 2005, before the emergence of smartphones and the inclusion of laptops, tablets, and other devices that would indeed fulfil this Prophecy. From that, several points are of note. Mention of the word ‘family’ is not exclusive but rather because one’s family and home have an inherent privacy. So if a portable device can inform a person about what happened in their home, it is even more possible to receive news from their workplace or other places that are not as private as the home. It is attributed to him, peace and blessings be upon him, to attribute the news or communication to the device, as in his saying: ‘*His whip, or his staff, or his sandals inform him.*’ This is broader than attributing the news or communication to the family. It is possible that the source of the news could be a similar surveillance device in their home or workplace.

While most communication among humans is predominantly verbal, it can also take the form of auditory or written signals, as seen in paging devices that preceded mobile phones. These devices could demand a prompt connection through another means or prompt the individual to return home or to their workplace. They could also warn of malfunctions in household appliances or the entry of intruders into the property. Communication can also occur through written text, as exemplified by the transmission of SMS messages via mobile phones. Additionally, communication can involve transmitting images and sound (video), as we witness in the early days of smartphones, portable computers, and tablets. Many people are able to remotely monitor their empty homes, leading to the apprehension of some thieves caught in the act. We have discussed this Prophecy in a separate published study, which readers may refer to for further details.

21: Proofs of Prophethood (IV): The Mosque in Yemen

Concluding this array of authentic prophecies which firmly and conclusively establish the veracity of the Prophethood of Muḥammad peace and blessings be upon him, we turn to the matter of Yemen. Here, there are several prophecies which have come to pass. Firstly, the collapse and crumbling of the Persian Empire. Second, is the construction of the mosque in Yemen which perfectly aligns to the noble sanctuary in Mecca. The latter, is particularly astounding since this was prior to the advent of modern scientific instruments.

To begin, we examine the narrative of events which caused the collapse of the Persian Empire and the conversion of the people of Yemen to Islam. A full account of these events is set out in the acclaimed *History of al-Ṭabari*:

Ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us he said Salamah narrated to us from Muḥammad ibn Ishāq from Yazeed ibn Ḥabeeb he said: He sent Abdullah ibn Ḥudhāfah ibn Qays ibn ‘Adi ibn Sa’d ibn Sahn to Kisra ibn Hurmuz, the King of the Persians with the following letter:

‘In the name of Allah, the Merciful and Compassionate. From Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah, to Kisra, the ruler of Persia. Peace be upon whoever follows right guidance, believes in Allah and His Messenger, and testifies that there is no god but Allah alone, Who has no partner, and that Muḥammad is His servant and His Messenger. I summon you with the summons of Allah; for I am the Messenger of Allah to all mankind, to warn whoever is alive, and that the word may be fulfilled against the unbelievers. Submit yourself, and you shall be safe. If you refuse, the sin of the Magians shall be upon you.’

When Kisra read it, he tore it up and said, ‘He writes this to me when he is my servant!’

Ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us he said Salamah narrated to us from Muḥammad ibn Ishāq from Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr from al-Zuri from Abu Salamah ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥman ibn ‘Auf, that Abdullah ibn Ḥudhāfah delivered the letter of the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him to Kisra. When the latter had read it, he tore it in half. When the Messenger of Allah heard that he had torn his letter, he said, ‘*May his kingdom be torn up.*’

Then he returned to the *ḥadith* of Yazeed ibn Abi Ḥabeeb, he said: Kisra then wrote to Bādhān, who was governor of Yemen, saying, ‘Send two strong men of yours after this man in the Ḥijāz, and have them bring him to me.’ So Bādhān sent his steward Bābawayh, who was a scribe and accountant, with the writ of Persia, and with him he sent a Persian named Khurrakhusrah. He wrote a letter to be taken by them to the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him, commanding him to go back with the two men to Kisra. He said to Bābawayh, ‘Go to this man’s land, speak to him, and bring me a report about him.’ So the two men set out. Having reached al-Ṭā’if, they found some men of Quraysh at Nakhib in the territory of al-Ṭā’if and asked them about him. They said that he was at Medina. The men of Quraysh were delighted and glad to have met the two men; they said to one another : ‘Rejoice! Kisra, the king of kings, has become his enemy. You have become rid of the man.’ The two men set out and reached the Messenger of Allah. Bābawayh addressed him, saying :

‘The Shah of Shahs and king of Kings, Kisra, has written to King Bādhān, commanding him to send someone to you to bring you to him. Bādhān has sent me to you so that you may go back with me. If you do, he will write concerning you to the king of Kings on your behalf and will keep him from you. If you refuse, you know who he is! He will destroy you, destroy your people, and lay waste to your lands.’

Now the two men had come before the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him having shaved their beards but left their moustaches, so that he disliked looking at them. He turned to them and said, ‘*Alas, who ordered you to do this?*’ They said, ‘Our lord’ - meaning Kisra, ‘ordered us to do it.’ The Messenger of Allah peace

and blessings be upon him said, 'But my Lord has ordered me to leave my beard and clip my moustache.' Then he said to them, 'Go away, and come to me tomorrow.' Then a message from heaven came to the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him which said that Allah had incited against Kisra his son Shirawayh. He had killed him in such, and such a month, on such and such -a night of the month, after such and such hours of the night had passed. Allah incited his son Shirawayh against him, and he killed him.

al-Wāqidi said: Shirawayh killed his father, Kisra, on the eve of Tuesday, the 10th day of Jumada I of the year 7, at the sixth hour of the night. He returned to the *ḥadith* of Muḥammad ibn Ishāq from Yazeed ibn Abi Ḥabeeb: He summoned the two men and told them the news. They said: 'Do you know what you are saying? We have reproved you for what is less than this. Shall we write this on your authority and report it to the king?' 'Yes," he said, 'report it to him from me, and tell him that my Deen and my dominion shall reach as far as the kingdom of Kisra has reached and extend to the utmost reach of camel's pad and horse's hoof. Say to him, 'If you submit yourself, I will give you what you possess and make you king over your people, the Abnā'.'

Then he gave Khurrakusrah a belt containing gold and silver that one of the kings had given him. The two men departed from him. They came to Bādhān and told him the news. He said: 'By God, this is not the language of a king. I think the man is a Prophet as he says. Let us await the event of what he has said. If it proves true, there is no disputing that he is indeed a Prophet who has been sent. If it does not prove true, we shall consider what to do concerning him.' Soon Bādhān received Shirawayh's letter, which said:

'To proceed: I have killed Kisra. I killed him only out of zeal for Persia, because he allowed himself to kill its nobles and detain them on the frontiers. When you receive this letter of mine, secure for me the obedience of those who are with you. See to the man about whom Kisra wrote to you, and do not provoke him until you receive my order concerning him.'

When Shirawayh's letter reached Bādhān, he said, 'This man is indeed a Messenger,' and he became a Muslim, and the *Abnā'* - those from Persia who were in Yemen-became Muslims with him.¹

There is no fear of any apparent weakness arising from the narrator Ibn Ḥumayd within the account since it has also been cited in the *Tafsir* of Ibn al-Mundthir:

Ali ibn 'Abd al-Aziz narrated to us he said Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad narrated to us he said Ibrāhim ibn Sa'd narrated to us from Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, (that) the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him, before his death, had sent some of his Companions as emissaries to the kings of the Arabs and the non-Arabs, calling them to Allah the Mighty and Exalted, during the period between (the Treaty of) al-Ḥudaybiyyah and his death, peace and blessings be upon him.

Muḥammad ibn Ishāq said Yazeed ibn Abi Ḥabeeb al-Miṣri narrated to me that he found a book in which the names of those the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him, sent to the kings of the people were listed, as well as what he said to his Companions when he sent them. He sent it to Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri with a trustworthy individual from his town, and he recognised it in the book.

Thereafter, he recounted the report as previously mentioned by al-Ṭabari he said: 'And he sent Abdullah ibn Ḥudhāfah ibn Qays ibn 'Adi ibn Sa'eed ibn Sahm to Khosrow, the king of Persia, and wrote a letter for him. When he read it, he tore it up,' thus recounting the report as previously mentioned by al-Ṭabari.² It has also been mentioned in *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah*, by Abu Nu'aym al-Aṣbahāni:

¹ The large citation is taken directly from: *The History of al-Ṭabari* [Vol. 8, pp. 111/114], translated by Michael Fishbein, State University of New York Press: New York (1997). Some modifications have been made throughout to the quotation in order to ensure closer proximity to the original Arabic text.

² *Tafsir* Ibn al-Mundthir [Vol. 1, p. 237]

Ḥabeeb ibn al-Ḥasan narrated to us he said Muḥammad ibn Yaḥya ibn Sulaymān narrated to us he said Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ayub narrated to us he said Ibrāhīm ibn Sa'd narrated to us from Ṣāliḥ ibn Kaysān he said Ibn Shihāb said, Ubaydallah ibn Abdullah ibn 'Utba reported to me that Ibn 'Abbās reported to him that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him sent a letter to Kisra. When he read it, he tore the letter up. Ibn Shihāb said, I thought that Ibn al-Musayyib said, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, prayed against them, that they be torn asunder.

Muḥammad ibn Ishāq said: the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him, sent Abdullah ibn Ḥudhāfah ibn Qays ibn 'Adi ibn Sa'd ibn Sahn to Kisra, the King of the Persians with the following letter:

'In the name of Allah, the Merciful and Compassionate. From Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah, the unlettered Prophet to Kisra, the mighty ruler of Persia. Peace be upon whoever follows right guidance, believes in Allah and His Messenger, and testifies that there is no god but Allah alone, who has no partner, and that Muḥammad is His servant and His Messenger. I summon you with the summons of Allah; for I am the Messenger of Allah to all mankind, to warn whoever is alive, and that the word may be fulfilled against the unbelievers. Submit yourself, and you shall be safe. If you refuse, the sin of the Magians shall be upon you.'

When the letter of the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him, was read, he tore it up and said, 'He writes to me with this letter while he is my slave.' Muḥammad ibn Ishāq said: Thus, I've been told that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: '*May Allah tear his kingdom apart,*' when it reached him that he had torn his letter up.³

The account is also found in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra*, by Ibn Sa'd. He records:

³ Abu Nu'aym al-Aṣbahānī *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah*, [p. 348, no. 241 (*Shamela* edition)]. The quotation has been significantly abbreviated. The Arabic edition provides the quotation in full, essentially recounting the same events as recorded by al-Ṭabari.

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him sent Abdullah ibn Ḥudhāfah al-Sahmi, who was one of six (emissaries) to Kisra (the King of the Persians) inviting him to accept Islam. He dictated a letter for him. Abdullah said: 'I handed (Kisra) the letter from the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. It was read to him, then he took hold of it and tore it to pieces.' When news of this event reached the Messenger of Allah, he said: '*O Allah, tear his kingdom apart!*'

Writing to his (vassal) governor in Yemen - Bādhān, Kisra outlined to him to send two strong abled men to bring him information about this man from Ḥijāz (the Messenger of Allah). To that end, Bādhān sent his overseer together with another man, supplying them with a correspondence. When they arrived in al-Medina, they handed this over to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. He smiled and invited them to accept Islam, which caused them to tremble with fear. He told them: '*Come back to me tomorrow, so I can inform you of what I want.*' Arriving the next day, he said to them '*Inform your master that my Lord has killed his master Kisra on this night, seven hours after it began.*' (It was the night of Tuesday, ten nights having passed of Jumada al-Awwal, in the seventh year). *Allah the Exalted and Blessed has empowered his son Shirawayh to execute him.*' The emissaries returned to Bādhān with the news, after which he and the Persian descendants in Yemen accepted Islam.⁴

⁴ Ibn Sa'd *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra* [Vol. 1, p. 259]. For brevity in the body text, the *isnād* is omitted and included here: 'Muḥammad ibn Umar al-Aslami reported to me he said Ma'mar ibn Rāshid and Muḥammad ibn Abdullah narrated to me from al-Zuhri from 'Ubaydallah ibn Abdullah ibn 'Utba from Ibn 'Abbās, he said (the speaker is Muḥammad ibn Umar); and Abu Bakr ibn Abdullah ibn Abi Sabra narrated to us from al-Miswar ibn Rifā'ah, he said (the speaker is Muḥammad ibn Umar). And 'Abdul-Ḥumayd ibn Ja'far narrated to us from his father, he said (the speaker is Muḥammad ibn Umar); and Umar ibn Sulaymān ibn Abi Ḥathma narrated to us from Abu Bakr ibn Sulaymān ibn Abi Ḥathma from his grandfather al-Shifā'ah, he said (the speaker is Muḥammad ibn Umar). And Abu Bakr ibn Abdullah ibn Abi Sabra narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Yusuf from al-Sā'ib ibn Yazeed from al-'Alā ibn al-Ḥaḍrami, he said (the speaker is Muḥammad ibn Umar); and Mu'adh ibn Muḥammad al-Ansari narrated to us from Ja'far ibn 'Amr ibn Ja'far ibn 'Amr ibn Umayyah al-Ḥaḍrami from his family from Amr ibn Umayyah al-Ḥaḍrami (their *ḥadīth* merging into the *ḥadīth* of others from them); they said.' A further reference is also provided, as it is recorded in the *Tārīkh Dimishq*, by Ibn Asākir [Vol. 27, p. 356]: Abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Bāqī reported to us al-Ḥasan ibn Ali reported to us Abu Umar ibn Ḥiyawaya Aḥmad ibn Ma'ruf reported to us al-Ḥārith ibn Abi Usāmah reported to us Muḥammad ibn Sa'd reported to us Muḥammad ibn Umar al-Aslami reported to us with its complete *isnād* and *matn*.

The account set out in the *Seerah* of Ibn Hishām says:

al-Zuhri informed me that he said: Kisra wrote to Bādhān and said: ‘(News has) reached me that a man from the tribe of Quraysh has emerged in Mecca, and he claims to be a Prophet. Investigate the matter and inform me. If he is repentant, then all is well and good. If not, send me his head.’ Bādhān sent a letter from Kisra to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. The Messenger of Allah replied to him (saying): ‘*Indeed, Allah has told me that Kisra will be assassinated on such-and-such a day, of such-and-such month.*’ When Bādhān received the letter, he hesitated, wanting to see what would happen. He said: ‘If he is truly a Prophet, then what he has said will come to pass.’ Allah indeed allowed the killing of Kisra on the day that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him stated.

Ibn Hishām said: ‘He was killed by his son Shirawayh.’ Khālid ibn Ḥiqq al-Shaybāni said: ‘Kisra was divided among his sons; with swords, as meat is divided, death laboured for him on a day; as every pregnant woman eventually gives birth.’

Bādhān embraces Islam. Al-Zuhri said: ‘When Bādhān heard of this, he sent news regarding the acceptance of Islam from him and his companions, to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. The Persian envoys said to the Messenger of Allah – ‘To who do we belong now, O Messenger of Allah?’ He replied: ‘*You are one of us, belonging to us, the family of the house.*’⁵

In Ibn Kathir’s *al-Bidāyah wal’Nihāya* the account is detailed as follows:

Abdullah ibn Wahb said, from Yunus from al-Zuhri, ‘Abd al-Raḥman ibn al-Qāri narrated to me that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him climbed the minbar one day to make an address. He praised Allah and bore the testimonial of faith. Then he said: ‘*Regarding what follows, I intend to send some of you to the kings of the non-Arabs, so do not differ with me as the Children of*

⁵ *Seerah* Ibn Hishām [Vol. 1, p. 69]. It can also be found recorded in *Umdat al-Qāri, Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* [Vol. 2, p. 28] as well as in many other books.

Israel differed with Jesus, the son of Mary.’ He therefore sent Shu’jā’ah ibn Wahb to Kisra. Kisra, who had his palace decorated and assembled the dignitaries of Persia then brought in Shu’jā’ah ibn Wahb. When he entered, Kisra ordered that the letter be taken from him, but Shu’jā’ah ibn Wahb told him, ‘No, I will hand it only to you, as the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him ordered me to.’ Kisra had him brought forward and Shu’jā’ah then gave him the letter. Kisra called for one of his scribes, a man from al-Hira, who read it to him.

It said, ‘From Muḥammad, servant and Messenger of Allah, to Kisra, leader of Persia.’ It angered Kisra that the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him had begun the letter with a reference to himself. He shouted in anger and tore up the letter before he learned what it said. He then had Shu’jā’ah ibn Wahb taken outside. Having seen what he had, Shu’jā’ah mounted his camel and left, saying, ‘Well, I swear, I don’t care which of the two routes I am on, since I did deliver the letter from the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him. When the force of his anger had abated, Kisra sent for Shu’jā’ah. They searched but he could not be found. He was sought for as far as al-Hira, but he had gone on ahead. When Shu’jā’ah went in (upon return) to tell how Kisra had behaved and how he had torn up the letter, the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said, ‘*Kisra tore his kingdom apart.*’⁶

⁶ Ibn Kathir *al-Bidāyah wal’Nihāya* [Vol. 4, p. 306]. A similar account is also outlined in the *Seera* of Ibn Kathir, see: *The Life of the Prophet Muḥammad*, (1998) Translated by Professor Trevor Le Gassick (Garnet Publishing: Reading). [Vol. 3, pp. 364/365]. A further citation is adduced in the Arabic edition from the *Muṣṣanaf* of Ibn Abi Shayba [Vol. 14, no. 37781]: ‘Muḥammad ibn Fuḍeel narrated to us from Ḥuṣayn from Abdullah ibn Shaddād, he said Kisra wrote to Bādhān: ‘I have been informed that a man is saying something, but I do not know what it is. Send for him to stay in his house and not be involved with the people in any way. Otherwise, let him set a date for me to meet him.’ So, Bādhān sent two men to the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him, with their beards shaved and their moustaches grown. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, asked them, ‘*What drives you to do this?*’ They replied, ‘Our master, who claims to be our lord, orders us to do so.’ The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, ‘*But we oppose your practice; we trim this and let this grow.*’ Then a man from Quraysh with a long moustache passed by, and the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, ordered him to trim it. He left them for over twenty days, then said, ‘*Go to the one who claims to be your lord and inform him that my Lord has killed the one who claims to be his lord.*’ They asked, ‘When?’ He said, ‘*Today.*’ They went to Bādhān and informed him of the news. He wrote to Kisra, and they found that the day Kisra was killed was indeed the same day.’

Ahādith of the accounts

While not necessarily as lengthy as that recorded within the books of *Seerah* and history, the accounts also appear within the corpus of *aḥādith*. The following has cited in the *Musnad* of Imam Aḥmad with an *isnād* that is *Ṣaḥīḥ* upon the conditions of the two-Shaykhs.

حَدَّثَنَا سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ دَاوُدَ الْهَاشِمِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ سَعْدٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي صَالِحُ بْنُ كَيْسَانَ وَابْنُ أُجَيِّ
ابْنُ شِهَابٍ كِلَاهُمَا عَنْ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ وَيَعْقُوبُ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي
أَبِي عَنْ صَالِحٍ قَالَ ابْنُ شِهَابٍ أَخْبَرَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّ ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ أَخْبَرَهُ قَالَ بَعَثَ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ خَدَّافَةَ بِكِتَابِهِ إِلَى كِسْرَى قَالَ فَدَفَعَهُ إِلَى عَظِيمِ
الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَدْفَعُهُ عَظِيمُ الْبَحْرَيْنِ إِلَى كِسْرَى قَالَ يَعْجُوبُ فَدَفَعَهُ عَظِيمُ الْبَحْرَيْنِ إِلَى كِسْرَى فَلَمَّا
قَرَأَهُ مَرَّقَهُ قَالَ ابْنُ شِهَابٍ فَحَسِبْتُ ابْنَ الْمُسَيَّبِ قَالَ فَدَعَا عَلَيْهِمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ، بِأَنْ يُمَرَّقُوا كُلُّ مَمَرَّقٍ

Sulaymān ibn Dāwud al-Hāshimī narrated to us Ibrāhim ibn Sa’d narrated to us he said Ṣāliḥ ibn Kaysān and Ibn Akhi Ibn Shihāb narrated to me, both of them from Ibn Shihāb from ‘Ubaydallah ibn Abdullah from Ibn ‘Abbās; and Ya’qub said my father narrated to me from Ṣāliḥ, Ibn Shihāb said ‘Ubaydallah ibn Abdullah reported to me that Ibn ‘Abbās reported to him, he said: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, dispatched Abdullah ibn Ḥudhāfah with his correspondence to Kisra (sic. King of the Persians). He said: he handed it to the to the Governor of Bahrain. (He did so) and the Governor of Bahrain sent it to Kisra, who read that letter and then tore it to pieces.

The sub-narrator Ibn Shihāb thinks that Ibn al-Musayyib said that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him invoked Allah against them (saying), ‘May Allah tear them into pieces, and disperse them all totally.’⁷

Another narration is to be found in *Sunan al-Kubra* by al-Bayhaqy:

⁷ Upwards of eighteen additional references are cited in the Arabic text, showing how widely this tradition has been reported. Among them are the four-references in *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī [Vol. 1, no. 64; Vol. 3, no. 2781, Vol. 4, no. 4162 and Vol. 6, no. 6836] where this is recorded, together with additional references to the *Musnad* of Aḥmad [Vol. 1, no. 2781], and the *Sunan* collections like that of al-Nasā’i [Vol. 3, no. 5859].

أخبرنا أبو عبد الله الحافظ حدثنا أبو العباس محمد بن يعقوب حدثنا أحمد بن عبد الجبار حدثنا يونس بن بكير عن ابن عون عن عمير بن إسحاق قال كتب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إلى كسرى وقيصر فأما قيصر فوضعه وأما كسرى فمزقه فبلغ ذلك رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، فقال أما هؤلاء فيمزقون وأما هؤلاء فستكون لهم بقية قال الشافعي رحمه الله ووعد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم الناس فتح فارس والشام

Abu Abdullah al-Hāfīz Abul’Abbās Muḥammad ibn Ya’qub reported to us Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Jabbār narrated to us Yunus ibn Bukeer narrated to us from Ibn ‘Awn from Umayr ibn Iṣḥāq, he said: The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him wrote to Kisra (ruler of Persia) and Caesar (ruler of Byzantium). Caesar respected it but Kisra tore the letter up. When the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him heard of this he said: *As for these people (the Persians), they will be torn apart; as for those (Byzantium), they will have a remnant.*

al-Shāfi’i, may Allah have mercy upon him said: ‘The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him promised the people the conquest of (both) Persia and the Levant.’⁸

Next, the following has been recorded in the *Muṣṣanaḥ* of Ibn Abi Shayba:

‘Abd al-Raḥeem ibn Sulaymān narrated to us from ‘Abd al-Raḥman ibn Ḥarmala al-Aslami he said I heard Sa’eed ibn al-Musayyib saying: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him wrote to Kisra (of Persia), Caesar (of Byzantium) and al-Najāshi (of Abyssinia):

To proceed - *Let us arrive at a statement that is common to us all: we worship Allah alone, we ascribe no partner to Him, and none of us takes others beside Allah as lords.’ If they turn away, say, ‘Witness our devotion to Him.’*

Sa’eed ibn al-Musayyib said: Kisra tore the letter up, not looking at it. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him said: ‘*He has been torn up and so has his nation.*’ As for al-Najāshi, he believes together with those with him. He sent a gift to the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him. He said (of this): ‘*Leave him as long as he leaves you.*’ Regarding Caesar, he read the letter which

⁸ al-Bayhaqy *Sunan al-Kubra*, [Vol. 9, no. 18387]

the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him sent. In reply, he said: ‘This letter, the like of which I haven’t heard since that of the Prophet Solomon – in the name of Allah, *al-Raḥman, al-Raḥeem*. Thereafter he sent for Abu Sufyan and al-Mughria ibn Shu’ba, who traded in this land, and asked them about some of the matters pertaining to the Messenger of Allah and who followed him. They said in reply, ‘The women and the weak among people follow him.’ He inquired, ‘Do those who join him (eventually) leave him?’ They replied ‘No.’ He said: ‘He is a Prophet – he will certainly rule over what is beneath my feet. If I were with him, I would wash his feet.’⁹

Calanders and dating

The essence of these events as can be seen from the aforementioned sources is well established with certainty. Transmission has reached us textually to the level of *tawātur*; only the insolent and stubborn would even dare to deny it. Despite this, the people of *Seerah* and historians more generally didn’t firmly record the dating for the event as precisely as should have been. Admittedly, this isn’t a great surprise because there wasn’t a firmly agreed upon calendar among the Arabs in use at the time. Even after the *Hijri* year was adopted as being the beginning of the Islamic calendar with *Muḥarram* considered the first month of the year, a few historians did not count the year of the Hijra as being the first year, rather they treated it as a ‘year zero.’ Consequently, the Battle of *Badr* would be recorded as being in year one; *Uhud* in year two, the Battle of *Aḥzāb* in year four etc. Compounding this problem was the intercalation and use of the month names by the Arabs. Other nations, such as the Jews and Syrians also utilised a complex lunisolar system of calendar dating.

Here, the statements made regarding the dating of when Kisra was assassinated by al-Wāqidi and al-Suhayli, broadly being the 10th of *Jumada al-Ula* in year 7AH with the conversion of Bādhān to Islam being in year 10 AH, is an *ijtihād* that should not be considered reliable. In fact, the correct

⁹ *Muṣṣanaf* Ibn Abi Shayba [Vol. 14, no. 37782]. The verse mentioned is from [3: 64]. In full this reads: *Say, ‘People of the Book, let us arrive at a statement that is common to us all: we worship Allah alone, we ascribe no partner to Him, and none of us takes others beside Allah as lords.’ If they turn away, say, ‘Witness our devotion to Him.’*

date, as recorded in inscriptions, minted coins, and in the Persian and Byzantine imperial records, states his assassination was on Sunday, February 28, 628 CE (according to the Julian calendar).¹⁰ That date corresponds to the 16 *Shawwāl*, 6AH – as per the lunar *Hijri* calendar. Consequently, it is necessary to understand that the six envoys who were sent to the Arab and non-Arab kings in the early sixth year of the Hijra, after the departure of the Confederates - a well-known transmitted statement mentioned by the leader of *Maghazi*, Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, and not in the early seventh year of the *Hijra*, after the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, returned from Ḥudaybiyyah, as is commonly believed.

There is no doubt that Qabād Sheerawayh – the new Kisra or Khosrow, son of Khosrow II, wrote immediately to his governors and commanders upon ascending to the throne. His message reached Bādhān in *Dhu al-Qa’idah* and Bādhān, along with the Persian offspring - the Abnā’, and a large number of people in Yemen, converted to Islam immediately. They sent news of this immediately and directly to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him. Following this, the Prophet peace be upon him dispatched Wabr ibn Yuḥannes al-Khuzā’i, may Allah be pleased with him, the same year, year 6, with the specific instructions to establish the *masjid* in Sana’a and determine the direction of the *Qiblah*.

al-Ḥāfiz al-Rāzi has mentioned in his work entitled *Tārīkh Ṣanā’a* (the History of Sana’a) that the Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sent the Companion Wabr ibn Yuḥannes al-Khuzā’i to Sana’a in Yemen in year 6 AH. He gave him the following instructions to put into effect: ‘*Invite them to al-Imān. If they are obedient to you in this, then start the Ṣalāh. If they are obedient to you regarding that, then order the construction of a masjid for them in the garden of Bādhān, made from rock that is at the base of Ghumdān; orient (sic. the masjid) towards the mountain which is called deen.*’ Commenting elsewhere, al-Rāzi said: ‘It is mentioned in the Prophet’s correspondence to Wabr, to construct a *masjid* in the garden of Bādhān using the rock for its foundations and setting it up in the place of its walls.’ Then al-Rāzi adds: ‘When Wabr conveyed this description of the *masjid* from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, Abān ibn Sa’eed

¹⁰ The execution of Khosrow II [590/628 CE] marked the beginning of the fall of the Sassanid empire.

arrived and laid the foundations of the *masjid* according to this description (given) and with its (specific) orientation.’ An excerpt of this was recorded in *Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ* by al-Ṭabarāni:

حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ يَحْيَى الْخُلَوَانِيُّ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ عَزْرَةَ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْمَلِكِ
 بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ الدِّمَارِيُّ عَنِ النُّعْمَانَ بْنِ بُرَيْجٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي ابْنُ رُمَانَ قَالَ قَالَ وَبَرُّ بْنُ يُحْنَسَ
 الْخَزَاعِيُّ قَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا بَنَيْتَ مَسْجِدَ صَنْعَاءَ، فَاجْعَلْهُ عَنْ يَمِينِ
 جَبَلٍ يُقَالُ لَهُ ضَيْيْنٌ
 ثُمَّ قَالَ لَا يَرْوِي هَذَا الْحَدِيثَ عَنْ وَبَرِّ بْنِ يُحْنَسَ إِلَّا بِهَذَا الْإِسْنَادِ، تَقَرَّرَ بِهِ عَبْدُ الْمَلِكِ الدِّمَارِيُّ

Aḥmad ibn Yaḥya al-Ḥullwāni narrated to us he said Ibrahim ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Ararah narrated to us he said ‘Abd al-Malik ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Dhimāri narrated to us from al-Nu’mān ibn Buzraj he said Ibn Rummānah narrated to me he said Wabr ibn Yuḥannes al-Khuzā’i said: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said to me: *If you build the masjid of Ṣanā’a, then place it to the right of the mountain that’s called ‘ḍeen’.*

Then he (al-Ṭabarāni) said: ‘This *ḥadith* is not narrated from Wabr ibn Yuḥannes except by way of this *isnād*. It is followed-on in that by ‘Abd al-Malik al-Dhimāri.’¹¹

However, in the original it says Wabr ibn Esa instead of Yuḥannes, which is a misprint. Writing in *Majmu’ al-Zawā’id* al-Haythami said: ‘It is narrated by al-Ṭabarāni in *al-Awsaṭ* and its *isnād* is *ḥasan*.’¹² Indeed, I would submit that the *isnād* is *ḥasan* as he has stated, but it is poor and misleading abbreviation of what was a longer statement, such as: ‘*When you build the mosque of Ṣanā’a, make it [with such and such attributes] facing the mountain known as ‘ḍeen’.*’ Wabr said: ‘So here it is now in Ṣanā’a to the right of Mount *ḍeen*, facing it.’ In the parlance of the Arabs, when they say ‘such and such a place is to the right of such and such,’ it means that it is to the south of it. This is because the east – the direction of sunrise and the accompanying warmth and light – is their primary original direction. However, regarding valleys and rivers, they consider the original primary direction to be upstream, where the rain falls, from which water, life, and goodness spring forth. For the Nile River, for example, the western bank

¹¹ al-Ṭabarāni *Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ* [Vol. 1, no. 831]

¹² al-Haythami *Majmu’ al-Zawā’id* [Vol. 2, p. 12]

(where Giza and the pyramids are) is the right bank, and conversely, for the Tigris, Euphrates, and Jordan rivers, their right bank is the eastern one.

Mentioned by al-Ḥāfiz al-Rāzi in his work entitled *Tārikh Ṣanā’a*, by way of another narrative: ‘Some narrated that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, sent Furwah ibn Maseek al-Murādi to Ṣanā’a and its environs, as well as Ḥaḍramawt. He ordered him to build the mosque of Ṣanā’a between the green and colourful castle and the citadel; hence he constructed it.’ It has been written as *al-Qal’ah* (fortress), but it is in actuality a rock; this might be borne of the language from the people of Yemen, or it could even be a scribal error for ‘*Jalmad*,’ ‘*Jalmada*,’ which is similar to ‘*Jalmud*’ which means a large solid rock.

Here, I would argue that this is in contradiction to the well-established accounts by the majority of historians. These indicate that Wabr ibn Yuḥannes al-Khuzā’i, may Allah be pleased with him, founded the mosque in the year 6AH. Moreover, Furwah ibn Maseek al-Murādi may Allah be pleased with him embraced Islam in year 8 or 9AH, having had several interactions with the false Prophet al-Aswad al-Ansi and other apostates. I don’t recall him being sent to Ḥaḍramawt. If there is a substantive basis for the assertion, it may be this – the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him dispatched Furwah ibn Maseek al-Murādi to Yemen and its environs. He ordered him to renew, or maybe expand the *masjid* in Sana’a which had been built by Wabr ibn Yuḥannes al-Khuzā’i.

The Grand Masjid of Sana’a in Yemen

The mosque in Sana’a, which was founded by Wabr ibn Yuḥannes al-Khuzā’i, may Allah be pleased with him, *still exists* today. When it was originally established, its area was not extensive; rather, it was square-shaped, with each side measuring approximately twelve meters. Some of its foundation stones are believed to have been taken from the ruins of the Ghumdān Palace.

Naturally with the passage of time, the *masjid* has undergone numerous expansions, reconstructions, and renovations. However, the people of Yemen have been extremely diligent in preserving the boundaries and the original *miḥrāb* of the old *masjid* built during the era of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, under his direct instruction. To this day, they

have marked its boundaries with two distinctive pillars: one is called ‘*al-Manqura*,’ with that name inscribed on it; located on the righthand side of the original *masjid*. The other, named ‘*al-Masmura*’ with that name also inscribed on it, being located on the opposite left side.

These two designated spots, marked by these names on the pillars, have been clearly identified and known with certainty throughout the Islamic history of Yemen, up to the present day at the back of the Great Mosque of Sana’a, as well as the location of the old *miḥrāb* and the rock ‘*al-Malmalama*,’ as mentioned in the words of al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Rāzi. It is worth noting that the architectural layout of the *masjid* in its current dimensions roughly corresponds to the design ordered to be built by the Umayyad Caliph al-Walid ibn ‘Abd al-Malik (circa 86/96 AH). Since that time, there have been no significant expansions, but rather internal constructions, such as the creation of porticos, minarets, domes, and other structures like the domed cubic building in the courtyard, which was planned to serve as a repository for Qur’ānic manuscripts and oils for illumination - a donation from the Ottoman governor Sinān Pāshā in 1016 AH. There have also been various restoration works undertaken, along with furnishings, following some devastating floods.

The people of Yemen have not only been diligent in preserving the relics of the *masjid* founded by Wabr ibn Yuḥannes al-Khuzā’i, may Allah be pleased with him, but they have also carefully preserved old Qur’ān’s and other important manuscripts. These were kept in boxes and upper storage areas, similar to cellars directly under room ceilings, known in present-day Ḥijāz as ‘*Duqaysi*.’

Over time, these storage areas might have been built over, renewed, and plastered, causing them to be hidden from view for potentially hundreds of years. It wasn’t until recent times that archaeologists discovered some of them, revealing some invaluable historical treasures. Among these were two of the oldest Qur’āns in the world, dating back to the first century of Hijra and written on parchment. One of these Qur’āns, discovered in late 2011, is nearly complete and in excellent condition. Additionally, other precious manuscripts and various artifacts have also been found. Moreover, library houses of the *masjid* contain fundamental books in Islamic jurisprudence and even rare Islamic manuscripts. The library of the great *masjid* is indeed one

of the treasures of authentic Islamic heritage found across the Islamic world and even throughout the entire globe.

Recent discoveries

In 2006, a group of researchers led by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Majeed al-Zindāni discovered that the geodesic line - the shortest path on the curved surface of the Earth - between the rock ‘*al-Malmalama*’ and the centre of the *Ka’ba* passes over the peak of Mount *Deen*. This discovery was made using ‘Google Earth,’ which relies on satellite maps and images and bases its calculations on the World Geodetic System (WGS 84).

Thus, what al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Rāzi mentioned is a precisely accurate specification of how the direction of the *masjid* should be oriented. The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him never went beyond the south of Ṭā’if during his lifetime. He never reached Yemen, nor did he see Sana’a, Mount *Deen*, the garden of Bādhān, or the Ghumdān Palace. At that time, there were no maps which were highly accurate or agreed upon; no satellites let alone satellite imagery, and the Earth’s round shape was not even universally agreed upon by philosophers and natural scientists. Moreover, the Earth’s shape is not merely spherical but ellipsoidal, as known today, and even this is a high-precision approximation of a more complex shape known as the Geoid. Modern geodesy - the science of Earth measurement - had not yet been developed, nor would it be for another thousand years.¹³

Truly, this is a remarkable discovery and a clear sign further bolstering the veracity of Prophethood. One can hardly blame Shaykh ‘Abd al-Majeed al-Zindāni and his research colleagues for being more than slightly overwhelmed at discovering this. In haste though, they published their research findings with sensational titles prior to exercising all necessary due diligence in this area. One such title was: ‘Satellites Testify that Muḥammad is the Messenger of God.’¹⁴

¹³ For an introduction to this, one can consult the open-access book chapter on this topic by G Blewitt (2007) which is available at *Science Direct*:

<<https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/physics-and-astronomy/geodesy>>

¹⁴ The Arabic edition provides a reference to a YouTube video, which still remains live on that channel. It is accessible via the following pathway:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qr_QvV2B5JQ>

Given this, we have sought the guidance of Allah in trying to elaborate upon this specific Prophecy. It required thorough study and critical engagement, particularly when refuting the objections and doubts raised by the ‘Arab atheists’ on their site and those raised by the enemies of Islam on their respective sites. Indeed, this topic is extensive and is covered in a separate standalone publication.

Truly and with certitude, we can conclude that it is absolutely and undoubtedly impossible to provide a coherent, convincing, and reasonable explanation for all of this outside the bounds of the fact that this is a Prophetic miracle. Any such explanation other than this would a) have to provide an accurate and inclusive outline given all the aforementioned facts and b) be free from any internal inconsistencies and contradictions. Yet, there is no way to achieve that on its own except by believing in what is stated in the magnificent and glorious Qur’ān, the book of Allah:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعاً الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ
فَأْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

Say [Muhammad], ‘People, I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, from Him who has control over the heavens and the earth. There is no god but Him; He gives life and death, so believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered prophet who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him so that you may find guidance.’¹⁵

يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِنْكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا قَالُوا شَهِدْنَا عَلَى أَنْفُسِنَا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَشَهِدُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَافِرِينَ

‘Company of Jinn and mankind! Did Messengers not come from among you to recite My revelations to you and warn that you would meet this Day?’ They will say, ‘We testify against ourselves.’ The life of this world seduced them, but they will testify against themselves that they rejected the truth.¹⁶

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ إِذَا يَأْتَيْتَكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِنْكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي فَامِنُوا وَأَطِيعُوا أُولَئِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

¹⁵ Qur’ān, 7: 158

¹⁶ Qur’ān, 6: 130

*Children of Adam, when Messengers come to you from among yourselves, reciting My revelations to you, for those who are conscious of Allah and live righteously, there will be no fear, nor will they grieve.*¹⁷

وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِيناً فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

*If anyone seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him: he will be one of the losers in the Hereafter.*¹⁸

Conclusion

From the analysis as presented herein, we argue with certitude, that the notion of Prophethood is true, specifically the Prophethood of Muḥammad ibn Abdullah, the Qurayshi unlettered Arab is undoubtedly true. Doubters of this are those whose mind Allah has altered; whose misfortune has overcome him, choosing to persist in a wretched fate, one that lands into the eternal misery of the fire of hell. By contrast, adherents to the recognition of this Prophethood have the hope of joy in an eternal abode of peace: ‘The righteous will live securely among Gardens and rivers, secure in the presence of an all-powerful Sovereign.’¹⁹

In short, this is one of the central rational proofs underpinning the Islamic concept of *Tawḥeed*, the testimonial that there is no other god except Allah, and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah. A full exploration of this topic naturally would require a standalone work, because it is necessary to provide a greater refutation to the specific arguments that have been put forth by the materialists, naturalists, as well as the disbelievers in general, notwithstanding those among the Jews and the Christians. We ask Allah for the presence of mind to complete such a work, together with the much needed health and time. There is no ‘other god,’ except Allah the Exalted. It is only by Him do we trust and reply upon for support, and unto Him do we turn in repentance.

¹⁷ Qur’ān, 7: 35

¹⁸ Qur’ān, 3: 85. Prior to citing this, some additional verses are quoted in the original Arabic. These are omitted for the sake of brevity, but they are excerpted from 72: 1/14.

¹⁹ Qur’ān 54: 54/55

Part V

The Historic Reality of Paganism in Arabia

Introduction

The aforementioned chapters in this volume should have provided a clear, albeit brief overview of the general principles, fundamental beliefs and decisive proofs that underpin the *Deen* of Islam - the *Deen* of Allah. He the Exalted stated unequivocally:

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَانِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ، إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ؛ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَعْثًا بَيْنَهُمْ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ، فَإِنْ حَاجُّوكَ فَقُلْ أَسْلَمْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّهِ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِ وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْأُمِّيِّينَ أَسْلَمْتُمْ فَإِنْ أَسْلَمُوا فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاغُ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

Allah bears witness that there is no god but Him, as do the angels and those who have knowledge. He upholds justice. There is no god but Him, the Almighty, the All Wise. Surely the (true) Deen with Allah is Islam. Those who were given the Scripture disagreed out of rivalry, only after they had been given knowledge - if anyone denies Allah's revelations, Allah is swift to take account.

*If they argue with you [Prophet], say, 'I have devoted myself to Allah alone and so have my followers.' Ask those who were given the Scripture, as well as those without one, 'Do you too devote yourselves to Him alone?' If they do, they will be guided, but if they turn away, your only duty is to convey the message. Allah is aware of His servants.'*¹

This is the *Deen* that He has approved for those in servitude to Him. He the Exalted says:

¹ *Qur'ān* 3: 18/20

الْيَوْمَ يَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَحْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ: الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ، وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ
نِعْمَتِي، وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمْ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

*Today the disbelievers have lost all hope that you will give up your Deen. Do not fear them: fear Me. Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My blessing upon you, and chosen as your Deen Islam.*²

He the Exalted has unequivocally declared that acceptance of a *Deen* other than Islam will never be accepted or sanctioned.

قُلْ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ
مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نَفَرِقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ
وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ، وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

*Say 'We [Muslims] believe in Allah and in what has been sent down to us and to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes. We believe in what has been given to Moses, Jesus, and the Prophets from their Lord. We do not make a distinction between any of the [Prophets]. It is to Him that we devote ourselves.' If anyone seeks a Deen other than Islam it will not be accepted from him: he will be one of the losers in the Hereafter.*³

Mankind is weak by nature. They do not recall the extent of blessings that are bestowed upon them until calamity befalls them, just like most do not appreciate the gift of life until they witness the throngs of death, nor do most value health until they experience illness. Therefore, one will not find anyone with more pure 'Imān than the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. They had previously witnessed the death of *kufri*, the era of pre-Islamic ignorance and were intimately familiar with its horrors. Allah the Almighty revived them with the blessed *Deen* of Islam; they lived with the revelation of Allah in the Arabic language, dealing with all manner of events. That revelation was understood by them with a deep enlightened understanding. History attests to that, to the extent that they shattered empires, making an indelible mark upon the course of human history. Without doubt, none after their era can reach the heights they did, nor achieve what they achieved. Hearing about something isn't the same as witnessing it; reading history is not like living it through events of the time.

² Qur'ān 5: 3

³ Qur'ān 3: 84/85

Nonetheless, being cognisant of the Prophetic biography coupled with the historic reality of the Arabs prior to the advent of that mission has a great many benefits. Among them are the following:

- Acknowledging the immense blessing of Allah upon us by sending the final Messenger to mankind, the mercy to mankind who brought manifestly clear signs to lead us from utter darkness to the light. He was the teacher of the book and the *hikmah*, a purifier for those who believe in him and follow him.
- Knowing the virtues of Islam. With conclusive evidences, profound and enlightened thinking, it has the propensity to produce for human civilization and how this expressly contrasts with *Shirk* (polytheism). All that *Shirk* produces is ignorance, misconceptions, myths, intellectual bankruptcy which inevitably leads to degradation, conflict and evil.
- Gaining a far more in depth understanding of the book of Allah by knowing the detailed circumstances of the people to whom it was originally addressed, coupled with appreciating the reality of the events which it speaks of.

Is it any wonder that the neglect of studiously having regard to the Prophetic biography, in tandem with the historic setting of the Arabs, including their *Shirk* prior to, and at the advent of the Prophetic mission, has led to the cataclysm of errors befalling this nation. Such errors which have accumulated over centuries reach their pinnacle with the sect of Wahhābism. That sect has spread its false and outrageous claims about the nature of the origins and reality of *Shirk* among the Arabs globally. Is it any wonder that their distorted and twisted conception of this and *Tawḥeed* more generally has darkened the world? Is it any wonder that such a warped and depraved understanding produces a mentality that fosters armed groups who kill Muslims while leaving the enemies of Islam at peace? Without a shred of doubt, the book of Allah has come to explain everything. Indeed, He the Exalted said:

ونزلنا عليك الكتاب تبيانا لكل شيء

*We revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything.*⁴

Indeed, in the book of Allah is sufficiency, for all matters. It is the rich source for anyone who desires to seek the truth. That is on the proviso that it is read with a proper deep understanding; comprehension, absorption, coupled with contemplation and enlightened thinking. It cannot be read with a hollow superficial understanding. Like the crazed sect which ‘recites the Qur’ān, but it doesn’t go beyond their throats,’ or those who ‘undertake worship to be seen by others, impressing people as they are impressed with themselves,’ or those who are so outwardly ‘pious’ that ‘if anyone compares his prayer with their prayer, he will consider his prayer inferior to theirs, and similarly his fasting inferior to theirs.’⁵

The inevitable result of their outright rejection of studious contemplation and thought, is their excessive admiration of themselves, sanctifying as such. Consequently, they ‘call to the Book of Allah, but they are not from it in anything’; ‘they will abandon Islam just as an arrow goes through the body of game of its target, the tip, shaft and quivers revealing nothing, for the arrow has been too fast even for the blood and excretions to smear.’ And such evil produces greater evil – ‘They kill the people of Islam, leaving the idol worshippers alone.’⁶ The last statement we have witnessed with the criminal actions of the group called ‘Dā’esh.’ Is it any wonder that the sincere advisor, peace and blessings be upon him told us ‘Wherever you meet them kill them, for a reward for killing them will be given on the day of resurrection to those who kill them.’

Thus, there is an urgent necessity for deep study, contemplation and enlightened thinking to expose the lies and fallacies of the Wahhabi sect; to refute its wild imaginary claims about the reality of *Shirk* among the Arabs upon which this sect has built its *Deen* borne of innovation. Given the backdrop to this, an exhaustive study of the works of *Tafsir*, *ḥadith*, *Seerah*, history and other than that, the fruit of which is this present work. Delving into the past to determine the nature of *Shirk* among the pre-Islamic Arabs is not a small undertaking. Other reference works have also been consulted to try and reconstruct precisely what they believed, leading us to examine

⁴ Qur’ān, 16: 89

⁵ Taken from the Prophetic statements which aptly describe the traits of the Kharijites, ancient or modern.

⁶ Ibid.

historical records, relics, artefacts and other scholarly works. Such work has been critical, especially since the Imām Ibn Taymiyyah, who is the highest reference point and a totem for the sect of Wahhābism, so obviously neglected the study of. This is despite what he clearly wrote in his work entitled - *Iqtidā’ al-Ṣirāt al-Mustaqeem*, where he said:

Whomsoever wishes to learn about the conditions of the *mushrikeen* in their worship of *Awthān* (idols); to understand the reality of *Shirk*, associating partners with Allah – a matter that Allah has condemned in its different guises; in order to understand the *ta’weel* (interpretation) of the Qur’ān, to know what Allah and His Messenger have rebuked, one should look into the *Seerah* of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. And (concerning) the condition of the Arabs during his time, to consider what al-Azraqi has mentioned (in his book) *Akhbār Makkah*, and other than him from the scholars.⁷

Indeed this is what Ibn Taymiyyah said himself in his writing. You, the dear reader, will see for yourself that he ordered righteousness, but regretfully he forgot it himself; as the poet expressed:

يا أيها الرجل المعلم غيره * هلا لنفسك كان ذا التعليم
تصف الدواء لذي السقام وذي الضنى * كيما يصح به وأنت سقيم

O you who teach others, beside oneself - how can you neglect to learn yourself?

You prescribe the cure for the sick and the ailing, so that you may cure them, While you are still sick.

In our modern age, *Tawḥeed* and Islam have become truncated, distorted and disfigured by the sect of Wahhābism. This is one of the main reasons for the spread of atheism in Muslim lands generally, and in the land of the two Holy Mosques specifically. Percentage wise, the rise of atheism is comparable to that of Belgium, which was once a Christian land. Moreover, extremist groups have emerged who are savage and cruel, borne of this malignant sect which has excelled in barbarity, driving people away from the ease that the tolerant *Deen* of Allah is. Therefore, there has been a level of compulsion

⁷ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Iqtidā’ al-Ṣirāt al-Mustaqeem* [Vol. 2, p. 289]

in including specialised chapters in this body of work relating to *Uṣul al-Deen* and its *qawā'id*, even though strictly it would sit aside such work.

To proceed, perhaps we can focus on the task at hand, to explain the reality of *Shirk* among the Arabs, while noting, first and foremost, with precision and care when reading texts, that the Adnany Arabs were an illiterate people. They had no literary tradition, no written scripture, and their culture was oral. Ignorance of the details of their myths and superstitions was widespread even among themselves. Unlike other nations, the Arabs did not have a tradition of epic literature that preserved the myths they held to underpin the creation of the universe, the stories of their 'gods,' and the wars of their heroes.

Secondly, and crucially, we must note that despite the centrality that Mecca held as a city and the role of the Quraysh therein – and even before them with the Jurhum and then Khazraj as leaders, the Arabs were not a single nation. Rather, they were a disparate collection of conflicting tribes bereft of a central state or single authority. They had a penchant for rebellion, chaos, as well as deviancy. Hence one should not be surprised to find contradictions, confusion and disparate explanations for their myths.

Thirdly, the memory of the narrators were unable to preserve in totality the details underpinning the collection of pre-Islamic beliefs, particularly due to the absence of writing or even an established script. Perhaps also Muslim narrators left parts out, largely in disgust given the polar opposite it was to Islam. If they were compelled to mention something from those older dark days, they did so with brevity, accompanied with a clear condemnation and cursing of the *mushrikeen*, then followed with the glorification of Allah the Exalted. This can be seen in the words of the great scholar from the *Tabi'* (successor) Qatādah, where he stated: 'They made the angels the daughters of Allah from among the *Jinn*, and the enemies of Allah are indeed liars.'

Perhaps they viewed the pre-Islamic beliefs as nothing more than myths associated with *Aṣnām* (idols), which were destroyed, being utterly erased from existence. With the passage of time, those very myths become ever more harder to understand let alone attempt a complete reconstruction. If it were not for brief mention in the text of the Qur'ān, many would have remained in complete ignorance regarding core aspects of these pre-Islamic beliefs and the set of cultic rituals they built their 'worship' upon. As an example, the following is cited in the work *al-Muffaṣal fi Tārikh al-Arab*

Qablal' Islam – A Detailed History of the Arabs Prior to Islam, but also understood from the text of the Qur'ān itself, that there were people from among the Arabs who worshipped the *Jinn*.

'They will reply, 'May You be Exalted! You are our supporter against them! Really, they worshipped the jinn most of them believed in them,' [34: 41]. Ibn al-Kalbi mentioned that the Bani Mulayḥ from the Khuz'āh kindred of Ṭalḥa al-Ṭalḥāt were among those who worshipped the *Jinn* in the pre-Islamic era, and they claimed that the *Jinn* appeared before them. Concerning them, the verse was revealed 'Those you [idolaters] call upon instead of Allah are created beings like you,' [7: 194]. He mentioned that some of the Arab tribes worshipped the *Jinn* or a class of the angels who they said were of the *Jinn*. They asserted that they were the daughters of Allah, so Allah revealed: 'Those [angels] they pray to are themselves seeking a way to their Lord, even those who are closest to Him. They hope for His mercy and fear His punishment,' [17: 57]. The *mufasssireen* and the *ahl-ul-akhbār* don't appear to have a clear understanding of how some of the Arabs believed in the divinity of the *Jinn* and their intermarriage with gods or god. The Qur'ān provides but a summation of this belief.

The *akhbāris* were not able to preserve the details of this belief or others similar. It is likely that this type of belief had an ancient myth associated with it that died out before Islam or that the Muslims abandoned it because it stood in contradiction to Islam, being a myth related to the idols. Therefore, they did not show interest in it and left it. If it were not for its brief mention in the Qur'ān, we would probably have been completely unaware of this worship. (Theodor) Nöldeke argued that the pre-Islamic Arabs did not worship the *Jinn*, nor did they consider them as deities in the way we understand the term. Even if the term 'worship of *Jinn*' indicates the worship of *Jinn*, this terminology does not necessarily imply the worship of *Jinn*.⁸

I would argue regarding the claim made by Nöldeke, that the pre-Islamic Arabs did not worship the *Jinn*, nor did they consider them as deities in the

⁸ Dr. Jawād Ali, *al-Muffaṣal fi Tārikh al-Arab Qablal' Islam* [Vol. 6, p. 710]

way we understand the term, is a blunder.⁹ It shows the lack of knowledge he had about the precise nature of the beliefs of the pre-Islamic Arabs with regards to the *Jinn* and his failure to understand the meaning of divinity as outlined in the Qur’ān and previous chapters of this work. In that he can’t be blamed because he was a *kāfir* who testified against himself by openly declaring that he didn’t believe in the Qur’ān. Despite that, he had more knowledge than the deviant sect of Wahhābism in many areas and they deserve censure for the adoptions they have made, by making false assertions about the Qur’ān, as mentioned by the verse where it says ‘*Treat this Qur’ān as something to be shunned,*’¹⁰ as they stubbornly cling to claims that are in contradiction to it

⁹ Theodor Nöldeke, the famous German linguist and orientalist from the nineteenth and early twentieth century, [d. 1930 CE].

¹⁰ *Qur’ān* 25: 30

1. The pagans claim ‘*He has a kinship with the Jinn*’

We begin the deep dive into the realm of what the Arab *mushrikeen* (polytheists) held as core beliefs at the advent, and during the time of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. Firstly, the following has been recorded by Imām al-Bukhāri in *al-Jāmi al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣr*, in the chapter related to the *Jinn* (their reward and retribution), it is of particular note:

باب ذكر الجن وثوابهم وعقابهم
لقله يا معشر الجن والإنس ألم ياتكم رسل منكم يقصون عليكم آياتي الى قوله عما يعملون
بخسا نقصا
قال مجاهد وجعلوا بينه وبين الجنة نسبا قال كفار قريش الملائكة بنات الله وأمهاتهم بنات
سروات الجن قال الله ولقد علمت الجنة انهم لمحضرون ستحضر للحساب جند محضرون
عند الحساب

Chapter: Mention of the *Jinn*, their reward and punishment
‘*Company of Jinn and mankind! Did messengers not come from among you to recite My revelations to you, up where He the Almighty said: Your Lord is not unaware of anything they do,*’ [6: 130/132].
Mujāhid said: ‘*And they made a relationship of kin between him and the Jinn,*’ [37: 158] the disbelievers of the Quraysh said: ‘The angels are the daughters of Allah, their mothers being the esteemed daughters of the *Jinn*.’ Allah said: ‘*Yet the jinn themselves know that they will be brought before Him,*’ being brought to account.¹

¹ Generally, most translations of al-Bukhāri tend to omit this section altogether. The section occurs in Book 59, The Beginning of Creation, chapter 12 related to the mention of the *Jinn*.

Elsewhere in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, in the chapters relating to the *Tafsir* of *Sura al-Ṣāffāt* of the Qur’ān, Imām al-Bukhāri records another statement from Mujāhid upon this:

باب تفسير سورة الصافات
وقال مجاهد وَبَيَّنَّ الْجِنَّةَ نَسَبًا، قال كفار قريش الملائكة بنات الله وأمهاتهم بنات سروات
الجن

Chapter: *Tafsir of Sura al-Ṣāffāt*

And Mujāhid said: ‘*They claim He has a kinship with the Jinn,*’ the disbelievers of the Quraysh said: ‘The angels are the daughters of Allah, their mothers being the esteemed daughters of the *Jinn*.’²

I would submit that the comment of al-Bukhāri appears in an assertive form, ‘Mujāhid said,’ giving the indication he is of the view that the report is valid and based on truth. In fact, this can be shown to be true, the statement is authentic as shown from multiple evidences from the following narrations. As stated by al-Ḥāfiz, Imām Ibn Ḥajar in *Fath al-Bāri, Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri*:

‘He said in the chapter relating to the *Jinn*, their reward and their punishment, with this interpretation as to their existence and that they are legally responsible etc. Mujāhid said (regarding the verse) ‘*And they made a relationship of kin between him and the Jinn.*’ He connected this via al-Firyābi from the channel of Ibn Abi Najih’ from Mujāhid with it and he said: ‘Abu Bakr said: Who are their mothers? They (the Quraysh) replied, daughters of the esteemed noble *Jinn*. He said: ‘*Yet the Jinn themselves know that they will be brought before Him.*’³

I would submit that here, al-Ḥāfiz confirms the validity of the connected channel of transmission by way of al-Firyābi, that will be cited below. Indeed, it is *Ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) as per the conditions of al-Bukhāri. As it is cited by al-Ḥāfiz in *Ta’liq al-Ta’liq*:

² As already noted, most English translations of al-Bukhāri tend to omit this altogether. It is to be found in Book 65, Prophetic Commentary, *Sura al-Ṣāffāt*.

³ Ibn Ḥajar *Fath al-Bāri* [Vol. 10, p. 79]

قال الفريابي حدثنا ورقاء عن ابن أبي نجيح في قوله وَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجِنَّةِ نَسَبًا، قال كفار قريش قالوا الملائكة بنات الله، قال أبو بكر فمن أمهاتهم؟ قالوا بنات سروات الجن؛ ولقد علمت الجنة إنهم لمحضرون الصافات قال علمت الجنة إنهم سيحضرون للحساب

al-Firyābi said: Waraqā’ narrated to us from Ibn Abi Najih’ in relation to His saying, ‘*And they made a relationship of kin between him and the Jinn,*’ he said: ‘The disbelievers of the Quraysh held, the angels are the daughters of Allah. Abu Bakr said: Who are their mothers? They replied: Daughters of the esteemed noble *Jinn*. However, ‘*Yet the Jinn themselves know that they will be brought before Him,* (chapter of) *al-Ṣāffāt.*’ He said: ‘They know they will be brought to account.’⁴

It is further cited in the *Tafsir* of Mujāhid:

أخبرنا عبد الرحمن قال حدثنا إبراهيم قال حدثنا آدم قال حدثنا ورقاء عن ابن أبي نجيح عن مجاهد في قوله وَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجِنَّةِ نَسَبًا قال قالت كفار قريش الملائكة بنات الله عز وجل فقال لهم أبو بكر الصديق رضي الله عنه: فمن أمهاتهم؟ قالوا بنات سروات الجن؛ فقال الله عز وجل: ولقد علمت الجنة إنهم لمحضرون يقولون إنها ستحضرن الحساب، والجنة هي الملائكة

‘Abd al-Raḥman reported to us he said Ibrahim narrated to us he said Adam narrated to us he said Waraqā’ narrated to us from Ibn Abi Najih’ from Mujāhid concerning His statement: ‘*And they imagine kinship between him and the Jinn,*’ [37: 158]. The disbelievers of the Quraysh said: ‘The angels are the daughters of Allah, the Mighty and Sublime.’ Abu Bakr al-Ṣadeeq, may Allah be pleased with him thus said: ‘So who are their mothers?’ They said in reply: ‘The esteemed daughters of the *Jinn*.’ Allah the Majestic thus stated: *Whereas the Jinn well know they will be brought before (Him).* Saying: ‘Brought forth to account (for saying that the) female *Jinn* are angels.’⁵

⁴ Ibn Ḥajar, *Ta’liq al-Ta’liq* [Vol. 2, p. 304]

⁵ *Tafsir* Mujāhid [Vol. 3, p. 460, no. 1419]. An additional narrative is cited in the Arabic edition from the *Tafsir* of Ibn Abi Ḥatim [Vol. 10, p. 3231, no. 18303], without the accompanying *isnād*. It reads: From Mujāhid, may Allah be pleased with him, concerning his saying: ‘*And they made kinship between him and the Jinn,*’ he said: ‘The disbelievers of the Quraysh said: The angels are the daughters of Allah.’ Abu Bakr al-Ṣadeeq thus said to them: ‘So who are their mothers?’ They said in reply: ‘The esteemed daughters of the *Jinn*.’ Allah thus stated: ‘*Whereas the Jinn well know they will be brought before (Him).*’ Saying: ‘Brought forth to account,’ he said: (for saying that the) female *Jinn* are angels.’

It is also in *Shu'ab al-'Imān* where al-Bayhaqy, may Allah have mercy upon him said:

Abu Abdullah al-Ḥāfiẓ has reported to us regarding the *Tafsir* of this verse, 'Abdar-Raḥman ibn al-Ḥasan al-Qādi reported to us Ibrāhim ibn al-Ḥasan narrated to us Adam narrated to us, transmitting the same. And it is transmitted to us from Qatādah that he said: 'And they made kinship between him and the Jinn,' the lies of the enemies of Allah. And from Abu 'Imrān al-Jawni he said: 'The Jews said, indeed Allah is an intimate of the *Jinn*, (hence where) the angels have come out.'

And it is transmitted to us from al-Kalbi that he said - They said the angels were the daughters of Allah, thus Allah the Exalted was saying (in reply) 'Whereas the Jinn well know they will be brought before (Him),' bringing them into hell those that had said that the angels were the daughters of Allah. It is said, this verse was revealed in regarding the *zanādiqa* (heretics), and that they had said: Allah created mankind, animals and cattle so Iblees said, let us fashion a creation, so he created snakes, scorpions and fanged beasts to cause harm. For that reason, He the Exalted said: 'And they made kinship between him and the Jinn. They said he is Iblees, Allah has disgraced him. Allah the Exalted is far above what the *mushrikeen* ascribe to him.

Abu 'Abdar-Raḥman al-Dahhān reported it to us al-Ḥussein ibn Muḥammad ibn Hārūn reported to us Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Nasr reported to us Yusuf ibn Bilāl narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Marwān narrated to us from al-Kalbi, he mentioned it.⁶

I would submit that Ibrāhim is Ibrāhim ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ali al-Hamdhāni, and he is *thiqa* (trustworthy). Abdar-Raḥman is Abul'Qāsim Abdar-Raḥman ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Ubayd ibn 'Abd al-Malik al-Hamdhāni, they said to him by the wording denoted from Ibrāhim concerning his saying 'narrated to us.' It was said though that this was only in relation to narrating from a book, yet this doesn't harm the channel of

⁶ al-Bayhaqy, *Shu'ab al-'Imān* [Vol. 1, pp. 299/300]

narration overall given that it is authentic, indeed, well established as authentic. It is also established by way of the channel narrated by al-Firyābi, the comment of al-Bukhāri substantiating that as well as others.

Analysis from the corpus of Tafsir

There are numerous additional channels of reporting in this regard, in addition to other statements that are relevant, all of which are authentic and established concerning the interpretation of the verse in question. To begin, as have been cited in the *Tafsir* of al-Ṭabari:

Statements regarding the interpretation of where the Almighty said: 'They claim that He has kinship with the Jinn,' [37: 158/159]. The statement of the Almighty mentioned and those *mushrikeen* (they had) made a relationship of kin between Allah and that of the female *Jinn*. There is a difference of opinion amongst the people of interpretation, in relation to the meaning of the word '*al-nasb*', a relationship of kin; those of the report (mentioned by) Allah about them, (that they had) made it Allah, the exalted. So some of them said: It is that they are, the enemies of Allah. They said, that Allah and Iblees (Satan) are brothers. Among those mentioning that are:

Muḥammad ibn Sa'd narrated to me he said my father narrated to me he said my uncle narrated to me he said my father narrated to me from his father from Ibn 'Abbās, concerning his saying: 'And they made a relationship of kin between him and the Jinn;' he said: 'A claim of the enemies of Allah, may He be Blessed and Exalted, that He and Iblees were brothers.'

Others said, it is that they said the angels were the daughters of Allah. And they said the female *Jinn* are the angels. Mentioning those who said that:

Muḥammad ibn 'Amr narrated to me he said Abu Aāsim narrated to us he said Esa narrated to us (*ḥawala*) and al-Ḥārith narrated to me he said al-Ḥasan narrated to us he said Waraqā narrated to us, all of them (reporting) from Ibn Abi Najīḥ from Mujāhid: 'And they made a relationship of kin between him and the Jinn;' he said: 'The disbelievers of the Quraysh said that the angels are the daughters of Allah. So Abu Bakr asked them, 'Who are their mothers?' They said

in reply, 'esteemed daughters of the *Jinn*.' They think they were created from what Iblees was made of.'

'Amr ibn Yahya ibn 'Imrān ibn 'Afra narrated to us he said 'Amr ibn Sa'eed al-Abaḥ narrated to us from Sa'eed ibn Abi 'Aruba from Qatādah in relation to His saying, 'And they made a relationship of kin between him and the *Jinn*,' the Jews said: Allah, the blessed and Exalted, (was) married to the *Jinn*, so the angels came out from that (union). He said: 'Glory be to Him, He is above that.'

Muḥammad narrated to us he said Aḥmad narrated to us he said Asbāt narrated to us from al-Suddi in relation to His saying, 'And they made a relationship of kin between him and the *Jinn*,' he said: The female *Jinn*, are the angels; they said they are the daughters of Allah.

And al-Ḥārith narrated to me he said al-Ḥasan narrated to us he said Waraqā narrated to us, all of them from Ibn Abi Najih from Mujāhid, 'And they made a relationship of kin between him and the *Jinn*,' (he said): the angels.'⁷

Cited in the *Tafsir* of 'Abd al-Razzāq there is the following:

عبد الرزاق عن معمر عن قتادة في قوله تعالى وَجَعَلُوا بَنِيَّهَ وَبَيَّنَّ الْجَنَّةَ نَسَبًا، قالوا صاهر إلى الجن والملائكة من الجن فلذلك قال: وَجَعَلُوا بَنِيَّهَ وَبَيَّنَّ الْجَنَّةَ نَسَبًا يقول جعلوا الملائكة بنات الله من الجن؛ وكذبوا أعداء الله: سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ، قال وَقَدْ عَلِمَتِ الْجَنَّةُ إِنَّهُمْ لَمُخَضَّرُونَ، قال قتادة محضرون في النار، إلا عباد الله المخلصين، قال فهذه ثنيا لله من الجن والإنس

From 'Abd al-Razzāq from Ma'mar from Qatādah in relation to His saying, *And they made a relationship of kin between him and the Jinn*, they said: 'Related by marriage to the *Jinn* and the angels are from the *Jinn*. For that reason, He said: 'And they made a relationship of kin between him and the *Jinn*,' saying they had made the angels the daughters of Allah from the *Jinn*. And the enemies of Allah lied. 'Allah is far above what they attribute to Him.' He said: 'Yet the *Jinn* themselves know that they will be brought before Him.' Qatādah said: 'brought before him to the fire. 'The true servants of Allah do not do

⁷ *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari [Vol. 19, pp. 644/646]

such things.' He said: 'So this is to praise Allah from the *Jinn* and mankind.'⁸

Cited in the abridged *Tafsir* of Ibn Abi Ḥātim:

عن قتادة رضي الله عنه في قوله: فاستفتهم قال فسلمهم يعني مشركي قريش الربك البنات ولهم البنون قال: لأنهم قالوا: لله البنات ولهم البنون، وقالوا: ان الملائكة إناث فقال أم خلقنا الملائكة إناثا وهم شاهدون كذلك الا انهم من افكهم ليقولون ولد الله وانهم لكاذبون، اصطفى البنات على البنين فكيف يجعل لكم البنين، ولنفسه البنات ما لكم كيف تحكمون ان هذا لحكم جائر أفلا تذكرون أم لكم سلطان مبين اي عذر مبين فاتوا بكتابكم اي بعذرکم ان كنتم صادقين وجعلوا بينه وبين الجنة نسبا قال: زعم أعداء الله انه تبارك وتعالى انه هو وإبليس اخوان

From Qatādah, may Allah be pleased with him, in relation to His saying, 'Now ask the disbelievers;' to task them, that is to say, the disbelievers of Quraysh, 'Is it true that your Lord has daughters, while they choose sons for themselves?' He said: Because they had said: To Allah the daughters, and unto them the sons. And they said: The angels are female. He said: 'Did We create the angels as females while they were watching?' Like: 'No indeed! It is one of their lies when they say, 'Allah has begotten,' How they lie!' Choosing females over the males, so how can he make sons for you? And to Himself, the females, 'How do you form your judgements?' This is indeed an unjust judgement you've formed. 'Do you perhaps have clear authority?' Which (you have as an) excuse; 'Bring your scriptures, if you are telling the truth; and they made a relationship of kin between him and the *Jinn*.' He said: 'The enemies of Allah had claimed that He, the blessed and Exalted, was the brother of Iblees.'⁹

Also appearing in the *Tafsir* of Ibn Abi Ḥātim:

عن عطية رضي الله عنه في قوله وجعلوا بينه وبين الجنة نسبا قال قالوا صاهر إلى كرام الجن

From 'Atiyah, may Allah be pleased with him, concerning where He said: 'And they made a relationship of kin between him and the *Jinn*;'

⁸ *Tafsir* 'Abd al-Razzāq [Vol. 6, p. 15, no. 6474]

⁹ *Tafsir* Ibn Abi Ḥātim [Vol. 10, p. 3231, no. 18302]

he said: They (had) said: ‘Related by marriage, to the honour of the female *Jinn*.’¹⁰

This is also in the *Tafsir* of Abu al-Ḥasan Muqātil ibn Sulaymān ibn Bashir al-‘Azdi al-Balkhi (d. 150 AH):

‘So ask them,’ saying to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, to ask the disbelievers of Mecca, from among them al-Naḍr ibn al-Ḥārtih – ‘Ask the disbelievers: is it true that your Lord has daughters, while they choose sons for themselves?’ [38: 149]. Hence, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him asked them in (*sic*. the Qur’ānic chapters) of *al-Ṭur* and *al-Najm*, given that Juhaynah and Bani Salamah used to worship the angels, referring to them also as (with) the *Jinn*, including Iblees, that they were taken by Allah, the Exalted and Glorified, as being ‘His daughters.’ Abu Bakr thus said to them, ‘So who are their mothers?’ To which they replied, ‘The elite nobility of the *Jinn*.’ Allah the Exalted and Majestic says: ‘*Did We create the angels as females while they were watching?*’¹¹

Imām al-Mawardi made a reasonable attempt at summarising the various viewpoints that have been advanced upon this topic in his work entitled *al-Nukat wal’Uyun*. Mention was made of four-separate explanations for the verse where Allah the Exalted said: *They claim that He has kinship with the jinn*.

Regarding this (the verse) there are four-viewpoints. The first among them, that it is referring to the association of *Shayṭān* in the worship of Allah the Almighty, and this matter of lineage is what they had made and claimed; it is the view of al-Ḥasan. Second, is what was said by some of the Jews of Isfahan, that Allah the Exalted had married the *Jinn*, and that there angels were the by-product. This was the view of Qatādah. Thirdly, some of the *zanādiqah* (heretics) had said, that Allah and Iblees were brothers. The light, the good, beneficial animals were from the creation of Allah, while the darkness, the evil and harmful animals created by Iblis. Ibn al-Kalbi

¹⁰ Ibid. [no. 18304]

¹¹ *Tafsir* Muqātil [Vol. 3, p. 621]

and ‘Aṭiyah al-‘Awfi had advanced that view. Fourth, as said by the *mushrikeen*, (their viewpoint), that the angels were the daughters of Allah. Hence, Abu Bakr had asked them, ‘So who then are their mothers?’ To which they had replied, ‘The esteemed nobility of female *Jinn*.’ This was the viewpoint of Mujāhid.

With regards to the designation of angels in this manner, there are (a further) three-viewpoints. Firstly, that they are a category among the angels which are referred to as ‘*al-Jinnah*’; it is the viewpoint of Mujāhid. Second, they are the ‘*Jinan*,’ as it is said by Abu Ṣāliḥ. Lastly, they are given that designation because they are concealed from sight, like the *Jinn*. He, the Mighty and Sublime says: ‘*They claim that He has kinship with the jinn*.’ In relation to the *Jinn*, there are two viewpoints, the first, that they are the angels, which is the view of al-Suddi; the latter, that they are the *Jinn*, as per Mujāhid.¹²

Despite this, the following is outlined lucidly in the *Tafsir* of Imām al-Rāzi, beginning, with the verses of the Qur’ānic text,¹³ which are covered at verses 149 to 160 of *Surah al- Ṣāffāt*:

Within this are the following issues (or enquiries) arising. The first – know that when Allah Almighty mentioned the stories of the Prophets, peace be upon them (all), He returned to explain the doctrines of the *mushrikeen*, clarifying their ugliness and absurdity. One of their false beliefs which they claimed was that they attributed offspring to Allah, and these were daughters, feminine, not male. ‘*Is it true that your Lord has daughters, while they choose sons for themselves?*’ [37: 149]. This is combined with what He said at the beginning of the *Surah*, namely: ‘*Is it harder to create them than other beings We have created?*’ [37: 11]. And that He the Almighty ordered His Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, to ask the Quraysh about the reason underpinning their denial of the resurrection. Then, the statements continued thereafter until He commanded him to ask why they attribute daughters to Allah and sons

¹² al-Mawardi *al-Nukat wal’Uyun* [Vol. 3, p. 477]

¹³ The extensive array of verses begins the citation from al-Rāzi. For brevity, these are listed as the reference only, rather than repeated here in the translation. In any event, al-Rāzi comments on the verses within the body-text obviating the need for the repetition.

to themselves. Al-Wahidi narrates from the *mufasireen* that they said: Quraysh and other Arab tribes like Juhaynah, Bani Salamah, Khuza'ah and Bani Mulayh had said that 'the angels are the daughters of Allah.' Know, that this statement includes two matters:

The first of which is the attribution of daughters to Allah, which is invalid, because the Arabs used to feel disdain towards (their own) daughters. How can something the creation despises be therefore attributed to the Creator? The second, relates to (the actual) proof that the angels were female (as they alleged). This is also invalid because the route of knowledge is either via sensory experience or (additional) information, the former being clearly absent here, because they didn't witness *how* the angels were created by Allah, which is meant by where He says: '*Did We create the angels as females while they were watching?*' [37: 150]. With regards to the (credible) report, it is also absent – because a report only stems from knowledge if it is known that it is absolutely truthful. Those who inform about this matter are liars. There isn't any evidence or proof of their truthfulness, nor indeed any evidential clue, which is what is meant by where He says: '*It is one of their lies when they say, 'Allah has begotten.' How they lie!*' [37: 151/152].

As for witnessing by sight, it is expounded from several viewpoints. First, that the evidence is arising from reason, based upon attributing the inferior to the higher. If the judgment of reason is valid in this matter, then your viewpoint is considered invalid. Secondly, is that we leave the underpinnings about the invalidity of their views. Instead, we demand them to provide evidence that proves the validity of their claims. If they fail to produce such evidence, then the contrary becomes apparent, indicating that there is no evidence supporting the validity of their claim whatsoever. Hence, this is the intended meaning of the verse: '*Do you perhaps have clear authority? Bring your scriptures, if you are telling the truth,*' [37: 156/157]. It has been established, as we have mentioned, that the position they have adopted lacks substantive evidence to buttress its validity, whether through sensory perception, tradition, or rational analysis. Therefore, it is unequivocally false and invalid. Know, that when Allah demanded them to present evidence for the validity of their views,

that it signifies that *tagleed* is invalid, and *Deen* is only valid through appropriate evidence.

Thirdly, He says: '*Did He truly choose daughters in preference to sons?*' [37: 153]. The general reading involves opening the letter *hamza*, cutting it off in the word [اصطفى]; then omitting the letter *alif*. Such is done to give a tone of reproach, condemnation. Such can be seen in (the verses) where He says: '*Has He taken daughters for Himself and favoured you with sons?*' [43: 16]; '*Does Allah have daughters while you have sons?*' [52: 39], and where He the Almighty said: '*Are you to have the male and He the female?*' [53: 21]. In tandem with these verses, this verse also carries that rhetorical question. In some of the channels of transmission, the reading of Nāfi' is: 'They are liars; Did He choose,' without the connected *alif*, and when the *hamza* is broken, it conveys the meaning that they make the false assertion that He (Allah) has chosen daughters for Himself. Similar to where He says '*Taste this, you powerful, respected man!*' [44: 49], in the matter of his assertion and belief.

Then, Allah says: '*They claim that He has kinship with the jinn,*' [37: 158]. Various interpretations exist concerning the intended meaning of '*the jinn,*' as per this verse. Firstly, Muqātil said, 'Establishing a lineage between Allah the Almighty, and the angels, when they made the claim that the angels were the daughters of Allah.' According to this viewpoint, '*the jinn*' here refers to the angels. They are called *Jinn*, either because they are concealed from perception, or that they are the protectors of paradise. I would argue that this interpretation is inherently problematic. This is so, because Allah invalidated their claim that the angels were His daughters. Then, He added to this by saying, '*They claim that He has kinship with the jinn.*' The addition implies that the reference being made now is different to that which proceeded it. Hence, it becomes necessary that the intended meaning of this verse is something *other* than what was mentioned earlier.

Regarding the second, Mujāhid said: 'The *kuffār* of the Quraysh made the claim that the angels were the daughters of Allah. Abu Bakr asked them – so who then are their mothers? They replied, the elite nobility of the female *Jinn*.' I also consider this interpretation to be

unlikely because a ‘mother-in-law relationship’ does not establish lineage.

Thirdly, as narrated in the *Tafsir* of where Allah says: ‘*Yet they made the jinn partners with Allah,*’ [6: 100]. A group of heretics were saying ‘Allah and Iblees are brothers. Allah is the good, the generous, while Iblees is the evil despicable brother.’ Thus, when Allah says: ‘*They claim that He has kinship with the jinn,*’ the intended meaning is this belief. In my view, this is closer to the truth. It is the belief of the Magians who speak of ‘Yazdan’ and ‘Ahriman,’ which corresponds to what we term ‘Iblees’ in our *Deen*. Yet, they differ considerably amongst themselves. Most hold the view that ‘Ahriman’ is a created entity, and they have very strange views on how its existence arose. A minority claims that it is eternal. Regardless, they agree that ‘Ahriman’ is a partner with Allah in managing this temporal plain; the blessings of this world are from Allah, and the evils are from Iblees. This explanation aligns with what Ibn Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him, had mentioned.¹⁴

Assessing the analysis from al-Rāzi

Indeed, the analysis provided by Imām al-Rāzi is poignant as it is eloquent. It is a robust analysis in several respects. It provides for a suitable analysis for the context, content and meaning of the noble verses. Following this, the comment regarding the claims of ‘angels being the daughters of Allah,’ and the account of ‘their mothers’ and matters of blood ties. Moreover, the explanation behind their claim, that ‘the angels are the daughters of Allah,’ while simultaneously asserting that the angels are a category of the *jinn*, with their mothers being from the *jinn* or due to their concealment, meaning they are hidden from sight, not visible to the eye, is broadly plausible. However, the context pushes one to anticipate the rejection of their claim that ‘the angels are the daughters of Allah,’ and also, it is His right to say in such a situation that they claimed a relationship to Him, with that of the angels and the *jinn*.

Following this, there remains comment to be provided concerning the matter of duality arising from Zoroastrianism. Namely, this was the

¹⁴ *Tafsir* al-Rāzi [Vol. 13, pp. 153/154]

supposed view held that Allah the Almighty and Iblis are ‘brothers,’ be that in origin, divine nature, lineage or even essence. Essentially, it was the claim that they are one, yet divided in two-branches. Allah the Almighty is the benevolent and generous, from whom the angels originated. They are His party and His army, constituting the branch of goodness and light. On the other hand, Iblees is the evil, the wretched brother, from whom the *jinn* and demons originated. They are the party of Iblees and his army, constituting the branch of evil and darkness. Given that we don’t have a detailed or credible account regarding the origin of creation among the pre-Islamic Arabs, it would become very difficult to try and determine the nature of this belief which was held, particularly regarding Iblis, how he emerged and the like. There may be an inference that they held such emergence to be accidental, given that Qur’ānic as well as some historical texts show that there was an unequivocal acknowledgment among the majority of the Adnanite Arabs in recognising Allah as being the supreme central deity.

Despite his mastery of the sciences of *manṭiq* and *kalām*, Imām al-Rāzi didn’t dwell upon the point as raised here. One need reflect on this matter thoroughly, particularly to understand the correct reasoning to be applied to the ridiculous and futile statements borne from the sect of Wahhābism, such as ‘*Kalām* is ignorance and ignorance of such is considered knowledge’; ‘One engaging in *manṭiq* becomes a *zindeeq*.’ We seek refuge in Allah from such idiocy and humbly beseech Him to grant us proficiency in all manner of sciences, including that related to philosophy, mathematics and the natural sciences more broadly. For you, the discerned reader, may He grant you, wherever you may be, the full use of your faculties for as long as you may live.

Taken in the round, together with the narratives thus far from al-Kalbi, Aṭīyyah al-Awfi, as found in al-Ṭabari and others, without content and channels of transmission, given that reason suggests that they cannot be altogether a pure invention or fabrication without any historical root, several conclusions can be surmised. From that, by necessity, some of the Arabs had *Shirk* within the conceptualisation of *al-Dhāt* (the divine essence), or worded differently, within the matter of divine genus. In other words, the perception being that divinity is a genus of varying species, each having multiple entities. They also had *Shirk* in the matter of *al-Khālīqīyyah* (creation), and *Shirk* in the matter of *al-Taṣṣaraf wal’ Tadbeer*. In effect, this

was a leaning towards the view held by the dualist Zoroastrians, claiming that Allah the Exalted and Iblees are brothers, sharing a common origin, essence, lineage and / or divine nature, thus the division in the two-parts as previously outlined. Even if their belief is confused, lacking sophistication as compared with other areas of Persian thought, its core essence should be grasped. Historians have mentioned similar accounts to this effect.¹⁵

Also, at this juncture it is worth reiterating, or rather re-reading the earlier quote from the previous chapter made by Dr Jawād Ali in his seminal work, *al-Muffaṣal fī Tārīkh al-Arab Qablal-Islam*.¹⁶ Extended comment upon many aspects of this will follow in due course. In any event, additional details are not strictly relevant here. One can review the matter in the books of *Tafsir* upon this topic, for example as set out by Imām al-Fakhr al-Rāzi in his works. What is important though, and the matter is confirmed, is that some Arabs had *Shirk* in relation to the divine nature, *Shirk* also being present in the matter of creatorship, as well as *Shirk* also extending into the domain of the administration and management of the universe. All of that is undeniable, it is essential to understand and appreciate properly.

¹⁵ As has been mentioned in *Nashuwat al-Ṭurab*: ‘Ibn Qutaybah said: Christianity was present in (the tribe of) Rabi’ah and Ghassān, as well as some of the Quḍā’ah. Judaism was present in Ḥimyar, Bani al-Ḥārtih ibn Ka’b and Kindah. Zoroastrianism was practiced in Tamim, from among them were Zurā’rah ibn Adas, his son Ḥujāb and al-Aqrah’ ibn Ḥābis. There was Manichaeism in Quraysh which was taken from the people of al-Ḥira.’ See: Ibn Sa’eed al-Maghribi (1982), *Nashuwat al-Ṭurab fī Tārīkh Jāhiliyyatul-Arab* (Maktaba al-Aqsa: Amman), [p. 72]. Ibn Sa’eed al-Maghribi, sometimes referred to as al-Andalusi, [d. 1286].

¹⁶ The Arabic edition re-quotes in entirety the previous quote from the work of Dr Jawad Ali made in the introductory chapter [Vol. 6, p. 710]. For the sake of brevity and to avoid repetition, this has been omitted from the English translation.

2. The statement of Quraysh, ‘the angels are the daughters of Allah’

Cited in the *Tafsir* of Mujāhid we find the following account which has a resolutely *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*, narrated upon the authority of Mujāhid:

From Mujāhid concerning His statement: ‘*And they imagine kinship between him and the Jinn*,’ [37: 158]. The disbelievers of the Quraysh said: ‘The angels are the daughters of Allah, the Exalted and Majestic.’ Abu Bakr al-Ṣadeeq, may Allah be pleased with him said: ‘So who are their mothers?’ They said in reply: ‘The daughters of esteemed nobility of the *Jinn*.’ Allah the majestic thus stated: ‘*Whereas the Jinn well know they will be brought before (Him)*,’ [37: 158]. Saying: ‘Brought forth to account (for saying that the) female *Jinn* are angels.’¹

Overall this report is *mursal* from Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him. It is a confirmation of what they say: ‘*The angels are the daughters of Allah, the Exalted and Majestic*,’ with the additional clarificatory point of what their supposed ‘mothers’ are, namely, the unsubstantiated claim that these ‘holy daughters’ are considered as ‘The esteemed daughters of the *Jinn*.’ As it is cited in the *Tafsir* of Ibn Abi Ḥātim:

¹ *Tafsir* Mujāhid [Vol. 3, p. 460, no. 1419]. Although not mentioned in the original text here as it is outlined in full in the previous chapter, the *isnād* for this is: Abdar-Raḥman reported to us he said Ibrāhīm narrated to us he said Adam narrated to us he said Waraqā’ narrated to us from Ibn Abi Najih’ from Mujāhid. Similar appears in the *Tafsir* of al-Ṭabari, with a variance of wording at the end: Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr narrated to me he said Abu Aāsim narrated to us he said Esa narrated to us; and al-Ḥārith narrated to me he said al-Ḥasan narrated to me he said Waraqā’ narrated to us, all of them (narrating) from Ibn Abi Najih’ from Mujāhid.

From Muḥammad ibn Uthmān al-Makhrami that the Quraysh said: ‘Assign to the followers of Muḥammad a man who shadows him (lit. to take charge of him).’ Therefore they assigned Ṭalḥa ibn Ubaydallah to Abu Bakr may Allah be pleased with him. Ṭalḥa approached him while he was among his people. So, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said: ‘What are you calling me to?’ Ṭalḥa said: ‘I invite you to the worship of al-Lāt and al-‘Uzza!’ Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said: ‘What is al-Lāt?’ He said: ‘Our lord.’ He said, ‘And al-‘Uzza?’ He replied, ‘Daughters of Allah.’ Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said: ‘And who are their mothers?’ Ṭalḥa became silent, he didn’t answer. Ṭalḥa said to his companions: ‘Answer the man,’ but the people were silent. So Ṭalḥa said: ‘Arise, O Abu Bakr, I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.’ Thereafter Allah revealed the verse: ‘*And whoever turns himself away from the remembrance of al-Raḥman, We appoint for him a Shayṭān, so he becomes his associate,*’ [43: 36].²

Further citations of this may be found in *al-Durr al-Manthur* by al-Suyūṭī in the chapters on the circumstances of revelation, , and in the *Tafsir al-Muneer* of al-Zuḥayli, as well as others.³ Likewise in this version, cited without an *isnād*: ‘al-Makhrami,’ but rather it is al-Makhzumi, and this is from a dictation error of the copyist. Regarding Muḥammad ibn Uthmān, this is an illusion or an old manuscript from Ibn Abi Ḥātim or his Shaykh. What is correct and authentic in all other sources is Muḥammad ibn ‘Abbād. Likewise, the wording ‘our lord’ is too illusionary or stemming from an old manuscript from Ibn Abi Ḥātim or his Shaykh. This is so because the idol ‘*al-Lāt*’ is definitively female, as will be exhaustively explained in a standalone chapter. Hence the correct word would be ‘*Rabatuna*.’ Similarly, as expressed by Ṭalḥa: ‘daughters of Allah,’ thereby confirming it - ‘a daughter of Allah,’ or ‘from the daughters of Allah,’ as it must be. The authentic text is therefore as follows:

² *Tafsir* Ibn Abi Ḥātim [Vol. 10, p. 3283, no. 18505]

³ See: al-Suyūṭī *al-Durr al-Manthur*, [Vol. 7, p. 377] and *Tafsir al-Muneer* al-Zuḥayli, [Vol. 25, p. 154]

From Muḥammad ibn ‘Abbād al-Makhzumi that the Quraysh said: ‘Assign a man to every man from the Companions of Muhammad to shadow him (lit. to take charge of him). Hence they assigned Ṭalḥa ibn Ubaydallah to Abu Bakr may Allah be pleased with him. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said: ‘What are *you* calling me to?’ Ṭalḥa said: ‘I invite you to the worship of al-Lāt and al-‘Uzza!’ Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said: ‘What is al-Lāt?’ He said: ‘*Rabatuna* (our goddess).’ He said, ‘And al-‘Uzza?’ He replied, ‘a daughter of Allah’ [or] ‘from the daughters of Allah.’ Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said: ‘And who are their mothers?’ Ṭalḥa became silent, he didn’t answer. Ṭalḥa said to his companions: ‘Answer the man,’ but the people were silent. So Ṭalḥa said: ‘Arise, O Abu Bakr, I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.’ Thus, Allah revealed the verse: ‘*And whoever turns himself away from the remembrance of al-Raḥman, We appoint for him a Shayṭān, so he becomes his associate,*’ [43: 36].

As for the channels of transmission, these all reliably stem from Muḥammad ibn ‘Abbād al-Makhzumi end-to-end. For example, as reported in *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* of al-Balādhuri:

And Abdul-Wāhid ibn Ghayāth al-Basri narrated to me Ḥammād ibn Salamah narrated to us Dāwud ibn Abi Hind reports from Muḥammad ibn ‘Abbād al-Makhzumi that the Quraysh said: ‘Assign to the followers of Muḥammad a man who shadows him.’ Therefore they assigned Ṭalḥa ibn Ubaydallah to Abu Bakr may Allah be pleased with him. Ṭalḥa approached him while he was among his people or he said unto his people: ‘Arise O Abu Bakr.’ Abu Bakr thus replied: ‘To what are you summoning me to?’ Ṭalḥa said: ‘To invite you to al-Lāt and al-‘Uzza.’ Abu Bakr replied, ‘And what is al-Lāt and al-‘Uzza?’ Ṭalḥa said: ‘Daughters of Allah.’ Abu Bakr said: ‘So who is their father?’ Ṭalḥa fell silent, not answering.⁴

⁴ al-Balādhuri, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* [Vol. 10, p. 119]. Here, the citation has been significantly abbreviated from the original Arabic.

The variance of wording here, ‘Who is their father?’ is evidently a mistake, as the original has ‘Who is their mother?’ which is correct by necessity. Further, this is also cited in ‘*Uyun al-Akḥbār* with the isnād: ‘Muḥammad ibn Abdul-Aziz narrated to me he said Abu Salamah narrated to us from Ḥammād ibn Salamah he said Dāwud ibn Abi Hind reported to us from Muḥammad ibn ‘Abbād al-Makhzumi.’⁵ In this rendition though one of the narrators has mixed matters slightly, or it is an illusion of the copyist, as there is an omission relating to the sentence: ‘He said: ‘*Rabatuna*,’ He replied: ‘And what of al-Uzza?’ This is the attribution found in this collection, but as well cited in *al-Aymā ila Zawā'id al-Amāli wal' Ajzā*.⁶

I would submit, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Aziz is Ibn Abi Rizmah, *thiqa* (trustworthy) as noted in *Taqrib al-Tahzib*, and Abu Salamah is Manṣur ibn Salamah ibn Abdul-Aziz al-Khuzā'i al-Baghdadi, *thiqa thabt* (resolutely trustworthy) as mentioned by al-Ḥāfiz also in *Taqreeb*.⁷ Muḥammad ibn ‘Abbād al-Makhzumi is a ‘*Tabi* (successor), *thiqa mashur* (trustworthy and famous) from the class of the Imām Mujāhid ibn Jabr.

Accounts of al-'Uzza

Further details regarding al-'Uzza appear in the *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* by Abul'Mundthir Hishām ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Sā'ib al-Kalbi. The following two passages are cited directly:

al-'Uzza was the greatest idol among the Quraysh. They used to journey to her, offer gifts unto her, and seek her favours through sacrifice. The Quraysh were wont to venerate her above all other idols. For this reason Zayd ibn ‘Amr ibn Nufayl, who, during the *Jāhiliyya* days, had turned to the worship of God and renounced that of al-'Uzza and of the other idols, said:

*I have renounced both al-Lāt and al-'Uzza,
For thus would the brave and the robust do.
No more do I worship al-'Uzza and her two daughters,*

⁵ Ibn Qutaybah, *Kitāb 'Uyun al-Akḥbār* (A Book of Choice Narratives) [Vol. 2, p. 216]. The repetition of the narrative is omitted since it is near identical in wording, bar the missing sentence that the Professor highlights.

⁶ *al-Aymā ila Zawā'id al-Amāli wal' Ajzā* by Nabil Sa'd al-Deen Jarrār.

⁷ al-Ḥāfiz *Taqreeb al-Tahzeeb* [Vol. 1, p. 547, no. 6092] and [p. 497, no. 6901]

*Or visit the two idols of the Banu-Ghanm;
Nor do I journey to Hubal and adore it,
Although it was our lord when I was young*

The custody of al-'Uzza was in the hands of the Banu-Shaybān ibn-Jābir ibn-Murrah ibn-'Abs ibn-Rifā'ah ibn al-Ḥārith ibn 'Utbah ibn Sulaym ibn Mansur of the Banu-Sulaym.⁸

The apparent import of these narratives seems to show that the Quraysh had learned their lesson, so amongst the common people, they expressed the answer that was set out in the narration that was reported from Mujāhid, namely that the ‘daughters’ are from ‘the esteemed nobility of the *Jinn*.’ This was without further specification of a name in what would seem to be a desperate attempt to avoid this ugly dilemma. Al-Shawkāni covers the narrative in his work *Faṭḥ al-Qadir*. While broadly the reported wording is the same, there is a nasty mistake therein. The narrative has that Abu Bakr asks, ‘What is al-Lāt?’ With Ṭalḥa then replying, ‘*Awlād Allah*’ [أولاد الله] - the ‘Children of Allah.’⁹ Clearly this is quite a nasty mistake made in relation to al-Lāt, mentioned as ‘Children of Allah,’ or ‘from the children of Allah.’ Earlier references to this wording cannot be traced prior to al-Shawkāni’s *Faṭḥ al-Qadir*. I would ask Allah that this is not a deliberate distortion or misrepresentation with the intention to try and make al-Lāt masculine, with the means of lying and evasiveness. Allah forbid. Thereafter, some of the individuals from the sect of Wahhābism ran with this mistake. For example, as cited in *al-Anwār al-Sāti'āt* by ‘Abd al-Aziz al-Salmān and also in the exposition and interpretation of the Qur’ān by Muḥay-al-Deen ibn Aḥmad Mustafa Darwish.¹⁰ Yet he was deceived by even the most vocal opponents of the Wahhābi sect from among the Twelver Shiites; we find in the book, *The Wahhābi defect in understanding Qur'ānic Tawḥeed*:

⁸ The *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* (Book of Idols) by Hishām ibn al-Kalbi, Translated by Nabih Amin Faris, (1952) Princeton University Press, [pp. 18/19]

⁹ al-Shawkāni *Faṭḥ al-Qadir* [Vol. 6, p. 407]. Again, the Arabic edition sets out the entire quote; here for the translation it is limited to the variance in wording to avoid the repetition.

¹⁰ ‘Abd al-Aziz al-Salmān *al-Anwār al-Sāti'āt* [Vol. 2, p. 481] and Muḥay-al-Deen ibn Aḥmad Mustafa Darwish ‘*Irāb al-Qur'ān wa Bayānahu* [Vol. 9, p. 86].

Yes: It appears from the report that Ibn Abi Ḥātim cited on the authority of Muḥammad ibn Uthmān al-Makhzumi that they believed some of them to be masculine... Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said: ‘What are you calling me to?’ Ṭalḥa said: ‘I invite you to the worship of al-Lāt and al-‘Uzza!’ Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, said: ‘What is al-Lāt?’ He said: ‘Our lord.’ He said, ‘And al-‘Uzza?’ He replied, ‘Daughters of Allah’¹¹

As well as quoting from *Fath al-Qadir* by al-Shawkāni! He has also observed with notable precision, grabbing this point with an iron fist, that al-‘Uzza according to the Quraysh was from the genus of the *Jinn*, indeed being from the esteemed nobility of the *Jinn*. She was viewed as the ‘consort of Allah,’ and that al-Lāt and Manāt were ‘her daughters,’ being from the genus of the angels and they were depicted as the ‘daughters of Allah.’ Namely, at the same time, it was the venerated idol, or rather considered as the greatest idol according to the Quraysh as per the reported text from al-Kalbi.

¹¹ Shaykh Abdullah Dashti *al-Khilal al-Wahhābi fī Fahm al-Tawḥeed al-Qurāni* [Vol. 5, p. 25]. The quote has been significantly abbreviated to only its most relevant portion.

3. Making the *Jinn* partners and attributing offspring to Allah

It is established that the attribution of offspring to Allah, is a severe and calamitous matter. Indeed, it has become a notable feature from among various categories of *Shirk*, including that from the Christians and Jews.¹ However, Allah the Exalted and Majestic, has categorically refuted these false claims of attribution. In particular, notable arguments are used to obliterate any such attribution. His statement, May He be Glorified and Exalted appears throughout the text of the Qur’ān. To begin, notable is the following verse:

وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِنَّ وَخَلَقَهُمْ وَخَرَفُوا لَهُ بَيِّنَاتٍ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ
بَدِيعُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أُنَى يُكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةٌ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

*Yet they made the jinn partners with Allah, though He created them, and without any true knowledge they attribute sons and daughters to Him. Glory be to Him! He is far higher than what they ascribe to Him, the Creator of the heavens and earth! How could He have children when He has no spouse, when He created all things, and has full knowledge of all things?*²

There are also other verses, more than a dozen, such as the following:

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ فَآمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةٌ انْتَهُوا خَيْرًا لَكُمْ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَهٌ
وَاحِدٌ سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا

People of the Book, don't go to excess in your religion, and don't say anything about Allah except the truth: the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was nothing

¹ In the Arabic edition of *Tawḥeed*, this chapter appears much later after the chapter entitled ‘Give us the genealogy of your lord.’

² *Qur’ān*, 6: 100/101

more than a Messenger of Allah, His word, directed to Mary, a spirit from Him.

So believe in Allah and His Messengers and do not speak of a 'Trinity' - stop [this], that is better for you, Allah is only one God, He is far above having a son, everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him and He is the best one to trust.³

The aforementioned verse, and also what follows it, concerning Jesus the son of Mary, peace be upon them are noteworthy:

ذَلِكَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ قَوْلَ الْحَقِّ الَّذِي فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ؛ مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ مِنْ وَلَدٍ سُبْحَانَهُ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

Such was Jesus, son of Mary. [This is] a statement of the Truth about which they are in doubt: it would not befit Allah to have a child. He is far above that: when He decrees something, He says only, 'Be,' and it is.⁴

Other verses of note within the text of the Qur'ān are unequivocal upon this subject. One cannot be in any doubt whatsoever regarding the absolute rejection of the attribution of offspring to Allah. One may read and note the following:

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا، سُبْحَانَهُ بَلْ لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلُّ لَّهُ قَانِتُونَ

They have asserted, 'Allah has a child.' May He be Exalted! No! Everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him, everything devoutly obeys His will.⁵

وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ، فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلِيٌّ مِنَ الذُّلِّ وَكَبْرَهُ تَكْبِيرًا

And say, 'Praise belongs to Allah, who has no child nor partner in His rule. He is not so weak as to need a protector. Proclaim His limitless greatness!⁶

قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا، سُبْحَانَهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ بِهَذَا أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

³ Qur'ān, 4: 171

⁴ Qur'ān, 19: 34/35

⁵ Qur'ān, 2: 116

⁶ Qur'ān, 17: 111

They say, 'Allah has children!' May He be Exalted! He is the Self-Sufficient One; everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him. You have no authority to say this. How dare you say things about Allah without any knowledge?⁷

وَيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا

It warns those people who assert, 'Allah has offspring.'⁸

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا، لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِدًّا، تَكَادُ السَّمَاوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًا، أَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدًا، وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا، إِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا

The disbelievers say, 'The Lord of Mercy has offspring.' How terrible is this thing you assert: it almost causes the heavens to be torn apart, the earth to split asunder, the mountains to crumble to pieces, that they attribute offspring to the Lord of Mercy. It does not befit the Lord of Mercy [to have offspring]: there is no one in the heavens or earth who will not come to the Lord of Mercy as a servant.⁹

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا، سُبْحَانَهُ بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُكْرَمُونَ

And they say, 'The Lord of Mercy has taken offspring for Himself.' May He be Exalted! No! They are only His honoured servants.¹⁰

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ، وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذًا لَذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ

Allah has never had a child. Nor is there any god beside Him; if there were, each god would have taken his creation aside and tried to overcome the others. May Allah be Exalted above what they describe!¹¹

الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ، وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا

⁷ Qur'ān, 10: 68

⁸ Qur'ān, 18: 4

⁹ Qur'ān, 19: 88/93

¹⁰ Qur'ān, 21: 26

¹¹ Qur'ān, 23: 91

It is He who has control over the heavens and earth and has no offspring, no one shares control with Him; and who created all things and made them to an exact measure.¹²

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدٌ فَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْعَابِدِينَ

Say [Prophet], 'If the Lord of Mercy [truly] had offspring I would be the first to worship [them].'¹³

لَوْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا لَاصْطَفَىٰ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ سُبْحَانَهُ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

Allah could have chosen any of His creation He willed for offspring, but He is far above this! He is the One, the Almighty.¹⁴

The verse, together with those previously quoted, apply generally to any who would attribute offspring to Allah. Be that the Christians who claim that the birth of Christ was borne of Allah, with the emergence of the Holy Spirit, or the pagan Arabs who asserted that 'the angels were the daughters of Allah.' And even to the philosophers who speak of 'generation,' 'emanation' or the 'emergence' of intellects and souls from the 'First Intellect,' be that with mediation or without.

The beliefs of the Arab Mushrikeen

Other verses of note upon this matter dealing with the pagan Arabs include the following, addressing those who claimed that the 'angels were the daughters of Allah,' and that their purported 'mothers' were believed to be from the elite nobility of the *Jinn*:

أَفَأَصْفَاكُمْ رَبُّكُم بِالْبَنِينَ وَاتَّخَذَ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنَاثًا إِنَّكُمْ لَتَقُولُونَ قَوْلًا عَظِيمًا

What? Has your Lord favoured you people with sons and taken daughters for Himself from the angels? What a monstrous thing for you to say.¹⁵

أَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلَائِكَةَ إِنَاثًا وَهُمْ شَاهِدُونَ، أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ مِنْ إِفْكِهِمْ لَيَقُولُونَ، وَلَدَ اللَّهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

¹² Qur'ān, 25: 2

¹³ Qur'ān, 43: 81

¹⁴ Qur'ān, 39: 4

¹⁵ Qur'ān, 17: 40

Did We create the angels as females while they were watching? No indeed! It is one of their lies when they say, 'God has begotten,' How they lie!¹⁶

أَمْ اتَّخَذَ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ بَنَاتٍ وَأَصْفَاكُمْ بِالْبَنِينَ

Has He taken daughters for Himself and favoured you with sons?¹⁷

وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنَاثًا أَشَهِدُوا خَلْقَهُمْ سَتُكْتَبُ شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَيُسْأَلُونَ

They consider the angels - Allah's servants - to be female. Did they witness their creation? Their claim will be put on record and they will be questioned about it.¹⁸

وَأَنَّهُ تَعَالَىٰ جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا

And that He, Exalted be the glory of our Lord - has neither spouse nor child.¹⁹

Additionally, there are the following verses where He the Mighty and Sublime says:

إِنْ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا إِنَاثًا وَإِنْ يَدْعُونَ إِلَّا شَيْطَانًا مَرِيدًا

In His place the idolaters invoke only females, and Satan, the rebel.²⁰

وَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجَنَّةِ نَسْبًا وَلَقَدْ عَلِمَتِ الْجِنَّةُ إِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ

They claim that He has kinship with the jinn, yet the jinn themselves know that they will be brought before Him.²¹

Isn't it astonishing that the Imām, Ibn Taymiyyah scarcely ever cited these verses in his purported 'comprehensive scrutiny' to establish his false and baseless tripartite division - *Tawḥeed: Tawḥeed al-Rububiyyah, Tawḥeed al-Uluhiyyah* and *Tawḥeed al-Asmā' wa'l-Ṣifāt*. Did these verses fall out of his copy of the Qur'ān? One wonders. I would argue, that perhaps in this outline there is what can be deemed sufficient, or more than sufficient. Lest the

¹⁶ Qur'ān, 37: 150/152

¹⁷ Qur'ān, 43: 16

¹⁸ Qur'ān, 43: 19

¹⁹ Qur'ān, 72: 3

²⁰ Qur'ān, 4: 117

²¹ Qur'ān, 37: 158

matter be excessively drawn out, causing weariness to any perusing it. In conclusion, it is manifestly clear, that the pagan Arabs held the belief that the ‘angels were the daughters of Allah,’ and they worshipped them *for that reason*. They believed that they belonged to an exalted ‘divine lineage.’ Here there is unity in the discourse from among all of the earliest exegetes. What is noteworthy to the modern reader, is that there isn’t any phantasms – no mention of ‘graves of the righteous,’ or any other of the deluded lies propagated by the sect of Wahhābism.

4. ‘They invoke only females, and *Shayṭān*, the rebel’

Feminine names bear the hallmark of the key false deities that the Arab *mushrikeen* worshipped and revered. Indeed, that is categorically confirmed by the manifest text of the Qur’an. Commenting on this, Ibn Ḥajar writes in in *Fath al-Bāri, Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri*:

In relation to the statement of the Exalted – ‘*In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,*’ Abu Ubaydah said: ‘Except for dead stones, dead bodies or what it is also meant by the dead relates to animals.’ Other than him it is said: It is said the *ināth* (females) because of the feminine names attributed to Manāt, al-Lāt, al-‘Uzza, Isāf and Nā’ila, and so on and so forth. From al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri: ‘There was no district among the Arabian districts except having an idol to be worshipped and given a feminine name. It will be mentioned in the interpretation of chapter *al-Ṣaffāt* a story about them that they were saying that the angels were daughters of Allah, but Allah is above and away from that. And in the narration of Abdullah ibn Aḥmad in his father’s *Musnad*, about which ‘Ubay ibn Ka’b commented concerning this verse saying, ‘With every *ṣanam* (idol) is a female genie.’ And its narrators are trustworthy.¹

As reported in the *Tafsir* of Ibn Abi Ḥātim, concerning the verse where the Exalted says: ‘*In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females, and Shayṭān, the rebel,*’:

¹ Ibn Ḥajar *Fath al-Bāri* [Vol. 10 , pp. 315/316]

حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ غَيْلَانَ أَنَّهُ الْفَضْلُ بْنُ مُوسَى أَنَّهُ الْحُسَيْنُ بْنُ وَاقِدٍ عَنِ الرَّبِيعِ بْنِ أَنَسٍ عَنِ أَبِي الْعَالِيَةِ عَنْ أَبِي بِنِ كَعْبٍ (إِنْ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا إِنَاثًا) قَالَ مَعَ كُلِّ صَنَمٍ جَنِّيَّةٌ؛ وَرُوي عَنِ الْحَسَنِ، نَحْوُ ذَلِكَ

My father narrated to us Maḥmud ibn Ghaylān narrated to us al-Faḍl ibn Musa reports al-Ḥussein ibn Wāqid reports from al-Rabih' ibn Anas from Abu al-'Aāliyah from Ubay ibn Ka'b (regarding the verse) 'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,' he said: 'With every *sanam* (idol) is a female genie.' It was narrated from al-Ḥasan concerning that.²

I would submit that this *isnād* is *Ṣaḥīḥ*, strong, its men appearing in the channel of transmission are *thiqa* (trustworthy) and famous, taken by the two Shaykh's and the majority, except al-Rabih' ibn Anas, as he is graded as truthful but with some mistakes. In this regard, we may accept the classification of al-Ḥāfiẓ that it is *Ṣaḥīḥ*, that he is *thiqa ṣaduq* (trustworthy, truthful). However, on the proviso that he is not narrating from Abu Ja'far al-Rāzi, wherein he has many disclaimed narrations as well as the semblance of disturbance. That is not apparent here within this line of transmission.

Thus, as confirmed by the Imām Abu Ḥātim ibn Ḥibbān in *Mashā'ir al-Amṣār* where he said: 'al-Rabih' ibn Anas ibn Ziyād al-Bakri resided in Merv. He heard (traditions) from Anas ibn Mālik; he is a narrator of Abu al-'Aāliyah, and all what is in his disclaimed narratives appear from the direction of Abu Ja'far al-Rāzi.'³ His narratives appear in the collections of Aḥmad, al-Dārimi, al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Mājah. For example, it appears in the appendages of *Musnad* Aḥmad, as shown by the narrative:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثنا هدية بن عبد الوهاب ومحمود بن غيلان قالوا ثنا الفضل بن موسى أنا حسين بن واقد عن الربيع بن أنس عن أبي العالوية عن أبي بن كعب إن يدعو من دونه إلا إناثا قال مع كل صنم جنية

Abdullah narrated to us Hadiya ibn Abdul-Wahhāb and Maḥmud ibn Ghaylān narrated to us, they said al-Faḍl ibn Musa narrated to us al-Ḥussein ibn Wāqid reported to us from al-Rabih' ibn Anas from Abu al-'Aāliyah from Ubay ibn Ka'b (regarding the verse) 'In His place

² *Tafsir* Ibn Abi Ḥātim [Vol. 4, p. 1067, no. 5970]

³ *Mashā'ir al-Amṣār*, [Vol. 1, p. 126, no. 987]

they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,' he said: 'With every *sanam* (idol) is a female genie.'

Shaykh Shu'ayb al-Arna'uṭ commented, 'Its *isnād* is *ḥasan*.' I would submit, that in fact, it is far better than that. It is strong to be taken as evidence.⁴ Greater elaboration upon the feminine characteristic is provided in the masterful *Tafsir* of Imām al-Ṭabari. It will be important to consider the entire passage that he has marshalled concerning this:

Statements concerning the interpretation of where He says: 'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,' [4: 117]. Abu Ja'far said: Disagreement exists amongst the exegetes concerning the interpretation of the verse. Some have said that it means they but invoke beside him al-Lāt, al-'Uzza and Manāt. Allah referred to them as 'female,' (in tandem) with the naming of the *mushrikeen* as they had named them feminine. Mentioning those who had said that:

Ya'qub ibn Ibrāhim narrated to me, he said Hushaym narrated to us he said Ḥuṣayn reported to us from Abu Mālik, in relation to where He said 'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke *Shayṭān*;' he said: 'al-Lāt, al-'Uzza and Manāt, all of them are feminine.'

al-Muthanna narrated to me he said 'Amr ibn 'Awn narrated to us he said Hushaym narrated to us from Ḥuṣayn from Abu Mālik, about it, except that he said: 'They are all feminine.'

Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥussein narrated to us he said Aḥmad ibn Mufaḍḍal narrated to us he said Asbāṭ narrated to us from al-Suddi (regarding the verse) 'They but invoke *Shayṭān*,' saying: 'They named them 'females' al-Lāt, al-'Uzza and Manāt.'

Yunus narrated to me he said Ibn Wahb reported to us he said Ibn Zayd said in relation to His saying 'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,' he said: 'Their gods, al-Lāt, al-'Uzza, Yasāf

⁴ Additionally it is cited in the selected *aḥādith* of *al-Mustakhraj min al-Aḥādith al-Mukhtāra mimā lam Yakhrāju al-Bukhārī wa Muslim fi Ṣaḥīḥuma*, [Vol. 3, p. 362, no. 1157]. At this juncture the Professor cites many of the additional evidences covering the subject of 'With every idol is a female *Jinn*.' For the English translation these are omitted here because they appear at length in the next chapter.

and Nā'ila, were female, they called upon them instead of Allah,' and he read 'they only invoke a Shayṭān.'

(al-Ṭabari) meanwhile, others have said that it means, indeed they invoke beside him only the dead without a soul. Mentioning those who said that:

al-Muthanna narrated to me he said Abdullah ibn Ṣāliḥ narrated to us he said Mu'āwiya ibn Ṣāliḥ narrated to me from Ali ibn Abi Ṭalḥa from Ibn 'Abbās, (regarding) His saying 'They only invoke a Shayṭān,' he says 'The dead.'

Bishr ibn Mu'ādh narrated to us he said Yazeed narrated to us he said Sa'eed narrated to us from Qatādah (regarding the verse): 'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,' which is to say, 'the dead with no soul in it.'

al-Muthanna narrated to me he said al-Ḥajjāj narrated to us he said Mubārak ibn Fadāla narrated to us from al-Ḥasan (regarding the verse): 'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,' he said: 'And the 'females,' all of which are dead, (have) no soul therein; a dry wood or a dry stone. Allah the Exalted said: 'Indeed, they only invoke an accursed Shayṭān,' up to (where) He said: 'they shall slit the ears of the cattle,' [4: 119].

(al-Ṭabari) others have said that it means, it is about the *mushrikeen* who used to say, 'the angels are the daughters of Allah;' mentioning those who said that:

Yaḥya ibn Abi Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib narrated to me, he said Yazeed reported to us he said Juwaybir reported to us from al-Ḍaḥḥāk, regarding His saying, 'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,' he said: 'They made the claim that the angels were the daughters of Allah.'

(al-Ṭabari) others have said that it means the *Ahl ul-Awthān* (the people of idols/idolatry) used to name their *Awthān* 'ināth (females, feminine),' so Allah revealed that as well. Mentioning those who said that:

Sufyān ibn Waki' narrated to us he said Yazeed ibn Hārun narrated to us from Nuḥ ibn Qays from Abu Rajā' from al-Ḥasan, he said: 'Each of the Arab precincts had a *Ṣanam* (idol) that they

worshiped, which they called: 'female of Bani so and so.' So Allah revealed, 'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females.'

al-Muthanna narrated to me he said Muslim ibn Ibrāhim narrated to us he said Nuḥ ibn Qays narrated to us he said Muḥammad ibn Sayf Abu Rajā' al-Ḥuddāni narrated to us he said 'I heard al-Ḥasan saying, "(In) each of the Arab precincts," thereafter narrating the same.'

(al-Ṭabari) others have said *al-Ināth*, the females in relation to this subject are *al-Awthān* (the idols). Mentioning those who said that:

Muḥammad ibn 'Amr narrated to me he said Abu 'Aāṣim narrated to us from Esa from Ibn Abi Najih from Mujāhid in relation to His saying, 'females,' he said 'Awthān (idols).

al-Muthanna narrated to me he said Abu Ḥudhayfa narrated to us he said Shibl narrated to us from Ibn Abi Najih from Mujāhid, mentioning similar to it.

Sufyān narrated to us he said Abu Usāma narrated to us from Hishām ibn 'Urwa from his father, he said it was (contained) in 'Aisha's *muṣḥaf*: 'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only idols.'

Abu Ja'far (al-Ṭabari) said: it is narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that he used to recite it as: 'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only *uthunan*,' with the plural meaning of *wathn* (idol), as if it were plural, *wathnā* (idolatry). Then at the heart of the letter 'waw' was a compressed *Hamza*. Like it has been said 'How pleasant is this face,' with the meaning, faces. As has been said: 'And when the Messengers are gathered at their appointed time,' [77: 11] with the meaning of times. It is mentioned that some of them were reading that, 'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only *uthunan*,' denoting the collective of 'females' with the plural of female; like the plural of 'the fruits' by denoting fruit.

Abu Ja'far (al-Ṭabari) said: The recitation that we deem it impermissible to deviate from is the one where it is read, 'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,' with the plural meaning of 'female,' because it is how that appears in the *maṣāḥif* of the Muslims, and it is an established proof by *ijmā'* (consensus) upon that reading (of the verse) like that.

Abu Ja'far (al-Ṭabari) said: The first of the interpretations which was mentioned regarding this, is that which is the most authoritative, with the correct reading. It is the interpretation of those who held, that He meant by that the (false) gods that the Arab *mushrikeen* worshipped besides Allah, and they had given them feminine names, such as al-Lāt, al-'Uzza, Nā'ila, Manāt and the like thereof. Rather, we would say it is preferable to interpret the verse in this manner, because the most apparent of the meanings set out, of 'females,' is in the wording of the Arabs and defined as such.⁵

The proficiency, accuracy and grasp of Imām al-Ṭabari is second to none, may Allah have mercy upon him. Notice also his wit and sharp mind after the enumeration of al-Lāt, al-'Uzza, Nā'ila and Manāt; he did not error as Ibn Zayd did, when he mistakenly inserted 'Yasāf, Nā'ila,' as feminine. The various reported statements were outlined briefly, with most of the references being mentioned, albeit without an *isnād* in *al-Durr al-Manthur*:

Reported by Abdullah ibn Aḥmad in *Zawā'id al-Musnad*, Ibn al-Mundthir, Ibn Abi Ḥātim from 'Ubay ibn Ka'b: '*In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,*' he said: 'With every *ṣanam* (idol) is a female genie.'

Reported by 'Abd, Ibn Jarir and Ibn al-Mundthir from Abu Mālik concerning His saying: '*In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,*' he said: 'al-Lāt, al-'Uzza, and Manāt, all of them are feminine.'⁶

Reported by Ibn Jarir from al-Suddi: '*In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,*' – he says: 'They call them females: Lāt, al-'Uzza, and Manāt.'

Reported by 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundthir and Ibn Abi Ḥātim from Ibn 'Abbās – '*In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,*' he said: '(the) dead.'

Reported by Abd ibn Ḥumayd, Ibn Jarir Ibn al-Mundthir and Ibn Abi Ḥātim from al-Ḥasan in relation to the verse in which he said:

⁵ *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari [Vol. 4, pp. 278/279 (print edition)]

⁶ Here the reference to 'Abd, is presumably 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd. Although this doesn't appear in either the print or online editions.

'Females, all of which are dead, within them no soul, like a dry tree and a dry stone.'

Reported by 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd and Ibn Jarir from Qatādah: '*only females,*' he said: '(the) dead with no soul therein.'

Reported by Sa'eed ibn Maṣṣur, Ibn Jarir and Ibn al-Mundthir from al-Ḥasan he said: 'Each of the Arab precincts had a *ṣanam* (idol) that they worshipped, naming them female of such and such tribe; so, Allah revealed (the verse), '*In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females.*'

Reported by Ibn al-Mundthir and Ibn Abi Ḥātim from al-Ḍaḥḥāk in relation to where He said: '*In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,* the mushrikeen said: 'The angels are the daughters of Allah, but we worship them to bring us closer to Allah.' He said: 'They took them as goddesses and their images (or depictions) were resembling and imitating those images of girls. And they (the *mushrikeen*) said: They are like the daughters of Allah, those whom we worship,' meaning the angels.

Reported by 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd from al-Kalbi that Ibn 'Abbās was reading this letter as: '*In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only a female, and Shayṭān, the rebel,*' he said: 'With every *ṣanam* (idol) is a female genie.'

Reported by 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd, Ibn Jarir and Ibn al-Mundthir from Mujāhid concerning where he says: '*only females,*' he said: 'Only *Awthān* (idols).'

Reported by Abu 'Ubayd in *Fadā'il al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundthir, Ibn Abi Ḥātim and Ibn al-Anbāri in *al-Maṣāḥif* from 'Aisha, that she was reading, '*In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only Awthān.*' The wording of Ibn Jarir was cited from the *muṣḥaf* of 'Aisha, '*In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only Awthān.*'

Reported by al-Khaṭeab in his history from 'Aisha, that she said: The Messenger of Allah peace be upon him read: '*In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only a female.*'⁷

⁷ al-Suyūṭi *al-Durr al-Manthur* [Vol. 2, pp. 393/394]

Cited in the acclaimed *Tafsir* by Ibn Kathir when providing the interpretation of what he the Almighty and Exalted said: *'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females'*:

Ibn Abi Ḥātim said my father narrated to me Maḥmud ibn Ghaylān narrated to us al-Faql ibn Musa reports al-Ḥussein ibn Wāqid reported to us from al-Rabih' ibn Anas from Abu al-'Aāliyah from 'Ubay ibn Ka'b: *'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,'* – he said: *'With every ṣanam (idol) is a female genie.'* And my father narrated to me Muḥammad ibn Salamah al-Bāhili narrated to us from Abdul-Aziz ibn Muḥammad from Hishām, that is to say Ibn 'Urwa, from his father from 'Aisha: *'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,'* she said: *'Awthān.'*

And narrated from Abu Salama ibn Abdur-Raḥman, 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr, Mujāhid, Abi Mālik, al-Suddi, Muqātil ibn Ḥayyān, similar to that.

And Juwaybir said from al-Ḍaḥḥāk in relation to where He said: *'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,'* he said: *'The mushrikeen said - Indeed, the angels are the daughters of Allah, but we worship them to bring us closer unto Allah. He said: They took them as goddesses and their images (or depictions) were resembling and imitating those images of girls. And they (the mushrikeen) said: They are like the daughters of Allah, those whom we worship,'* meaning the angels.'

The *Tafsir* is like what the Exalted has said elsewhere in the noble book, namely: *'Consider al-Lāt, al-'Uzza, and the third one Manāt - are you to have the male and He the female? That would be a most unjust distribution! These are nothing but names you have invented yourselves, you and your forefathers. Allah has sent no authority for them. These people merely follow guesswork and the whims of their souls, even though guidance has come to them from their Lord,'* [53: 19/24].

'They consider the angels – Allah's servants– to be female. Did they witness their creation? Their claim will be put on record and they will be questioned about it,' [43: 19]. *'They claim that He has kinship with the Jinn, yet the Jinn themselves know that they will be*

brought before Him. Allah is far above what they attribute to Him,' [37: 158/159].

Ali ibn Abi Ṭalḥa and al-Ḍaḥḥāk said from Ibn 'Abbās: *'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,'* he said: *'That is to say, (the) dead.'* Mubārak said, that is to say Ibn Faḍāla, from al-Ḥasan: *'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,'* al-Ḥasan said: *'The 'females' are all dead things, in which there isn't a soul, either a dry tree and a dry rock.'* It is narrated by al-Ḥātim and Ibn Jarir, and it is *ghareeb* (strange).⁸

Here I would submit the comment of the Imām Ibn Kathir in relation to the interpretation of 'females,' relating to the dead as 'strange,' that is, everything that is dead without a soul therein, is in fact testament to his noble manners and caution of the tongue. Except that the truth concerning a statement the like thereof is to classify it as *bātil* (rejected, void), *munkar* (disclaimed) and reprehensible. No document is known from the book of Allah or the Prophetic *Sunnah*, nor from the eloquence of the Arabs; neither from a saying of a companion, the testimony of the senses, a historical report or even precise vision.

In conclusion, the truth, which is decisively established is as follows: firstly, what was stated by the Imām Abu Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarir al-Ṭabari: *'The reading which we do not accept, a reading other than that; to be read as such: 'In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,'* with the plural meaning of 'female,' because it is like that in the *maṣāḥif* of the Muslims, and an established proof by consensus upon that reading (of the verse) like that.' Secondly, what is meant by the wording 'female' in the Qur'ān by the noble verse is - the supposed 'gods' that the pre-Islamic pagan Arabs worshipped beside Allah had been given feminine names by them, such as al-Lāt, al-'Uzza, Nā'ila, Manāt and the like. That is clearly shown by plain obvious meaning of the word 'female' in the language of the Arabs, what has been defined exclusively as being feminine. Given that is the case, then it is no doubt obliged to direct the interpretation of the verse to the most famous and evident meaning, as noted by the Imām Abu Ja'far al-Ṭabari.

⁸ *Tafsir* Ibn Kathir [Vol. 2, p. 414]

5. With every idol is a *Jinn* (or devil)

Several statements have been reported regarding the interpretation of the verse from *Surah al-Nisā'* where He, may He be Glorified and Exalted has said:

إِن يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ إِلَّا إِنَاثًا وَإِن يَدْعُونَ إِلَّا شَيْطَانًا مَّرِيدًا

*In His place the idolaters invoke only females, and calling upon Satan, the rebel.*¹

Three-key statements which are reported concerning this interpretation vary in wording, but their import is essentially similar. As for what has been said:

- 'With every *Ṣanam* (idol) is a female *Jinn*'
- 'With every *Ṣanam* is a *Shayṭāna* (she-devil)'
- 'With every *Ṣanam* is a *Shayṭān*, appearing to the custodian and speaking with them'

Such additional detail that is provided by these statements is not readily evident nor even necessitated by the context of the verse. It must therefore have some sort of historical origin or basis that existed among the pre-Islamic Arabs. Reference for these statements of interpretation are to be found in multiple sources. The body of evidence will be detailed, together with the variance of reported wording that has reached us and commented upon where required. To begin, the first narrative is to be found in the *Tafsir* of Ibn Abi Ḥātim in relation to the commentary upon the aforementioned verse:

¹ *Qur'ān*, 4: 117

قال ابن أبي حاتم حدثنا أبي حدثنا محمود بن غيلان أنبأنا الفضل بن موسى أخبرنا الحسن بن واقد عن الربيع بن أنس عن أبي العالبيّة عن أبي بن كعب إن يدعون من دونه إلا إناثا قال مع كل صنم جنية وروى عن الحسن، نحو ذلك

Ibn Abi Ḥātim said: my father narrated to us Maḥmūd ibn Ghaylān narrated to us al-Faḍl ibn Muṣā reports al-Ḥasan ibn Wāqid reported to us from al-Rabih' ibn Anas from Abul-'Aliyah from Ubay ibn Ka'b; 'In His place the idolaters invoke only females,' he said: 'With every *Ṣanam* is a female *Jinn*.' And it is narrated from al-Ḥasan, which is similar to that.²

Indeed, the *isnād* for this is strong, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and with it, a definitive proof is established. It is cited in *Zawā'id Musnad Aḥmad*:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثنا هدية بن عبد الوهاب ومحمود بن غيلان قالوا ثنا الفضل بن موسى أنا حسين بن واقد عن الربيع بن أنس عن أبي العالبيّة عن أبي بن كعب إن يدعون من دونه إلا إناثا قال مع كل صنم جنية

Abdullah narrated to us Hadiya ibn 'Abd al-Wahāb and Maḥmūd ibn Ghaylān narrated to us, they said al-Faḍl ibn Muṣā narrated to us Ḥussein ibn Wāqid reported to us from al-Rabih' ibn Anas from Abul-'Aliyah from Ubay ibn Ka'b: 'In His place the idolaters invoke only females,' he said: 'With every *Ṣanam* is a female *Jinn*.'³

Cited without an *isnād* in *Zād al-Masir fī 'Ilm al-Tafsir*, is the statement of Ibn 'Abbās, that he said: 'With every *Ṣanam* is a *Shayṭān*, appearing to the custodian and speaking with them.' Ubay ibn Ka'b said: 'With every *Ṣanam* is a female *Jinn*.'⁴ Again, cited without an *isnād* the entry in the *Tafsir* of al-Baghawi is as follows:

² *Tafsir* Ibn Abi Ḥātim [Vol. 4, no. 5970]

³ *Zawā'id Musnad Aḥmad* [Vol. 35, no. 21231]; *Musnad Aḥmad* [Vol. 5, no. 21127]. The Arabic edition also notes that this reported among the selected *aḥādīth* of the *Mustakhraj* [Vol. 3, no. 1157], those that are *Ṣaḥīḥ* but not recorded by either al-Bukhārī or Muslim: Abu Ṭāhir al-Mubārak ibn Abi al-Ma'aliṣ reported to us by reading it on the western side of Baghdad, I said to him Hibbatallah ibn al-Ḥuṣṣain report[ed] to you reading in audience and you were presently listening, al-Ḥasan ibn al-Mazhab reported to us Abu Bakr al-Qaṭi'i reported to us Abdullah ibn Aḥmad narrated to us Hadiya ibn 'Abdal-Wahāb narrated to me, narrating similarly.

⁴ *Zād al-Masir fī 'Ilm al-Tafsir* [Vol. 1, p. 473]

He the Almighty says: ‘In His place the idolaters invoke only females,’ the verse was revealed in relation to the people of Mecca, namely (regarding) what they are worshipping. Similarly, He the Almighty said: ‘Your Lord says: Call upon Me,’ [40: 60], namely, to ‘Worship Me’, which is based upon where the Almighty says ‘Those who are too proud to serve Me,’ [40: 60], thus saying, besides (or other than) Him, meaning Allah. ‘Only females,’ He wanted to highlight the female *Awthān* because they were called by feminine names, and they used to say ‘al-Lāt, al-‘Uzza and Manāt.’ Each tribe had a feminine *Ṣanam* referred to by a female (name) *Bani Fulan* (tribe of so and so). In each of them was a *Shayṭān* who appeared to the devotees and custodians and spoke to them, and that is why He said: ‘Except only invoking a *Shayṭān*.’ This is the statement of the majority of the exegetes.⁵

It is also cited in the abridged *Tafsir* al-Baghawi, which is entitled, *al-Masma’ bi-‘ālam al-Tanzeel*: ‘And with every *Ṣanam* is a *Shayṭān*, expressing on behalf of it and the people are deceived by it.’⁶ Contained within the *Tafsir* of al-Rāzi it is written: ‘The *mufasssireen* said, indeed there was in every one of those *Awthān* a *Shayṭān* who the devotees saw and it was speaking to them.’⁷ Likewise, it is mentioned by Ibn Taymiyyah in *al-Nubuwwāt*: ‘Ibn ‘Abbās said - With every *Ṣanam* is a *Shayṭān*, appearing to the custodian and speaking with them.’⁸ In *Majmu’ al-Fatāwa* there is: ‘Ibn ‘Abbās said: With every *Ṣanam* is a *Shayṭān*, appearing to the custodian and speaking with them. And Ubay ibn Ka’b said: With every *Ṣanam* is a female *Jinn*.’⁹ There are many other references where this appears, for example, cited in *Tafsir* Ibn Abi Ḥātim:

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ الْحُسَيْنِ حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي حَمَّادٌ حَدَّثَنَا مِهْرَانُ عَنْ سَفْيَانَ فِي قَوْلِهِ وَإِنْ يُدْعُونَ إِلَّا شَيْطَانًا قَالَ لَيْسَ مِنْ صَنَمٍ إِلَّا فِيهِ شَيْطَانٌ

Ali ibn al-Ḥussein narrated to us Abu Ḥammād narrated to us Mihrān narrated to us from Sufyān regarding His saying ‘And calling upon

⁵ *Tafsir* al-Baghawi [Vol. 1, p. 702]. The verses cited, in order are: *Qur’ān*, 4: 117 and 40: 60.

⁶ *al-Masma’ bi-‘ālam al-Tanzeel* [Vol. 1, p. 185]

⁷ *Tafsir* al-Rāzi [Vol. 11, p. 221]

⁸ Ibn Taymiyyah *al-Nubuwwāt* [Vol. 2, p. 1020]

⁹ Ibn Taymiyyah *Majmu’ al-Fatāwah* [Vol. 27, p. 360]

Satan, the rebel,’ he said: ‘There isn’t a *Sanam* without a *Shayṭān* in it.’¹⁰

Appearing also in *Athār al-Bilād wal-Akhhbār al-‘Abbād* with the following wording:

‘In it,’ meaning at al-Ṭā’if, is the stone of al-Lāt under the minaret of the mosque. It is a rock upon which a man used to sit in the old days and prepare *Saweeq* for the pilgrims. When this man died, ‘Amr ibn Luḥay said: ‘He didn’t die! In fact, he entered this rock!’ He thus ordered his people to begin worship of that rock. Inside al-Lāt and al-‘Uzza, were two devils that spoke to the people. Hence, (the tribe of) Thaqeef took al-Lāt as a *Ṭāghut*, building for her a sanctuary and adorning it. (People) went around it in veneration of its majesty and glory; it is a square white rock. When Thaqeef embraced Islam, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, sent Abu Sufyān ibn Ḥarb and Mughirah ibn Shu’bah to destroy it. Today, the stone is (still) underneath the minaret of the mosque at al-Ṭā’if.’¹¹

Added to the above, we can also include the details that have been provided as per the following set of narrations. Firstly, as has been reported in *al-Sunan al-Kubra* of Imām al-Nasā’i:

أخبرنا علي بن المنذر قال حدثنا بن فضيل قال حدثنا الوليد بن جميع عن أبي الطفيل قال لما فتح رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم مكة بعث خالد بن الوليد إلى نخلة، وكانت بها العزى، فأتاها خالد، وكانت على ثلاث سمرة، فقطع السمرة وهدم البيت الذي كان عليها ثم أتى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، فأخبره فقال ارجع فإنك لم تصنع شيئاً، فرجع خالد فلما أبصرت به السدنة وهم حجبها أمعنوا في الجبل وهم يقولون يا عزي، فأتاها خالد فإذا هي امرأة عريانة ناشرة شعرها تحتفن التراب على رأسها فعممها بالسيف حتى قتلها، ثم رجع إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، فأخبره فقال: تلك العزى

Ali ibn al-Mundthir reported to us he said Fuḍeel narrated to us he said al-Waleed ibn Jamih’ narrated to us from Abul’Ṭufayl, he said: When the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him conquered Mecca, he sent Khālid ibn al-Walid to the valley of

¹⁰ *Tafsir* Ibn Abi Ḥātim [Vol. 4, no. 6009]

¹¹ Zakariyā ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmud al-Qazwini [d.682AH], *Athār al-Bilād wal-Akhhbār al-‘Abbād*, [pp. 98]

Nakhlah where al-‘Uzza was found. Khālid went to it while it was perched upon three gum-acacia-trees. He cut the trees and tore down the sanctuary that was built on them.

Then, he came to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him and told him, but he said: *Go back, for you did not do anything.* He went back and found its custodians (of the shrine) busy making tricks and supplicating: ‘O ‘Uzza.’ So he came and found a naked woman with unkempt hair standing there putting sand on her head. He stabbed her with his sword till he killed her. Then he returned to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him and told him about it. He said: *That was al-‘Uzza.*¹²

Some have attributed a defect in the channel as a result of the presence of the narrator Waleed ibn Jamih’, although Muslim narrated from him, and he is graded *thiqa* by others. Al-Ḥākim said: ‘If Muslim had not mentioned him in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, it would have perhaps been better.’ Ibn Ḥibbān said: ‘Unique regarding his follow-on’s; taking him as an established proof is invalidated.’ And al-‘Uqayli said: ‘There is *Iḍṭirāb* (semblance of disturbance) in his *ḥadith.*’ While the man may not be deemed a conclusive proof, there has been some follow-on narrations from him, as will be outlined in due course.

The destruction of the idol, al-‘Uzza

The narrative regarding the destruction of al-‘Uzza appears in the *Maghāzi* of al-Wāqidi from a separate independent channel of reporting, albeit in *mursal* form:

Abdullah ibn Yazeed narrated to me from Sa’eed ibn ‘Amr al-Hudhali, he said The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him arrived in Mecca on Friday, ten-nights before the end of *Ramadān*. The squadrons spread in every direction. He commended them to attack those who were not following Islam. Hishām ibn al-‘Aās set out with two-hundred men in the direction of Yalamlama. Khālid ibn Sa’eed ibn al-‘Aās set out with three-hundred men in the

¹² al-Nasā’i, *al-Sunan al-Kubra* [Vol. 6, no. 11547]. Abu Ya’la has this also in his *Musnad* [Vol. 2, no. 902] with slight variance of the *isnād*: Abu Kureeb narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Fuḍeel narrated to us, with it.

direction of ‘Urana. Khālid ibn al-Waleed was dispatched to bring down al-‘Uzza. Khālid set out with a platoon of thirty-cavalry from his companions to al-‘Uzza and brought it down. Then he returned to the Prophet peace be upon him who inquired, *Is it destroyed?* He replied Yes, O Messenger of Allah. The Prophet peace be upon him said: *Did you see anything?* He replied no. He (the Prophet) said: *Surely, you have not destroyed it. Return and destroy it!* So Khālid returned and he was irritated. When he reached al-‘Uzza, he drew his sward and a black woman came out to him, naked, with hair dishevelled. The custodian of the idol’s sanctuary shouted out to her. Khālid said: A chill went down my spine as he began shouting:

O ‘Uzza, give me strength and do not be false with me before Khālid throw the head cover and fold up your sleeves
O ‘Uzza, if you do not kill the man, Khālid come to me with speedy crimes or help me!

He said: Khālid approached her with the sword while saying: ‘O ‘Uzza, you will be disbelieved, not praised; indeed, I have found Allah and he will disgrace you!’

He said: He struck her with the sword and cut her in two. Then he returned to the Messenger of Allah informing him of events. He (the Prophet) said: *Yes, that was al-‘Uzza who despairs that she will never be worshiped in your land.* Then Khālid said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, Allah be praised who is generous to us and saves us from destruction. I used to see my father come to al-‘Uzza with his gifts of a hundred camels and cattle and slaughter them to al-‘Uzza. He would stay with her for three nights and return to us content. I look at what my father died upon, believing that vision that overwhelmed their lives. How he was deceived, that he came to slaughter to a stone which neither hears nor sees, and is of no harm or use. The Messenger of Allah peace be upon him said: *‘Surely this affair belongs to Allah.*

*Whoever He prepares to guide will be successful and whoever He leads astray, errors.'*¹³

It is cited in *Tarikh Dimishq* from another independent channel of reporting, but it is in *mursal* form:

Abu Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Kareem ibn Ḥamza reported to us Abu Bakr al-Khaṭeab reported to us Abul-Ḥusein ibn Bishrān reported to us Abu Ali ibn Ṣafwān reported to us Abu Bakr ibn Abi al-Dunya reported to us my father reported to me ‘Abbād ibn al-‘Awwām narrated to us from Sufyān ibn Ḥusein from Qatādah, that the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him dispatched Khālīd ibn al-Waleed to al-‘Uzza, which belonged to Hawāzin, its custodian being Banu Sulaym. He said: Go, for a black woman with long hair and great short breasts would be brought forth. He said: And they were inciting her with the following verse:

O ‘Uzza, attack with an attack that hits no unvital place, against Khālīd

Throw down thy veil and gird up thy train

O ‘Uzza, if thou wilt not slay Khālīd, bear a swift punishment, or become a Christian.

Abu Sulaymān Khālīd struck and executed her. He then came to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, who said: *O Khālīd, what did you do?* He said: *al-‘Uzza is gone and after today, there al-‘Uzza is no more.*¹⁴

Another follow-on narrative regarding these events is to be found in the *Kitāb al-Ṣanam* (The Book of Idols) by Abul-Mundthir Hishām ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Sā’ib al-Kalbi:

¹³ Rizwi Faizer ed. (2011), *The Life of Muhammad: al-Wāqidi’s Kitāb al-Maghāzi*, (London: Routledge), p. 429. Given the length of citation, the Arabic text is omitted. Ibn Sa’d makes mention of this in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra* [Vol. 2, pp. 110/111], albeit without an *isnād*; it is apparent that he has followed the channel of reporting from his Sheikh, al-Wāqidi regarding this. It is also cited in *Akhbār Makkah* by al-Azraqi from the channel of al-Wāqidi: ‘My grandfather narrated to me from Muḥammad ibn Idris from al-Wāqidi, from Abdullah ibn Yazeed from Sa’eed ibn ‘Amr al-Hadthi.’

¹⁴ *Tarikh Dimishq* [Vol. 16, p. 231]

al-‘Anzi Abu Ali narrated to us he said Ali ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ narrated to us he said Abu al-Mundthir reported to us he said my father narrated to me from Abu Ṣāliḥ from Ibn ‘Abbās, he said: al-‘Uzza was a she-devil which used to frequent three trees in the valley of Nakhlah. When the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him conquered Mecca, he dispatched Khālīd ibn-al-Walid saying: *Go to the valley of Nakhlah; there you will find three-trees. Cut down the first one.* Khālīd went and cut it down. On his return to report, the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him asked him: *Have you seen anything there?*

Khālīd replied and said no. The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him ordered him to return and cut down the second tree. He went and cut it down. On his return to report the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him asked him a second time: *Have you seen anything there?* Khālīd answered, no. Thereupon the Prophet ordered him to go back and cut down the third tree. When Khālīd arrived on the scene he found an Abyssinian woman with dishevelled hair and her hands placed on her shoulder[s], gnashing and grating her teeth. Behind her stood Ḍubayyah ibn Hirma al-Sulami who was then the custodian of al-‘Uzza. When Ḍubayyah saw Khālīd approaching, he said:

*O thou al-‘Uzza! Remove thy veil and tuck up thy sleeves;
Summon up thy strength and deal Khālīd an unmistakable blow.
For unless thou kills him this very day,
Thou shalt be doomed to ignominy and shame.*

Thereupon Khālīd replied: O al-‘Uzza! May thou be disbelieved, not glorified, verily I see that Allah hath abased thee.

Turning to the woman, he dealt her a blow which severed her head in two, and she crumbled into ashes. He then cut down the tree and killed Ḍubayyah the custodian, after which he returned to the Prophet peace be upon him and reported to him his exploit. Thereupon the Prophet peace be upon him said: *That was al-‘Uzza. But she is no*

more. The Arabs shall have none after her. Verily she shall never be worshipped again.¹⁵

The *isnād* is *sāqit* ('fallen,' indicating that it is extremely weak). Muhammad ibn al-Sā'ib is accused of being very weak; Abu Ṣāliḥ is not strong, but he was within the timeframe of 'Ikrimah. Ibn Mardawiyh also cited it, it is in *Takhrij al-Kashāf*, that the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him dispatched Khālid ibn-al-Walid to al-'Uzza to destroy her.¹⁶ The report relating to al-'Uzza, is also to be found in *Kitāb al-Ṣanam* by al-Kalbi:

The person who introduced al-'Uzza was Zālim ibn Asad. Her idol was situated in a valley in Nakhlāt al-Shāmiyah called Ḥuraḍ, alongside al-Ghumayr' to the right of the road from Mecca to Iraq, above Dhāt-'Irq and nine miles from al-Bustin. Over her [Zālim] built a sanctuary called 'Buss' in which the people used to receive oracular communications. The Arabs as well as the Quraysh were wont to name their children 'Abd-al-'Uzza. Furthermore al-'Uzza was the greatest idol among the Quraysh. They used to journey to her, offer gifts unto her, and seek her favour through sacrifice.¹⁷

Variance of narratives

At this juncture, it is also worth noting that other stories and narratives are to be found upon this topic relating to this present chapter. Among them is

¹⁵ The *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* (Book of Idols) by Hishām ibn al-Kalbi, Translated by Nabih Amin Faris, (1952) Princeton University Press, [p. 21]. The English has been modified to more closely align with the original Arabic. Although not cited in the original Arabic text, there is a rather amusing anecdote which has been recorded in *al-Maghāzī* by Ma'mar ibn Rāshid. The incident follows the conquest of Mecca. 'Then al-'Abbās stood up for the prayer, and Abu Sufyān stood alongside him. When they had finished, he asked, 'Abbās, whenever Muḥammad does something, do they do likewise?' 'Yes,' he answered 'and if he were to command them to go hungry and thirsty until they died of starvation, they would do it. Indeed, I believe they will destroy your people tomorrow.' Abu Sufyān pleaded, 'Take us to see him!' He went in to see the Prophet, who was under a domed canopy of leather. Now 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb was behind the canopy, and as the Prophet began to explain Islam to him, Abu Sufyān said, 'What shall I do with al-'Uzza?' 'Take a shit on her!' 'Umar exclaimed from behind the canopy. 'And on your father, you vulgar man!' Abu Sufyān retorted.' See: *The Expeditions: An Early Biography of Muhammad*, by Mamar Rashid, (2015) edited and translated by Sean W. Anthony (New York University Press: New York), [pp. 96/98].

¹⁶ *Takhrij al-Kashāf*, [Vol. 4, p. 423]

¹⁷ Op. Cit, *The Book of Idols* [p. 18]

the following story which differs in substantive from that previously cited, which is recorded by Ibn Sa'd in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra*:

Following the conquest of Mecca, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him dispatched Sa'd ibn Zayd al-Ashhali to (the idol) Manāt. She was in the area of Mushallal common to the tribes of al-'Aws, al-Khazraj and Ghassān. On the day of the conquest of Mecca, the he Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him dispatched Sa'd ibn Zayd al-Ashhali at the head of a contingent of twenty-men appearing before the *sādin* (custodian of the temple or shrine), with the intention to destroy it. The *sādin* said: What is it that you want? (Sa'd) replied: The demolition of Manāt! The *sādin* said: You and that! So Sa'd walked up to her, and a naked black woman came out to him, with her hair dishevelled, cursing and striking her chest. The *sādin* exclaimed: 'Come on Manāt, show the anger of which you are capable!' Sa'd ibn Zayd al-Ashhali proceeded to beat her to death. He then came upon the idol with his contingent and destroyed it, finding nothing in its treasury. He went back to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. That was not in the month of *Ramaḍān*.¹⁸

Customary to the people of reports, this is mentioned without an *isnād*. The next citation appears in *Tahrir al-Maqāl fī Mawāzinah al-'Amāl and Ḥukm ghayr al-Mukafileen fī al-'Uqbi wal-Māl*, by Abu Ṭālib 'Uqayl ibn 'Aṭiya ibn Abi Aḥmad Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Aṭiya al-Qāḍi al-Andalusi al-Ṭarṭushi, then namely of Marrakech:

Also mentioned upon a similar theme from Uthmān, he said Muḥammad ibn al-Sā'ib narrated to me from Abu Ṣāliḥ from Ibn 'Abbās that a man used to sit upon a rock at Thaqeef selling *saweeq* to the pilgrims who used consume it. He had sheep and fat (also), so it was termed the rock of al-Lāt when he died. After he had passed away, 'Amr ibn Luḥay said to the people 'Your Lord was al-Lāt,' and a Shayṭān thus entered into the hollow of that rock.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ibn Sa'd *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra* [Vol. 2, p. 147]

¹⁹ al-Ṭarṭushi *Tahrir al-Maqāl* [Vol. 2, p. 473]. al-Ṭarṭushi (d. 608AH).

Continuing from the same work regarding al-‘Uzza:

And al-‘Uzza was of three-shades, being five-*farāsk*s from Mecca. The first calling unto her worship was ‘Amr ibn Rabi’a and al-Ḥārith ibn Ka’b; ‘Amr ibn Rabi’a said to them: ‘Indeed your lord-God is al-Lāt, who sends the summer to al-Ṭā’if from its cold.’ And al-‘Uzza being situated in the region of Tihāma. And in every one of them was a she-devil. Uthmān said: Muḥammad ibn al-Sā’ib narrated to me that regarding al-Lāt, al-‘Uzza and al-Manāt, in every one of them a she-devil would appear to the custodian. They are the conduit through which you converse with them. He said: Banu Naṣr, Jusham, Sa’d ibn Bakr who were backward of Hawāzin worshipped al-‘Uzza.²⁰

In relation to this, I would submit that the matter with regard to the story of the demolition of al-‘Uzza, the sounds heard in her temple, and similar narrations, does not necessarily deviate from one of the following three possibilities exclusively. The first of which, that this manifestation actually took place, a naked black woman with dishevelled hair appeared before Khālīd ibn al-Waleed may Allah be pleased with him, then he executed her. That woman thus being some form of incarnation or appearance of a satanic-being. This type of satanic-being is the one who eavesdrops from the heavens and seeks to empower the custodians of sorcery and fortune-telling, for which they are renowned. This is from rational possibilities, if it is contrary to the natural *Sunnah*’s, then it will be a miracle and a sign for the proof of our Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, a *karāma* bestowed for Abu Sulaymān, Khālīd ibn al-Waleed may Allah be pleased with him.

Secondly, that this event took place, a naked black woman with disheveled hair appeared before Khālīd ibn al-Waleed may Allah be pleased with him, then he executed her. That woman being from the progeny of Adam, a natural human being. Perhaps she is stemming from a black racial origin, strong physique, having unkempt hair, loud voice and a terrifying sight to those who gaze upon her. Such a woman could well be owned by some master, or even the shrine custodian, being an accomplice with them.

²⁰ Ibid.

She would be residing in some form of hidden basement, perhaps a cave, or a hollow within trees, rocks, or huge *tamātheel* (statuettes). Therefore, it would be this woman, hidden or concealed, who is the one who actually addresses those who are undertaking the worship of the *ṣanam*. Addressing the devotees from within that *ṣanam*, tree, monument or the like, thereby giving pronouncements that could relate to speculation, threat or assignments. Thus, the foolish devotees think that ‘the goddess’ speaks to them in answer to their supplication, or as an inspiration to their thoughts. That shouldn’t come as an unusual surprise given that custodians of such matters are given to witchcraft and other forms of trickery. Such matters are concocted to mislead simpleminded people, that is an incurable disease, and it is a well-known matter among all nations and peoples, and throughout all ages. One can travel to modern-day India and witness such phenomena still in existence today.

Lastly, that this never happened at all. Rather, some narrators have been deceived by the lies of the *kuffār* and the *munāfiqeen*, and the ignorant myths among the general public. Even if this were to be the case, it would be impossible for *all* these stories that have reached us to be a pure invention concocted by the narrators. In other words, having a purely fictitious origin which has no form of historical root among the beliefs and legends held by the Arabs.

Whatever the case may be, in the round, the indication is that the belief of the Arab *mushrikeen* was definitely like this: that *Aṣnām* (idols), monuments, trees, stones, temples, and all manner of idolatry, are nothing but bodies, dwellings, manifestations, or symbols of an intangible being(s) of some sort or of some kind, or the supernatural - a supreme angelic or a demonic/satanic entity or a *Jinn*. It is that ‘divine’ being that they worship. In other words, via their glorification, sanctification; obedience to its commands and prohibitions. And they hope for its goodness and benefit, or they their fear its wrath, intimidation, evil and tyranny.

6. ‘This deity – is He made from gold or silver?’

How the Arab *mushrikeen* conceived of the matter of divinity or godhood is an important area to address, for the title of this chapter is taken from a statement made at the time of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, where it was asked - ‘This deity that you are invoking, Allah, what is He? Is He (made) from gold or silver?’ Details of the incident(s) appear across the corpus of *aḥādīth*. To begin, the following is cited in in *Dtham al-Kalām wa’ Ahlihi*:

Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥman reported it to us Zāhir ibn Aḥmad reported to us Muḥammad ibn al-Musayyib narrated to us al-‘Abbās ibn Muḥammad reported to us Abdullah ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb narrated to us Ali ibn Abi Sāra narrated to us from Thābit from Anas he said the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, sent a man to one of the Arab tyrants,¹ saying: *Go and tell him to come and see me*. He said: O Messenger of Allah, he is too haughty to comply with that. He said: *Go and tell him to come and see me*. The man went and said to him: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, asks you to come and see him. The man retorted: Allah’s Messenger? And what is Allah? Is He made of gold? Or perhaps he is from silver? Or from copper?

The man went back and informed the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him - I told you that he is too haughty to comply. He said: *Go to him a second time and ask him to come and see me*. He went and the man repeated exactly what he said in the previous occasion. As he was talking to me, Allah sent above his head a cloud which

¹ Literally the wording is: ‘a Pharaoh from among the Pharaohs of the earth.’

thundered and a bolt of lightning struck him and removed his skull. Allah the Exalted then revealed the verse: ‘*The thunder sounds His praises, as do the angels in awe of Him; He sends thunderbolts to strike whoever He wills. Yet still they dispute about Allah, He has mighty plans.*’²

The narration also appears in several other collections.³ Another tradition appearing in *Dtham al-Kalām wa’ Ahlihi*, has the cleanest wording and most complete text:

Ali ibn Bushra reported to us Muḥammad ibn Ishāq ibn Muḥammad ibn Yahya reported to us Muḥammad ibn Sa’eed ibn Ishāq al-Aṣbahāni narrated to us Yahya ibn Ja’far ibn al-Zibriqān narrated to us Yazeed ibn Hārūn narrated to us Dulaym ibn Ghazwān narrated to us Thābit al-Bunāni narrated to us from Anas ibn Mālik, he said: The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him once sent a man from among his companions to a ruler from among the heads of the *mushrikeen*, calling him to Allah. And the *mushrik* said to him (the messenger): ‘This deity, Allah that you are involving, what is he? Is he from gold? Or is he from silver? He said: The matter weighed heavily upon his heart, thus he went back to the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him.

Then, he said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, you sent me to a man, from whom I heard words that I find quite difficult to even repeat.’ He said: *Return to him*. So the man returned and he had the same repeated to him. Upon returning to the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him he said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, what is there

² Abu Ismā’il al-Harawī, *Dtham al-Kalām wa Ahlihi* [Vol. 4, no. 631, p. 97]. The verse cited is at *Qur’ān*, 13: 13

³ Notably, in the *Musnad* of Abu Ya’la [Vol. 6, no. 3468], with the *isnād*: ‘Ishāq narrated to us Ali ibn Abi Sāra narrated to us Thābit narrated to us from Anas, with it similarly.’ Also in, *Ithāf al-Khayra al-Mihrat* [Vol. 6, no. 5741, p. 73] that is attributed to Abu Ya’la. Further references also include that of *al-Sunan al-Kubra* by al-Nasā’i [Vol. 6, no. 11259] with the *isnād*: ‘Amr ibn Manṣūr reported to us Abdullah ibn Abdul-Wahhāb narrated to us he said Ali ibn Abi Sāra narrated to me, with it.’ al-Ṭabarāni also cites this in *al-Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ* [Vol. 3, no. 2602] with the *isnād*: ‘Abu Muslim narrated to us he said Abdullah ibn Abdul-Wahhāb al-Ḥajjāji narrated to us he said Ali ibn Abi Sāra narrated to us, with it.’³ After this, al-Ṭabarāni provides the follow-on comment, ‘This *ḥadīth* isn’t narrated from Thābit except by Ali ibn Abi Sāra.’ I would submit it is a delusion, may Allah be pleased with him, as will be set out in this chapter.

extra upon that?’ He said: *Return to him*, so (he did) and repeated the same to him. Then Allah sent down a thunderbolt from the sky, and it destroyed him and the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him did not know of that. Then the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said to him: *Allah destroyed your companion after you*. Thus, Allah the Mighty and Sublime then revealed the verse: ‘*The thunder sounds His praises, as do the angels in awe of Him; He sends thunderbolts to strike whoever He wills. Yet still they dispute about Allah, He has mighty plans.*’⁴

Another narrative regarding this is found in *al-Asmā’ wal’Ṣifāt* of al-Bayhaqy:

Abu Sa’eed ibn Abi ‘Amr reported to us Abul-‘Abbās al-Aṣam narrated to us Yahya ibn Abi Ṭālib narrated to us Yazeed ibn Hārūn reported to us Dulaym ibn Ghawzān reported to us from Thābit al-Bunāni from Anas, he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him sent a man from among his companions to a ruler from among the heads of the *mushrikeen* and said: *Invite him unto Allah, the might and sublime*. The *mushrik* said (to the messenger): ‘This deity that you invoke, what is he? Is he from gold or silver? So the words spoken weighed heavily upon his heart. He sent him back to the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him, (upon return) he said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, by Allah, you have sent me to a man whom I heard from him, that which I can hardly repeat back. (The Prophet) said to him: *Go back to him*. He went back and the same was said to him.

So he went back to the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him, he said: ‘By Allah, O Messenger of Allah, He did not add to what he said to me (previously).’ (The Prophet) said to him: *Go back to him*. And he came back to him, and told him the same thing. He said: Then Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, sent down a thunderbolt from the sky upon him, and it destroyed him. The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him was unaware. So, he went to Messenger of Allah and said to him: Indeed, Allah the

⁴ Abu Ismā’il al-Harawī, *Dtham al-Kalām wa Ahlihi* [Vol. 4, no. 630, p. 96]. The end verse is from 13: 13

Mighty and Sublime has destroyed your companion after you. Allah then revealed the verse: ‘*The thunder sounds His praises, as do the angels in awe of Him; He sends thunderbolts to strike whoever He wills. Yet still they dispute about Allah, He has mighty plans,*’ [13: 13].⁵

It is also to be found in *Kashaf al-Astār* with the *isnād*: ‘Abida ibn Abdullah narrated to us Yazeed ibn Hārūn reports Dulaym ibn Ghazwān narrated to us Thābit narrated to us from Anas, he said to him narrating similarly.⁶ After this, al-Bazzār said: ‘Dulaym is Basran, *Ṣāliḥ*.’ I would submit, not so, he is *ṣaduq* (truthful) *Ṣaḥīḥ* in *ḥadīth*. Al-Haythami said in *Majmu al-Zawā’id*: ‘The men (narrating in the channel) of al-Bazzār are the men of *Ṣaḥīḥ*, other than Dulaym ibn Ghazwān, he is *thiqa* (trustworthy). And in the men (narrating in the channel) of Abu Ya’la and al-Ṭabarāni: Ali ibn Abi Sāra, and he is *daef*.’⁷ I would submit that Abu Ya’la narrated it from two different channels as can be seen, in any event, the *ḥadīth* is *Ṣaḥīḥ*. The *ḥadīth* from the channel of Abu Ghālib Dulaym ibn Ghazwān al-‘Abdi al-Baṣri al-Barā’ is further reported in *Kitāb al-Sunnah* of Abu ‘Aāṣim, where he said: Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr narrated to me Dulaym ibn Ghazwān narrated to us, with it.⁸ Imām Abu Ya’la also reports it, (Aḥmad ibn Ali al-Muthanna), and he said: ‘Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr narrated to us and others, they said Dulaym ibn Ghazwān narrated to us, with it.’⁹ Also, cited in *Dtham al-Kalām wa Ahlihi*, there is the following narrative, but it is Jew coming forth to ask the question:

Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abdulah reported to us Abdullah ibn Aḥmad reported to us Ibrāhim ibn Khuzaym reported to us ‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us Yahya ibn ‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us from Abu Bakr ibn ‘Ayyāsh from Layth from Mujāhid, he said: A Jew came to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him and he said: O Muḥammad, from what is your lord, from a pearl? He said, then Allah sent a thunderbolt upon him, which killed him and the verse

⁵ al-Bayhaqy *al-Asmā’ wal’Ṣifāt* [Vol. 2, no. 605, p. 37]

⁶ al-Bazzār *Kashaf al-Astār* [Vol. 3, p. 54]

⁷ *Majmu al-Zawā’id* [Vol. 7, p. 42]

⁸ Abu Aāṣim *Kitāb al-Sunnah* [Vol. 1, p. 304]

⁹ *Musnad* Abu Ya’la [Vol. 6, no. 3341]

was revealed: ‘Yet still they dispute about Allah, He has mighty plans.’¹⁰

In his *Tafsir*, Ibn Kathir records similarly:

Ibn Abi Ḥātim said: ‘Amr ibn Salam al-Baṣri narrated to us ‘Amr ibn al-Muḥrim Abu Qatādah narrated to us Ma’mar narrated to us Abu Ka’b al-Makki narrated to us he said, ‘Evil from the wickedness of Quraysh (was mentioned, they said) - tell us about your Lord, is he made of gold, or is he made from silver, or is he made of copper? The sky trembled and rumbled (rattling in the words of the Arabs, is the thunder). If his head is cut off, it will fall between his hands. And Layth ibn Abi Sulaym said from Mujāhid, ‘A Jew came and said, O Muḥammad, inform us about your lord, of what is he (made)? From pearls? Or rubies?’ He said: A thunderbolt came and took him (obliterated him).¹¹

As for what is reported in *al-Durr al-Manthur* by al-Suyūṭi:

As narrated from al-Ḥākim, al-Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir and Ibn Abi Ḥātim from Mujāhid, may Allah be pleased with him, he said: A man came to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, he said: Inform me about your lord, is he from gold? Or from a pearl, or a sapphire? Then a thunderbolt came and struck him down. Thus, Allah revealed the verse: ‘He sends thunderbolts to strike whoever He wills,’ [13: 13]. And narrated from Ibn Jarir from Ali, may Allah be pleased with him: A man came to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him and he said: ‘O Muḥammad, narrate to me about your lord, this deity that you call upon – is he a sapphire? Or perhaps made of gold, or other than that? A thunderbolt descended and eviscerated him. So, Allah the exalted revealed the verse: ‘He sends thunderbolts to strike whoever He wills.’¹²

¹⁰ Abu Ismā’il al-Harawi, *Ditham al-Kalām wa Ahlihi* [Vol. 4, no. 635, p. 105]

¹¹ *Tafsir* Ibn Kathir, [Vol. 5, p. 394]

¹² al-Suyūṭi, *Durr al-Mashur*, [Vol. 5, p. 492]

Taken in the round, when looking at the substance of all the aforementioned texts, despite the differing parts of the narrative, this strongly suggests that some of the Arabs could *only* conceive of the conception of a deity as being represented by an idol. That is why the recipient who was being called to Islam asked, ‘This deity, Allah to whom you are invoking, what is it? Is it made from gold or silver?’ More will be detailed upon this matter within the chapter that elicits a detailed analysis regarding the story of the ‘*Dhāt Anwāṭ*.’ Similar can also be said in the case of the Children of Israel, or rather a section among them following the Exodus from Egypt. They could only conceive of a deity in their imagination as something being represented by an idol, hence asking for an idol of Allah to be fashioned so that they would then sanctify it

7. What are the *Awthān* and the *Aṣnām*?

Earlier we explained that the belief which the Arab *mushrikeen* held was definitively as follows: that *Aṣnām*, *Anṣāb*, trees, stones, baetyls, temple sanctuaries and all other kinds of *Awthān*, are nothing more than bodies, dwellings, manifestations, or symbols of the intangible, relating to non-material beings. They related to the supernatural, be that of a lower or higher order, demonic, angelic or the middle-sort relating to the *Jinn*. All of which were depictions of supposed divine beings whom they worshipped, revered, loved, obeyed (be that in relation to commandments or prohibitions); sought help and hope from; feared, dreaded, and sought protection from or against. Given this description, which undoubtedly accurately fits the historical context, it is necessary at this juncture to outline, or indeed seek clarification upon, what the *essence* of the *Aṣnām* and *Awthān* were. Each matter is dealt with at the appropriate juncture, with the help and permission of Allah the Exalted. Here do recall what has been outlined already in this volume, namely, what was mentioned in the *Tafsir* of Ibn Abi Ḥātim in relation to the Qur’ānic verse which states: ‘*In His place the idolaters invoke only females, and Satan, the rebel.*’

حدثنا علي بن الحسين ثنا موسى بن هارون يعني الدولابي ثنا مروان عن جويبر عن الضحاك في قوله ان يدعون من دونه الا إنا قال المشركون ان الملائكة بنات الله، وانما نعبدهم ليقربونا إلى الله زلفى، قال اتخذوا أربابا وصورهن صور الحواري فحلوا وقلدوا، وقالوا هؤلاء يشبهن بنات الله الذين نعبدنهم يعنون الملائكة

Ali ibn al-Ḥussain narrated to us Musa ibn Hārūn, that is to say al-Doulabi narrated to us Marwrān narrated to us from Juwaybir from al-Ḍaḥḥāk concerning where He said: ‘*In His place they (the idolaters) but invoke only females,*’ [4: 117] he said that the

mushrikeen said: ‘Indeed the angels are the daughters of Allah, but we only worship them to bring us closer to Allah.’ He said: ‘They took them as goddesses and their images (or depictions) were resembling and imitating those images of girls. And they (the *mushrikeen*) said: ‘They are like the daughters of Allah, those whom we worship, meaning the angels.’¹

To reiterate, we argue explicitly, with immense precision and an iron grip, that in the sight of the *mushrikeen*, was that al-‘Uzza for the Quraysh, was from the genus of the *Jinn*, considered as being from the *Sarawāt al-Jinn* – the esteemed nobility of the *Jinn*. She was viewed as being the ‘consort to Allah,’ may He be Exalted above such claims. From this, that al-Lāt and Manāt, were considered as being her daughters, from the genus of the angels; that they were ‘the daughters of Allah.’ At the same time, they are depicted as *ṣanam* – an idol, with al-Lāt held as being the greatest of the *Aṣnām* revered by the Quraysh. That is also outlined verbatim by Abul’Mundthir Hishām ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbi.

Aṣnām

Together this can be bolstered with a critical summary of the various beliefs that were held by other nations of the *mushrikeen*, not limited to the Arabs at the dawn of Islam, but also that of the Babylonians, Assyrians, of which we now possess considerable knowledge regarding their beliefs, temples, deities and idols. Furthermore, adding information gleaned from the Greek and Roman civilisations, will provide us a vast material that has been preserved to draw upon. The importance of doing so, stems from them being contemporaneous to the Arabs at the dawn of Islam, indeed even before the advent of Islam, the Arabs had imported their *Aṣnām* from these surrounding regions. Therefore, approaching this with diligence, care and scrutiny, excluding matters of lesser secondary detail, we can converge upon the view that broadly, the idols fall into three main categories.

To begin, the first are that of *Aṣnām*, the most significant of the specific *Awthān*. Concerning these *Aṣnām*, they form the majority of cases, being carved or engraved images, sculptures made from stone, baetyls, wood,

¹ *Tafsir* Ibn Abi Ḥātim [Vol. 4, no. 6007]

metal or other materials. They can appear to resemble or contain features that are human, animal or a composite of the two, therianthrope.² Other depictions can involve a combination of animal features, cross-species. Every *ṣanam* is thus a *timthāl* (statue) of some kind, but not every *timthāl* is a *ṣanam*. Much the same, every *ṣanam* is a *wathn*, but not every *wathn* is a *ṣanam*. Invariably these *Aṣnām* are associated, within the minds of the *mushrik* worshipper, with the divine being or entity that they supposedly represent, a strong firm connection being established:

- a) By unification. The perceived divine entity or being, that is intimately associated with the *Aṣnām*, unifying with it within a corporeal sense, or sharing single nature.
- b) Through Presence. The perceived divine entity or being maintains a *permanent presence* within it, functioning akin to a ‘spirit,’ contained within the physical representation, or manifestation of the *ṣanam*.
- c) As a conduit. At times the *mushrik* may believe that they are vessels or a conduit for the divine being or entity to manifest in. The being ‘dwells’ within them, and can be summoned, for active presence, during certain rituals, offerings or when hymns are sung in dedication to it.
- d) Communication, communicative intermediary. The *mushrik* believing that the entity, sometimes a lesser deity, is an intermediary with a divine being. Here the service is akin to that of being an organ of communication, much like an eye or ear of the human anatomy. Essentially it is some form of mechanism, albeit supernatural, to communicate with the divine being or entity.

The last couple of points in general indicate that to the *mushrik* mind, the *Aṣnām* are the vehicle mechanism through which communication is undertaken, albeit in a general sense. The details though, across *mushrik*

² While analysing the various deities of the Nabataeans, Wenning provides a useful comment here regarding the term ‘aniconism.’ He writes: ‘The Nabataeans observed what is called ‘aniconism’ (Gladigow 1988; Mettinger 1995: 18-20) in the veneration and representation of their deities. Aniconism means that rather than using figural images as objects of worship, symbolic forms such as standing stones are taken as the representation of the deity. Aniconism is a phenomenon found in various religions. It is not restricted to monotheistic religion rather it is a feature of polytheistic belief systems.’ See: Robert Wenning ‘The Betyls of Petra,’ (Nov. 2001), *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, [No. 321, pp. 79/95].

cultures or civilisations, is not always an easy thing to decipher. By its very nature, it is vague, confused, often contradictory. Yet for the average *mushrik* devotee, it becomes very difficult to properly disentangle let alone fully decipher. That, coupled with the connection to the *ṣanam* itself, especially for the common *mushrik* devotee, it becomes near impossible, near indistinguishable to provide a clear demarcation between the divine being and the *ṣanam* or *Aṣnām* which represent it. For example, they may plainly say:

نَعْبُدُ أَصْنَامًا فَنَنْظِلُ لَهَا عَاقِبِينَ

‘We worship *Aṣnām* and are constantly in attendance on them.’³

The verse, was in the context of the story of Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him, and the dialogue with his people. Or, as expressed relating to the Children of Israel:

وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتَوْا عَلَى قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَى أَصْنَامٍ لَهُمْ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ

We took the Children of Israel across the sea, but when they came upon a people who worshipped *Aṣnām*, they said, ‘Moses, make a god for us like theirs.’ He said, ‘You really are foolish people.’⁴

Here, as the verse shows, for those among the Children of Israel who said this, the matter of a *ṣanam* was the same as ‘god,’ even indistinguishable, hence they didn’t see a problem with expressing this request in this manner. Perhaps it was gleaned from their stay in Egypt. The figure of the Sāmiri, which the Qur’ān also mentions, was of the same mindset:

فَأَخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَهُ خُورٌ فَقَالُوا هَذَا إِلَهُكُمْ وَإِلَهُ مُوسَى فَنَسِي

³ Qur’ān, 26: 71. Together with the two-preceding verses, which read: *Tell them the story of Abraham, when he asked his father and his people, ‘What do you worship?’ They said, ‘We worship Aṣnām and are constantly in attendance on them.’*

⁴ Qur’ān, 7: 138

But he [used the molten jewellery to] produce an image of a calf which made a lowing sound, and they said, 'This is your god and Moses' god, but he has forgotten.'⁵

The meaning which the Sāmiri is conveying is that the *ṣanam* was suitable for the God of Moses, being your God too. Hence there wasn't a need for Moses to depart to the mountain, awaiting revelation and instruction from his Lord, but it is here, before your eyes - a matter Moses forgot or overlooked.

Awthān

With regards to the specific *wathn* or the fetishisation of *wathn*, it stems from the belief of the *mushrikeen*, in some cases, to relate to a natural entity, in its origin. In other words, it may be a mountain, a cave, tree, rock, baetyl, which is in turn linked or associated to a divine being or entity of a specific kind. The connection tends to fall within the five types of association which are mentioned earlier, unification, presence, conduit, communication / communicative intermediary. Here, this natural entity is perceived to have or is given the attributes, characteristics and functions associated with *Aṣnām*, even if it is not explicitly depicted as a *ṣanam*. It may even retain its original depiction altogether, being viewed simply as it is: a tree, rock etc. But with the attribution of these fetishistic characteristics, it becomes the *wathn ṣanami*. Perhaps this is what Allah the Exalted referred to when informing us of what Ibrahim said to his people, He says:

إِنَّمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَانًا وَتَخْلُقُونَ إِفْكًا

What you worship instead of Allah are mere Awthān; what you invent is nothing but falsehood.⁶

Then, there is the narrative of what Ibrahim had said before his migration, but after Allah had saved him from being thrown into the fire:

⁵ Qur'ān, 20: 88

⁶ Qur'ān, 29: 17

وَقَالَ إِنَّمَا اتَّخَذْتُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَانًا مَّوَدَّةَ بَيْنِكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُ بَعْضُكُم بِبَعْضٍ وَيَلْعَنُ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا وَمَأْوَاكُم النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُم مِّن نَّاصِرِينَ

Abraham said to them, 'You have chosen Awthān instead of Allah but your love for them will only last for the present life: on the Day of Resurrection, you will disown and reject one another. Hell will be your home and no one will help you.'⁷

The people from the era of Ibrahim peace be upon him used to worship a multiplicity of deities, most of which were celestial bodies, spirits, or other cosmic entities. That has been alluded to in the text of the Qur'ān, which has also been confirmed by the established historical record, with transmission that is continuously recurrent, bolstered by additional excavations and confirmed artifacts. Broadly, these 'deities' were represented in majority of instances by *Aṣnām*, as will be discussed in appropriate chapters. Ibrahim's father was in fact one of the chief sculptors of these. From amongst them, it is reasonable to suggest that there would have been *Awthān* as well as *Aṣnām* with specific characteristics. Convention has long held since antiquity that individuals were referred to as being the worshipper of x *ṣanam*, or the worshipper of y *wathn*. Yet, this is perhaps more of an abbreviation of speech for ease of reference. In reality it is relating to an individual who is the worshipper of a particular deity, depicted as a *ṣanam* or *wathn*; those constructs being the symbolic representation of such or a substitute for that given deity. Within the text of the Qur'ān we find this narrative utilised about the story of Ibrahim, peace be upon him, where he said:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا وَاجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ

Remember when Abraham said, 'Lord, make this town safe! Preserve me and my offspring from worshipping the Asnām.'⁸

In the minds of many of the *mushrikeen*, the matter escalates to the point where they find themselves completely unable to conceive of the concept of a deity *except* with the accompaniment of a *ṣanam*. Consequently this prompted some of the *mushrikeen* to even question the matter of divine

⁷ Qur'ān, 29: 25

⁸ Qur'ān, 14: 35

essence itself, as noted where they asked whether Allah was ‘made of gold or silver.’ Elites though among the *mushrikeen*, those considered to have knowledge and their philosophers, in general tend to distance themselves from this viewpoint. They tend to assert that the *sanam* is but a symbol for the deity; a focal point upon which rituals, of varying kinds, offerings and supplications are made to. Some go as far as to argue that the multiplicity of deities is but the manifestation of a single deity. Political or even social expediency allows the situation to persist, given that many elites view the common folk as being far too removed from any abstract thinking.

With regards to the reality of the worshipped deity, it is considered a divine being or entity. Whether that is held to be celestial or terrestrial; beneficial or purely angelic, harmful and purely demonic, *Jinn*-like, or an amalgam in between. In scope it can encompass both good and evil. The perceived divine being or entity is unified, present or residing within a given *sanam*. Communication with it occurs through the medium of the *Aṣṇām* or *Awthān*. However the essence is not simply the *tamātheel* or *soora* (image, picture), whether that be made of stone, wood, gold or other materials. This point needs to be recognised properly, because it is a matter of necessity arising from perception and reason. It must be emphasised that it is impossible for the sane rational human being to worship that which is inanimate, blind, or deaf; a lifeless substance and believing it to be so with certitude.

Hence there *must be* something else which is behind this representation within those that believe this. Something held in the active imagination of those holding such a belief. Even if one were to observe those within a mental institution who may be talking to a lifeless object – a shoe, or a pen for example – they would be undertaking this as a result of their mental disorder or cognitive malfunction. They have been deluded into thinking that this conversation is real. But that is imaginary and limited to their brain, resultant from that mental disorder and / or cognitive impairment. Animals and birds flee from scarecrows for example, given their poor ability at discernment, perceiving them to be human and which could potentially do them harm. If they had the ability to realise that it is just some cloth or rags draped over a makeshift board to depict a human, perhaps they wouldn’t fear anything at all. In a similar matter, animals and birds pay no attention to the sway of a tree or its branch caused by the wind.

Tantalisingly close

Imām al-Fakhr al-Rāzi came tantalising close to pinpointing the reality of the *Aṣṇām* in his acclaimed great *Tafsir, Mafātiḥ al-Ghayb*. He wrote:

Know, that He the Almighty provided the exposition upon the peak of worship, and its peak with sincerity in *Tawḥeed*. Following which there is criticism of the pathway (chosen by) the *mushrikeen*: ‘[As for] those who choose other protectors beside Him, saying, ‘We only worship them because they bring us nearer to Allah,’ [39: 3]. This is the allocation of speech, and those who took *Awliyā*’ besides Him say, ‘We worship them only that they may bring us nearer to Allah.’ According to this allocation, the news of what is omitted is His saying, ‘They say.’

Know, that the pronoun in (where) He says: ‘We only worship them because they bring us nearer to Allah,’ refers back to two-categories of entities – though with intellect and those without. As per those with intellect, it is that some people worshipped Christ, Ezra and the angels. A great many people worship the sun, the moon, the stars, believing them to be living rational beings that can communicate. Concerning the things that were worshipped, devoid of life and reason, they are the *Aṣṇām*. Once you have comprehended this, we can say that the viewpoint as mentioned by the *kuffar* is reasonable (in as far as) those holding intellect. (Yet) it doesn’t hold true for those without reason. The explanation can be understood from two-viewpoints. The first, is that the pronoun in His saying (from the verse) ‘We worship them,’ is a pronoun for those with reason, so it is fitting for the *Aṣṇām*. Secondly, it is not entirely fanciful for those *kuffār* believing that Christ, Ezra and the angels *might be able* to intercede for them before Allah. But it is beyond reason for a rational person to believe that the *Aṣṇām* and lifeless objects bring them closer to Allah. Accordingly, their intension is that their worship of these *Aṣṇām* brings them closer to Allah.

It can be said, that indeed, the one who is the *Aāqil* (wise, discerning) does not worship the *sanam* based upon the (mere) fact that it is made of wood or stone. Rather, they worship it due to their belief that these are *tamātheel* representing divine beings, such as the

celestial bodies, the *tamātheel* of heavenly spirits, or the *tamātheel* (depicting) the Prophets and the righteous people from the past. Their intention in worshipping these is to direct their acts of worship towards those entities that they have divine attributes and are associated with these figurine images. The essence of the discourse for those who worship the *Aṣnām* is that they argue – ‘Indeed, the greatest deity is too majestic to be worshipped by mere humanity. However, it is more appropriate for human beings to engage in the worship of greater beings such as the celestial bodies and heavenly spirits. Then, these intermediaries engage in the worship of the supreme deity.’ (In actuality), this is what they intend by saying - ‘*We only worship them because they bring us nearer to Allah.*’⁹

Imām al-Rāzi has made some valid points particularly in relation to the matter of representation of the *Aṣnām* and what they are intended for. Yet, it lacks precision, even lucidity in key aspects. He was correct to note that they are representations of divine beings associated with the images and / or figurines. It is not the matter of that representation by itself devoid of association. Overall, the intent of Imām al-Rāzi in utilising the term *Aāqil* (wise, discerning) descriptively in the quoted text, is someone possessing the minimum level of intellect, at the very least enough to hold to be legally responsible and accountable. That is in contrast to those falling below that level or those with mental insanity. His intention seems to be not limited only to the mature, thoughtful and intellectually progressive persons. As for his account of the viewpoint of those worshipping *Aṣnām* beginning with ‘the greatest deity is too majestic to be worshipped by mere humanity,’ there are some criticisms in order here. There is a glaring error of magnitude that has been made, to assert that viewpoint *on their behalf*. It is inherently contradictory, for such greater beings or entities can’t be said to be ‘worshipped’ in the first place, unless it is *a priori* coupled with a belief in their divine nature or divinity.

Secondly, the idea of worshipping Prophets, as Prophets, is fallacious. Christ was worshipped *because* he was perceived as being a divine being – they claimed he was ‘the son of God,’ or God himself in human form, or that

⁹ *Tafsir* al-Rāzi [Vol. 26, p. 421]. The long citation has been abbreviated slightly from the original Arabic.

he was part of a Trinity. In a similar manner, angels aren’t worshipped on their own for being angels – they were worshipped because they were *perceived as being divine beings* held as a belief by those undertaking those acts. The pre-Islamic Arab *mushrikeen* considered them as being the ‘daughters of Allah.’ Other civilisations have also had similar ludicrous beliefs. That such beings as mentioned are considered as being great, is not a matter of dispute per se. No Muslim would argue they have lesser diminished status, including al-Rāzi. But that is *not the case* within the minds or belief system of the *mushrikeen* towards them. One must constantly be wary of falling into the trap of a ‘deception of perception,’ thinking that your belief is aligned to that of others simply by virtue of common terminology.

A lesser though still fallacious error relates to the last portion of the quote from al-Rāzi, concerning the worship of heavenly spirits and celestial bodies. Other justifications exist in the deluded minds of the *mushrikeen*, but they haven’t been readily or expressly acknowledged. Among them, is that the *mushrikeen* had the view that being the supreme deity or chief of the Gods, the father, would delight in the worship of his offspring, be it son or daughter, and reward it. Being construed as a rather twisted form of inadvertent worship to the father and closeness to him, the latter being an inevitable result. The offspring of the supposed supreme deity or chief of the Gods are held by the father in high-esteem. Their intercession is highly unlikely to be rejected, as they are on the same plain of existence. Worship of those entities, in the minds of the *mushrikeen*, achieves the intended purpose since that intercession doesn’t require any permission.

On the matter of intercession more generally, the supposed supreme deity or chief of the Gods is only sought via such intermediaries. Many *mushrik* cultures and civilisations have likened it to an earthly court, where the King, in this case head of the Gods, is only approachable in this manner; the *mushrik* perceiving the loftiness or even aloofness as a quality of perfection. There is also the notion held by the *mushrikeen* that the supreme deity or chief of the Gods, doesn’t necessarily have full ability to act or create, except by way of an intermediary. One shouldn’t be surprised that *mushrikeen* hold that view, since they perceive it as a quality of perfection attributable to the greatest of deities. The inference being that they aren’t tainted by ‘low-level action,’ or corrupted by the base level of the temporal

world. It could also stem from an inability to genuinely conceive the true nature of creation from nothingness with a necessity to affirm it. Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥman ibn Yaḥya al-Mu‘allimī al-Yamāni came quite close to this matter during a discourse about the *Aṣnām* of the Arabs. He wrote:

The intention behind their (set of) actions was that they only exalted the *Aṣnām* as *Tamātheel* or reminders of the imaginary female entities, which they believed to be daughters of Allah the Mighty and Sublime. In their view, these entities were the angels. They did not believe that the *Aṣnām* themselves possessed any benefit or harm. Instead, they believed that venerating these *Aṣnām* brought benefits in terms of elevating the status of the individuals for whom these *Tamātheel* or reminders were created for.¹⁰

Broadly, I would argue that this perspective is generally valid. But again, it can be criticised for not having the required level of precision in making a distinction between the matter of a *ṣanam* (idol) and that of a *timthāl* (statue, figurine), with the level of accuracy that is needed. Moreover, it can be expressed as a strict principle in the form of an equation:

(الصنم) = (التمثال) + (علاقة الارتباط المحكم بكانن إلهي، والنيابة عنه)

The *ṣanam* (idol) = the *timthāl* (statue, figurine) + a strongly held and established association with a diving being / entity, acting as a representative of such.

Reading the quote again with this expressed equation should help to illuminate the subtle errors that are contained therein by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥman al-Mu‘allimī, may Allah have mercy upon him. It was more of a summation, albeit with its errors. He also said:

A summary of the beliefs of the *mushrikeen* as they relate to the *Aṣnām*: that they are *Tamātheel* or reminders of the angels, and there may be a *timthāl* or reminder of Allah the Mighty and Sublime, as previously outlined. That they themselves do not (cause) harm or

¹⁰ *Athār* Shaykh Abdar-Raḥman ibn Yaḥya al-Mu‘allimī al-Yamāni [Vol. 2, p. 500], emphasis added.

benefit, rather they are a pretext to worship the one for whom they have made a *timthāl* for the remembrance of.¹¹

Perhaps it would be more accurate to have said: they are *Tamātheel* and reminders of the angels; there may be a *timthāl* or token reminder for Allah, the Mighty and Sublime. The *Tamātheel* being inanimate, do not cause harm or benefit intrinsically. Worship of it, is considered as being the worship of the entity for whom it was made or intended.

The second category of *Awthān*

These relate to general *Awthān*, either as:

1. Temples: which are devoted to a ‘goddess,’ behind curtains or a screen. They have a custodian or attendant. Usually inside the temples there are *Aṣnām* and *taṣāweer* (image depictions). Demarcated or within the vicinity, there is usually a restricted area, which is considered sacred.
2. A sacred area or space. Here, there is an area of land that is considered sacred, being set aside for particular deities, but there can be a temple housed within it.
3. *Anṣāb* (sacrificial stones, stone alters). Stone structures, sculptures of non-living entities, sacrificial stones, or even stone plinths. Often this relates to practices related to blood sacrifice or offerings, sometimes they are erected or placed with banners to be taken. The Qur’ān makes explicit the prohibition of consumption arising from this, namely: ‘*And that which is sacrificed on stone altars.*’¹² Typically they can be located upon hilltops or mounds, where offerings are made; at the sides of roadways for passers-by to touch or wipe the sacrificial blood. Arrangement of the *Anṣāb* can be deliberate or even with constructed platforms. A *ṣanam* can feature within this or not. Distinguishing their form is easy enough as they often have specific inscriptions, symbols or even dedicated flags and banners.
4. ‘*Eid Makāni*’ (festival grounds). This is a demarcated area of land that doesn’t necessarily have a temple. Celebrations or markets and

¹¹ Ibid, [p. 511]

¹² *Qur’ān*, 5: 3

gatherings are held at this locale, often with specific timings in mind, for instance like a solstice. Such areas are the places of festivities for the people of *Shirk*, with their markets assigned for the *Ṭawāgheet*. Distinct from that, are markets like that of ‘Ukāz during the era of *Jāhiliyya*, which were not catered upon being dedicated to *Awthān*. Limiting this concept may prove difficult as it can include man-made constructions or works.

5. The *Wathn* can also be something that is, by its very nature, naturally occurring; something which is not subject to human interference. Examples of this being:
 - a) Rocks, or baetyls. Varying ludicrous myths may often abound, such as the claim that ‘a deity’ sat on it, was born from it, is residing within it, or other such things related from the acts of the ‘deity.’ This is a general *Wathn*. If though the belief of the *mushrik* is that the deity or divine entity *entered or united* with that rock, then it would be a *specific Wathn*. An example of which, is the long engraved rock at Ṭā’if, *al-Ṣafā’* that was to symbolise the goddess al-Lat, which was worshipped by the tribe of Thāqif.
 - b) Trees. Again, varying ludicrous myths may be found associated with this, such as a deity sought shade beneath it, was born within it etc. Such trees may also be associated with fertility rites, almost always often represented as being female. An example of which is the tree that was near the date-palm, between Ṭā’if and Mecca, that had a structure and curtains over it to represent al-‘Uzza, which was revered by the Quraysh. On occasion, rocks and trees were enclosed within what was perceived to be a ‘sacred space,’ with the increase of visitors or devotees, they can then acquire curtains or screens. Various cultic rituals may arise to accompany the symbolism of such natural objects if within the confines of a temple or sacred space. Placing limitations upon it for analytical purposes can be difficult, but it would constitute a general *Wathn*. Should a tree serve as a means of a perceived divine connection, where blessings are said to derive or flow through it, like the tree that was called ‘*Dhāt Anwāt*,’ which was worshipped besides Allah, then this would be a *specific Wathn* too.

Third category: symbolism

Next, this category relates to *Awthān* that are symbolic. They may not have an immediately *direct* connection with deities, but they can be symbols or emblems of beliefs which are *kufir* or *Shirk*. One of the most obvious examples of which is that of the cross. That is revered and hung as a symbol of the Christian belief of ‘sacrifice of the son of God,’ Allah is far Exalted above this, for such a belief is rooted in *kufir* and *Shirk*. Underpinning the symbolism is the notion that the sacrifice was to redeem or cleanse humanity from inherited sin. The Christian cross is a *Wathn*, as has been confirmed by the statement of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, when ‘Adi ibn Ḥātim al-Ṭā’i entered into his presence with this upon his neck. He said: ‘*O ‘Adi, remove this Wathn from your neck.*’¹³ One should note the subtlety here, as the cross isn’t worshipped in and of itself, it is a matter displayed for symbolism and revered.

There are other symbols which are of note, like the Zoroastrian fire, which is meant to symbolise the deity of light and goodness, Yazdān. Flags that symbolise the belief of *kufir* and *Shirk*, such as when a *ṣanam* representing a false deity is depicted upon them, or if praises and supplications to the *Awthān* are written on them. Also, if they contain other symbols of *kufir* and *Shirk* like the cross. There are also notable examples from the twentieth century, with regards to extreme left and right wing ideologies. The flag bearing the hammer and sickle, used by the Soviet Union and many communist political parties presents the symbols of Marxist-Leninism, which is a belief based upon atheism, and notoriously the Swastika, from Nazi Germany, which symbolised another ideology of *kufir*

¹³ As recorded in the *Sunan* of al-Tirmidhi: al-Ḥussain ibn Yazeed al-Kufi narrated to us ‘Abd al-Salām ibn Ḥarb narrated to us from Ghutaṭayf ibn Ayan from Muṣ’ab ibn Sa’d from ‘Adi ibn Ḥātim. He said, ‘I came to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, whilst wearing a gold cross around my neck. He (the Prophet) said: *O ‘Adi, remove this Wathn from your neck.* And I heard him reciting from *Surah al-Barā’ah*: *They take their rabbis and their monks as lords besides Allah.* He said: *As for them, they did not worship them, but when they made something lawful for them, they considered it lawful, and when they made something unlawful for them, they considered it unlawful.*’ Abu Esa said: ‘This *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan ghareeb*, we do not know of it except as a narration of ‘Abd al-Salām ibn Ḥarb; Ghutaṭayf ibn Ayan is not known for *ḥadīth*.’ In his *Tafsir* of the verse (9: 31), al-Tabari [Vol. 11, pp. 416/419] cites several channels regarding this tradition, some with the alternate wording of: ‘Adi said – O Messenger of Allah, we do not worship them. He (the Prophet) said: *Do they not forbid what Allah has permitted, and do you then forbid it; and do they make lawful what Allah has prohibited, thereafter you consider it lawful?*’ (‘Adi) replied: Yes. He (the Prophet) said: ‘*So that is your worship of them.*’

and *Shirk*. Regarding the flags of nations, tribes and military units, originally they may not be considered *Awthān*, unless bearing such symbols such as those mentioned.

Regarding the ‘god of fire’ – a fire noted among the Hindus of India, which is circled around seven times during ceremonies relating to marriage, it is more than just a symbol. It is a *wathan ṣanami*, viewed in the same manner as mentioned previously with regards to the *Aṣnām* and *Awthān* of the earlier categories. Devotional prayers and specific rituals are directed towards it, signifying the presence of the ‘god of fire’ during marriage rituals, or as seeking to represent it delegating on behalf of the ‘god of fire’ in any of its significant aspects.

Festivities

With regards to the point of festivities, and its singular form being ‘*Eid*, it refers to what is considered as customary in occurrence and purpose, both with regards to time and place. The term of ‘*Eid*,’ is derived from the concepts relating to repetition and regularity. When it functions as a reference to a location, it signifies the place where people gather with the intention of engaging in worship or other activities, in a recurring and organised manner, following a specific method. Idolatrous festivities relate to the places designate for such by the people of *Shirk*, be that for markets, seasonal in nature or otherwise, underpinned by being dedicated to false deities. Such places are *rijs* (filth) arising from idolatrous practices and are to be avoided. Conversely, markets relating to normal trade and gatherings like the market of ‘Ukāz during the era of *Jāhiliyya*, are not cantered upon being dedicated to *Awthān*, as mentioned previously. The following has been recorded in the collection of *Sunan* from Imām Abu Dāwud, with an *isnād* resolutely *Ṣaḥīḥ*:

حدثنا داود بن رشيد حدثنا شعيب بن إسحاق عن الأوزاعي عن يحيى بن أبي كثير قال حدثني أبو قلابة قال حدثني ثابت بن الضحاك قال نذر رجل على عهد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أن ينحر إبل بيوانة فأتى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال إني نذرت أن أنحر إبلًا بيوانة فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم هل كان فيها وثن من أوثان الجاهلية يعبد؟ قالوا لا، قال هل كان فيها عيد من أعيادهم؟ قالوا لا، قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أوف بنذرك فإنه لا وفاء لنذر في معصية الله ولا فيما لا يملك بن آدم

Dāwud ibn Rasheed narrated to us Shu’ayb ibn Isḥāq narrated to us from al-‘Awzā’i from Yaḥya ibn Abi Kathir he said, Abu Qilābah narrated to me he said Thābit bin al-Ḍaḥḥāk narrated to me, he said: During the era of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, a man undertook a vow to sacrifice a camel at Buwānah. He approached the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and said to him: ‘I have undertaken a vow to sacrifice a camel at Buwānah.’ The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and said: ‘*Did the place contain any Wathn from the Awthān that was worshipped during the era of Jāhiliyya?*’ The answer was no. He further inquired: ‘*Was there any festival from their festivals observed there?*’ The answer was no. (So) the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: ‘*Fulfil your vow, for a vow to do an act of disobedience to Allah must not be fulfilled, neither must one do something over which a human being has no control.*’¹⁴

If it is a noun for time, then it is clear, it is the one that immediately springs to mind when the word ‘*Eid*’ is heard. As reported in the *Sunan* of Abu Dāwud, with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād* upon the conditions of Imām Muslim:

حدثنا الحسن بن علي حدثنا وهب حدثنا موسى بن علي (ح) وحدثنا عثمان بن أبي شيبة حدثنا وكيع عن موسى بن علي والإخبار في حديث وهب قال سمعت أبي أنه سمع عقبة بن عامر قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يوم عرفة، ويوم النحر، وأيام التشريق عيدنا أهل الإسلام؛ وهي أيام أكل وشرب

al-Ḥasan ibn Ali narrated to us Wahb narrated to us Musa ibn Ali narrated to us, *ḥawala*, and Uthmān ibn Abi Shayba narrated to us Waki’ narrated to us from Musa ibn Ali and the report in the *ḥadith* of Wahb, he said I heard from my father that he heard ‘Uqba ibn ‘Aāmir say, that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: ‘*The day of ‘Arafah, the day of al-Naḥr and the Ayām al-Tashreeq are our Eids (for) the people of Islam. These are the days of eating and drinking.*’¹⁵

¹⁴ *Sunan* Abu Dāwud [Vol. 3, no. 3313]. It is also recorded by al-Ṭabarāni in his *Mu’jam al-Kabir* [Vol. 2, no. 1341] and by al-Bayhaqi in his *Sunan al-Kubra* [Vol. 10, no. 19926].

¹⁵ *Sunan* Abu Dāwud [Vol. 2, no. 2419]. More than half-a-dozen additional references for this narration is cited across the corpus of *ḥadith*. Among the most prominent are *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān [Vol. 8, no. 3603], *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Khuzaymah [Vol. 3, no. 2100], *al-Mustadrak* by al-Ḥākim [Vol. 1, no. 1586] and that found in the *Sunan* of al-Tirmidhi [Vol. 3, no. 733].

The *mushrikeen* had festivities that were set by time and place. With the arrival of Islam though, Allah invalidated these altogether. In their place, the *Hunafā'* were granted 'Eid ul Fiṭr, 'Eid al-Naḥr; the days of Mina as replacements. Just as the festivities that were set by time and place by the *mushrikeen* at the sacred places of the *Ka'ba*, *Bayt al-Ḥarām*, 'Arafah, Mina and the sacred rites. Hence, *al-Wathan* is generally considered as being any symbol of *Shirk* or *kufir*, from the *Aṣnām* or *al-Ansāb* (sacrificial stones); the trees, baetyls, crucifixes, banners, shrines of the *Ṭawāgheet*, their temples and festivities. It encompasses both that are worshipped – like the *Aṣnām* and the specific *Awthān*, entities accompanied by cult-like fetishes, and those that are not worshipped. In any event, it is matter that is *rijs* and to be avoided. As He the Almighty said:

فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ حُنْفَاءَ اللَّهِ غَيْرَ مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِ

*Shun the filth of idolatrous beliefs and practices and shun false utterances. Devote yourselves to Allah and assign to Him no partners.*¹⁶

'Worshippers of the cross'?

At this juncture, some may enquire, what is the meaning behind the phrase – 'worshippers of the cross,' that has entered common vernacular, being used as a euphemism for Christians generally. Similar is said of Zoroastrians, 'worshippers of fire.' To this, we would reply – where did this wording come from in the context of Allah and His Messenger? What people have used in rhetorical or name-calling is not principally our concern. What we are concerned with is the texts of revelation, that of the Book of Allah and authentic *Sunnah* from His Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him. An objection may arise as the wording reported in the *Dalā'il al-Nubuwa* by Abu Nu'aym al-Aṣbahāni states:

Ibrāhim ibn Aḥmad narrated to us Aḥmad ibn Farj narrated to us he said Abu Umar al-Douri narrated to us he said Muḥammad ibn Marwān narrated to us from Muḥammad ibn al-Sā'ib al-Kalbi from Abu Ṣāliḥ from Ibn 'Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him, that a delegation of Christians from Najrān came to the Messenger of Allah,

¹⁶ *Qur'ān*, 22: 30/31

peace and blessings be upon him. They comprised fourteen men from their nobles. Among them, their chief, who was the eldest, his appointed successor and their most learned. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: 'Embrace Islam,' they replied 'We have already embraced Islam.'

He asked them: 'What have you embraced of Islam?' They replied: 'We have embraced Islam before you.' He said to them: 'You have lied, you are preventing people from accepting Islam because of three things, your worship of the cross, your consumption of pork and your claim that Allah has a son.' Then, Allah sent-down the verses: 'The likeness of Jesus before Allah is just like Adam; He created him from dust, said to him, 'Be', and he was,' [3: 59]. When it was recited to them, they retorted 'We don't know of what you say.' And it was revealed, *If anyone disputes this with you now that you have been given this knowledge, from the Qur'an, Say, 'Come, let us gather our sons and your sons,'* (to the end of the verse).¹⁷

Regarding this, we would argue that the validity of the story as a whole doesn't necessarily mean the validity of every single word contained therein, especially since this *isnād* - Muḥammad ibn Marwān / Muḥammad ibn al-Sā'ib al-Kalbi / Abu Ṣāliḥ - is *ḍa'eef*, it is one of the weakest lines of reporting. More correct in this respect is the following report:

Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad narrated to us he said Aḥmad ibn Dāwud al-Makki and Muḥammad ibn Zakariya' al-Ghallābi narrated to us, they said Bishr ibn Mihrān al-Khaṣṣāf narrated to us he said Muḥammad ibn Dinār narrated to us from Dāwud ibn Abi Hind from al-Sha'bi from Jābir, he said: The chief and the learned came to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, and he invited both of them to Islam. They said: 'We have embraced Islam, O Muḥammad, even before you!' He replied: 'You have lied. If you want, I can tell you what prevents you from embracing Islam.' They said, 'Tell us then!'

¹⁷ *Qur'ān*, 3: 61. Abu Nu'aym al-Aṣbahāni, *Dalā'il al-Nubuwa*, [pp. 354/355]. The Arabic edition cites the entire narrative in full, which is lengthy. This has been abridged for the English translation to only the portion relevant to the section at hand.

He said: ‘Your love of the Cross, your consumption of alcohol, and that you eat the flesh of swine.’¹⁸

Even if the phrasing such as ‘worshippers of the cross,’ can be found in authentic *isnād*’s, then it is reasonable to interpret them based upon the actions of the narrator, then to interpret them figuratively with the meaning, ‘people of the religion that venerates the cross as a central symbol within their belief,’ which can be seen as being akin to other types of sayings, like a ‘slave to the *dihram* and the *dinār*,’ e.g. a slave of money.

The people of the *Awthān*, similarly those worshipping the *Awthān*, are those who are *mushrikeen*, being differentiated from the *Ahl-ul-Kitāb*, or ‘people of the book.’ Textual narrations exist to confirm this. It is established that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him passed by a gathering that included Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Salul before Abdullah had embraced Islam. Within that gathering, there was a mixture of people, some from the Muslims, the *mushrikeen*, the ‘worshippers of *Awthān*,’ and the Jews. Abdullah ibn Rawāḥa was also in that gathering. Abdullah ibn Ubay covered his nose with his mantle and said ‘Don’t scatter the dust over us.’ And the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him greeted them. Al-Bukhāri recorded this in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* with an *isnād* that is extremely authentic. The version he records is in full, the majority of other scholars have recorded this in shorter or abbreviated forms.¹⁹ The *Ahl al-Kitāb* and some of their acts and sayings were attributed to *Shirk*. Some of their symbols like the cross have been named as *Wathn*. But, the term *Ahl-ul-Wathn* hasn’t been used to refer to them – one should pay close attention to this distinction. We would argue that some of these truths have remained hidden, even from scholarly experts within the disciplines of history and archaeology. They have not always made studious effort at impartial comprehensive investigation. Failures have been made to grasp all relevant texts and evidence. The result, is that they fell victim to a form of ‘insight deception’ as noted earlier. An example of this can be seen from what is recorded by the late Dr Jawād Ali:

¹⁸ Ibid. [pp. 355/356], abridged, pertinent to the section at hand.

¹⁹ References for the narration include: *Ṣaḥīḥ* Bukhāri [Vol. 4, no. 4290], *al-Adab al-Mufrad* Vol. 1, no. 1108], *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim [Vol. 3, no. 1798] and many others.

It is important to note that writings from the era of *al-Jāhiliyya*, as well as documented accounts from historical sources have mentioned the name of a deity for the sun, calling her as a goddess by her name, *al-Shams* (the sun). Regarding *al-Qamar* (the moon), there isn’t a corresponding name in that same respect. Indeed, it is mentioned as being ‘*Shahr*’ (seen, perceived) in texts from South Arabia. (The word) ‘*Shahr*’ relates to being the crescent moon in languages from South Arabia. People in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula still use this term to refer to it. Names though derived from its varying attributes predominate. Often, it is referred to as ‘*Wadd*’ in certain texts.

For those who may not have the requisite understanding of languages from the South Arabian region, they might assume that it is (in reference) to a the name of a god, while in actuality, it is one of the many names for the ‘mood god’ from among a certain people known as ‘*Almaqah*’ (or *Almuqh*). The meaning, referring to the ‘illuminator’, the ‘light’ among the Sabaeans, (also) denoting an aspect of evil. Similar is to be said of other names, which are mostly derived from attributes and not necessarily specific names like the sun. We also find this among the narratives from historical sources.

Among such accounts, there is mention that some of the Arabs had worshipped the sun, addressing it with a prefix as *al-Ilāhha* ‘the goddess,’ (also with) *laha*. Some of them worshipped Saturn, Jupiter and other celestial entities, as discussed elsewhere. (Yet) there is no mention of the moon in such accounts. It would seem that historians were unaware of (any notion of) the worship of the moon in the era of *al-Jāhiliyya*. Despite thorough examination of detailed historical accounts, it would seem evident that the during this era, the Arabs didn’t worship the moon. The reasons for that, is what was discerned from the people of Mecca and other tribes who had worshipped *Aṣnām*. They had believed that the *Aṣnām* were the means of approach to getting closer to Allah, influenced in part by the Qur’ānic mention of the worship during *al-Jāhiliyya* of *Aṣnām* and *Awthān*, without comprehending that they had made the *Aṣnām* as

intermediators and intercessors for the gods, which were celestial bodies in origin.²⁰

In response, we would argue that the last sentence is a glaring and clear mistake. The *Aṣnām*, or in particular the *Tamātheel*, are in themselves, lifeless entities, without the ability to hear, see or even think. How could they serve the function as being intermediaries or intercessors? The *Aṣnām* and the *Awthān* were either substitutes or representations of deities, acting as physical forms or dwellings for the supposed ‘gods’; in the minds of some, functioning as a conduit of communication, the ‘ears and eyes of the god.’ Some, but not *all* of these supposed gods were viewed as being celestial beings, spiritual entities with minds, souls but on a cosmic scale. There may have been occasion by some to equate them with certain celestial bodies. These ‘gods’ or ‘supernatural entities’ were distinct beings that were perceived to hear, see, discern, and reason; possessing ability, will, and choice. In turn, in the *mushrik* mind, such entities might have served as being intercessor or intermediaries for the supreme deity, ‘chief of the gods,’ the apex of divine hierarchy, namely Allah – who is Exalted and far above such absurdities being attributed to Him. Such beliefs were not limited to the Arabs but other *mushrik* nations with the concept of a central deity also had this. One should note that there is another category of *mushrik* nations which have dual or triadic central deities, and a third category without any central deity at all.

Definitions

Despite many advances in the subjects of ancient history, archaeology and other branches of science, the situation can become obfuscated; is it any wonder than many of the moderns are just as perplexed as the ancients in trying to decipher this? Cited in *al-Nihāya fi Ghareeb al Ḥadīth wal’Athar*, the entry for *ṣanam* is recorded as follows:

صَنَمٌ: قَدْ تَكَرَّرَ فِيهِ ذِكْرُ الصَّنَمِ وَالْأَصْنَامِ وَهُوَ مَا اتَّخَذَ إِلَهًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى. وَقِيلَ هُوَ مَا كَانَ لَهُ جِسْمٌ أَوْ صَوْرَةٌ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ جِسْمٌ أَوْ صَوْرَةٌ فَهُوَ وَثَنٌ

²⁰ Dr Jawād Ali (1968), *al-Mufaṣṣal fi Tārikh al- ‘Arab Qablal’Islam* [Vol. 6, pp. 175/176]

Ṣanam: The mention of the *Ṣanam* and the *Aṣnām* were repeatedly mentioned. And it is what was taken as a deity/god besides Allah the Almighty. It is said that it is something that has a *jism* (body) or *ṣoora* (image, pictorial depiction); if it doesn’t have a *jism* or *ṣoora* then it is a *Wathn*.²¹

Mentioned in *Lisān al- ‘Arab* is the following:

Ṣanam: The *Ṣanam* is known in singular form; (plural) *Aṣnām*. It is said that it is known from ‘Shaman’ and it is the *Wathn*. Ibn Seedah said: ‘It is carved from wood, and crafted from silver and copper; its plural being *Aṣnām*.’ Mention of *Ṣanam* and *Aṣnām* is found within the corpus of *ḥadīth*, and it refers to what is taken as a god besides Allah. And it is said ‘It is something with a *jism* (body) or *ṣura* (image, pictorial depiction). If it doesn’t have either, then it is a *Wathn*. Abul’Abbās narrated from Ibn al-‘Arābi: ‘(The words) ‘*al-Ṣanamah*’ and ‘*al-Naṣmah*’ refer to the *ṣoora* that is worshipped.’ In the *Tanzeel* of al-Aziz (says): ‘*Preserve me and my offspring from worshipping the Aṣnām*,’ [14: 35]. Ibn ‘Arafah said: ‘Whatever you take as gods, if it is without a *ṣoora* then it is a *Wathn*. If it has a *ṣoora*, then it is a *ṣanam*.’

It is said ‘The difference between (the wording of) *al-Wathn* and *al-Ṣanam* is that the former does not have a physical form, made of wood, stone, or silver, that is craved and worshipped. *al-Ṣanam* is a *ṣoora* without a body. From among the Arabs, there were those who made the erected *Wathn* a *ṣanam*. As narrated from al-Ḥasan, that he said: ‘Among the Arabs there was no individual except that he had a female *ṣanam* that he worshipped, and it was called the female of the tribe of so and so.’ From that, Allah the Mighty and Sublime says: ‘*In His place the idolaters invoke only females*,’ [4: 117]. The word ‘*ināth*,’ (females) refers to everything that does not possess a spirit such as wood and stone.²²

Next, is the definition found within *Tāj al- ‘Arus*:

²¹ *al-Nihāya fi Ghareeb al Ḥadīth wal’Athar* [Vol. 3, p. 56]

²² *Lisān al- ‘Arab* [Vol. 12, p. 349]. One of largest dictionaries of the Arabic language that was compiled by Ibn Manẓur, (d. 1311CE), historian, scholar and philologist.

Al-Ṣanam, one from the *Aṣṇām*, being mentioned on numerous occasions within the Qur’ān and (corpus of) *ḥadīth*. Al-Jawhari said: ‘It is, *al-Wathn*,’ and he has explicitly mentioned that they are (*sic.* the terms) synonymous. The difference between them was marked by Hishām al-Kalbi in his *The Book of Idols*, (arguing) that if the object is made from wood, gold, silver or other than that from the precious materials of the earth, it is considered a *ṣanam*; if it is made from stone, then it is termed *Wathn*. Ibn Seedah said: ‘It is carved from wood, fashioned from silver or bronze.’ Al-Fihri mentioned that the *ṣanam* is that which has a *ṣoora*, made into the form of a *timthāl*. The *Wathn* is that which doesn’t have a *ṣoora*. I say, this is the viewpoint of Ibn ‘Arafah. It is said, that *al-Wathn* is that which has no physical body, whether it be made from wood, stone, or silver; it is carved, and it is worshipped. (Regarding) a *ṣanam* is that which has a *ṣoora* but no body. It is said that the *ṣanam* has the *ṣoora* of a human being.

The *Wathn*, is what is other than that. That is mentioned in the *Sharḥ al-Dalā’il*. Others have said, if it has no body or *ṣoora*, it is a *ṣanam*, if it has a body or *ṣoora*, it is a *Wathn*. It is said that a *ṣanam* is (made from) stone or other than that. The *Wathn*, a carved rock. *Wathn* (*sic.* as a term) can be applied to the cross, and anything that distracts from the worship of Allah the Almighty. Upon that manner, Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him said: ‘*Preserve me and my offspring from worshipping the Aṣṇām*,’ [14: 35]. (This was) because he, peace be upon him, with his true cognisance of Allah the Mighty and Sublime, coupled with insight and wisdom, was not one to fear the worship of lifeless objects that used to be worshipped (in his era). It is as if he said ‘Keep me away from being occupied with that diverts me from You’; this was said by al-Rāghib.²³

One really must ponder upon the magnitude of the terrifying error contained in the citation from *Tāj al-Arus* by way of the statement from al-Rāghib. The *Aṣṇām* that the people of that era immersed themselves in, by venerating, sanctifying, and worshipping, even fighting to the death for, were,

²³ al-Zubaydi, *Tāj al-Arus min Jawāhir al-Qāmus*, [Vol. 32, p. 524]

in his view, nothing more than lifeless bodies in their beliefs, and yet, they worshipped them. What a ludicrous analysis.

The contemporary era

Blame though, if it is to be properly apportioned, should be directed towards contemporary Islamic activists, who have frozen themselves in the chamber of such earlier statements. As if, time stopped since the days of Ibn al-Qayyim and Ibn Taymiyyah. Contemporary research in various disciplines like archaeology, genetics, history and others are ignored almost completely. While admittedly, such fields are not without shortcomings, not least from preconceived notions or even psychological projections, the work of anthropologists, modern writers and others have provided copious evidence of the beliefs, customs and habits of peoples that were *mushrikeen*. And yet, there are some really terrible examples, such as that from *al-Wasaṭiyya fil’Qur’ān al-Kareem* by Dr Ali Muḥammad Maḥmud al-Ṣullābi, where he wrote:

The worship of *al-Aṣṇām* spread among mankind. Whether they were described as *tamātheel* of the angels, or *tamātheel* of ancestors, or entities in themselves. The *Ka’ba* which was built for the worship of Allah alone, was filled with the *Aṣṇām*, which numbered 360; other than the major *Aṣṇām*, (placed in) all directions. Indication that al-Lāt, al-‘Uzza and al-Manāt were *tamātheel* of angels is what has been reported in the Qur’ān al-Kareem in *Sura al-Najm*.²⁴

From this, I would respond that by Allah, there is no other god except Him, I have never come across *Aṣṇām* described as being the ‘*tamātheel* of the angels,’ in the way that comes to the minds of the people of Islam when speaking about the angels. They are, the honoured servants of Allah, as the verses clearly expound:

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَانَهُ بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُونَ، لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ، يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنْ ارْتَضَىٰ وَهُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَتِهِ مُشْفَعُونَ، وَمَنْ يَقُلْ مِنْهُمْ إِنِّي إِلَهٌ مِنْ دُونِهِ فَذَلِك نَجْرِيهِ جَهَنَّمَ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ

²⁴ Dr Ali Muḥammad Maḥmud al-Ṣullābi, *al-Wasaṭiyya fil’Qur’ān al-Kareem*, [p. 197]

And they say, 'The Lord of Mercy has taken offspring for Himself.' May He be Exalted! No! They are only His honoured servants: they do not speak before He speaks and they act by His command. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot intercede without His permission — indeed they themselves stand in awe of Him. If any of them were to claim, 'I am a god beside Him,' We would reward them with Hell: this is how We reward evildoers.²⁵

لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَلَا يَسْتَحْسِرُونَ، يُسَبِّحُونَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَا يَفْتُرُونَ

Those that are with Him are never too proud to worship Him, nor do they grow weary; they glorify Him tirelessly night and day.²⁶

What I found were *Aṣnām*, what al-Ṣullābi dubs as the 'tamātheel of the angels,' which were in fact perceived as being divine beings, stemming from a divine origin or genus. Held to be sons and daughters of a supreme god/deity, or of one of the major deities. Sometimes they are referred to as brothers, sisters, wives, companions from a divine tribe etc. In some instances, they are portrayed as being the wives and companions originally from mankind, but raised to divinity.

By Allah, the One besides whom there is no other god, I have never found among the Arabs, nor among most other peoples, *Aṣnām* that were described as 'tamātheel of ancestors.' Instead, such representations are found only among a minority of peoples, like the Chinese, where *Aṣnām* are described as 'tamātheel of ancestors,' if such a thing exists at all. These 'ancestors,' after their death, were believed to have been elevated to become divine entities, regardless of the mechanism behind this elevation, whether it was through incarnation, union, evolution and ascension, a transformation of their essence, or whatever fantastical ideas such deluded minds may conjure. By Allah, the One besides whom there is no god, none have worshiped *Aṣnām* for their own sake, meaning due to them being mere *only tamātheel* – statuettes or figurines, as is evident from the context beyond denial. This is an impossibility that does not exist anywhere in the world, among the foolish or even among animals. All *Aṣnām* are, in actuality, *representations* of supposed divine beings, intimately connected to them

²⁵ *Qur'ān*, 21: 26/29

²⁶ *Ibid*, [19/20]

with a strong bond, acting as complete substitutes on their behalf, without increase or decrease.

Some good examples exist from the contemporary era, and all praise is due to Allah. There are still some whose brains have not been plunged into retardation from the mistakes of Ibn Taymiyyah and lies of Wahhābism. As the Imām and martyr Sayyid Quṭb wrote eloquently in his work, *In the Shade of the Qur'ān*:

Then a refutation of the complex superstition the idolaters presented in opposition to belief in Allah's Oneness follows: 'True devotion is due to Allah alone. [As for] those who choose other protectors beside Him, saying, 'We only worship them because they bring us nearer to Allah,' Allah Himself will judge between them regarding their differences. Allah does not guide any ungrateful liar,' [39: 3]. Although they declared that Allah created them and the heavens and earth, they would not carry this belief to its natural and logical consequence which required that they devote all their worship and submission to Allah without *Shirk*. Instead they invented the superstition that the angels were Allah's daughters and even carved *tamātheel* (statues) representing angels so that they could worship these. They then claimed that their worship of these *tamātheel*, such as al-Lāt, al-'Uzzā and Manāt, was not in essence worship of them. It was merely a gesture to bring them closer to Allah, in the hope that these statues or what they represented would eventually intercede with Allah on their behalf.

Thus, deviation from simple, natural logic landed them in such a medley of falsehood: for the angels are not Allah's daughters, nor (were the) *Aṣnām* (actual) representations of angels. Allah, may He be glorified, does not accept such deviation. He neither accepts intercession on people's behalf nor allows them to draw closer to Him in this way. Humanity deviates from the logic of its own nature whenever it moves away from the simple faith of *Tawḥeed*, which is the essence of Islam, as it was the creed preached by every Messenger of Allah to adherence to a single divine being.²⁷

²⁷ Sayyid Quṭb, (2006), *In the Shade of the Qur'ān*, Translated by Adil Salahi, (Islamic Foundation Markfield: Leicester), [Vol. 14, p. 409]. The English translation of this cited passage has been modified slightly to bring it closer in line with the original Arabic text.

A truly remarkable argument made by Sayyid Quṭb, may Allah have mercy upon him. Yet despite its eloquence, some minor corrections are required to be made. Clearly, it would have been preferable to explicitly say, ‘*They believed* that the angels were the daughters of Allah,’ rather than how the text has expressed the notion. Emphasis must be placed on *their* belief, the Arab *mushrikeen*. Some of them fought to the death to preserve their idolatry. It wasn’t merely out of a whim or a thought. Furthermore, it would have been more accurate and precise to explain that ‘*their worship* of the angels,’ or ‘*their worship* of angelic *Aṣṣnām*,’ instead of expressing the matter as just being the carving of the *tamātheel* representing angels. Such wording could inadvertently convey the notion that their worship was directed at the *tamātheel* and not necessarily what they were representing. In reality, the entities they were worshipping were the angels, and the *Aṣṣnām* served as the representation of what they construed as a divine entity or entities. *Tamātheel* – statuettes, figurines, devoid of that necessary link to represent a supposed divine entity, are as they are – artistic depictions. On a side note, Sayyid Quṭb also errs in placing the invention of these myths to the Arabs, which is not historically accurate. Such myths, as with the *Aṣṣnām* were imported to the region. Some selective development and adaptation occurred, but these were not in origin native to Arabia.

May Allah also forgive Sayyid Quṭb for the slip of the tongue, or in this instance pen, for the wording to express that they claimed what they were doing was not in essence worship, but a gesture to come closer to Allah. Without question, the *mushrik* Arabs *believed* in the divinity of the angels, by designating them as ‘the daughters of Allah.’ They worshipped them because of this, as they expressed clearly ‘*We only worship them because they bring us nearer to Allah.*’²⁸ They sought to justify what they were doing by arguing that such worship was beloved to Allah – whom they believed to be the father of the gods, the supreme deity, so that worship was a) in itself, a means of drawing close and achieving proximity to Allah, as He loves and rewards those who worship His beloved daughters and b), an incentive for the angels, who are considered daughters of Allah in their belief, to intercede and mediate for them before Allah, the ‘Supreme Father God.’

²⁸ *Qur’ān*, 39: 3

Despite the eloquence of the text by the martyr Sayyid Quṭb, it seems that he didn’t fully grasp that ‘acts of worship’ don’t exist or can’t be conceived of *without* being preceded by the belief in divinity, as will be exhaustively explained in this series of books. He continued with the regrettable following passage, almost undermining what he had built up, he wrote:

Nowadays, we see in different parts of the world the worship of saints and *Awliyā*, which is similar in essence to the practice of the Arabs of old who worshipped angels, or *tamātheel* representing angels, to draw closer to Allah. Allah, in His limitless glory, defines the way that brings people close to Him: this is belief in Allah’s oneness without intermediaries or intercessors of any sort. ‘*Allah does not guide any ungrateful liar.*’²⁹

Hence making a mere superficial similarity from the apparent and likening this to the intended action, thereafter categorising it as being ‘acts of worship’ is thus invalid, it is impossible. Rather, the essential task is to try and *understand* the belief upon which the acts regarding the matter of ‘saints’ and the *Awliyā* actually is. Namely – is it a belief that deems them to be divine entities of any kind? Is it a divine being or entity in terms of creation, control, management, independent intervention; a delegated authority from Allah, the right of intercession without permission, rebellion against Allah followed by escape by flight; overriding legislative prerogative of command etc? If it is indeed the case, then the actions would be deemed as being ‘worship.’ Otherwise they wouldn’t be, in which case they may be forms of honouration, reverence or the like, and nothing more.

²⁹ Op Cit.

8. Israel and the Calf

Previously we mentioned that the Children of Israel, or rather some of them, when they departed Egypt, couldn't conceive of the idea of a deity except by way of a *ṣanam* (idol). For that reason, they wanted to make a *ṣanam* to Allah that they could sanctify. There is, consequently, no truth to what Shaykh 'Abd al-Aziz ibn Bāz mentioned, where he said:

ومن ذلك قصة بني إسرائيل مع السامري حينما وضع لهم من حليهم عجلًا ليعبدوه من دون الله فزين لهم الشيطان عبادته مع ظهور بطلانها

And from that, the story of the Children of Israel with the Sāmiri, who had fashioned for them a calf made from their jewellery, for them - to worship it besides Allah, so that devil (would be) adorned for them to worship it with the appearance of that untrue thing.¹

That quote was from the *fatwa* (legal responsa) by the Shaykh which was entitled: 'Rule of Islam in the Revival of Reports,' and can be found in the official sites. In response, we would submit that it is a brazen lie. It is nonsense, since Allah never said of the Children of Israel concerning this matter that it was 'to worship it besides Allah.' Rather, the wording was only about the 'taking of the calf.' Allah the Exalted, Sanctified by His names explicitly says:

وَإِذْ وَاَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ اَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَاَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ

¹ For example as published in the collection of *legal responsa* and various articles by Ibn Bāz. See: *Majmu' Fatawā' wa Maqālāt Muwanawa'ah* [Vol. 3, p. 337 (print edition, 2008)]. The *fatwa* was originally issued in 1982.

*We appointed forty nights for Moses and then, while he was away, you took to the calf – a terrible wrong.*²

Further to this, He also states within the same chapter:

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ اِنَّكُمْ ظَلَمْتُمْ اَنْفُسَكُمْ بِاتِّخَاذِكُمُ الْعِجْلَ فَتُوبُوا اِلَىٰ بَارِئِكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوا اَنْفُسَكُمْ ذٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِنْدَ بَارِئِكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ اِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ

*Moses said to his people, 'My people, you have wronged yourselves by taking the calf, so repent to your Maker and kill [the guilty among] you. That is the best you can do in the eyes of your Maker.' He accepted your repentance: He is the Ever Relenting and the Most Merciful.*³

Again, later in the same chapter He the Exalted states:

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَاَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ

*Moses brought you clear signs, but then, while he was away, you chose to take the calf - you did wrong.*⁴

وَإِذْ اَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَّرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاَسْمِعُوا قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَاَشْرَبُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ قُلْ يَنْسَمَا يَاْمُرُكُمْ بِهٖ اِيْمَانُكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِيْنَ

*Remember when We took your pledge, making the mountain tower above you, and said, 'Hold on firmly to what We have given you, and listen to [what We say].' They said, 'We hear and we disobey,' and through their disbelief they were made to drink [the love of] the calf deep into their hearts.*⁵

There are two further verses of striking import, as set out below where Allah the Exalted expressly states:

يَسْأَلُكَ اَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ اَنْ تَنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ كِتَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فَقَدْ سَأَلُوا مُوسَىٰ اَكْبَرَ مِنْ ذٰلِكَ فَقَالُوا اَرْنَا اللّٰهَ جَهْرَةً فَاَخَذْتُمُ الصَّاعِقَةَ يُظْلِمُهُمْ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ النَّبِيَّاتُ فَعَفَوْنَا عَن ذٰلِكَ وَاَتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ سُلْطٰنًا مُّبِيْنًا

² *Qur'ān*, 2: 51

³ *Qur'ān*, 2: 54

⁴ *Qur'ān*, 2: 92

⁵ *Qur'ān*, 2: 93

*The People of the Book demand that you make a book physically come down to them from heaven, but they demanded even more than that of Moses when they said, 'Show us God face to face,' and were struck by the thunderbolt for their presumption. Even after clear revelations had come down to them, they took the calf as an object of worship, yet We pardoned this, and gave Moses clear authority.*⁶

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ سَيِّئًا لَّهُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَذِلَّةٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُفْتَرِينَ

*Those who took to the calf will be afflicted by their Lord's wrath, and by disgrace in this life.' This is the way We repay those who invent such falsehoods.*⁷

Thus, one should understand that they 'never worshipped the calf *besides Allah*,' as expressed by Shaykh 'Abd al-Aziz ibn Bāz. Should there be any wonder at this level of knowledge and lack of diligence in reading the actual text of the Qur'ān, when the man originates from the sect of Wahhābism? He could not escape the clutches of that, since members of this sect: 'recite the Qur'ān, but it doesn't go beyond their throats,' and 'if anyone of you (compares his prayer with) their prayer, he will consider his prayer inferior to theirs, and similarly his fasting inferior to theirs'; 'they pass through the *Deen clean as the arrow passes through the prey*.' Moreover, 'They worship to be seen of, and impress people, (conceited) full of self-admiration,' which is inevitable given their rejection of diligence, thought and self-criticism. Self-praise and conceit is their mannerism, such that they 'kill the people of Islam, while leaving the people of idols.' Without doubt, 'they call to the book of Allah, though they have nothing to do with it.' Is it any wonder for that reason that the blessed Messenger, may there be peace and blessings upon him, reporting from Allah said of them: 'So, wherever you find them, kill them, for there will be a reward for their killers on the day of resurrection.'⁸

Shaykh 'Abd al-Aziz ibn Bāz was one such type from the sect of Wahhābism, the same individual who committed rational suicide by

⁶ Qur'ān, 4: 153

⁷ Qur'ān, 7: 152

⁸ These sentences are the reported Prophetic words in relation to the descriptive characteristics and markers of the *Khawārij*.

brazenly going on record to assert that the earth doesn't rotate around the sun, that the celestial bodies are fixed and other such ludicrous ideas. So, the depiction in the *ḥadith* of their state is quite apt, that they 'call to the book of Allah, yet have nothing to do with it.' We seek refuge in Allah from this humiliation and humbly beseech him to grant us the best of this world and that to follow it.

The reality of the calf

Given all of this, what then is the reality of *al-Ijl* - the calf? Or to be more precise with more accurate wording, the *timthāl* (statue) or *ṣanam* (idol) of the *ṣoora* (image) of that calf? The answer is provided direct from above the seven-heavens; for He the Exalted has said:

فَأَخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَهُ خُورٌ فَقَالُوا: هَذَا إِلَهُكُمْ وَإِلَهُ مُوسَىٰ فَنَسِيَ

*To produce an image of a calf which made a lowing sound, and they said, 'This is your god and Moses' god, but he has forgotten.'*⁹

The underlying understanding of *their* belief concerning the calf, or to be more precise: the *timthāl* (statue / figurine) or *ṣanam* (idol) of the *ṣoora* (image) of that calf, it is a *ṣanam* of Allah the Exalted; their god and the god of Moses peace be upon him. It is not an additional god or that which is worshipped *also besides Allah*. According to *what they believed*, there wasn't any need for Moses peace be upon him to ascend to the mountain summit at the behest of his Lord. Rather, *in their minds*, this is a matter that Moses in fact had 'forgotten,' out of ignorance or by mistake. As he had led them to the mountain, it was his right to be there with him, being a participant in what they were partaking in. To the closest meaning, it is essential to understand the root cause of those undertaking the acts in this situation and what the position of Moses (peace be upon him) was upon his return. There isn't a need for remote or far-fetched interpretations or making the entire incident totally as a result of the Sāmīri and 'forgetting *Tawḥeed*' as is often mentioned in the majority of works from the exegetes.

⁹ Qur'ān, 20: 88

There is a further discussion and detailed clarification concerning these matters in our study of the issue of ‘*Dhāt Anwāt*,’ which is the next chapter. Moreover, there is also a detailed chapter concerning the ‘*ṣanam*’ (idol) and its station of being worshipped in relation to a god, by way of a figurative statue or statuette; that being used as a representative or conduit of a god/deity. This and more, is covered in the present work outlining the basis of Islam and the essence of monotheism. Consequently, with an insightful reading of the book of Allah and a keenness to seek out the ultimate truth behind what is the actual reality of idols, the problem of understanding becomes that much clearer. The problem of also understanding the noble and majestic words as expressed in the book becomes clearly resolved. For He, Blessed and Sanctified by His names has explained:

وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتَوْا عَلَى قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَى أَصْنَانٍ لَهُمْ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ، إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ مَتَّبِعُوا مَا هُمْ فِيهِ وَبَاطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

We took the Children of Israel across the sea, but when they came upon a people who worshipped idols, they said, ‘O Moses, make a god for us like theirs.’ He said, ‘You really are foolish people; [the cult] these people practice is doomed to destruction, and what they have been doing is useless.’¹⁰

They wanted Moses to make for them a *ṣanam* that would be a substitute of Allah, the Exalted and Majestic. Saying this is not an innovation of the present author of this work, neither is it a statement made by any of those who consider themselves ‘modernists’ or even ‘rationalist.’ Rather, it is an old saying that emanates from Allah; one that must now be reiterated to elucidate its proper meaning. As has been reported in *Tafsir* al-Baghwi:

قال قتادة كان أولئك القوم من لحم وكانوا نزولاً بالبرقة فقالت بنو إسرائيل لما رأوا ذلك قالوا يا موسى اجعل لنا إلهاً أي مثلاً نعبده كما لهم آلهة ولم يكن ذلك شكاً من بني إسرائيل في وحدانية الله وإنما معناه اجعل لنا شيئاً نعظمه ونتقرب بتعظيمه إلى الله عز وجل وظنوا أن ذلك لا يضر الديانة وكان ذلك لشدة جهلهم قال موسى إنكم قوم تجهلون عظمة الله

Qatādah said: It was those people from Lakhm and they were descended from Raqqah. When the Children of Israel saw that, they said: ‘O Moses, make for us a *Ilāh* (god), that we may worship which

¹⁰ *Qur’ān*, 7: 138/139

is similar to their ‘*ālihah* (gods).’ This was not a complaint (or complaining) of the Children of Israel in (relation to) the oneness of Allah. But its meaning, make for us anything to (the semblance of which) may enhance our closeness to Allah. They thought that it would not harm the religion, such was their severe ignorance. Moses said: ‘Verily you are an ignorant people, and greatness is to Allah.’¹¹

That is also accompanied with the interpretation which is to be found in the *Tafsir al-Khāzan*:

قال البيهقي رحمه الله ولم يكن ذلك شكاً من بني إسرائيل في وحدانية الله تعالى وإنما معناه اجعل لنا شيئاً نعظمه ونتقرب بتعظيمه إلى الله تعالى وظنوا أن ذلك لا يضر الديانة وكان ذلك لشدة جهلهم

al-Baghwi, may Allah have mercy on him said: This was not a complaint (or complaining) of the Children of Israel in (relation to) the oneness of Allah the Almighty. But its meaning, make for us anything (the semblance of which) may enhance our closeness to Allah the Almighty. They thought that would not harm the religion, such was their severe ignorance.¹²

Mention is also made about it in the *Tafsir* of al-Tha’ālabi, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥassān fī Tafsir al-Qur’ān*:

And Ibn Jurayj said: The *tamātheel* (statuettes/figurines) of cows were made of stones, sticks, and so on, and that was the first trial of the calf, and their saying: ‘*Make for us a god as they have gods*,’ shows their approval of what they saw of those ‘gods,’ due to their ignorance, so they wanted that to be in the law of Moses, and in a sentence – ‘What draws him closer to Allah, otherwise it is far from saying to Moses: ‘Make us a *ṣanam* that we will worship, and disbelieve in your god.’ And for this I said, the similarity that the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him said, in relation to the words of Abu Wāqid al-Laythi: ‘O Messenger of Allah - Make a *Dhāt Anwāt* for us as they have a *Dhāt Anwāt*,’ and the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him said he denounced it. And he said: *Allahu*

¹¹ *Tafsir al-Baghwi* [Vol. 2, p. 227]

¹² *Tafsir al-Khāzan* [Vol. 2, p. 243]

*Akbar (Allah is greatest) by Allah you have said as the Children of Israel said, 'Make for us a god like their gods.' You shall follow the way of those who were before you. (From) the ḥadith; and Abu Wāqid didn't intend corruption by this matter.*¹³

May Allah have mercy upon al-Tha'ālabi, given that he has been somewhat confused here by the lack of clarity in his mind concerning the meaning of the word *ṣanam* (idol) and its relationship with that of *Ilāh* (god). Hence, he gave the addition: 'And some people said, that was from the Children of Israel's *kufr* (disbelief). The word '*Ilāh*' requires that, and this is possible, and what I mentioned first is more correct, and Allah knows best.'¹⁴ I would submit, and their saying: '*This is your God and the God of Moses,*' and Moses' answer here strengthens the second possibility, yes: who must believe that such matters came from their wickedness and those who are close to *kufr*.

Without any doubt, I would submit, that the phrasing as expressed in the Qur'ān is the most precise in existence; Allah has stated: '*Then they came upon a people who kept to the worship of idols.*'¹⁵ Indeed, it is Allah from his knowledge who has set out the reality of the situation by way of this expression; it is clear that it was not just simply a matter of *tamātheel*. Rather it was one of *Aṣnām*. In the belief of these people they had the conception of some linkage between the idol and their concept of divinity or divine beings. That was the essence of what they believed. The verse itself expresses that clearly: '*They said: O Moses! Make for us a god as they have gods.*'

In the narrative presented by Allah concerning the words expressed by the Children of Israel, or rather some of them, with the most concise and accurate representation that there were those who did not have the ability to distinguish a deity and the idol representing one. Thus, the image presented of them having the perception that a god is an idol and the idol is a god. The proof to substantiate that is where they said: '*Make for us a god as they have gods.*' We know of this absolutely because it is Allah who has informed us

¹³ al-Tha'ālabi, *al-Jawāhir al-Ḥassān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* [Vol. 3, p. 72]. al-Tha'ālabi is Abu Zayd 'Abdar-Raḥman ibn Muḥammad ibn Makhliḥ, [d. 875AH].

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *Qur'ān*, 7: 138

of the narrative. Undoubtedly, they have seen the *Aṣnām* (idols) of the people that they encountered. We are not informed of any detailed exchanges that may have taken place between them and the people they encountered; for example, whether they asked specifically about those *Aṣnām* or had other forms of encounters, like that which occurred during the narrative of the people of Ibrāhim which we will consider in due course.

Indeed al-Tha'ālabi, may Allah have mercy upon him, was good to point out when he referred to the phrase used in the narrative of the calf. The reality of their words being: '*Make us an idol (for Allah), as they have idols.*' Yet the expressed phrasing of the Qur'ānic text is far more accurate and more revealing of the nature of belief that they held and the corruption that clouded their concepts. Neither can it be excluded that they held divinity to be a national issue, each people or nation having a god or gods; the text indicates that, '*as they have gods.*' It would seem that they did not grasp that Allah is the Lord of *all creation*, there is no 'other' god/deity in existence, let alone a conception of a 'national' god for the Children of Israel.

As has been cited in the *Tafsīr* of the notable judge Abu Muḥammad Abdul-Ḥaq ibn Ghālib ibn Abdur-Raḥman ibn Tamām ibn 'Aṭiya al-Andalusi al-Muḥārabi (d. 542 AH):

The Qāḍi, Abu Muḥammad said: And what is apparent from the dialogue of the Children of Israel to Moses – '*Make us a god as they have gods,*' is that they have preferred what they saw from the gods of those people, so they wanted this to be in the law of Moses and in a sentence, that which brings him closer to god, otherwise it is far away to say to Moses: '*Make us an idol that we will worship, and disbelieve in your god.*' And Moses knew that this is ignorance from them, as they asked something forbidden in which to engage associates (or partners) in worship and from it he deals with the worship of *Aṣnām* and *kufr* in Allah the Sublime and Mighty. Similar is what has been said by the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him regarding the statement of Abu Wāqid al-Laythy during the conquest of Ḥunayn, as they passed through a great green sidra tree (it was said): 'O Messenger of Allah! Make for us a *Dhāt Anwāt* as they have a *Dhāt Anwāt*.'

(The) *Dhāt Anwāt* was an object that the *mushrikeen* used to hang their weapons upon and it was a convening place for them to gather

there. So, Abu Wāqid and the others put forth the suggestion to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him for him to legislate this and to allow them to do it. The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him saw that it was a pretext for the worship of that kind of sacrament, and he denied it utterly (to them) replying ‘Allah is greatest; this is like what the people of Moses said: ‘Make for us a god like their gods.’ You shall follow the way of those who were before you.’ The Qāḍi, Abu Muḥammad said: Abu Wāqid did not mean to intend corruption by this. Some of the people said, that was from the *kufir* of the Children of Israel. The word ‘*Ilāh*’ requires that, and this is possible, and what I mentioned first is more correct, and Allah the Almighty knows best.¹⁶

The Qāḍi, Abu Muḥammad, may Allah have mercy upon him, indeed caused harm with his Māliki principles of *Sadd’ al-Dharā’i* (blocking the means) and *Mā’lāt al-‘Amāl*, together with other speculative delusions that are not based upon definitive evidences, thus his statement: ‘and from it he deals with the worship of *Aṣṅām* and *kufir* in Allah the Sublime and Mighty.’ As for where he said: ‘in which to engage associates (or partners) in worship,’ that is a grave mistake, for there is no ‘association’ at all, neither in worship, nor in anything else. Rather, it is related to the harsh prohibition of taking Allah to be a *ṣanam*, and that is an act of *kufir*. A belief in the possibility of representing Allah with a *ṣanam* requires the necessity of comparing Allah to His creation, or the permissibility of Allah’s inclusion in some of His creation, by necessity this stems from the beliefs which constitute *kufir*. Indeed, it is likening Allah to His creation, and attributing inferiority to Him, and the permissibility of *al-ḥulool* (incarnation) and *al-Ittihād* (union with the divine) - in the final analysis it is the root of all *Shirk* and *kufir* in the world. Perhaps the format in the verse immediately following that, where it is stated is not fully grasped:

قَالَ أَعْبَدِ اللَّهَ أَبْغِيكُمْ إِلَهًا وَهُوَ فَضَّلَكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

¹⁶ *Tafsir* Ibn ‘Aṭiya [Vol. 2, p. 447]. The full title being *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajid fi Tafsir al-Kitāb al-Aziz*

*He said: Why should I seek any god other than Allah for you, when He has favoured you over all other people?*¹⁷

For some of the unenlightened minds, especially the minds of those who ‘recite the *Qur’ān*, but it doesn’t go beyond their throats,’ they would think that this contradicts what we have originally said: that they never wanted anything except for Allah, but only wanted a *ṣanam* or a *tamātheel* by way of a visual representation, just as it is the case with the *Aṣṅām* and on behalf of the supposed gods that these *Aṣṅām* are to take the place of. In response, we say, with the help of Allah’s guidance, that this is illusory, indeed a gross error. That is because the plain text of what Moses peace be upon him said to them is evident. They said: ‘Make for us a god as they have gods,’ and Moses said: ‘You really are foolish people; [the cult] these people practice is doomed to destruction, and what they have been doing is useless.’ With this, the complete response ends, as per the text. There is no doubt that Moses peace be upon him, lucidly explained to his people in simplified appropriate language what this situation was. Namely, that the true God, Allah, is One and the same. He is not an ‘individual of a species,’ nor of a genus; there is nothing comparable or unto His likeness whatsoever. Hence it is impossible that there could be any notion of there being a *ṣoora* (picture, image) or a *timthāl* (statue, figurine) of Him. He had not given them as yet a name to address Him by, that is until Allah had outlined it clearly for them: ‘*ehye ’āsher ’ehye*’ – ‘I am who I am,’ or Yahweh.¹⁸ Greater explanation for this will be provided in subsequent chapters with specific reference to the Old Testament. For the present discussion, the Old Testament passage reads:

Then Moses said to God, ‘Indeed, when I come to the Children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?’ And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the Children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ Moreover, God said to Moses, ‘Thus you shall say to the Children of Israel: ‘The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God

¹⁷ *Qur’ān*, 7: 140

¹⁸ The allusion here being to the Book of Exodus, [3: 14]: God said to Moses: “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you.” Often, it is rendered into English as being “I Am that I Am.”

of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.¹⁹

Then Moses peace be upon him, after the reply had been given, was instructed to teach them (the Children of Israel) about the attributes of Allah, what He is, what He isn't. Either in the present assembly or an alternate one, Moses spoke to them to outline what Allah the Almighty had instructed him, resuming with the wording: 'He said,' which means here: He added, saying; or he said after that on another occasion: 'He said: Why should I seek any god other than Allah for you, when He has favoured you over all other people?'²⁰ Perhaps he told them that if he had responded to their request and made a *ṣanam* for them, this idol would necessarily have been a statue of *something other than Allah*, whom they knew before when He named himself to them previously as being: 'I AM WHO I AM,' or Yahweh. The Children of Israel well knew that Allah had given them preference through saving them from the clutches of the Pharaoh; parting the sea and drowning their pursuers, and it is impossible that there be any representation of Allah to resemble His creation. Strength is lent to this matter by way of the fact that the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, when he cited these Qur'ānic verses in relation to the matter of *Dhāt Anwāt* didn't go beyond His saying: '*You really are foolish people,*' and '*You shall follow the way of those who were before you.*' Neither should it be ruled out that Moses peace be upon him gave the Children of Israel a stern reprimand for even using the word 'gods,' even if it was utilised in relation to the nation of people that they had encountered. No credence is lent to the notion of that; there is no 'other god' or 'gods' in existence. There is only Allah, Lord of all creation, and He is not 'exclusive' as the God of the Children of Israel.

What we have said about the justification for the repetition of the word 'he said' is in essence valid, as has been also mentioned by the scholarly litterateur Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir ibn 'Aāshur, may Allah have mercy upon him, in *al-Taḥrīr wal'Tanweer*:

Repetition of the word '*He said*' that is resumed in the continuation of the narrative relating to Moses' answer that Allah the Almighty

¹⁹ Old Testament, Book of Exodus, [3: 14/16]

²⁰ *Qur'ān*, 7: 140

relates: '*He said: Why should I seek any god other than Allah for you,*' similar is to be seen when He the Almighty said elsewhere: '*He said: All of you get out! You are each other's enemies,*' [7: 24] to where He said: '*He said: There you will live,*' [7: 25]. It would appear that it is repeated in the narrative of such sayings, if the narrative is quite long, or because it is relating to a transition from the purpose of reprimanding their particular question, to the purpose of (then) reminding them of the grace of Allah upon them. Gratitude for that blessings requires them to be restrained from attempting to worship that which is a non-benefactor. It is from ascending in the inference to the method of dialectical submission: if those 'gods' weren't in vain, an attempt at worshiping them and turning away from Allah who bestowed blessings upon you would be *kufr*; a call to foolishness and it is a far cry from joining them in such foolish matters.²¹

Regarding what was stated in the *Tafsīr* al-'Alusi:

'He said - 'Why should I seek any god other than Allah for you,' [7: 140]; this is the answer given, what is presented being an introduction and prelude to it. Perhaps that is why the wording of '*He said*' is repeated. The Shaykh al-Islam said: It is an initiation to clarify the affairs of Allah the Almighty that necessitate the worship to Him, Glory be to Him, after clarifying that what they requested of His worship is something that cannot be sought in the first place because it is null and void. Therefore, between them '*He said*' with each of them being the words of Moses peace be upon him. al-Shihāb said: '*The word 'He said' was repeated with a union between the two speakers because this is a rhetorical evidence of their preference over the worlds, and it was not inferred by mental objection because they are simplistic people.*'²²

What al-'Alusi has outlined is purely in error. This isn't the answer and it wasn't what was touted. Rather, this was a complete answer to our *Tafsīr*. As for what the Imām Ibn Taymiyyah made it: 'the start of an exposition,' appears closer to our statement except for his contradictory and false

²¹ *al-Taḥrīr wal'Tanweer* (Tunisian edition), [Vol. 9 p. 83]

²² *Tafsīr* al-'Alusi [Vol. 5, p. 40]

madthab in relation to knowing ‘god.’ He made a new statement relating to ‘The affairs of Allah the Almighty that necessitate the *takṣiṣ* (specification) of worship to Him, Glory be to Him.’ But the people didn’t ask for anything except a *ṣanam* of Allah; to speak of the *ṣifāt* (divine attributes) of Allah and what he should describe as a ‘god,’ regarding of whether it is a matter of particularisation to worship.

With it also, comes the unravelling of the problem concerning ‘*Dhāt Anwāt*’, which Shaykh ‘Abd al-Aziz ibn Bāz furnished us with the following comment:

And that is proved in the collection of al-Tirmidhi and others, with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād* from Abu Wāqid al-Laythi may Allah be pleased with him: We went out with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) for Ḥunayn and had recently left *kufīr*. Some of the *mushrikeen* had a Sidra-tree that they used to stay by its vicinity, and upon it they used to hang their weapons. They said of it, *Dhāt Anwāt*. So, when we passed by, we said: O Messenger of Allah! ‘Make for us a *Dhāt Anwāt* as they have a *Dhāt Anwāt*.’ In reply he peace be upon him said: ‘*It is an enormity what you have said. By the one in whose hand my soul is, you have said as the people of Moses said: make for us a god as they have their gods. You will surely embark upon the ways of the peoples before you.*’ What they said: Make for us a *Dhāt Anwāt* as they have a *Dhāt Anwāt*, resembling what the Children of Israel said: make for us a *ilah* (god) as they have their ‘*aliha* (gods). Thereby giving consideration to the meaning and objective behind the expression and not just the given wording.

Hence, we would say yes, indeed. The lesson by way of meaning and not simply that by way of wording. But it doesn’t appear that you have actually understood the original meaning, as you have not elucidated the wording; is that not evident? Given the seriousness of the topic concerned, you approach the reading of the book of Allah at such a superficial level, without digesting and representing it accurately. Thus, you definitely are from amongst those who ‘recite the Qur’ān, but it doesn’t go beyond their throats.’ That has been proved to be from amongst the traits of the *Khawārij*, those that go to extremes; those who are renegades, textually established by *mutawātir*

(continuously recurrent reports) from Allah’s seal of the Prophets peace and blessings be upon him. The inevitable result is: ‘*If anyone of (you compares his prayer with) their prayer, he will consider his prayer inferior to theirs, and similarly his fasting inferior to theirs.*’ They will ‘pass through the Deen clean as the arrow passes through the prey,’ and - ‘they call to the book of Allah, but they have nothing to do with it.’²³ Continuously, we seek refuge with Allah from such betrayal and we ask him for sanctity and wellbeing in this life and that to follow.

The truth that the *ḥadīth* of *Dhāt Anwāt* demonstrates that our companions mentioned weren’t the most fortunate, as they are those who ‘*recite the Qur’ān, but it doesn’t go beyond their throats.*’ Be that either in terms of understanding, or in terms of the manner of comprehending speech or precise words. Yet it is necessary to precondition to fully review all of the *aḥādīth* upon the topic, and its lines of reporting, to really get to grips with what actually happened. Given its considerable length, a separate stand-alone chapter has been prepared to elucidate these matters in detail.

²³ Again, these sentences are the reported Prophetic words in relation to the descriptive characteristics and markers of the *Khawārij*.

9. The story of *Dhāt Anwāṭ*

Following on from the previous chapter regarding the calf and the Children of Israel, we now have an in-depth look at the story of ‘*Dhāt Anwāṭ*’ that is mentioned in those narratives. Literally, ‘*Dhāt Anwāṭ*’ relates to ‘that upon which things are hung.’¹ As will be demonstrably shown, the story is authentically reported in the corpus of *ahādīth*. The body of evidence is considerable and will be detailed to show the various channels from where it is reported together with the narrators through which it has reached us. The significance of this incident isn’t to be underestimated or misunderstood. There are several important legal points which are arising from the various authentic narratives that have reached us, which will be analysed after the body of evidence is considered.

The ahādīth reporting the incident

There are multiple reporting channels through which the incident relating to the ‘*Dhāt Anwāṭ*’ occurred. These authentic channels are from Mālik, Sufyān ibn Uyayna, Ibrāhīm ibn Sa’d, Yunus ibn Yazeed, Ma’mar ibn Rāshid ‘Uqayl ibn Khālīd and Muḥammad ibn Ishāq. In addition to this, there are other independent channels which report the core of the incident.

Narrations reported through Mālik

Imām al-Ṭabarānī records this in *Mu’jam al-Kabir* with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*:

¹ For the chapter, the transliteration is utilised throughout - ‘*Dhāt Anwāṭ*,’ as opposed to the translated meaning.

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ حَدَّثَنَا الْقَعْنَبِيُّ عَنْ مَالِكٍ عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ عَنْ سِنَانِ بْنِ أَبِي سِنَانِ الدُّؤَلِيِّ عَنْ أَبِي وَاقِدٍ اللَّيْثِيِّ قَالَ خَرَجْنَا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِلَى حُنَيْنٍ وَتَحْنُ خُدَّاءَ عَهْدٍ بِكُفْرٍ، وَلِلْمُشْرِكِينَ سِدْرَةٌ يَعْكُفُونَ عِنْدَهَا، وَيَنْوُطُونَ بِهَا أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهَا ذَاتُ أَنْوَاطٍ. قَالَ: فَمَرَرْنَا بِالسِّدْرَةِ، فَقُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ اجْعَلْ لَنَا ذَاتَ أَنْوَاطٍ كَمَا لَهُمْ ذَاتُ أَنْوَاطٍ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، إِنَّهَا السُّنُّنُ، قُلْتُمْ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ كَمَا قَالَتْ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ إِلَهَةٌ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ لَتَرْكَبُنَّ سَنَنَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ

Ali ibn Abdul Aziz narrated to us al-Qa’nabi narrated to us from Mālik from Ibn Shihāb from Sinān ibn Abi Sinān al-Duwali from Abu Wāqid al-Laythi, he said: We went out with Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him to (the expedition of) Hunayn and we had recently left disbelief (we were still new in embracing Islam). The *Mushrikeen* had a Sidra tree that they were devoted to, hanging their weapons upon it, and it is called ‘*Dhāt Anwāṭ*.’ He said: So we had passed by this Sidra tree and We said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, make for us a *Dhāt Anwāṭ* just as they have their *Dhāt Anwāṭ*.’ The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *Allahu Akbar, you say as was said similarly to those before you. By Him in whose Hand lays my soul, similar was said by the Children of Israel: ‘Make a god for us like theirs. He said, ‘You really are foolish people,’ [7: 138] in following the ways of the people who came before you.*²

It is also cited in the *Sunnah* of al-Marwazi, with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*: ‘Muḥammad ibn Yahya narrated to us Abdullah ibn Muḥammad ibn Asmā’ ibn Ubayd al-Dabbī’ narrated to us from Juwayriyyah from Mālik from al-Zuhri from Sinān ibn Abi Sinān al-Dayali, narrating it from Abu Wāqid al-Laythi.’ Essentially, the reported wording is the same, with ‘we had recently left disbelief,’ [وَتَحْنُ خُدَّاءَ عَهْدٍ بِكُفْرٍ] the small variance at the beginning where the Prophetic wording begins with ‘That is an ancient practice, Allah is the

² al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabir* [Vol. 3, no. 3291]. In the original Arabic edition, the Professor quotes each of the narrations in full, with *isnād* and *matn*. For the English translation though to avoid difficulties in perusal, as well as lengthy repetition, we have a) introduced new sub-headings and b) abbreviated the secondary narrations to the *isnād*’s and variance of wording.

Greatest' [إِنَّهَا السُّنُّنُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ].³ Abu Nu'aym records the *ḥadīth* in *Ma'rifa al-Ṣaḥāba*, again with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād* via Mālik. Here, the wording variance is slight with the narrator Ibrāhīm ibn Sa'd saying: 'While we were new to our covenant from *Kufr*.' The other difference, specifying that they were *passing by* the tree that was named *Dhāt Anwāt*. The remainder wording is the same. Abu Nu'aym provides a follow-on comment with: 'The sequence of the narration stems from Mālik. He didn't mention Ma'mar, nor Ibn Ishāq. They were recent in their departure from *Kufr*.'⁴ Here I would argue this is the *ḥadīth* of Mālik, its *isnād* is *Ṣaḥīḥ* upon the conditions of the two-Shyakh (sic. Bukhāri and Muslim), by way of scholarly *ijmā'*.

Narrations reported through Sufyān ibn Uyayna

This is reported in the *Musnad* of al-Ḥumaydi, with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*: 'Sufyān narrated to us he said al-Zuhri narrated to us from Sinān ibn Abi Sinān from Abu Wāqid al-Laythi, that the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him to during the expedition to Ḥunayn he passed by a tree that was called '*Dhāt Anwāt*.' There is no significant variance of wording in the reported *matn*.⁵ It is also cited in the *Muṣṣanaf* of Ibn Abi Shayba, with the beginning of the *isnād* as 'Ibn Uyaynah narrated to us,' and in the *Musnad* of Abu Ya'la, with the *isnād* Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shayba narrated to us Sufyān ibn Uyayna

³ al-Marwzi, *al-Sunnah*, [p. 17, no. 39]. It is also reported in the *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal [Vol. 5, no. 21952] with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*, however it is mentioned without the extended text: 'Ishāq ibn Sulaymān narrated to us Mālik ibn Anas narrated to us from al-Zuhri from Sinān ibn Abi Sinān al-Dayali, narrating it from Abu Wāqid al-Laythi, he said: We went out with Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him to (the expedition of) Ḥunayn.' Thereafter mentioning the *ḥadīth* of Ma'mar and Ma'mar has a more complete *ḥadīth*.

⁴ Abu Nu'aym, *Ma'rifa al-Ṣaḥāba* [Vol. 2, no. 2021]. Here the *isnād* is particularly lengthy as it has various intersections of channels: 'Aḥmad ibn Sulaymān narrated to us Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm narrated to us 'Abd al-Razzāq reports, Ma'mar reports (*ḥawala*) and Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥasan narrated to us Bishr ibn Musa narrated to us al-Ḥumaydi narrated to us Sufyān narrated to us (*ḥawala*) and Abu Bakr ibn Khilāl narrated to us he said Muḥammad ibn Ghālib ibn Ḥarb narrated to us al-Qa'nabi narrated to us from Mālik (*ḥawala*) and Abdullah ibn Ja'far narrated to us Yunus ibn Ḥabeeb narrated to us Abu Dāwud narrated to us Ibrāhīm ibn Sa'd narrated to us and Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥamdān narrated to us al-Ḥasan ibn Sufyān narrated to us Ṭālut ibn 'Abbād narrated to us Ḥammād ibn Salamah narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Ishāq narrated to us, from all of them he said: from al-Zuhri from Sinān ibn Abi Sinān al-Duwali from Abu Wāqid al-Laythi, he said: We went out with Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him to (the expedition of) Ḥunayn.'

⁵ *Musnad* al-Ḥumaydi [Vol. 2, no. 848]

narrated to us.'⁶ In *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, al-Ṭabarāni records it as: 'Bishr ibn Musa narrated to us al-Ḥumaydi narrated to us Sufyān narrated to us, with it;⁷ and there is also that which is cited in the *Tafsir* of Ibn Abi Ḥātim, 'Hārun ibn Ishāq al-Ḥamdāni and Muḥammad ibn al-Wazīr al-Wāsiṭi narrated to us, they said Sufyān narrated to us, with it.'⁸ Al-Tirmidhi records the narration in his collection of *Sunan* with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*: 'Sa'eed ibn Abdar-Raḥman al-Makhzumi narrated to us Sufyān narrated to us from al-Zuhri from Sinān ibn Abi Sinān from Abu Wāqid al-Laythi.' Mention is made of the hanging of weapons upon the tree, and the beginning of the reported Prophetic wording exclaims *Subḥānallah* [سبحان الله]. Al-Tirmidhi's follow-on comment is: 'Abu Esa said: This *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ*. Abu Wāqid al-Laythi's name is al-Ḥārith ibn 'Auf; in this chapter, there are narratives from Abu Sa'eed and Abu Hurayrah.'⁹

There is a second channel that al-Ṭabari records, although the narrator Sinān ibn Abi Sinān is dropped from the *isnād*, which is clearly an error. The *isnād* reads: 'Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Alā narrated to us he said Muḥammad ibn Thawr narrated to us from Ma'mar from al-Zuhri, that Abu Wāqid al-Laythi had said.'¹⁰ It is cited in the *Tafsir* of Ibn Abi Ḥātim with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*.¹¹ It is also in *al-Sunan al-Mā'thura* of al-Shāfi'i with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*: 'I heard Sufyān ibn Uyayna narrate from al-Zuhri from Sinān from Abu Wāqid al-Laythi he said we passed by a tree with the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him.' The *matn* is abridged just to include the Prophetic wording of '*This is as the Children of Israel said, 'Make for us a god as they have gods.*'¹²

⁶ *Muṣṣanaf* Ibn Abi Shayba [Vol. 7, no. 37375]

⁷ al-Ṭabarāni, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir* [Vol. 3, no. 3292]

⁸ *Tafsir* Ibn Abi Ḥātim [Vol. 5, no. 8906]

⁹ *Sunan* Tirmidhi, [Vol. 4, no. 2180]. Al-Ṭabari has the narrative in his *Tafsir* with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād* that reads: 'al-Ḥasan ibn Yaḥya narrated to us he said Abdar-Razzāq reported to us he said Ma'mar reported to us from al-Zuhri from Sinān ibn Abi Sinān from Abu Wāqid al-Laythi.'

¹⁰ *Ibid*, [no. 15505]

¹¹ *Ibid*.

¹² al-Shāfi'i *al-Sunan al-Mā'thura* [p. 388, no. 400]

It is also cited across many other additional collections, again each having a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*.¹³ Concerning all the above, I would submit this is the *ḥadīth* of Sufyān ibn Uyayna, its *isnād* is *Ṣaḥīḥ* upon the conditions of the two-Shyakhs (sic. al-Bukhāri and Muslim), by way of scholarly *ijmāʿ*.

Narrations reported through Ibrāhim ibn Saʿd

The Imām Abu Dāwud al-Ṭayālisi records this in his *Musnad* with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*: ‘Ibrāhim ibn Saʿd narrated to us he said al-Zuhri narrated to us from Sinān ibn Abi Sinān al-Duwali from Abu Wāʿqid al-Laythi, he said.’ The reported wording is largely the same, together with the reported phrase of ‘we had recently left disbelief’ [ونحن حديثو عهد بكفر] included. The slight variance of wording has the Prophetic words expressed as: ‘You utter just as the People of the Book uttered to Moses, peace be upon him – Make for us a god as they have gods.’¹⁴ In *Muʿjam al-Kabir*, al-Ṭabarāni cites this also, with the *isnād*: ‘al-Ḥasan ibn Ishāq al-Tustari narrated to us Yaḥya al-Ḥamāni narrated to us Ibrāhim ibn Saʿd narrated to us, with it.’¹⁵ It is also cited in the *Sunnah* of Ibn Abi Aāṣim, again with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*: ‘Yaʿqub ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us Ibrāhim ibn Saʿd narrated to us from al-Zuhri from

¹³ It is also cited in the *Sharḥ Uṣul ʿItiqād Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jammāh* [Vol. 1, no. 204/205] with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*: ‘Abdullah ibn Muḥammad ibn Ali ibn Ziyād al-Nisāburi reported to us he said Makki ibn ʿAbdān reported to us he said Abdullah ibn Hishām narrated to us he said Sufyān narrated to us (*ḥawala*) and Aḥmad ibn Ubayd reported to us he said Ali ibn Abdullah ibn Mubashir reported to us he said Muḥammad ibn al-Wazir ibn Qays narrated to us Sufyān narrated to us, with it.’ There is also the citation for this in *Maʿrifat al-Sunan wal-Athar* [Vol. 1, no. 329] with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*: ‘Abu Ishāq Ibrāhim ibn Muḥammad al-Faqīh reported to us he said Abul-Naḍr al-Isfiryāni reported to us he said Abu Jaʿfar ibn Salāmah reported to us he said al-Muzani narrated to us he said al-Shāfiʿi narrated to us he said I heard Sufyān narrate from al-Zuhri.’ It is cited in the *Musnad* of Abu Yaʿla [Vol. 3, no. 1441] with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*: ‘Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shayba narrated to us Sufyān ibn Uyayna narrated to us from al-Zuhri, with it. Bayhaqy records the narrative in *Dalāʿil al-Nabuwa* [Vol. 5, no. 125] with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*: ‘Muḥammad ibn Abdullah ibn Yusuf al-Aṣbahāni narrated to us by dictation he said Abu Saʿeed Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ziyād reports al-Baṣri reports in Mecca, he said al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Zafarāni narrated to us he said Sufyān ibn Uyayna narrated to us, with it.’¹³ Also in *Muʿjam al-Ṣaḥāba* by Ibn Qānih [Vol. 1, p. 172] with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*: ‘Bishr ibn Musa narrated to us al-Ḥumaydi narrated to us Sufyān narrated to us, with it.’ And finally, it is also cited in *Dham al-Kalām wa-Ahlihi* [Vol. 3, no. 458] with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*: ‘al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abdullah reported to us Shāfiʿi ibn Muḥammad reported to us Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Salāmah reported to us in Egypt al-Muzani narrated to us al-Shāfiʿi narrated to us – I heard Ibn Uyayna narrate, with it.’

¹⁴ *Musnad* Abu Dāwud al-Ṭayālisi [Vol. 1, no. 1346]

¹⁵ *Muʿjam al-Kabir* [Vol. 3, no. 3294]

Sinān ibn Abi Sinān that he heard Abu Wāqid al-Laythi saying.’¹⁶ These are the narrations that are reported through Ibrāhim ibn Saʿd. The *isnād*’s are *Ṣaḥīḥ* upon the conditions of the two-Shaykhs (sic. Bukhāri and Muslim), by way of scholarly *ijmāʿ*.

A narration that is reported through Yunus

Imām Ibn Ḥibbān reports the narration in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* via this line of reporting with the *isnād* being: ‘Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Qutayba reported to us Ḥarmila narrated to us he said Ibn Wahb narrated to us he said Yunus reported to us from Ibn Shihāb that Sinān ibn Abi Sinān al-Duwali, they are the allies of Bani Al-Duyal, reported that he had heard Abu Wāqid al-Laythi saying.’ Here the variance of wording includes the following: ‘Being one of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, the Messenger of Allah conquered Mecca and he took us out with him at Ḥawāzin until we had passed by the sidra (tree) of the *Kuffār*, a sidra that they had worshipped around it. And they called this a ‘*Dhāt Anwāt*.’¹⁷ With regards to the Prophetic wording, this remains essentially the same. This is the narration that has been reported via Yunus.¹⁸ Its *isnād* is *Ṣaḥīḥ* upon the conditions of the two-Shyakhs (sic. Bukhāri and Muslim), by way of *ijmāʿ* of the critics.

What is noteworthy here is that the four Imām’s through which these collection of narratives are reported are among the top-class of reporters from al-Zuhri, namely Mālik ibn Anas, Sufyān ibn Uyayna, who are considered as the firmest among the people reporting from al-Zuhri, as well as Ibrāhim ibn Saʿd and Yunus. Each of these first-class narrators report that there was a passing by or encounter at a certain object (a tree) that was called ‘*Dhāt Anwāt*.’ Indeed, it is as they have reported and said.

Narrations reported through Maʿmar ibn Rāshid

¹⁶ *Sunnah* Ibn Abi Aāṣim [Vol. 1, no. 76]

¹⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān [Vol. 15, no. 6702]

¹⁸ Yunus ibn Yazid ibn Abi al-Nijād, d. 159AH [776CE]. Among the entries that Muḥammad Mustafā al-ʿAzami has for this narrator is: ‘Yunus b. Yazid. He wrote down everything from al-Zuhri. Ziyād b. Saʿd Sufyān asked him for his book from al-Zuhri, but he refused to give it, saying – al-Zuhri is here and you are a Ḥāfīz; after reading my book you might go to him and ask him without my knowledge.’ See: Muḥammad Mustafā al-ʿAzami [2000], *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature*, [Islamic Book Trust: Kuala Lumpur], [p. 93].

This narration has been cited in the *Jāmi' Ma'mar ibn Rāshid* with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*: ('Abd al-Razzāq reported to us he said) Ma'mar reported to us from al-Zuhri from Sinān ibn Abi Sinān al-Deeli from Abu Wāqid al-Laythi.' There is slight variance in the contextual wording, with the reporting as: 'We said: O Messenger of Allah, make for us a *Dhāt Anwāt* like the *kuffār* have a *Dhāt Anwāt*. They came to it every year and they attached their weapons on it, laying their cloaks down before entering.' The remainder Prophetic wording is essentially the same, save for an additional '*Allahu Akbar*' being mentioned.¹⁹ The full citation from the *Tafsir* of 'Abd al-Razzāq with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād* is: 'Abd al-Razzāq narrated to us from Ma'mar from al-Zuhri from Sinān ibn Abi Sinān from Abu Wā'qid al-Laythi, he said.' The additional contextual wording provided by the narration is: 'The *kuffār* used to hang their weapons upon it as well as venerating around it;' while the reported Prophetic wording is the same.²⁰

Next, the following has been recorded in the *Maghāzi* of al-Wāqidi, with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād* and some variance of wording. The *isnād* is: 'Ma'mar narrated to us from al-Zuhri from Sinān ibn Abi Sinān al-Dayali from Abu Wāqid al-Laythi, he is al-Ḥārith ibn Mālik, he said.' In terms of the textual wording reported:

'We went out with the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him to (the expedition of) Ḥunayn. The disbelieving Quraysh and those who were their equals among the Bedouin had a great big green tree named '*Dhāt Anwāt*.' They came to it every year and they attached their weapons on it, and they slaughtered before it and devoted a whole day to it.' He said: 'One day, while we were marching with the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him we saw a large green tree that concealed us from the side of the street.' We

¹⁹ *Jāmi' Ma'mar ibn Rāshid* [Vol. 11, no. 20763]. It is also in the *Tafsir* of 'Abd al-Razzāq, 'from Ma'mar'; in the *Musnad* of Aḥmad - 'Abd al-Razzāq narrated to us Ma'mar narrated to us, with it;' in *al-Sunan al-Kubra* of al-Nasā'i: 'Muḥammad ibn Rāfih' reported to us 'Abd al-Razzāq narrated to us, with it.'

²⁰ *Tafsir* 'Abd al-Razzāq [Vol. 2, no. 931]. It is cited in *al-Ibnā al-Kubra* [Vol. 2, no. 710] by Ibn Baṭṭa: 'Abul-Ḥasan Aḥmad ibn al-Qāsim ibn al-Rayyān al-Sabti narrated to us he said Iṣḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm Abu Ya'qub al-Dayri narrated to us he said Abdar-Razzāq narrated to us, with it.'

said: 'O Messenger of Allah, make for us a *Dhāt Anwāt* like they have a *Dhāt Anwāt*.'²¹

Numerous additional references for this are also found across the corpus of evidence.²² Concerning the above, this is the *ḥadīth* of Ma'mar ibn Rāshid, its *isnād* is *Ṣaḥīḥ* upon the conditions of the two-Shyakh's, by way of scholarly *ijmā'*.

Narrations reported through 'Uqayl ibn Khālid

There are two references for where this narration appears in the corpus of *ḥadīth*. The first, is recorded in the *Musnad* of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. The *isnād* for this is: 'Ḥajjāj narrated to us Layth, that is to say, Ibn Sa'd narrated to us 'Uqayl ibn Khālid narrated to me from Ibn Shihāb from Sinān ibn Abi Sinān al-Duwali al-Jundāmi from Abu Wāqid al-Laythi.' Essentially here, there is no great difference or variance in wording. The Prophetic wording as expressed remains the same.²³

There is also the citation also in the *Tafsir* of al-Ṭabari: 'al-Muthanna narrated to me he said Ibn Ṣāliḥ narrated to us he said al-Layth narrated to me he said 'Uqayl narrated to me from Ibn Shihāb he said, Sinān ibn Abi Sinān al-Duwali from Abu Wāqid al-Laythi, with it.'²⁴ Concerning the above, this is the *ḥadīth* of 'Uqayl ibn Khālid, its *isnād* is *Ṣaḥīḥ* upon the conditions of the two-Shyakh's, by way of scholarly *ijmā'*.

Narrations reported through Muhammad ibn Ishāq

²¹ Rizwi Faizer ed. (2011), *The Life of Muhammad: al-Wāqidi's Kitāb al-Maghāzi*, (London: Routledge), [pp. 437/438].

²² In the *Tafsir* of al-Baghawi it is reported with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*: 'Abu Sa'eed Abdullah ibn Aḥmad al-Ṭāhiri reported to us my grandfather, Abu Sahl Abdul-Ṣamad ibn Abdar-Raḥman al-Bazzār reported to us Abu Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn Zakariyā al-Udhafari reported to us Iṣḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Dabri reported to us 'Abd al-Razzāq reported to us Ma'mar reported to us, with it.' There is also the reference that is provided in *Akhbār Makkah* [Vol. 1, p. 129], by al-Azraqi: 'Abul'Waleed narrated to us he said my grandfather narrated to us from Muḥammad ibn Idris from Muḥammad ibn Umar al-Wāqidi from Ma'mar ibn Rāshid al-Baṣri from al-Zuhri from Sinān ibn Abi Sinān al-Diyali from Abu Wā'qid al-Laythi, and he is he is al-Ḥārith ibn Mālik, he said.'

²³ *Musnad* Aḥmad [Vol. 5, no. 21947]

²⁴ *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari [Vol. 13, no. 15058]

As reported in the *Seerah* of Ibn Hishām, the *isnād* for this is: ‘Ibn Ishāq said: And Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri narrated to me from Sinān ibn Abi Sinān al-Duwali from Abu Wāqid al-Laythi that al-Ḥārith ibn Mālik said.’ There is some variance in the contextual wording as reported which says:

‘We accompanied the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him to Ḥunayn, having recently left *Jāhiliyya*.’ He said: ‘The *Kuffar* of the Quraysh and other Arab tribes, had a great green tree that was called *Dhāt Anwāt*, to which they used to go every year, hang their weapons upon it; slaughter beasts beside it, and stay for a day.’²⁵

As with the previous narrations, the main thrust of the reported Prophetic wording is the same.²⁶ Indeed, I would submit that this is the narrative that Muḥammad ibn Ishāq heard from al-Zuhri and its *isnād* is *mutaṣṣil* (connected) and *ṣaḥīḥ*. Thus here, there are three-leading scholars: Ma’mar ibn Rāshid, ‘Uqayl ibn Khālid, both of which are firm authorities among the people in narrating from al-Zuhri; and the third, Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, heard this from al-Zuhri. All of them narrate the incident of passing by this ‘great green sidra tree,’ that it may be the ‘*Dhāt Anwāt*’ or another ‘*Dhāt Anwāt*.’

Hence, what they said, is what they said, we would say that there is nothing within these channels to demonstrably state for or against it being a specific ‘*Dhāt Anwāt*.’ We would argue that affirmation is given precedence over negation. Mention is made in the narratives of a ‘*Dhāt Anwāt*’ in particular by four of the senior trustworthy narrators. The most *ṣaḥīḥ* of the channels of transmission are according to the conditions as set by two Shaykhs (*sic.* Bukhāri and Muslim).

²⁵ *Seerah* Ibn Hishām [Vol. 2, p. 442]

²⁶ Imām al-Ṭabarāni also cites this in his *Mu’jam al-Kabir* [Vol. 3, no. 3293], with the *isnād*: ‘al-Miqdām ibn Dāwud narrated to us Asad ibn Musa narrated to us Yaḥya ibn Zakariyā Abi Zā’ida narrated to us Ibn Ishāq narrated to us al-Zuhri narrated to me from Sinān ibn Abi Sinān al-Laythi, thereafter al-Jundā’i from Abu Wāqid al-Laythi, that he said.’ It is also within the *Tafsir* of al-Ṭabari [Vol. 13, no. 15057]: ‘al-Muthanna narrated to me he said al-Ḥajjāj narrated to us he said Ḥammād narrated to us from Muḥammad ibn Ishāq from al-Zuhri from Sinān ibn Abi Sinān from Abu Wāqid al-Laythi from the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him, regarding it.’ And he has that ‘al-Ḥārith ibn Mālik’ is definitely a correction, but it is ‘and he is al-Ḥārith ibn Mālik,’ or *his name* is al-Ḥārith ibn Mālik. Bayhaqy cites this also in his *Dalā’il al-Nabuwa* [Vol. 5, p. 124] with the *isnād*: ‘Abu Abdullah al-Ḥāfiẓ and Abu Bakr al-Qādi reported to us, they said Abul’Abbās Muḥammad ibn Ya’qub narrated to us he said Aḥmad ibn Abdul Jabbār narrated to us he said Yunus narrated to us from Ibn Ishāq, with it.’

Independent narrations

But perhaps the following narration, which is entirely independent and based on what is contained in the channel by way of the wording expressed by Kathir ibn Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Awf al-Muzani, will clarify the issue in a definitive manner. The narration is reported by the Imām Abdar-Raḥman ibn Abi Ḥātim in his *Tafsir*:

My father narrated to me, Ibrāhim ibn al-Mundhir narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Ismā’il ibn Abi Fudeek narrated to us from Kathir ibn Abdullah ibn ‘Awf from his father from his grandfather, that he said: We were on a *ghazwa* with the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him in the year of conquest, being 1500 who had opened Mecca by (the permission of) Allah. And at Ḥunayn, in between there and al-Ṭā’if we were among woodland, from which there was a Sidra (tree) upon which weapons were hung, it was called ‘*Dhāt Anwāt*,’ and it was worshipped besides Allah [وكانت تُعْبَدُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ].

When the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him saw it, he turned away from it, being a sunny day, seeking a shade other than it. A man said to the Messenger of Allah: ‘Make for us a *Dhāt Anwāt* like they have a *Dhāt Anwāt*.’ The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him: ‘*That’s an ancient practice. By Him in whose hand lays my soul, you have said as the Children of Israel said to Moses: ‘Make for us a god like they have gods.’* And he said: ‘*Why should I seek any god other than Allah for you, when He has favoured you over all other people?*’²⁷

As per the channel, ‘Amr ibn ‘Awf al-Muzani may Allah be pleased with him is from among the *Sābiqeen al-Awaleen*, having prayed to the two-Qiblah’s. This narration is in agreement, rather it is almost identical to the aforementioned authentic narrations that have been outlined. There is nothing wrong with it in its reported text except:

²⁷ *Tafsir* Ibn Abi Ḥātim [Vol. 5, no. 8910]. The last verse quoted is from [7: 140]. Imām al-Ṭabarāni also reports this in his *Mu’jam al-Kabir* [Vol. 17, no. 27] with the *isnād*: ‘Masada ibn Sa’d al-Aṭṭār narrated to us Ibrāhim ibn al-Mundhir narrated to us Ibn Abi Fudeek narrated to us from Kathir ibn Abdullah al-Muzani from his grandfather, he said narrating it.’

1. Some of the narrators, or perhaps the dictating scribes have erred when mention is made of being over 1500 in number, when in fact it is more than ten-thousand. Perhaps it was meant to suggest the number being from *his* tribe, so it is not fatal overall.
2. Where he said: ‘*Why should I seek any god other than Allah for you, when He has favoured you over all other people?*’²⁸ What is *Ṣaḥīḥ* is that he only recited up to: ‘*You really are foolish people,*’²⁹ as demonstrated by the narratives of Mālik and Yunus. What the traditions of the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him demonstrate by way of eloquence and *Jawāmi’ al-Kalim*, is that this is used as a precedent of reasoning and inclusion, which one finds similar in many *Ṣaḥīḥ* traditions.

Overall the matter reaches the transmission level of *mutawātir* (continuously recurrent report), which is useful to acknowledge for definiteness and certainty. Any lingering suspicion about the proof relating to this incident, is refuted by the following brief narration, from an independent reference, and a completely independent path, as cited in the *Maghāzi* of al-Wāqidi:

حَدَّثَنِي ابْنُ أَبِي حَبِيبَةَ عَنْ دَاوُدَ بْنِ الْحَصِينِ عَنْ عِكْرَمَةَ عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ كَانَتْ ذَاتُ أَنْوَاطٍ شَجَرَةً عَظِيمَةً، أَهْلُ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَدْخُونَ بِهَا وَيَعْكُونَ عَلَيْهَا يَوْمًا، وَكَانَ مَنْ حَجَّ مِنْهُمْ وَضَعَ رِذَاءَهُ عِنْدَهَا، وَيَدْخُلُ بِغَيْرِ رِذَاءٍ تَعْظِيمًا لَهَا، فَلَمَّا مَرَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ (. . .) إِلَى حُنَيْنٍ قَالَ لَهُ رَهْطٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ فِيهِمُ الْخَارِثُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ اجْعَلْ لَنَا ذَاتَ أَنْوَاطٍ كَمَا لَهُمْ ذَاتُ أَنْوَاطٍ. فَكَرَّرَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، ثَلَاثًا، وَقَالَ: هَكَذَا فَعَلَ قَوْمٌ مُوسَى بِمُوسَى

Ibn Abi Ḥabiba narrated to me from Dāwud ibn al-Ḥuṣṣain from ‘Ikrima from Ibn ‘Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him, he said: ‘*Dhāt Anwāṭ*’ was a large tree. The people of *Jāhiliyya* slaughtered before it and were devoted to it for one day. He who made pilgrimage among them put down his cloak at the tree and entered (the sanctum) without his cloak, glorifying it. When the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him passed by to Ḥunayn, a group of his companions said to him (among them) al-Ḥārith ibn Mālik, ‘O

²⁸ *Qur’ān*, 7: 140. *Tafsir* Ibn Abi Ḥātim [Vol. 5, no. 8910]

²⁹ The end of verse at 7: 138

Messenger of Allah, make for us a *Dhāt Anwāṭ* like they have a *Dhāt Anwāṭ*.’ The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him proclaimed *takbir* three-times. He said: *Thus, did the people of Moses act with Moses.*³⁰

Summary analysis

Taken as a whole, all these narratives necessitate reducing the story to its core essence and this shows the following:

1. That they (sic. the Prophet and Companions) had passed by something called a ‘*Dhāt Anwāṭ*.’
2. What the Companions had said, and the answer that the Prophet had given to them is fully reported.
3. Those who had reported what was said, or most of them, were new to Islam, having recently disavowed *kufir*. And it is not of great import; was Abu Wāqid al-Laythi himself one of those who said what was reported? Or that he had used the wording of ‘we said,’ because the majority of those who said are from his tribe. He himself is not one of those who said that because he is old in Islam, he witnessed Badr. As has been said, it is not of great import what the actual number is, be it three or even three-thousand. Added to that also, the narrative provided by ‘Amr ibn Awf al-Muzani, may Allah be pleased with him.
4. The incident occurred after the glorious conquest of Mecca, and the resounding victory over Ḥawaāzin, on the route between Ḥunayn and al-Ṭā’if. The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him was on route to Ṭaqif in al-Ṭā’if to discipline her for participating in Ḥawaāzin, aggression and war against Allah and His Messenger. Ṭaqif had given support, but now the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him had mastery over the region. The enemies were overwhelmed as he had unsheathed his sword subjecting them to a crushing defeat – a matter of historical record, though secondary to the matter now at hand. Even if this was on the way to Ḥunayn before the battle, it is in the area of

³⁰ Faizer *al-Wāqidi’s Kitāb al-Maghāzi*, [p. 438]. It appears as ‘*bi-hā*’ [بها] as per the original text report, which is a obvious typo. The correct form would be ‘*la-hā*’ [لها]. In addition to this, the portion marked in parentheses with three dots, seems to be missing in the original text itself.

the Sultan of Mecca, which he had defeated, a glorious opening and destruction of the temples of its idols. Thus, the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him was master of that region, having conquered it, subjecting it to his authority.

5. That the tree of ‘*Dhāt Anwāt*,’ was worshipped besides Allah. This is how it was stated in the narration of ‘Amr ibn Awf al-Muzani, may Allah be pleased with him.
6. He (the Prophet) *did not* cut down the tree of ‘*Dhāt Anwāt*,’ nor did he order it to be done; he avoided it, neither seeking any shade that it provided, despite its considerable size and breadth.

With regards to the reason for *not* cutting down the ‘*Dhāt Anwāt*,’ despite it being definitely and undisputedly an idolatrous idol that was worshipped besides Allah, it would appear in my estimation to be because in essence, it was a tree. In other words, meaning because it was something that was a natural thing and not an artificial construct per se. It was not a deliberate artificial construct borne of human actions, such as the temple of al-Uzza at Nakhla, which would appear to have been some sort of structure built around a large acacia tree or multiples of them. It was a pavilion or tent-like structure, probably mostly made of animal hair, and perhaps some parts of it were fashioned from stone. Hence, the building couldn’t be removed except by cutting or burning those trees altogether. Or, similar to the temple of al-Lāt in al-Ṭā’if, which was built with curtains to resemble the *Ka’ba*, on a white square carved rock, surrounding it was a courtyard that served as a sanctuary, As has been reported in the *Tafsir* of Ibn Kathir:

وَكَاثِبَتِ اللَّاتُ صَخْرَةً بَيْضَاءَ مَنُوشَةَ وَعَلَيْهَا بَيْتٌ بِالطَّائِفِ، لَهُ أَسْتَارٌ وَسِدَنَةٌ وَحَوْلَهُ فِنَاءٌ مُعْظَمٌ عِنْدَ أَهْلِ الطَّائِفِ، وَهُمْ تَقِيْفٌ وَمَنْ تَابَعَهَا، يَفْتَخِرُونَ بِهَا عَلَى مَنْ عَدَاهُمْ مِنْ أَحْيَاءِ الْعَرَبِ بَعْدَ فُرَيْشٍ

al-Lāt was a white rock bearing an inscription, upon which a building was erected over it at al-Ṭā’if. It had curtains, servants and a sacred courtyard around it. The people of al-Ṭā’if, the tribe of Thaqif and their allies had worshipped it. They are proud of it over those who opposed them from the surrounding Arab tribes after the Quraysh.³¹

³¹ *Tafsir* Ibn Kathir [Vol. 7, p. 422]

So the building was removed, and ‘the sanctuary’ abolished, in a manner similar to that of what has been reported in the *Tārikh al-Madina* by Ibn Shabba:

al-Ḥizāmi narrated to us he said Muḥammad ibn Fuleeh narrated to us from Musa ibn ‘Uqba from Ibn Shihāb, he said: After the killing or ‘Urwa ibn Mas’ud, several dozen men who were among the notables of Thaqif came as a delegation. These included the leaders of Thaqif, such as Kināna ibn ‘Abd Yā’lil and Uthmān ibn Abi al-Aāṣ ibn Bishr. They approached the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him to seek reconciliation and judgement. He narrated a lengthy report until he reached the story of the destruction of al-Lāt. Then he said: The emissaries of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, came to them, with their leader Khālid ibn al-Walid among them, and also al-Mughira ibn Shu’ba. When they arrived, they went to al-Lāt and demolished it. (From the Thaqif, both men and women, and even children, gathered to watch. The people of Thaqif, in general, didn’t believe that it could be destroyed. al-Mughira ibn Shu’ba, may Allah be pleased with him, then took a pickaxe and said: ‘I will make you laugh, O Thaqif.’ He struck the idol with the pickaxe and then started running away. The people of the city let out a single cry, saying, ‘May Allah remove al-Mughira far away; he has been killed by the goddess.’

When they saw him fall as he was running. They said, ‘Whoever among you wishes, let him come forward and make an effort to destroy it,’ swearing by Allah that it could never be done. al-Mughira then jumped up and said, ‘May Allah disgrace you, O people of Thaqif! It is nothing but stones and clay. Turn to the forgiveness of Allah and worship Him.’ Then he struck the idol and broke it, and he climbed onto its enclosure, with men following him. They continued to demolish it, stone by stone, until they levelled it with the ground. The custodian of the shrine said: ‘The foundations will surely be angry with them and will bring destruction upon them.’ When Al-Mughira heard this, he said to Khālid, ‘Let me dig out its foundation.’

So they dug until they extracted its soil, removed its treasures, and took its curtains. Thaqif was left in astonishment.³²

The context for this is set out lucidly in the *Maghāzi* of al-Wāqidi:

Abu Sufyān and al-Mughira and their companions set out to destroy the *Rabba* (goddess). When they were close to al-Ṭā'if al-Mughira said to Abu Sufyān: 'Step forward and enter for the affair of the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him.' Abu Sufyān said: 'Rather, you step forward to your people!' So, al-Mughira went ahead while Abu Sufyān stayed with his property in Dhul'Harm. al-Mughira entered with about ten men to destroy the *Rabba*. When they alighted in al-Ṭā'if, it was 'Isha, so they stayed the night, and went the next morning to destroy the *Rabba*. al-Mughira said to his companions who arrived with him, 'Today, I will surely make you laugh about the (tribe of) Thaqif.' And he took a pickaxe and settled on the head of the *Rabba*. And he held a pickaxe, and as he stood, his people, the Banu Mu'attib, stood near him. They had weapons for fear that he would be wounded, just as his uncle, 'Urwa ibn Mas'ud.

When al-Mughira struck with the pickaxe, he fell in a swoon, agitated over it. The people of al-Ṭā'if shouted in one voice, 'No! You claim that the goddess does not resist. Rather, by God, she is resisting.' al-Mughira stayed in that situation for a while. Then he sat up and said: 'O people of Thaqif, the Bedouin used to say, Not a tribe from the tribes of the Bedouin is more intelligent than Thaqif. But not a tribe from the tribes of the Bedouin is more stupid than you! Woe unto you! What are al-Lāt and al-'Uzza and the goddess? Are they not stones like this stone? It does not know who worships it and who does not worship it! Woe unto you, did al-Lāt hear or see or benefit or injure?' Then he destroyed her. And the people destroyed with him. The priest began to say: 'The priests of al-Lāt from the Thaqif. were the Banu 'Ijlān ibn 'Attāb ibn Mālik. Its owner among them was 'Attāb ibn Mālik ibn Ka'b, then his sons after him. He says: 'You will see what happens when he reaches its foundation, that the foundation will be angry and swallow them.' When al-Mughira heard

³² Ibn Shabba *Tārikh al-Madina* [Vol. 2, pp. 501, 505]

that, he turned and dug the foundation until he reached as deep as the middle of a man, and he reached al-Ghabghhab with its treasures. They pulled its ornaments and its robe and what was in it of perfume and gold and silver.³³

Given the above, I would argue that in the context set out by al-Wāqidi, Abu Sufyān ibn Ḥarb was mentioned in place of Khālid ibn al-Waleed, and other notable differences that would necessitate definitively, that it is narrated from someone *other* than al-Zuhri. This is the case in both contexts in considerable detail, with not a single letter being mentioned about the inscribed white rock. It is impossible for it to have been broken, or scratched, or they wanted to do so and were unable to, and not a single letter is mentioned in this long report, or other similar reports, regardless of the degree of its evidence. It is said to be - the inscribed white rock, which is still under the old minaret of the *masjid* of Abdullah ibn 'Abbās. The reason for not breaking or erasing it, and Allah knows best, is that in essence it is a natural rock. And the inscriptions upon it arise from human agency, which are secondary in nature. So, they do not necessitate breaking them or erasing them; perhaps they will be extracted one day, and their inscriptions will be photographed, analysed and read.

The reality of the story of 'Dhāt Anwāt'

Firstly that 'Dhāt Anwāt' was 'worshipped instead of Allah,' that is, it was an idolatrous idol. The issue is not just one of *Tabbaruk* as some have stretched the imagination to try and argue.³⁴ It is most likely an idol dedicated to al-Lāt, if it was in the Ṭā'if area after the fall of Ḥunayn. Or it was an idol for al-Uzza, if it was in the area of Mecca before the fall of Ḥunayn.

Secondly, that he peace and blessings be upon him said unto them: 'By Him in whose Hand lays my soul, similar was said the nation of Moses: 'Make a god for us like theirs.' He said: 'You really are foolish people.'³⁵ Its reality being: a similitude to the essence of what they were saying: taking

³³ Faizer *al-Wāqidi's Kitāb al-Maghāzi*, [pp. 475/476].

³⁴ The meaning often rendered into English is that it is as a means to seek goodness or blessing by virtue of touching or being close to something.

³⁵ *Qur'ān*, 7: 138

an idolatrous statue for Allah, through which they would receive some form of blessing by Allah. In essence, the statement of the Children of Israel: is to take a *Ṣanam* for Allah, through which their worship would reach Allah. Clearly it isn't a metaphorical statement of exaggeration. Neither is it an analogy relating to some aspects of their saying to some aspects that the Children of Israel said. Whomsoever claims otherwise would have to provide substantive proof.

Thirdly, the saying: 'make for us a *Dhāt Anwāt* just as they have their *Dhāt Anwāt*,' is just like their (the Children of Israel) saying: 'Make for us a god like theirs,' which is a statement of *kufr*. Indeed, a matter of *kufr* for the one uttering it, unless one of the well-known impediments to *takfeer* of that specific person would apply, such as ignorance or interpretation. The situation here may be an admixture of both ignorance and interpretation.

It is not the case, as was claimed by Abu Abdullah al-Maṣri, one of the students of knowledge, who marshalled many books and published on the internet a paper entitled: 'Detailing the errors in understanding arising from the matter of *Dhāt Anwāt*.' It was part of a series related to the 'defence of the Companions.' There was some joy in locating this research originally, however after it was downloaded and perused, it turned out to be a great disappointment. The author appointed himself ostensibly to 'defend the Companions,' as if they needed his defense, or as if he had received a legal agency from Abu Wāqid al-Laythi may Allah be pleased with him, from beyond the grave. Even assuming that there is a good reason for this, it is not the crux of the issue in this story. Moreover, the author read the texts and in himself formed a preconceived opinion and desire that he chose, namely that 'there is no excuse for ignorance in *kufr*.' He twists the neck of the texts to lead them to his desire, instead of surrendering to the infallible revealed texts so that they *lead him* to their realities, as is the case of the true believers:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا

*When Allah and His Messenger have decided on a matter that concerns them, it is not fitting for any believing man or woman to claim freedom of choice in that matter: whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger is far astray.*³⁶

So there is no accusation of injustice towards the author, here is the text of what he says:

Those who say excuses for ignorance in all matters argue with this *ḥadith* that the *Ṣahāba* committed *Shirk* and the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him excused them out of their ignorance and they did not commit *kufr*. And they made this as evidence that whomsoever commits *Shirk Akbar* (major polytheism) out of ignorance does not become a *kāfir*. Those opposing brought some texts to the scholars to support their understanding of the *ḥadith*. The answer to this opposition is twofold.

Detailed here is the responses that Abu Abdullah al-Maṣri outlines:

Firstly, to say, and by Allah is all *tawfeeq*: those who had made this request, similar to innovation, had recently disavowed *kufr*. They asked, they didn't act. The scholars have stated that they asked for that in mere resemblance, to have a tree to which they could entrust their weapons, and retrieve them from. And not from it victory, because blessings descend from Allah the Almighty. For that reason, they asked the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him: 'Make for us a *Dhāt Anwāt* just as they have their *Dhāt Anwāt*.' They did not claim this from their own selves regarding it, but they wanted it to be bestowed from Allah by way of His Prophet and chosen one, peace and blessings be upon him.

And as I said before - they sought it as a matter of victory and not from it, as in the *Ṣaḥīḥ ḥadith* - 'We were given rain by such and such.'³⁷ That is to say: because of the star, not by it, because saying that it rained because of the star, then this would be innovation and

³⁶ *Qur'ān*, 33: 36

³⁷ The allusion being to several reported *aḥādith* in which the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him was reported to have said: 'But the one who says: We have been given rain by such and such a star he has disbelieved in Me and believed in the stars.' One such narration is to be found in the *Sunan* of al-Nasā'i, narrated by Zayd ibn Khālid al-Juhani.

Shirk Asghar (minor polytheism). They sought victory with it, but the caveat that they fell into was the matter of resemblance to the *mushrikeen*, so the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him cut off the substance of similarity from its very root. And he said: *By Him in whose Hand lays my soul, similar was said by the Children of Israel – ‘Make a god for us like theirs.’*

Responses

Given this, we would say, from where did you get that they had only ‘asked for that in mere resemblance of *bidah*’ - innovation? Yet they had said explicitly and without equivocation, ‘Make for us a *Dhāt Anwāt* just as they have their *Dhāt Anwāt*.’ The belief of the *mushrikeen* in the *Dhāt Anwāt* is known explicitly or by way of indicative evidence. This is especially true regarding the statement that we have, albeit with some weakness, that the *Dhāt Anwāt* was that which ‘was worshipped besides Allah.’ Moreover, the Prophet reprimanding them in relation to that *Tamātheel*, responding to their saying with saying that this was also said by the Children of Israel - that is an explicit statement of *kufr*. And what of Abu Wāqid’s apology, either for himself, his tribe or both, because they had recently disavowed *kufr*?

Here we would retort - how did you know that what they asked for was only ‘resemblance in innovation,’ since they explicitly said without equivocation: ‘make for us *Dhāt Anwāt* just as they have a *Dhāt Anwāt*,’ and the belief of the *mushrikeen* in *Dhāt Anwāt* is known explicitly or by supporting evidences, especially a narration, albeit it can be considered weak, about *Dhāt Anwāt* that it is ‘worshipped besides Allah?’ Moreover, the similarity emphasised by the Prophet of their saying to the saying of the Children of Israel, which is an explicit blasphemous saying, and Abu Wāqid’s apology on behalf of himself or his people or both of them because they were recent converts to Islam? It will be of no benefit to you to say: ‘the scholars stated that they (the Companions) asked only for resemblance in having a tree upon which they can hang their weapons and seek with – *bihā*, is not from it - *minhā*, in terms of victory, because of the blessings sent down from Allah, May His Majesty be Glorified, on it.’ So, we have the right to ask these ‘scholars,’ and we will soon cite samples of their statements - from where did you get this? Even though your statement ‘from it’ has no

meaning at all because they did not believe that blessing is *from the tree in itself as being a tree*.

This is an absurdity that even the inmates of mental institutions would not believe. Rather, it was an idol that represents either al-Lāt or al-‘Uzza or any other supposed divine beings whether they are upper angelic, lower satanic, or in between earthly *Jinn*.³⁸ Thus, it does not matter whether to seek from it or with it, and all these nonsense verbal acrobatics make no difference, for they are meaningless containing no benefit.

Paradoxically, Abu Muḥammad al-Maṣri, sought to make the Prophetic wording in response to this matter ‘just a resemblance in innovation’ turning away from its appearance and reality without proof. On occasion saying some of the scholars didn’t properly clarify the matter. This is despite the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him being the most eloquent of Arabs and being granted the capacity of expressing words which are concise yet comprehensive in meaning. He should not have cared about what they said, especially that he himself says a few lines later: ‘And those who asked the Prophet for *Dhāt Anwāt* did not commit *Shirk-al-Akbar*...’ Given this, I would respond by saying – which statement is clearer than that made by the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him when he specifically invoked the reference to Musa, peace be upon him and what he was asked by the Children of Israel ‘Make for us a god just as they have gods’?

Abu Abdullah al-Maṣri gave another example as mentioned earlier, where he said: ‘Saying that it rained because of the star, then this would be innovation and *Shirk Asghar*.’ Thus, he created the words *Ibtidā*’ and *Shirk Asghar* from his imagination, and there is no ground for it in the wording of the *aḥādīth* referred to at all. In this regard, there are about seven or eight *aḥādīth*, most of which are *Ṣaḥīḥ* and they aren’t understood as he has expressed. They are narrated on the authority of multiple *Ṣaḥāba* including Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri, Abu Hurayrah, Ibn ‘Abbās, Ali and others, may Allah be pleased with them all. The word relating to innovation, *bid’ah* does not appear in the reported wording across the corpus of evidence. What was in

³⁸ The idea of the tree symbolising or representing a supposed female goddess whether directly connected with fertility or otherwise, is not something that was either unknown or even uncommon throughout the ancient Near East. For a useful introduction to this topic see: Irit Ziffer (2010), ‘Western Asiatic Tree-Goddesses,’ *Egypt and the Levant* [Vol. 20, pp. 411-430], Austrian Academy of Sciences Press.

fact mentioned, is the following - *Kufr* and its opposite in most of the narrations is *al-Imān* (faith). Although the context suggests that *kufr* herein means ‘ingratitude’ for the blessing which is the opposite of gratitude. An authentic and explicit narration came with the word gratitude according to Imām Muslim: ‘Some people entered the morning with gratitude and some with ingratitude (to Allah).’³⁹

Secondly, from the era or times of pre Islamic ignorance, *al-Jāhiliyya*. It is old that people got used to it until it became almost impossible to avoid it, and this is the complete opposite of *bidah*’ – innovation, which is the newly invented matter. So, from where did the erstwhile Abu Abdullah al-Maṣri come with the word *bidah*’ here?

Noteworthy again, the word *Shirk* was not mentioned at all, except in a narration from a man called Mu’āwiyah al-Laythi, who has nothing but this solitary *ḥadith*. None have narrated from him except Naṣr ibn Aāṣim al-Laythi which is not sufficient to remove the designation of *jahāla* (anonymity) from him. Or rather it is not sufficient to document it or to know his level of memorisation and his strictness or leniency in narration by meaning. Naṣr ibn Aāṣim *did not mention* that he is a Companion. The text of *ḥadith* has ambiguity and it is not readily evident that he heard this from the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him. This is because the narration comes sometimes *Mu'an'ana* (starts with the ‘An [عن]), e.g. from the Prophet [عن النبي] according to al-Bukhāri who is one of the most diligent scholars to have collected the words of hearing. Sometimes it is *Mu-anana*, containing the reporting *from* Mu’āwiyah al-Laythi *that* the Messenger of Allah said [عن معاوية الليثي أن رسول الله، قال]. On other occasions it is *mu'allaqa* (suspended) with the phrasing *from* Mu’āwiyah al-Laythi, he said - the Messenger of Allah said [قال معاوية الليثي قال: قال رسول الله]. Hence, the example

³⁹ The wording as reported by Imām Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ (Kitāb al-‘Imān)* is: ‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azeem al-Anbārī narrated to me al-Naḍr ibn Muḥammad narrated to me Ikrima, he is Ibn ‘Ammār narrated to us, Abu Zumeel narrated to us he said Ibn ‘Abbās narrated to me he said: It rained upon the people during the time of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, thus he said: ‘Some people entered the morning with gratitude and some with ingratitude (to Allah). Those who entered with gratitude said: This is the blessing of Allah, and those who entered with ingratitude said: Such and such asterism was right. It was upon this that the verse was revealed: I swear by the setting of the stars to the end and make your provision that you should disbelieve it.’

given by Abu Abdullah al-Maṣri is not persuasive, rather it is an argument against him, and a refutation of his claims.

What remains thereafter is his claim ‘Whoever says it’s the star that sends down the rain, it is *Shirk Akhbar* in His *Rububiyyah*.’ I do not doubt that his *intent* is right, but his wording is terrible and ambiguous. He should have said: ‘The star is what sends down the rain by its own capability in an independent manner,’ or ‘The star is what sends down the rain with no knowledge, estimation and permission from Allah,’ or ‘Allah is in need for the mediation or aid of a star to send down the rain, just as kings need assistants and ministers,’ or something like that if he wants to elaborate more. If he wanted to sum it up he could say: ‘Whoever *believes* that the star has something of divinity in it, and attributes to it bringing the rain down, then it is *Shirk Akhbar*.’ There is no need for the addition of Lordship here in the phrasing, because it could also be *Shirk* as it relates to the divine essence, names and attributes. Naturally, he clings to the tripartite division stemming from Ibn Taymiyyah.

The remainder of the research by Abu Abdullah al-Maṣri doesn’t greatly depart from what has been mentioned already, despite the mixing of sophisms with the thoroughly established rulings! May Allah reward him with good for his hard work and effort in undertaking the research. Like many though it seems the doctrine of Wahhābism has severely hampered his efforts – may they be rectified.

Writings from the scholarly community

Detailed in this concluding section are a sample of some of the sayings from the scholarly community. Included with some brief commentary, without lengthening the discussion, so that you can see the extent of the frightening confusion this matter has caused.

To begin, the following has been cited in *al-Ḥawādath al-Badah*’ by Abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Waleed ibn Muḥammad ibn Khalaf al-Qurayshi al-Fihri al-Andalusi al-Ṭartoutshy al-Māliki: ‘Look, may Allah have mercy upon you, wherever you find a Sidra or a tree that people go to, glorify its status, hope for healing and recovery from it, and attach items to

it, cut it down - it is a *Dhāt Anwāt*.⁴⁰ We would argue in response, our Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him is the best example, who explained and taught, and he didn't cut the tree down. What the author outlined here, is the imperative, in his mind, to cut down such trees, something the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him didn't do. One may reasonably ask what the difference in content here is from the words of Abu Bakr ibn al-Waleed al-Ṭartoutshy and that of Dhul Khuwayṣarah – the lost and doomed to destruction? Next, the following has been recorded by Ibn Taymiyyah in *Iqtidā' al-Ṣirāt al-Mustaqaem*:

And when the *mushrikeen* had a tree to hang their weapons upon which they called *Dhāt Anwāt*, some people said: 'O Messenger of Allah, make for us a *Dhāt Anwāt* just as they have *Dhāt Anwāt*...' Thus, the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him repudiated them for merely resembling the *kuffār* in taking a tree, maintaining it and hanging their weapons on it. So how about something much greater than imitating the *kuffār*, or is it actually *Shirk* itself?

So, whoever goes to a place seeking blessings, and the *Sharī'ah* does not recommend it, then it is one of the evil actions and some of which are worse than the others; whether the place is a tree, a spring, a canal, a mountain, or a cave, and whether one goes to it to pray, supplicate, read [the Qur'ān], celebrate Allah's praises, or worship, so that s/he singles out that place itself or something similar to it for a kind of worshipping.⁴¹

Here the comments made by Ibn Taymiyyah are reprehensible. A claim of 'mere resemblance,' is nothing but allegations and hearsay with no proof that everyone can make - how easy is it to claim [something] and how difficult is it to prove it. Besides, they did not actually themselves 'took a tree, maintain it and hang their weapons on it' in the first place, rather they asked the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him to make them a *Dhāt*

⁴⁰ Abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Waleed al-Ṭartoutshy *al-Ḥawādith al-Badah'* [p. 39]. al-Ṭartoutshy [d.520 AH].

⁴¹ Ibn Taymiyyah *Iqtidā' al-Ṣirāt al-Mustaqaem* [Vol. 2, p. 157]. The quote is abbreviated to its most pertinent points. In the remainder, Ibn Taymiyyah mentions vows undertaken at these places – 'Even worse than that is when a vow would be made for this place, and it is said that it accepts the vow as some of the misguided people say. This vow is a vow of disobedience with the agreement of the scholars, and it is not permissible to fulfil it.'

Anwāt as they, the *mushrikeen* had. Hence, his Prophetic response in stating this was like the Children of Israel saying, 'Make for us a god as they have their gods.' Thereafter, what is the reality of this belief and the essence of the perception – limited to hanging items on a tree? After such grave errors, more follow, with his comments on 'seeking blessings' therein. If the foundations are corrupt, the results are bound to be corrupt; confusing and contradicting, but this is not the subject of these secondary matters. Writing in *al-Itiṣām*, al-Shāṭibi said:

So, his saying peace be upon him 'till my followers copy the deeds of the previous nations and follow them very closely, span by span' indicates that they copy the same as what they did, except that it is not necessary to follow them in copying their innovations, rather they may follow them in their innovations and in what resembles these innovations. So what denotes the former is his saying: 'You will follow the ways of those who were before you,' the *ḥadith* where he stated: 'So that if they had entered into the hole of the lizard, you would follow them in this also.' And what indicates the latter is his saying (*sic.* in response): 'We said: O Messenger of Allah, make for us a *Dhāt Anwāt*, and he said: 'This is exactly what the Children of Israel said - Make for us a god.' Thus, copying the [Children of Israel] in having a *Dhāt Anwāt* is not the same as associating other gods with Allah, but similar to it. Therefore, it is not necessary to take into account what is stipulated unless it is stipulated in every aspect, and Allah knows best.

Given this, we say in response, from here the error originated. The issue, basically, is not 'taking other gods besides Allah,' at first sight, but rather 'taking idols instead of Allah.' And since it is impossible to take an idol for Allah, the Necessarily Existent, the One, the Self-Sufficient Master, it follows, with the necessity of reason, that the idol that is taken is acting, if we supposed that it is necessarily acting on behalf of something in the first place, on behalf of something else other than Allah. What is worse than this error is what was stated by the renegade and rebel, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (MIAW) in his *Kitāb al-Tawḥeed* under the chapter of - 'Whoever seeks blessing from a tree, stone, or any such thing.' He says: 'There are several points to be discussed in this matter: the third point: that they did not

do it [...] the eleventh point: that there are two types of *Shirk* major and minor because they did not apostatise by doing so.’ Indeed yes, by the Lord of the *Ka’ba*, they did not apostatise because they are excused by ignorance or misinterpretation, and not because their saying cannot be categorised as a statement of *Shirk*. The claim of MIAW, ‘they didn’t do it,’ is meaningless, but what counts is the belief indicated in the saying. So, if the saying is a matter of *Shirk*, then the action that results from it, if there was any action, is nothing but an increase in *Kufr* and the *Kufr* has already been achieved through the same saying, meaning by the same belief. In the compendium, *al-Fatḥ al-Rabbāni min Fatāwa’ al-Imām al-Shawkāni* the following is cited:

These people only asked for a tree where they can hang their weapons, just like what was done in *Jāhiliyya*, and they did not intend to worship that tree or ask from it what the ‘grave worshippers’ ask from the people of the graves. So he, peace and blessings be upon him, told them that this can be considered outright *Shirk*; it is like taking other gods besides Allah.⁴²

Here, we would argue that ‘hanging the weapon on the tree’ if it is based on a belief in any kind of idolatry or divinity in the tree is considered as *worshipping the tree*, more precisely, worshipping the supposed divine being represented by the tree. Thus, it is meaningless to say there was no intention to worship or making a similitude with the supposed ‘grave worshippers,’ because the very notion of worship *must be preceded* by a belief upon which it is based. Tragic that Imām al-Shawkāni fell into this awful trap of the tripartite division of *Tawḥeed*, coupled with its highly misleading definition of the nature of worship. In that, he has followed MIAW, with the obsession of graves, which blurred his vision, even distorted his mind. Lastly, the following has been mentioned in *al-Kalimāt al-Nāfi’ah fil’ Makfirāt al-Wāqi’ah*:

So if taking a tree to hang weapons upon and devote in its vicinity is [like] taking another god besides Allah, even though they do not worship it nor seek [something] from it. Then what about carrying

⁴² *al-Fatḥ al-Rabbāni min Fatāwa’ al-Imām al-Shawkāni* [Vol. 1, p. 329]

out devotions in the vicinity of the graves, supplicating for it, circumambulating it? And what of the relationship between sedition with a tree and sedition with the grave, if the people of *Shirk* and *bidah*’ really knew!⁴³

To reiterate and reinforce the point made continually, ‘taking a tree to hang weapons and devote to it,’ is worshipping the tree – in actuality it means as such if it is preceded or accompanied by a belief that this tree is the representation, manifestation or conduit of a supposed female god, a belief *not uncommon* in antiquity across the region and beyond. Expressing they don’t ask or seek from it in the quote, is utterly meaningless. It is as if he is saying – ‘they do not worship it if they worship it,’ and that is enough for you to see the contradiction.

The people did not want to worship other than Allah originally, but rather they thought it was permissible to take a *Ṣanam* or *Wathn*, like this tree, for Allah the Blessed and Exalted - which is impossible when it comes to Allah the Almighty. What proves and supports our viewpoint is that there has never been a discussion or series of *Fatawā’ (legal responsa)* on what was done to the *Ka’ba* before Islam, such as the with the *Kiswa* (the cloth), gifting antiques, offering incense and perfumes, washing and perfuming it on occasion, clinging to its cloth to avoid being killed, or pleading in supplication, facing it in prayers, etc. All of that was an act of worshipping and devotion to Allah. Islam approved it because the *Ka’ba* is one of the symbols of Allah. It is *manifestly not* an idol of Allah. People properly understood what Abdullah ibn Abbās, may Allah be pleased with them, said: ‘The Black Stone is the Right Hand of Allah on Earth with which he greets His servants,’ and only dull people regard it as ambiguous.

Perhaps this is sufficient, otherwise it would be very long without noticeable benefit. No matter how different people’s opinions about the essence of this *Dhāt Anwāt* the definite conclusion is that the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, did not cut it down, nor did he issue a command that it be cut down. Rather, it was narrated that he cursed anyone who cuts down a tree in the desert, which is a strong slap on the stupid backs of the

⁴³ Abdullah ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb *al-Kalimāt al-Nāfi’ah fil’ Makfirāt al-Wāqi’ah* [p. 349].

men from the sect of Wahhābism, and spit in their faces. And Allah is the All-Knowing and Most Wise.

10. 'Give us the genealogy of your lord'

To the mind of the *mushrik* Arab, they had no issue with levelling a question at the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, 'give us the genealogy of your Lord.' Here, the bulk of textual evidence concerning this will be thoroughly analysed. But crucially, one should pay attention to the mindset underpinning the question raised by the *mushrikeen*. Regardless of what name is given to it, be that '*Uluhiyyah*' (divinity), or '*Rububiyyah*' (lordship) or whatever else, the essential point is to that mindset there was a conceptualisation of the nature of godhood as being a genus of many parts. Naturally, having such a conceptualisation led them to view this in the form of types and even sub-parts or sub-strata. To begin, the first narration on this matter has been cited in the *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad:

حدثنا أبو سعد محمد بن ميسر الصاغانى حدثنا أبو جعفر الرازى حدثنا الربيع بن أنس عن أبي العالبيّة عن أبي بن كعب أن المشركين قالوا للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يا محمد انسب لنا ربك فأنزل الله قل هو الله أحد الله الصمد لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا أحد

Abu Sa'd Muḥammad ibn Muyassar al-Ṣāghāni narrated to us Abu Ja'far al-Rāzi narrated to us from al-Rabih' ibn Anas from Abul-'Aāliyah from Ubay ibn Ka'b, that the *mushrikeen* said to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him: 'O Muḥammad, give us the genealogy of your lord.' Thus, Allah Blessed and Almighty revealed (the chapter): *Say: He is Allah the One, Allah the eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him.*¹

Some elaboration upon the wording appears in other narrations, for example as has been cited in the *Sunnah* of Ibn Abi Aāṣim and in *Dthilāl al-Jannah*

¹ *Musnad* Aḥmad [Vol. 35, no. 21219].

by al-Albāni. Broadly the reported wording is the same, however there is the additional explanation of the word, *al-Ṣamad*:

قال فالصمد الذي لم يلد ولم يولد ولا يولد له؛ لأنه ليس شيء يلد إلا يولد ولا يولد إلا سيموت، وليس شيء يموت إلا يورث، وإن الله لا يموت ولا يورث، ولم يكن له كفوا أحد، قال: ليس له شبيه ولا مثيل ولا عدل

He said: '*al-Ṣamad* - (it is) He who did not beget and nor was He begotten, because nothing is as such except that it will die. Nothing dies without being inherited (as such); and Allah neither perishes nor does He bequeath. 'No one is comparable to Him.' He said 'there is no resemblance, likeness, or equivalence.'²

In *Kitāb al-Tawḥeed* by Ibn Khuzaymah:

قَالَ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَبِيهَةٌ، وَلَا عَدْلٌ، وَلَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَقَالَ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ جَدَائِشٍ فِي حَدِيثِهِ الصَّمَدُ، لَمْ يَلِدْ، وَلَمْ يُولَدْ، لِأَنَّهُ لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ يُولَدُ إِلَّا سَيَمُوتُ، وَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ يَمُوتُ إِلَّا سَيُورَثُ، وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَمُوتُ وَلَا يُورَثُ وَالْبَاقِي مِثْلُ لَفْظِ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مَنِيعٍ، سِوَاءً

He said – 'there is no resemblance, equivalence, nothing is comparable to Him. Maḥmud ibn Khidāsh said in relation to the *ḥadīth* of *al-Ṣamad*: 'He does not beget, nor is He begotten, because nothing that is born except that it dies, and nothing dies but is bequeathed. And Allah does not die nor inherit.' The remainder wording is alike to that from Aḥmad ibn Muneeh'³

² *Sunnah* Ibn Abi Aāṣim [Vol. 1, no. 663]. The *isnād* is: 'Abu Kāmil al-Fuḍeel ibn Ḥusein narrated to us Abu Sa'd al-Khurāsāni narrated to us Abu Ja'far al-Rāzi narrated to us from al-Rabih' ibn Anas from Abul-'Aāliyah from Ubay ibn Ka'b.' Also reported in the *Tafsir* of Ibn Abi Ḥātim [Vol. 10, no. 19532]; other scholars too have cited this in an abridged manner. A further follow-on narration is given from the work of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥammad al-Dulaby entitled *al-Kuna' wal-Asma* [Vol. 2, no. 1034]. Essentially, there is no difference in reported wording to that recorded by Aḥmad as previously quoted, but there is a slight variance in the *isnād*, namely: He said: 'Aḥmad ibn Shu'ayb reported to me Aḥmad ibn Muneeh' read upon us, he said Aḥmad ibn Muiyasar Abu Sa'd al-Ṣāghāni narrated to us he said Abu Ja'far al-Rāzi narrated to us from al-Rabih' ibn Anas from Abul-'Aāliyah from Ubay ibn Ka'b.'

³ Ibn Khuzaymah *Kitāb al-Tawḥeed*, [Vol. 1, p. 95]. The *isnād* being: 'Aḥmad ibn Muneeh' and Maḥmud ibn Khidāsh narrated to us, he said Abu Sa'd al-Ṣāghāni narrated to us he said Abu Ja'far al-Rāzi narrated to us from al-Rabih' ibn Anas from Abul-'Aāliyah from Ubay ibn Ka'b.' It also appears in the second part of '*Amāli*' by Ibn Bishrān [p. 266, no. 1481]: Abu Muḥammad 'Abdul-Khāliq ibn al-Ḥasan al-Mu'addil reported to us Abu Shu'ayb al-Ḥirāni narrated to us Abu Sa'd al-Ṣāghāni Muḥammad ibn Mussayir ibn Sinān al-Ju'fi, with the entire wording.

Further to this, appearing also in the *Asbāb al-Nuzul*:

أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو نَصْرِ أَحْمَدُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمِهْرَجَانِيُّ أَخْبَرَنَا عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ الرَّاهِدِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْقَاسِمِ ابْنُ بِنْتِ مَنِيعٍ حَدَّثَنَا جَدِّي أَحْمَدُ بْنُ مَنِيعٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو سَعْدِ الصَّغَانِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو جَعْفَرِ الرَّازِيِّ عَنِ الرَّبِيعِ بْنِ أَنَسٍ عَنِ أَبِي الْعَالِيَةِ عَنِ أَبِي بِنِ كَعْبٍ أَنَّ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَالُوا لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ انْسُبْ لَنَا رَبَّكَ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ قَالَ فَالصَّمَدُ الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ، لِأَنَّهُ لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ يُولَدُ إِلَّا سَيَمُوتُ، وَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ يَمُوتُ إِلَّا سَيُورَثُ، وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى لَا يَمُوتُ وَلَا يُورَثُ. وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفْوًا أَحَدًا قَالَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَبِيهَةٌ وَلَا عَدْلٌ، وَلَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ

Abu Naṣr Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mihrajāni reported to us 'Ubaydallah ibn Muḥammad al-Zāhid reported to us Abul'Qāsim ibn Bint Muneeh' narrated to us my grandfather Aḥmad ibn Muneeh' narrated to us Abu Sa'd al-Ṣāghāni narrated to us Abu Ja'far al-Rāzi narrated to us from al-Rabih' ibn Anas from Abul-'Aāliyah from Ubay ibn Ka'b that the *mushrikeen* had said to the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him, 'Give us the genealogy of your lord.' Thus, Allah the Almighty revealed: *Say: He is Allah the One, Allah the eternal.*

(Regarding) *al-Ṣamad* he said: 'He did not beget nor was He begotten, for there is nothing that is born except that it dies, except Allah. And there is no one equal to Him. He said, there is no resemblance unto Him, nor equivalence, and there is nothing like Him whatsoever.'⁴

Cited in *al-Asmā wal-Ṣifāt* by al-Bayhaqy with complete similar meaning: Abu Abdullah al-Ḥāfiz reported to us Abul'Abbās Muḥammad ibn Ya'qub narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Ishāq al-Ṣāghāni narrated to us Ahmed Muneeh' narrated to us Abu Sa'd Muḥammad ibn Muiyassar al-Ṣāghāni narrated to us.⁵ Appearing also in the twelfth *Mashaykha al-Baghdādi'ah* of Abu Tāhir al-Salafi: al-Shaykh Abul'Ma'ali Thābit ibn Bundār ibn Ibrāhīm al-Muqri, in writing by al-Wahhāb al-Anaṭi in the month of Sha'bān of the year 95 (AH) in *Jāmi' al-Manṣur*; Abu Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥasan al-Khilāl al-Ḥāfiz reported to us in writing during audience, Abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il al-Warrāq narrated to us

⁴ *Asbāb al-Nuzul*, *Zaghlul* [p. 500, no. 880]

⁵ al-Bayhaqy *al-Asmā wal-Ṣifāt* [Vol. 2, no. 607]

Abdullah ibn Muḥammad narrated to us my grandfather Aḥmad ibn Muneeh' narrated to us Abu Muḥammad ibn Muyassar Abu Sa'd al-Ṣāghāni narrated to us.⁶

Regarding the above, I would submit that it is narrated by *other* than Abu Sa'd Muḥammad ibn Muyassar al-Ṣāghāni, the blind, without mention being made of Ubay ibn Ka'b. Some among the people had feared that he might be Abu Sa'd because he was blind and wasn't in possession of a book. Rather, relying on his retention through memorisation, he did not memorise as he should have. But it has been fully corroborated with mention of Ubay ibn Ka'b and raising it, preserving the text of the *ḥadīth* in its entirety. Indeed, it is narrated by al-Ḥākim in his *Mustadrak*:

أخبرنا أبو عبد الله محمد بن يعقوب الحافظ وأبو جعفر محمد ابن علي قالوا ثنا الحسين بن الفضل ثنا محمد بن سابق ثنا أبو جعفر الرازي عن الربيع بن أنس عن أبي العالبيّة عن أبي بن كعب رضي الله عنه أن المشركين قالوا يا محمد انسب لنا ربك فأنزل الله عز وجل قل هو الله أحد الله الصمد قال الصمد الذي لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا أحد لأنه ليس شيء يولد إلا سيموت وليس شيء يموت إلا سيورث وإن الله تبارك وتعالى لا يموت ولا يورث ولم يكن له كفوا أحد لم يكن له شبيه ولا عدل ليس كمثل شيء

أخبرنا أبو عبد الله محمد بن يعقوب الحافظ وأبو جعفر محمد ابن علي قالوا ثنا الحسين بن الفضل ثنا محمد بن سابق ثنا أبو جعفر الرازي عن الربيع بن أنس عن أبي العالبيّة عن أبي بن كعب رضي الله عنه أن المشركين قالوا يا محمد انسب لنا ربك فأنزل الله عز وجل قل هو الله أحد الله الصمد قال الصمد الذي لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا أحد لأنه ليس شيء يولد إلا سيموت وليس شيء يموت إلا سيورث وإن الله لا يموت ولا يورث ولم يكن له كفوا أحد قال لم يكن له شبيه ولا عدل وليس كمثل شيء

Abu Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Ya'qub al-Ḥāfiz and Abu Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ali reported to us, they said al-Ḥussein ibn al-Fadl narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Sābiq narrated to us Abu Ja'far al-Rāzi narrated to us from al-Rabeeh' ibn Anas from Abul-'Aāliyah from Ubay ibn Ka'b may Allah be pleased with him, that the *mushrikeen* had said: 'O Muḥammad give us the genealogy of your lord.' Thus, Allah the Mighty and Sublime revealed *Say: He is Allah the One, Allah the eternal.*

He said '*al-Ṣamad* is the One who did not beget nor was He begotten, for there is nothing that is born except that it dies, except Allah. And there is no one equal to Him. There is nothing comparable to Him. He said: There is no resemblance unto Him, nor equivalence, and there is nothing like Him whatsoever.⁷

⁶ *Mashaykha al-Baghdādi'ah* [p. 29, no. 1000]

⁷ al-Ḥākim *al-Mustadrak* [Vol. 2, no. 3987]

Thereafter al-Imām al-Ḥākim commented by saying: 'This *ḥadīth* has a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*, but they did not record it;' al-Dhahabi concurred. al-Ḥāfiz regarded it as *ḥasan*,⁸ and al-Albāni said in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhi*: '*ḥasan* without the statements (regarding) *al-Ṣamad*.'⁹ It appears in *al-Asmā wal-Ṣifāt* by al-Bayhaqy with some very important additions:

حدثنا محمد بن عبد الله الحافظ إمامنا أنا أبو عبد الله محمد بن يعقوب الحافظ وأبو جعفر محمد بن صالح بن هاني قالوا ثنا الحسين بن الفضل ثنا محمد بن سابق ثنا أبو جعفر الرازي عن الربيع بن أنس عن أبي العالبيّة عن أبي بن كعب رضي الله عنه قال إن المشركين قالوا يا محمد انسب لنا ربك فأنزل الله تبارك وتعالى قل هو الله أحد الله الصمد قال الصمد الذي لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا أحد لأنه ليس شيء يولد إلا سيموت وليس شيء يموت إلا سيورث وإن الله تبارك وتعالى لا يموت ولا يورث ولم يكن له كفوا أحد لم يكن له شبيه ولا عدل ليس كمثل شيء

قال البيهقي كذا في هذه الآية جعل قوله لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا أحد تفسيراً للصمد وذلك صحيح على قول من قال الصمد الذي لا خوف له وهو قول مجاهد في آخرين فيكون هذا الاسم ملحقاً بهذا الباب ومن ذهب في تفسيره إلى ما يدل عليه الاشتقاق ألحقه بالباب الذي يليه ومنها العظيم قال الله جل ثناؤه وهو العلي العظيم وذكرناه في خبر الأسماء

Muḥammad ibn Abdullah al-Ḥāfiz narrated to us by dictation Abu Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Ya'qub and Abu Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ ibn Hāni reported to us, they said al-Ḥussein ibn al-Fadl narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Sābiq narrated to us Abu Ja'far al-Rāzi narrated to us from al-Rabeeh' ibn Anas from Abul'Aāliyah from Ubay ibn Ka'b, may Allah be pleased with him, he said: Indeed, the *mushrikeen* had said – 'O Muḥammad give us the genealogy of your lord.' Thus, Allah the Blessed and Exalted revealed - *Say: He is Allah the One, Allah the eternal.*

He said: '*al-Ṣamad* is One who did not beget nor was He begotten, there is nothing like unto Him. For there is nothing that is born except that it dies, and nothing dies except that it is inherited. And indeed Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, neither dies nor bequeaths, and He has no equal, He has no likeness, nor resemblance, and there is nothing like unto Him.'

al-Bayhaqy said, 'In this verse, He made His statement that He was *neither born nor does He beget, and there is nothing comparable to Him*. As per the *Tafsir* of *al-Ṣamad* that is correct according to

⁸ Ibn Ḥajar *Fath al-Bāri* [Vol. 13 no. 356]

⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhi* [no. 2680]

those who said that it means One who is not hollow. That view was held by Mujāhid, and others concerning this particular name that is related to this chapter. Others have interpreted it upon the meaning derived linguistically, putting into the category of other names like *al-‘Adtheem*. Allah, Glory unto Him said that ‘*He is the Most High, the Tremendous*,’ [2: 255], and we mentioned as such in relation to the narrative of the Names.¹⁰

Given the above, I would submit that it is most likely that the additional sentences of *Tafsir* that are included are not in the original text of the *ḥadith*. By itself, this *isnād* is not *Ṣaḥīḥ* given the presence of Abu Ja’far al-Rāzi. It is *ḥasan qawi’*, *Inshā’Allah*. However, it can be taken broadly as being *Ṣaḥīḥ* with its parallel narratives and cumulative evidences, which are numerous.

Analysing the ‘Ilal in some of the ḥadith

What has been cited in *al-Tārikh al-Awsaṭ*: ‘He said: Muḥammad ibn Muyassar Abu Sa’d al-Ṣāghāni the blind hearing from Hishām ibn ‘Urwa and Abu Ja’far al-Rāzi, within it is *Iḍṭirāb* (semblance of disturbance).’¹¹ Imām al-Bukhāri has explained the alleged *Iḍṭirāb* here in his acclaimed work, *al-Tārikh al-Kabir*, with some additional information provided in the footnotes to the print edition:

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مَيْسَرٍ أَبُو سَعْدِ الصَّغَانِيِّ الضَّرِيرِ سَمِعَ هِشَامَ بْنَ عُرْوَةَ وَأَبَا جَعْفَرَ الرَّازِيَّ، فِيهِ اضْطِرَابٌ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ عَنِ الرَّبِيعِ عَنِ أَبِي الْعَالِيَةِ عَنِ أَبِي: قَالُوا لِلنَّبِيِّ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، انْسَبْ لَنَا رَبِّكَ، فَنَزَلَتْ (قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ)، وَقَالَ عِمَارٌ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ عَنِ أَبِيهِ عَنِ الرَّبِيعِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، مَرْسَلٌ

Muḥammad ibn Muyassar Abu Sa’d al-Ṣāghāni the blind hearing from Hishām ibn ‘Urwa and Abu Ja’far al-Rāzi, within it is *Iḍṭirāb*. He said: Abu Ja’far narrated to us from al-Rabeeh’ from Abu Aāliyah from ‘Ubay: ‘They said to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, give us the genealogy of your lord.’ So it was revealed: *Say He is Allah, the One*. And ‘Ammār said: Abdullah ibn Abi Ja’far narrated

¹⁰ *al-Asmā wal-Ṣifāt* [Vol. 1, no. 50]

¹¹ *al-Tārikh al-Awsaṭ* [Vol. 2, no. 2603]

to us from his father from al-Rabeeh’ from the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, it is *mursal*.¹²

As reported in the *Sunan* of al-Tirmidhi:

حدثنا عبد بن حميد حدثنا عبيد الله بن موسى عن أبي جعفر الرازي عن الربيع عن أبي العالية أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ذكر ألتهم فقالوا انسب لنا ربك قال فاتاه جبريل بهذه السورة قل هو الله أحد فذكر نحوه ولم يذكر فيه عن أبي بن كعب وهذا أصح من حديث أبي سعد وأبو سعد اسمه محمد بن ميسر وأبو جعفر الرازي اسمه عيسى وأبو العالية اسمه رفيع وكان عبداً أعتقته امرأة صابئة

‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us Ubaydallah ibn Musa narrated to us from Abu Ja’far al-Rāzi from al-Rabih’ ibn Anas from Abul-‘Aāliyah that the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him mentioned their (the *mushrikeen*) gods, so they said: give us the genealogy of your lord. He said: ‘So Jibril, peace be upon him, came to him with this *Surah*: *Say: He is Allah, the One*.’

So, he mentioned similarly, but he did not say in it ‘from Ubay ibn Ka’b.’ And this is more correct than the *ḥadith* of Abu Sa’d. The name of Abu Sa’d is Muḥammad ibn Muyassar. Abu Ja’far al-Rāzi’s name is Esa, and Abul-‘Aāliyah’s name Rafih’, he was a slave, he was freed by a Sabian woman.¹³

In the *Mizān al-‘Itidāl* of al-Dhahabi there is: ‘And Abu Naḍr Hishām said: Abu Ja’far narrated to us from al-Rabih’ ibn Anas from Abul-‘Aāliyah, it is *mursal*.’¹⁴ In *Jāmi al-Bayān (Tafsir)* of Abu Ja’far al-Ṭabari there is:

حدثنا ابن حميد قال حدثنا مهران عن أبي جعفر عن الربيع عن أبي العالية قل هو الله أحد الله الصمد قال: قال ذلك قادة الاحزاب: انسب لنا ربك، فاتاه جبريل بهذه

Ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us he said Mihrān narrated to us from Abu Ja’far from al-Rabih’ ibn Anas from Abul-‘Aāliyah: *Say He is Allah, the One, the Eternal*. He said: ‘The leaders of al-Aḥzāb said that - give us the genealogy of your lord. So (the angel) Jibreel brought this to him.’¹⁵

¹² al-Bukhāri *al-Tārikh al-Kabir* [Vol. 1, no. 778]

¹³ *Sunan* al-Tirmidhi [Vol. 5, no. 3365]

¹⁴ al-Dhahabi *Mizān al-‘Itidāl* [Vol. 3, p. 35]

¹⁵ *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari [Vol. 26, no. 2961]

However, Ibn Ḥumayd is *ḍaef* and Mihrān ibn Abi Umar al-Aṭṭār al-Rāzi is not considered to be at the peak of exactitude and retention. As for Abu Ja'far al-Rāzi, his name being Abu Ja'far Esa ibn Mā'hān, shouldn't be interpolated or viewed as being opposed to (the narration) concerning Muḥammad ibn Sābiq, nor until that of Abu Sa'd al-Ṣāghāni. So how about their meeting, especially since he also differed from Ubaydallah ibn Musa, Abul-Naḍr, Hāshim ibn al-Qāsim, Mihrān ibn Abi Umar al-Aṭṭār al-Rāzi, who reached Abul-'Aāliyah? The following has been cited in *Tahzeeb al-Kamāl*:

Abdul Aziz ibn Sallām said I heard Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd saying: 'Abdullah ibn Abu Ja'far was a *fāsiq*; I heard ten-thousand *ḥadith* form him but I discarded them.' And Abdul Aziz also said: I heard Ali ibn Mihrān saying, I heard Abdullah ibn Abu Ja'far saying: 'A tray of meat is more beloved to me than this so and so.' Abu Zur'a and Abu Ḥātim said: *thiqa*; an addition of Abu Ḥātim: *ṣaduq*. Abu Aḥmad ibn 'Adī said some of his *ḥadith* are not followed-up upon. And he was mentioned by Ibn Ḥibbān in *Kitāb al-Thiqāt*.¹⁶

There is additional mention of this in *Tahzeeb al-Tahzeeb*:

Ibn Ḥibbān made mention of him in *al-Thiqāt*. I said: He said his *ḥadith* are considered other than his narrations from his father. And al-Sāji said: (he has) weakness in him.' I saw in the certified *nuskha*, *Kāmil* by Ibn 'Adī – al-Ḥasan ibn Sufyān reported to us Abdul Aziz ibn Sallām narrated to us, I heard Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd saying Abdullah ibn Abu Ja'far said: 'Ammār ibn Yassār is a *fāsiq*.¹⁷

As for Ubaydallah ibn Musa, without doubt he is *thiqa* 'aābid from among the people *thabt* (exactitude), particularly in relation to (the narrator) Isrā'il, being from among the people who scrutinise and the wording in the *ḥadith*. Except that is, all the narratives that are from Abu Ja'far al-Rāzi, that which has come either in the wording of reports or *ḥadith*; again except this *ḥadith*

¹⁶ *Tahzeeb al-Kamāl* [Vol. 14, no. 3208]

¹⁷ Ibn Ḥajar *Tahzeeb al-Tahzeeb* [Vol. 5, no. 500]

which came in the 'an 'an format. Another channel is to be found in *Jāmi al-Bayān*, *Tafsir al-Ṭabari*:

حدثنا أحمد بن حازم قال حدثنا عبيد الله بن موسى، عن أبي جعفر الرازي عن زيد بن أسلم، عن ابن يسار عن ابن عباس ولا جنباً إلا عابري سبيل، قال لا تقرب المسجد إلا أن يكون طريقك فيه، فتمرّ ماراً ولا تجلس

Ahmad ibn Ḥāzim narrated to us he said Ubaidallah ibn Musa narrated to us from Abu Ja'far al-Rāzi from Zayd ibn Aslam from Ibn Yassār from Ibn 'Abbās: 'Neither while in a state of ritual impurity, except while passing through.' He said: 'Do not approach the *masjid* unless it coincides with it, so pass by and do not sit therein.'¹⁸

Indeed, here there are two additional narratives that are both *an 'an* (from, from), but it is the narration that is reported from Sufyān from Ubaydallah ibn Musa, and it is not strong enough to be relied upon. Diligence is required here; the obligation being caution and fear of the possible existence of an intermediary narrator between Ubaydallah ibn Musa and Abu Ja'far al-Rāzi. This possibility of a missing intermediary narrator may well be Mihrān ibn Abi Umar al-Aṭṭār al-Rāzi or Abdullah ibn Abu Ja'far al-Rāzi, by himself. Such will be elucidated shortly. This narration of Ubaydallah ibn Musa does not rise to that of *tarjeeh al-Irsāl*. It is not permissible to therefore adopt the wording as Imām al-Tirmidhi has done, 'And this is more correct than the *ḥadith* of Abu Sa'd' because he did not notice the *an 'an* in reporting of Ubaydallah ibn Musa, and he didn't know that Muḥammad ibn Sābiq was being followed in this regard.

Nothing is therefore left bar the existing disagreement upon Abul-Naḍr, Hāshim ibn al-Qāsim, we have not found it in any of the *aṣl*, *uṣul*, or *al-'ajzā*, but it is only according to al-Dhahabi in *al-Mizān al-'Itidāl*. If it is to be established or proven, what this this indicates is that there is *Iḍṭirāb* (semblance of disturbance) stemming from Abu Ja'far al-Rāzi, ostensibly because of his weakness of memorisation and lack of exactitude. All that preceding thus necessitates the decisiveness by confirming the *ḥadith mursal*. Except, that its raising is more likely when coupled with firm attestations and follow-on narrations, which oblige accepting it as authentic

¹⁸ *Tafsir al-Ṭabari* [Vol. 8 no. 9553]

and *ḥadith marfu’*. As has been reported in the *Sunnah* of Abdullah ibn Aḥmad:

حَدَّثَنِي سُرَيْجُ بْنُ يُونُسَ حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ مُجَالِدٍ حَدَّثَنَا مُجَالِدٌ عَنْ الشَّعْبِيِّ عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ جَاءَ أَعْرَابِيٌّ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ اسْتَبْنَا لَنَا رَبِّكَ، فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ، إِلَى آخِرِهَا

Surayj ibn Yunus narrated to me Ismā’il ibn Mujālid narrated to us Mujālid narrated to us from al-Sha’bi from Jābir ibn Abdullah, he said ‘The Arabs came to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him and said: Give us the genealogy of your lord. So, Allah the Blessed and Almighty revealed - Say: *He is Allah the One*, to the end of the chapter.’¹⁹

I would submit that these *isnād’s* are *ḥasan jayyid*, even if we were to say *Ṣaḥīḥ*, upon which substantive proof can be established, even with the following taken account of. Mujālid ibn Sa’eed ibn Umayr al-Hamdāni died in the year 143AH, or shortly thereafter. The assessment of al-Ḥāfīz appears quite unfair, where he judged him to be *laysa bil’qawi* (not strong) in *al-Taqrīb*. He was followed in that by Imām Yaḥya ibn Ma’een, although he didn’t provide elaboration or distinguishing points. Rather, the narrator is *thiqa qawi* (trustworthy, strong) by himself; having a good book, but he was made weak thereafter being susceptible to indoctrination. This was the case when the Imām Yaḥya ibn Sa’eed al-Qaḥṭān realised about him. It was the

¹⁹ *Sunnah* Abdullah ibn Aḥmad [Vol. 2, no. 1185]. Here, a further narration is cited from *Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ* [Vol. 6, no. 5687] by al-Ṭabarāni: ‘Muḥammad ibn Abdullah al-Hadrami narrated to us he said Surayj ibn Yunus narrated to us he said Ismā’il ibn Mujālid narrated to us Mujālid narrated to us from al-Sha’bi from Jābir: They said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, give us the genealogy of your lord.’ So it was revealed: *Say: He is Allah the One*. to the end of the chapter.’ Thereafter, a further two-narrations are cited in the Arabic edition after this. The first, is from *Asbāb al-Nuzul* [p. 500, no. 881]: ‘Abu Mansur al-Baghdādi reported to us al-Hasan ibn al-Sarraj reported to us Muhammad ibn Abdullah al-Hadrami reported to us Surayj ibn Yunus reported to us Ismā’il ibn Mujālid reported to us from al-Sha’bi from Jābir, he said: They said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, give us the genealogy of your lord.’ So it was revealed: *Say: He is Allah the One*. to the end of the chapter.’ The second, is from *al-Asmā wal-Ṣifāt* by al-Bayhaqy [Vol. 2, no. 608]: ‘And Abu Abdullah reported to us Abul-‘Abbās narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Ishāq narrated to us Surayj ibn Yunus reported to us Ismā’il ibn Mujālid reported to us from Mujālid from al-Sha’bi from Jābir, he said: They Arabs came and said to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him give us the genealogy of your lord. So it was revealed: *Say: He is Allah the One, Allah the eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him.*’

classes that began during the days of Bani al-‘Abbās, yet Imām Yaḥya ibn Sa’eed al-Qaḥṭān didn’t abandon it. As for the older scholars, such as Shu’ba, al-Thawri, Ḥammād ibn Zayd and Hushaym ibn Bashir, they accepted him, judged him *thiqa* and narrated from him. This can be extrapolated by a very careful reading of what has been cited in *al-Jarḥ wa’Tadeel*,²⁰ the same being true of what al-‘Ijli said in *Ma’rifat al-Thiqāt*.²¹ ‘Mujālid ibn Sa’eed, Kufan, *jāi’z al-ḥadith, ḥasan al-ḥadith*, except that Abdar-Raḥman ibn Mahdi used to say: ‘Ashhath ibn Sawār is stronger than him.’ The people didn’t follow him with regards to this, Mujālid is (in fact) better than Ashhath ibn Sawār. Yaḥya ibn Sa’eed said: ‘Mujālid *yulaqan al-ḥadith, idthā’ laqun*.’²² He had seen and heard from him, *Ṣāliḥ al-Kitāb*, narrating from Qays ibn Ḥāzim and al-Sha’bi, and Allah knows best.

Regarding Ismā’il ibn Mujālid ibn Sa’eed al-Hamdāni, to do justice to al-Ḥāfīz, he said: ‘*Ṣaduq yukhtī*’ (truthful, with mistakes). If he had said *Thiqa yukhtī* it would have been much better, since he is more deserving of that assessment than ‘Amr ibn Abi ‘Amr, companion to the *ḥadith* of *al-Baheemah*. He is a narrator of al-Bukhāri in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Tirmidhi, as well as others. Imām Yaḥya ibn Ma’een wrote of him and said, ‘*lā ba’sa bihi*’ (nothing untoward with him) and on another occasion, ‘*thiqa*’ (trustworthy). He heard from his father the old Mujālid during the days of Hishām ibn ‘Abdal-Malik, because he had heard (narrations) from Simmāk ibn Ḥarb, Abu Ishāq al-Sabee’e and others who had died before 130AH. So perhaps he was born in approximately 105AH or shortly before it. He died after 180AH and may well have inherited his father’s books, which as mentioned previously, are good books. As has been cited in *al-Asmā wal-Ṣifāt* by al-Bayhaqy:

أَخْبَرَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ عَدَانَ أَخْبَرَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ عُبَيْدِ الصَّفَّارِ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَبِي عَاصِمٍ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مُوسَى يَغْنِي الْحَرَشِيِّ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَيْسَى حَدَّثَنَا دَاوُدُ يَغْنِي ابْنَ أَبِي هِنْدٍ، عَنْ عِكْرَمَةَ عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ أَنَّ الْيَهُودَ جَاءَتْ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْهُمْ كَغَبُّ بْنُ الْأَنْثَرِفِ وَحُبَيْبُ بْنُ أُحْطَبٍ، فَقَالُوا يَا مُحَمَّدُ، صِفْ لَنَا رَبِّكَ الَّذِي بَعَثَكَ. فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ

²⁰ *al-Jarḥ wa’Tadeel* [Vol. 8, p. 361, no. 1653]

²¹ *Ma’rifat al-Thiqāt* [Vol. 2, p.264, no. 1685]

²² The phrase [يلقن الحديث إذا لقن] is left transliterated; essentially indicating the lack of vigilance and some needlessness on the part of the narrator in question, accepting of *ḥadith* that are presented to him but not from his actual narratives.

أَخَذَ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ، لَمْ يَلِدْ، فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ، فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفْوًا أَحَدٌ، وَلَا شَبَهٌ فَقَالَ هَذِهِ صِفَةُ رَبِّي عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَتَقَدَّسَ عُلُوًّا كَبِيرًا

Ali ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdān reported to us Aḥmad ibn Ubayd al-Ṣaffār reported to us Makhlad ibn Abi ‘Aāsīm narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Musa, that is to say al-Ḥirāshi narrated to us Abdullah ibn Esa narrated to us Dāwud, that is to say, Ibn Abi Hind narrated to us from ‘Ikrima from Ibn ‘Abbās that the Jews came to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, among them was Ka’b ibn al-Ashraf and Ḥubay ibn Akhtāb. They said, ‘O Muḥammad: describe for us your lord who has sent you.’ Thus, Allah the Mighty and Sublime revealed: *Say: He is Allah the One, Allah the eternal. He begot no one – nothing emanates from Him, nor was He begotten – coming from something, No one is comparable to Him, having no resemblance. And He said: This is the characteristic of my Lord, the Mighty and Sublime, and He is sanctified greatly.*²³

Also, as per the abridged *Tafsir* of Ibn Abi Ḥātim:

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا إِنَّ الْيَهُودَ جَاءَتِ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، مِنْهُمْ كَغَبْ بِنُ الْأَشْرَفِ وَحِي بِنُ الْأَخْطَبِ فَقَالُوا يَا مُحَمَّدُ صِفْ لَنَا رَبَّكَ الَّذِي بَعَثَكَ، فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْوَلَدُ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ

From Ibn ‘Abbās may Allah be pleased with him, that the Jews came to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him among them was Ka’b ibn al-Ashraf and Ḥubay ibn Akhtāb. They said, ‘O Muḥammad: describe for us your lord who has sent you.’ Thus, Allah revealed: *Say: He is Allah the One, Allah the eternal. He begot no one – nothing emanates from Him, nor was He begotten – coming from something.*²⁴

It is cited in *Dham al-Kalām wa’Ahlihi*:

أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو يَعْقُوبَ الْحَافِظُ أَخْبَرَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ابْنَ الْحُسَيْنِ سَمِعْتُ مُحَمَّدَ بْنَ إِبرَاهِيمَ الصَّرَّامِ يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ عُمَانَ بْنَ سَعِيدٍ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عُمَانَ التَّنُوخِيُّ عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ عَنْ

²³ al-Bayhaqy *al-Asmā wal-Ṣifāt* [Vol. 2, no. 606]

²⁴ *Tafsir* Ibn Abi Ḥātim [Vol. 10, no. 19534]

قَتَادَةَ عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ جُبَيْرٍ أَنَّ الْيَهُودَ قَالُوا لِلنَّبِيِّ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، مَا نَسَبُهُ رَبُّكَ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ إِلَى آخِرِهَا

Abu Ya’qub al-Ḥāfiz reported to us Muḥammad ibn Abdullah ibn al-Ḥussein reported to us, he heard (from) Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhim al-Sarrām saying, I heard (from) Uthmān ibn Sa’eed, Muḥammad ibn Uthmān al-Tanukhi narrated to us from Sa’eed ibn Basheer from Qatādah from Sa’eed ibn Jubayr that the Jews said to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, ‘what is the lineage of your lord?’ So Allah the Almighty revealed, *Say: He is Allah the One*, until the end (of the chapter).²⁵

The conversion of Abdullah ibn Salām

Another set of traditions which cover this matter relates to the conversion narratives which have reached us for the Companion, may Allah be pleased with him, Abdullah ibn Salām. The first narrative here has been cited in the abridged *Tafsir* of Ibn Abi Ḥātim:

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ حَمَزَةَ بْنِ يُوسُفَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ سَلَامٍ أَنَّ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ سَلَامٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ لِأَخْبَارِ الْيَهُودِ إِنِّي أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أُحَدِّثَ بِمَسْجِدِ أَبِيْنَا إِبرَاهِيمَ عَهْدًا فَاَنْطَلَقَ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَهُ: أَنْتَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنِ سَلَامٍ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ، قَالَ: أَنْ، فَدَنَا مِنْهُ، فَقَالَ: أَنْشُدْكَ بِاللَّهِ أَمَا تَجِدُنِي فِي التَّوْرَةِ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ فَقَالَ لَهُ انْعَمْتَ لَنَا رَبِّكَ، فَجَاءَ جِبْرِيْلُ فَقَالَ قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ إِلَى آخِرِ السُّورَةِ، فَقَرَأَهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ ابْنُ سَلَامٍ أَشْهَدُ إِنَّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، ثُمَّ انْصَرَفَ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ وَكُنْتُمْ إِسْلَامَهُ

From Muḥammad ibn Ya’qub ibn Ḥamza ibn Yusuf ibn Abdullah ibn Salām, that Abdullah ibn Salām may Allah be pleased with him said

²⁵ *Dham al-Kalām wa’Ahlihi* [Vol. 4, no. 634]. Two further narrations are provided for in the original Arabic text. The first, as reported in the *Tafsir* of Mujāhid [Vol. 2, no. 112]: ‘Abdar-Rahman reported to us he said Ibrāhim narrated to us he said Adam narrated to us he said Qays ibn al-Rabeeh’ narrated to us he said al-‘Amash and ‘Aāsīm ibn Abi al-Najud narrated to us from Abu Wā’il Shaqeeq ibn Salamah he said: Quraysh said the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him give us the genealogy of your lord, thus Allah revealed this *Surah*, he said: O Muḥammad, this is to be ascribed to Me.’ The second, is from *al-‘Adhima* by Abu al-Shaykh al-Asbahāni [Vol. 1, no. 89]: ‘Muḥammad ibn Yaḥya ibn Manda narrated to us ‘Amr ibn Ali narrated to us Abu Dāwud narrated to us from Qays from ‘Aāsīm from Abu Wā’il, he said: The Quraysh said to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, what is the lineage of your lord? Thus Allah the Mighty and Sublime revealed: *Say: He is Allah the One, Allah the eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him.* O Muḥammad, ascribe this to Me.’

to the Jewish sages: ‘I want to make a covenant at the *masjid* of our father, Ibrāhīm,’ so he hurried to the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him and he said: *You are Abdullah ibn Salām?* He said: Yes. He said: *Come forth to us.* Then he said: *I beseech you, by Allah, do you not find me in the Torah, (as) the Messenger of Allah?* He said to him: ‘Describe to us your lord.’ Thus, (the angel) Jibreel came and he said: *Say: He is Allah the One* – to the end of the *Surah*. So the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him recited it and Ibn Salām said: I testify that there is no god but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah. Then he went to Medina and concealed his conversion to Islam.²⁶

It is cited in the *Sunnah* of Ibn Abi Aāšim and with it, *Zhilāl al-Jannah* by al-Albāni:

حدثنا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مُصَفَّى حَدَّثَنَا الْوَلِيدُ بْنُ مُسْلِمٍ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ حَمْرَةَ بْنِ يُونُسَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ سَلَامٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ أَنَّ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ سَلَامٍ قَالَ لِأَخْبَارِ الْيَهُودِ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُحَدِّثَ بِمَسْجِدِ آبَائِنَا إِذْ رَأَيْتُمْ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ عَهْدًا قَالَ فَلَمَّا نَظَرَ إِلَيْهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، قَالَ: أَنْتَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ سَلَامٍ، قَالَ: قُلْتُ: نَعَمْ. قَالَ: قُلْتُ فَأَنْعَثَ لَنَا رَبِّكَ؟ قَالَ: قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدَ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ وَقَرَأَهُ عَلَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Muḥammad ibn Muṣaffa narrated to us al-Waleed ibn Muslim narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Ḥamza ibn Yusuf ibn Abdullah ibn Salām narrated to us from his father, that Abdullah ibn Salām said to the Jewish sages: ‘I want to make a covenant at the *masjid* of our father, Ibrāhīm and Ismā’il.’ He said: When the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him, looked upon him he said: *You are Abdullah ibn Salām?* He replied Yes. Then he (Abdullah ibn Salām) asked: ‘Describe to us your lord.’ He (the Prophet) said: *Say: He is Allah the One, Allah the eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him.* And the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him recited it to us.²⁷

With the complete wording, it is to be found in the *Dalā’il al-Nabuwa* of Abu Nu’aym al-Aṣbahāni:

²⁶ *Tafsir* Ibn Abi Ḥātim [Vol. 10, no. 19533]

²⁷ *Sunnah* Ibn Abi Aāšim [Vol. 1, no. 664]

Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad narrated to us he said ‘Abdān ibn Aḥmad narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Muṣaffa narrated to us he said al-Waleed ibn Muslim narrated to us from Muḥammad ibn Ḥamza ibn Yusuf ibn Abdullah ibn Salām from his father, that Abdullah ibn Salām said to the Jewish sages: ‘I desire to renew a covenant at the *masjid* of our father Abraham and Ismā’il.’ So he went to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, he was in Mecca and he met them when they had left the *Hajj*, and he found the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him in Mina and the people around him, so he got up with the people. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him looked at him and he said: *You are Abdullah ibn Salām?* He replied yes. He said: *Come closer.* He said: *I beseech you by Allah, O Abdullah ibn Salām, do you not find me in the Torah, as being the Messenger of Allah?* He (Abdullah ibn Salām) replied to him: ‘Describe your lord.’

He said: So the angel Jibreel came and stood before the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and said to him: *Say: He is Allah the One, Allah the eternal* – until the end (of the chapter). The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him recited it as such upon us. (Abdullah) ibn Salām said: ‘I testify that there is no god but Allah and you are the Messenger of Allah.’ Then (Abdullah) ibn Salām proceeded to Medina, but concealed his conversion to Islam. When the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him emigrated to Medina, I was up a palm tree, so I came down by myself and my mother she said: For Allah’s sake, had you been Musa ibn Imrān, you would not have been able to throw yourself from the top of the palm tree. And she said: By Allah, I am pleased with the arrival of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, like (when) Musa ibn Imrān, when he was sent.²⁸

In relation to this tradition, al-Albāni said: ‘Its *isnād* is *daef*; its men (narrators) are judged trustworthy except Ḥamza ibn Yusuf ibn Abdullah ibn Salām; only his son Muḥammad narrated anything about him. Only Ibn Ḥibbān judged him as *thiqa*, but he didn’t meet his grandfather Abdullah ibn

²⁸ *Dalā’il al-Nabuwwa* [p. 355, no. 246]

Salām.’ He also said: ‘The *ḥadīth* is narrated by al-Ṭabarāni in *al-Kabir*: Abdullah ibn Aḥmad narrated to us he said Muḥammad ibn Muṣaffa narrated to us, with it.’ Al-Haythami said: It is narrated by al-Ṭabarāni, its men (narrators) are judged trustworthy except that is Ḥamza, who didn’t see his grandfather Abdullah ibn Salām.’

It was further mentioned by al-Wāḥidi in *Asbāb al-Nuzul* as well as by al-Baghawi, with its meaning in an abridged format from al-Ḍaḥḥāk and others. It is cited in *Dham al-Kalām wa’Ahlihi*:

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ reported to us Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad ibn Ayub reported to us Bakr ibn Sahl al-Dimyāṭi narrated to us Abdul-Ghani ibn Sa’eed narrated to us Musa ibn Abdar-Raḥman al-Thaqafi narrated to us from Ibn Jurayj from ‘Aṭā from Ibn ‘Abbās; and from Juwaybar from al-Daḥḥāk from Ibn ‘Abbās that the delegation of Najrān came to the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him, (comprising among them) seven-bishops from Bani al-Ḥārith ibn Ka’b, within them al-Aqib and a Sayyid from Madḥaj. They said to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him: ‘Outline for us the attributes of your lord – is it from aquamarine, sapphire or from gold?’ The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *Indeed, my Lord is not of such ‘things’ nor made of such things nor are they from him.* Thus, Allah the Almighty revealed: *Say: He is Allah the One* – there is nothing which like unto Him; he said: *You are one and this is one.* The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *There is nothing like unto him; all that (exists) dies except Him.*

They said: ‘Outline for us these attributes.’ And it was revealed: *Allah the eternal.* They said: And what is ‘*al-Ṣamad*’? The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: ‘*The Master who endures in need, as He said: And when hardship afflicts you, it is to Him alone you cry out for help;*’ [16: 53]. *He wants you to seek out His help.* So, they said: Give us more of the attributes. Allah thus revealed: *He begot no one, just as Mary gave birth, nor was He begotten, like the birth of Jesus, No one is comparable to Him. You want an equivalence to Him from among His creation, but it was denied.* The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him wanted to curse them concerning that but they said: We delayed three

on the fourth day, when we curse you. So the Jews and Christians said: Do not curse him, for he is a Prophet who is angered.²⁹

It is in *al-Abāteel wal’Manākeer wal-Ṣaḥāḥ wal-Mushāhir*, with the following: Ṣā’id ibn Yassār ibn Muḥammad al-Harawi al-Bushanji reported to us, coming upon us, al-Imām Shaykh al-Islam Abdullah ibn Muḥammad al-Ansari al-Harawi reported to us Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ reported to us in its complete entirety.³⁰

The narratives from Tafsir

At greater length, is the series of narratives that have been reported in the *Tafsir* of al-Ṭabari:

Regarding the interpretation of the verse(s) where He, may His names be Glorified and Sanctified: ‘*Say: He is Allah the One.*’ It has been said that the *mushrikeen* asked the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him concerning the genealogy of the Lord of Power, so Allah sent down this *Surah* as a reply to them. Conversely, some of the (interpreters) have said this *Surah* was revealed as a reply to the Jews, who asked him about (Allah), saying: ‘This God created creation, so who created God?’ This *Surah* was then revealed as a response to them. (Regarding) those who have mentioned that: this *Surah* was revealed as a reply to the *mushrikeen* who had asked (the Prophet) to trace the genealogy of the Lord, Blessed and Exalted that He is.

²⁹ *Dham al-Kalām wa’Ahlihi* [Vol. 4, no. 632]

³⁰ *al-Abāteel wal’Manākeer wal-Ṣaḥāḥ wal-Mushāhir* [Vol. 1, no. 60]. An additional narration is cited at this point in the original Arabic text. As recorded by al-Ṭabarāni in *Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ* [Vol. 1, no. 732]: ‘Aḥmad narrated to us he said ‘Abdar-Raḥman ibn Nāfi’ Darkhat narrated to us he said Ali ibn Thābit narrated to us from al-Wāza’ah ibn Nāfi’ from Abu Salamah from Abu Hurayrah, he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *Everything has a nisbah and the nisbah of Allah is: Say He is Allah the One.*’ Imām al-Ṭabarāni’s follow-up comment is: ‘This *ḥadīth* isn’t narrated from Abu Hurayrah except by way of this *isnād*, it is followed-on by ‘Abdar-Raḥman ibn Nāfi’. The Professor then comments by saying ‘I would argue that it is not a defect per se that Abdar-Raḥman ibn Nāfi’ is unique in narrating it, but rather the narrator al-Wāza’ah ibn Nāfi’ has a great many *wahm* (delusions) and mistakes.’

Aḥmad ibn Muneeh' al-Marwazi and Maḥmud ibn Khidāsh al-Ṭālaqāni narrated to us, they said Abu Sa'eed al-Ṣan'āni narrated to us he said Abu Ja'far al-Rāzi narrated to us from al-Rabeeh' ibn Anas from Abu al-'Aāliyah from Ubay ibn Ka'b, he said: The *mushrikeen* said to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, 'Give us the genealogy of your lord.' Thus, Allah then revealed (the verse): *Say: He is Allah the One, Allah the eternal.*

Ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us he said Yaḥya ibn Wa'ḍaḥ narrated to us he said al-Ḥussein narrated to us from Yazeed from 'Ikrimah, he said: Indeed, the *mushrikeen* said to the Messenger of Allah: O Messenger of Allah - report to us about your lord; describe your lord, what is he? What is he made of? Then Allah revealed (the verses): *Say: He is Allah the One* – until the end of the *Surah*.

Ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us he said Mihrān narrated to us from Abu Ja'far from al-Rabeeh' from Abu al-'Aāliyah (regarding): *Say: He is Allah the One, Allah the eternal*; the confederate leaders said, 'Give us the genealogy of your lord,' then (the angel) Jibreel brought down this *Surah*.

Muḥammad ibn 'Auf narrated to me he said Surayj narrated to us he said Ismā'il ibn Mujālid narrated to us from Mujālid from al-Sha'bi from Jābir, he said: The *mushrikeen* had said, 'Give us the genealogy of your lord,' thereafter, Allah revealed: *Say: He is Allah the One.*

(Here) detailing those who said that this *Surah* was revealed in relation to the questions posed by the Jews.

Ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us he said Salamah narrated to us he said Ibn Ishāq narrated to me from Muḥammad from Sa'eed he said: A group of Jews came to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him and they said to him: 'O Muḥammad, this God of yours created creation, therefore who created him?' The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him grew angry to the point that he visibly changed complexion. He was about to dismiss them out of anger on behalf of his Lord, but then (the angel) Jibreel, peace be upon him, came to him, calming him. He said unto him: O Muḥammad, calm thyself. Then the answer to the question (of the Jews) was revealed by Allah, thus He said: *Say: He is Allah the One.*' When the Prophet peace and

blessings be upon him recited this to them, in reply they said: 'Describe your lord for us – what is his body like? What are his forearms and arms like?' The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him became even angrier than previously, and again was about to dismiss them out, when Jibreel came to him and said the same thing; he brought the reply that (the Jews) had enquired about: '*These people have no grasp of Allah's true measure. On the Day of Resurrection, the whole earth will be in His grip,*' [39: 67].

Ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us he said Mihrān narrated to us from Sa'eed ibn Abi 'Aruba from Qatādah, he said: A group from among the Jews came to the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him and they said to him: 'Give us the genealogy of your lord,' then the following was revealed: *Say: He is Allah the One* – until the end of the *Surah*.

If the matter is how we have described it, the interpretation of these verses is as follows: *Say*, O Muḥammad to the people questioning you regarding the genealogy and description of your Lord, and also regarding who 'created' Him: The Lord about whom you have been inquiring, *He is Allah*; to whom belongs every being in existence worship. Worship should and cannot be directed to anything bar Him.³¹

Some may have questioned the diversity and multiplicity as it relates to the circumstances behind the revelation as set out in the previous narrations, just like the problem mentioned by Imām Ibn Kathir in his rendition of the *Seerah*. After mentioning the narrations about the revelation of the noble verses, he said:

'If you [believers] must respond to an attack, make your response proportionate, but it is best to stand fast,' [16: 126] up to where He says '*do not be distressed by their scheming,*' [16: 127]. I said, this verse is from the Meccan period, while the events of Uḥud happened

³¹ *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari [Vol. 24, pp. 687/688]. Given the length of citation, the Arabic text is omitted altogether. A complete translation of al-Ṭabari's *Tafsir* of this *Surah* is available on our website.

three-years after the *hijrah*. How does this fit together? Allah knows best.³²

In essence, we would argue, there is no real problematic concern over this, as we have outlined elsewhere in our books, regarding the following verses where He the Exalted and Majestic has said:

[Believers], why are you divided in two about the hypocrites, when Allah Himself has rejected them because of what they have done? Do you want to guide those Allah has left to stray? If Allah leaves anyone to stray, you [Prophet] will never find the way for him.

They would dearly like you to reject faith, as they themselves have done, to be like them. So do not take them as allies until they migrate [to Medina] for Allah's cause. If they turn [on you], then seize and kill them wherever you encounter them.

Take none of them as an ally or supporter. But as for those who seek refuge with people with whom you have a treaty, or who come over to you because their hearts shrink from fighting against you or against their own people, Allah could have given them power over you, and they would have fought you. So if they withdraw and do not fight you, and offer you peace, then Allah gives you no way against them.

You will find others who wish to be safe from you, and from their own people, but whenever they are back in a situation where they are tempted [to fight you], they succumb to it. So if they neither withdraw, nor offer you peace, nor restrain themselves from fighting you, seize and kill them wherever you encounter them: We give you clear authority against such people.³³

Perhaps the best thing that sheds light on the meaning of these noble verses is to know the reasons or circumstances behind the revelation, and what is the incident that it was revealed in connection to that the Qur'ān deals with. However, it must be hastened to point out that what is mentioned in the reasons for the revelation of any verse of the blessed Qur'ān, concerning

³² Ibn Kathir, *al-Sira al-Nabawīya* [Vol. 3, p. 55] (English translation), Centre for Muslim Contribution to Civilization.

³³ *Qur'ān*, 4: 88/91. Given the length of the citation from the verses that are quoted, the Arabic text has been omitted.

aḥādīth and narratives, if established as authentic, only provides an indicative guide to the details that are mentioned in the actual specific verse. Indeed, it sheds light on the meaning of its given sentences, so it becomes clearer, but it does not change its subject matter, nor the meanings of its sentences according to the connotations of the Arabic language and *Sharī'ah*, and not regarding the reason for revelation. The reason for revelation is not a specification, a restriction, or an interpreter. Rather, the *takhṣīṣ* (specification), the *taqayyad* (restriction), and the *ta'weel* (interpretation); the *ta'weel* is detailing the text from its apparent meaning, either from another textual evidence, or the from the necessity of perception and reasoning, and nothing else.

There is no reason for objection that there are multiple narratives and varying circumstances regarding the particular reasons for revelation of a verse or set of verses. Indeed, without doubt a verse or even a group of verses would be revealed for the first time in relation to a specific incident, with the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him reciting them. That recitation would be to several Ḥāfīz al-Qur'ān, who would be memorising it, but it is also immediately dictated to various scribes in attendance, so it is written down utilising the various means that were available at the time, be it on leaves, parchment, tablets or the like. Thereafter, it is transferred after a particular time, be it long or short, to the approved *mushaf* when sitting in attendance to prepare the composition of the Qur'ānic text. All of which, is then reviewed with the angel Jibreel each *Ramaḍān*. If a reliable narration came that the verse was revealed and was written or dictated, we know from that that it was the first revelation. Also, the applicability of a verse, or a group of verses, when we recite it for the first time to reality is a complete application of all its sentences and parts.

If we find such a perfect fit, we assume that this is the first descent of the revelation. Then another occasion may arise and an incident occurs, or the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him asks about a matter, and the Prophet judges upon it with a specific ruling and recites the verse, some of those who attended that juncture who perhaps had not already memorised it therefore thought it was just being revealed, especially if the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him remained silent. He waits for the revelation, then the well-known distress that he often experienced when the revelation came down upon him, so those who attended with him at that time would think

that what had followed after the revelation of distress, the intensity of revelation, had just descended, although it had happened previously. Rather, the new revelation came to guide its application to this incident as well. In most cases, the applicability of a verse, or group of verses, to this new reality is a partial applicability to one or some of its sentences, in which the witnessing thereof took place. Therefore, it is not reprehensible that the *Ṣaḥīḥ* narrations mention multiple facts as a reason for revelation, as we have mentioned previously. The verse of punishment in the same way is definitely originating at Mecca, then it was revealed again in the incident of Uḥud, or it was recited at that time as a reminder, and a third time after the glorious conquest of Mecca, and so on. All praise be to Allah.

The totality of the aforementioned texts, regardless of their individual parts, then leaves no room for doubt that the Arabs believed that ‘*Uluhiyyah*,’ ‘*Rububiyyah*’ or you name it whatever you want: to be a genus of many types, and each type has many sub-parts. So naturally, *in their minds*, they found it entirely conceivable to ask the Prophet of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, about ‘the genealogy of your lord.’

11. The reality of *Shirk* among the Arabs

Given the plethora of narratives that have been considered thus far, the following becomes manifestly clear, indeed confirming what has been exhaustively detailed. In general the matter of *Aṣṅām* – idols, in the belief of their worshippers, are unequivocally regarded as symbols, channels of communication, dwellings, or embodiments of supposed ‘divine entities.’ Some of them may be considered ‘other worldly,’ that is to say, celestial, angelic or planetary, while others are terrestrial and low, of the temporal plain, either angelic and pure, or demonic and malevolent (and perhaps there was a category of *Jinn* in between, moderate, containing both good and evil).

Secondly, these supposed ‘divine entities,’ in *the belief of their worshippers*, possess independence and significant participation in creation and formation. Or, in the management, administration, and arranging matters in a measured way (especially in benefit and harm), or in command, prohibition, and legislation, be that in some or all of these aspects.

Thirdly, with regards to the Arab tribe of Quryash in particular, but also for a large proportion of the pagan Arabs stemming from the Adnanite tribes, they believed in the following:

1. That the angels ‘were the daughters of Allah,’ and that their supposed mothers, were from the daughters of the elite nobility of the *Jinn*. It is possible that they believed that al-Lāt was one from among them.
2. That there is lineage related to Allah. That He belonged to numerous tribes with many individuals. Therefore, the Quraysh *demand* clarification from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, about his belief in the ‘essence’ of Allah. Consequently, *Surah al-Ikhlās* (chapter 112) was revealed. This chapter has been established to be

equivalent of one-third of the Qur'ān. Thus it is no wonder, for divine lineage deserves such a lofty status.

3. Some pagan Arabs could not conceive in the concept of a deity *without* recourse to having some form of 'idol' depicting or representing it. Therefore, they asked concerning Allah the Mighty and Sublime 'Is He made from gold or silver?' Others, in fact the majority, had the belief that Allah is a 'celestial being' beyond nature and the temporal plain. As noted by what Ḥuṣayn al-Khuzā'i said, who was the father of 'Imran ibn Ḥuṣayn, may Allah be pleased with him, prior to Islam - 'How many gods do you worship today? His father replied, 'Seven, six in the earth and one in heaven.' This is as per the narration found in the *Sunan* of al-Tirmidhi. Clearly, the 'one in heaven' was a reference to Allah, the Almighty.

It should also be noted that some of the Arabs, particularly from the tribes of Tamim and those living on the outskirts of Iraq, had embraced Zoroastrianism. Additionally, scattered individuals from the tribe of Quraysh were dualist heretics, believing in the existence of two deities – one of light, one of darkness - two gods, of light and darkness. It is said that Abu Sufyān was from among them.¹ This is notwithstanding the fact that *Shirk* among the Arabs was simple and primitive. It was lacking substantive intellectual content, far behind the intellectual complexity and philosophical sophistication found among neighbouring peoples. It wasn't though *completely* devoid of any intellectual or doctrinal substance as suggested by Professor al-Fayoumi. His introductory comments to his work may have involved some exaggeration, but he could have also been referring specifically to the absence of systematic, philosophical, academic content.²

Given this, it would be a fatal error to assert that the pre-Islamic pagan Arabs did not have any notion of *Shirk* as it related to the matter of the divine essence – *al-Dhāt*, allowing for its multiplicity or *Shirk* to extend to the realm of names and attributes - *Asmā' wa'l-Ṣifāt*, or even the matter of lordship, *al-Rububiyyah*, regardless of how one seeks to define it. Yet in actuality,

¹ Here, the quote from *Nashuwat al-Ṭurab fi Tārikh Jāhiliyyatul-Arab* is repeated. See footnote 19 from chapter 1.

² Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Fayoumi (1994), *The History of Pre-Islamic Religious Thought*, (4th edition), [p. 8].

this was precisely their form of *Shirk* and its true ugly nature. From this, their association in worship, governance, and legislation followed - not the other way around, as Imām Ibn Taymiyyah mistakenly asserted. Compounding that calamity, this gross error was adopted as a weaponised ideology by the renegade Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (MIAW) and his adherents. They used this as a sharp unsheathed sword against the people of Islam, leaving the *mushrikeen* and enemies of Islam unchallenged.

Truth is ascertained by evidence. Every Muslim, in fact every sane and rational individual should take heed of this disastrous example to diligently review, critique, scrutinise and properly examine. All the while, *always* referring the matter back to Allah and His Messenger. Never be intimidated or overwhelmed by the hollow words of men, since truth doesn't intrinsically reside within them.

For those who wish to delve deeper and thoroughly explore the details of the beliefs of the Arabs, their myths, legends, idols, and related matters, they should refer to Volume Six, (print edition), of Dr. Jawad Ali's seminal work, extensively quoted throughout this present book. While much the granular detail that he covers may not be of primary concern to us here, it is important to understand how *Shirk* infiltrated the Arabs of the North, the descendants of Ismā'il, peace be upon him, after they had adhered to *Tawḥeed* for many centuries. This is what will be addressed in the forthcoming chapters..

When I heard about the release of a book titled *Polytheism in Ancient and Modern Times*, I hurried to acquire it, hoping to find in it the insight I sought regarding the *true* nature of the *Shirk* of the Arabs. However, I was greatly disappointed. This book, *Polytheism in Ancient and Modern Times* by Abu Bakr Muḥammad Zakariya, was printed and published by al-Rāshid Library in Riyadh, 2001. It originated as a Master's or doctoral thesis. The book is a large work, spanning three volumes, and it contains an enormous amount of citations. Yet, it unquestioningly accepts the ill-fated Wahhābi tripartite division, as if it descended from the seven-heavens, leaving the author floundering among the blind and bereft of reason. However, the esteemed reader should not accept my words without evidence; they should read the book themselves, think with their own mind, and make their own informed and astute judgment.

12. How did the Adnanite Arabs abandon the *Deen* of Ismā'il?

There is no doubt that this matter, the conversion of the Arabs from the *Tawḥeed al-Ḥanaḥīyah*, the *Deen* of Ibrāhīm, into *Shirk* and *Kufr*, was one of the things which occupied and confused a great many thinkers, scholars and historians. It attracted their attention since very early times. To be more specific, it occurred from the beginning - during the time of the blessed *Ṣaḥāba* may Allah be pleased with them all. Among the attempts made to decipher this, arguably the first, was what al-Bukhārī cited in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* with many being mistaken into thinking it has an authentic connected channel of transmission connected to Ibn 'Abbās: 'al-Lāt was a man who used to kneed (or mix) the *saweeq* for the pilgrims.'¹ A separate chapter is enclosed within the present volume to conclusively demonstrate this is invalid.

Others, such as Ibn Jarir (al-Ṭabari) recorded a narrative in his *Tafsir* ostensibly to Mujāhid, concerning the verse where He the Exalted said - '[Disbelievers], consider al-Lāt and al-Uzza,' he (Mujāhid) said: 'He was preparing the *saweeq* for pilgrims and people stayed at his graveside.'² The wording reporting from Ibn Abi Ḥātim has: 'He was preparing the *saweeq* upon a stone, none would consume it except that they would become fat, so they worshipped him.'³ A variant in wording is reported also by Sa'eed ibn Manṣur, which reads: 'He used to prepare the *saweeq* and feed the people who passed by. When he died, they worshipped him. They said: he is al-

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī, [Vol. 6, no. 4859]

² *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari [Vol. 11, p. 520]

³ Ibn Ḥajar *Fath al-Bārī* [Vol. 8, p. 778]

Lāt.'⁴ I would argue that this is ostensibly the first attempt, but perhaps better phrased as *if this was Ṣaḥīḥ*, purportedly narrated from Ibn 'Abbās.

Secondly, if it were true, one could only at most indicate that what was intended by this narrative was to try and explain *how Shirk* emerged among the Arabs, al-Lāt not actually existing, nor being known from before that time. Undoubtedly all of that is certainly false. These, as well as other similar narratives are all *mawqūf*, not a single letter is *marfū'* – raised and attributable to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. Consequently they are not stemming from *wahy* (revelation) nor should they be construed as such. Contained within them, is no standing or authoritative proof whatsoever.

Rather, these narratives are nothing but myths or popular legends. Within them is not authoritative proof, as will be conclusively shown. To begin, the following appearing in the *Seerah* literature is often mentioned in this regard:

Ibn Ishāq said: They say that the beginning of stone worship among the descendants of Ishmael was when Mecca became too small for them and they wanted more room in the country. Everyone who left the town took with him a stone from the sacred area to do honour to it. Wherever they settled they set it up and walked round it as they went round the *Ka'ba*. This led them to worship what stones they pleased and those which made an impression on them. Thus as generations passed they forgot their primitive faith and adopted another religion for that of Abraham and Ishmael. They worshipped idols and adopted the same errors as the peoples before them. Yet they retained and held fast practices-going back to the time of Abraham, such as honouring the temple and going around it, the great and little pilgrimage, and the standing on 'Arafa and Muzdalifa, sacrificing the victims and the pilgrim cry at the great and little pilgrimage, while introducing elements which had no place in the religion of Abraham. Thus Kināna and Quraysh used to say:

⁴ al-Suyutī has mention of this in *al-Durr al-Manthūr* [Vol. 6, p. 163]. There are two entries as per the *Sunan* of Sa'eed ibn Manṣur [Vol. 7, no. 2084/2085, pp. 454/456] regarding this. The entry referred to here is the former, with the full *isnād* as: Sa'eed narrated to us he said Sufyān reported to us he said I heard it from two (narrators) from Ibn Abi Najīh, or Ḥumayd or Dāwud, and from all of them from Mujāhid.

لبيك اللهم لبيك، لبيك لا شريك لك، إلا شريكاً هو لك، تملكه وما ملك

'At Your service, O Allah, at Your service! At Your service, You have no partner except a partner who is Yours, You own him and what he owns.

They used to acknowledge His unity in their proclamation and then include their idols with Allah, putting the ownership of them in His hand. Allah said to Muḥammad: *Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him*, i.e. they do not acknowledge My oneness with knowledge of My reality, but they associate with Me one of My creation.⁵

As will be outlined shortly, the Arabs used to give the names of their *Aṣnām* (idols) to their children, so they carried these names like 'Zayd al-Lāt,' 'Tamim al-Lāt,' 'Zayd Manāt,' or 'Abd al-Manāt' and so on. This was *prior* to the advent of the Prophetic mission by at least twelve generations. The Adnanite Arabs, the Arabs of the north, were an illiterate nation – largely devoid of literary prowess or even calculation. They were not akin to the Greeks, producing epic literature of their 'heroes,' 'gods' and an elaborate mythology. Transmission of such reports, such as that from the *Seerah* cited above, cannot be used as any standing authority whatsoever. Oral transmission beyond a few generations becomes generally unreliable if it is purely through that medium of transmission. Hence, such a narrative, termed by Muḥammad ibn Ishāq as '*al-Za'm*' (a claim) cannot be accepted under any circumstances.

Moreover, the glorification of the *Ka'ba* is as old as Ismā'il ibn Ibrahim, peace be upon him and his father. They lived prior to the advent of the Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by more than seventy-generations. So how is it that the deviation appeared so late, around the twelfth generation, suddenly manifesting with the Arabs giving names to their children after the *Aṣnām*?

The Prophetic clarification from revelation

⁵ A Guillaume (1967), *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), [pp. 34/35]. The translation has been modified slightly to take a more accurate account of the original Arabic text, omitting the old English pronouns. The Qur'anic verse quoted is at [12: 106].

What has been cited thus far is evidently problematic. In fact, it is a collection of false claims. What is *Ṣaḥīḥ*, is what has been reported by the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. He himself clarified this matter. It stems from *wahy* (revelation) with a transmission that is beyond doubt, it is *tawātur*. He, peace and blessings be upon him, expressly said:

رَأَيْتَ عَمْرُو بْنَ لَحْيٍ بِنِ قَمْعَةَ بْنِ جَنْدِفٍ يَجْرُ قُصْبَهُ فِي النَّارِ، إِنَّهُ كَانَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ غَيَّرَ دِينَ
إِسْمَاعِيلَ فَتَنَصَّبَ الْأَوْثَانَ وَبَحَرَ الْبَحِيرَةَ وَسَيَّبَ السَّائِبَةَ وَوَصَلَ الْوَصِيلَةَ وَحَمَى الْخَامِي

*I saw 'Amr ibn Luḥay ibn Qam'ah ibn Khindif dragging his intestines in the fire (of hell). He was the first to change the Deen of Ismā'il, setting up awthān (idols), letting the animals loose (for them); introducing the practice of al-Baḥīrah, al-Sā'ibah, al-Waṣīlah and al-Ḥāmi.*⁶

Given the confusion that often underpins the topic at hand, it is necessary to not merely assert that the narratives upon which this is based are *tawātur*, namely continuous recurrent transmission, but to demonstrably *show* that. It is imperative to lay out, in exhaustive detail, the *aḥādīth* as they appear in the corpus of *Sunnah*, showing that this is a matter where the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him has told us from *wahy* who introduced *Shirk*. As will be shown, the matter is reported by six *Ṣaḥāba*; there are in addition, several *mursal* narrations that can be appended to that body of evidence.

⁶ The Qur'ān makes mention of these classes of animals dedicated to the idols at [5: 103/104]: '*Allah did not institute the dedication of such things as Baḥīrah, Sā'ibah, Waṣīlah or Ḥāmi to the idols; but the disbelievers invent lies about Allah. Most of them do not use reason - when it is said to them, 'Come to what Allah has sent down, and to the Messenger,' they say, 'What we inherited from our forefathers is good enough for us,' even though their forefathers knew nothing and were not guided.*' Professor Muhammad Abdel Haleem has a footnote (p. 78) for this verse in his translation, where he writes that these were 'Different classes of animals liberated from work or use as food, in honour of idols, and venerated by the pagan Arabs.' In his doctoral thesis, al-Jabari has criticised the English translation of these verses, amongst others. He argues that the method of translation doesn't often render accurately though what is being conveyed to the reader. This is particularly so with the idolatrous practices of dedicating animals to idols. He has proposed an alternate translation for the verses as being: '*God has not prescribed superstitions such as a slitting the ear of a she-camel, or a letting loose she-camel for free pasture, or sacrificing twin animals to idols, or freeing a stallion-camel from work. Those who do not believe invent lies against God and most of them lack wisdom.*' See: Raed Al-Jabari, (2008), *Reasons for the Possible Incomprehensibility of Some Verses of Three Translations of the Meaning of the Holy Quran into English*, doctoral thesis, ESRI, University of Salford, [p. 146].

Hadith of Abu Hurayrah

To begin examination of these compelling textual evidences, we start with the narration as recorded by Imām al-Bayhaqy, in his *Sunan al-Kubra*. It has one of the most authentic channels of transmission in this world, narrated on the authority of Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyib from Abu Hurayrah:

أخبرنا أبو عبد الله الحافظ وأبو طاهر الفقيه وأبو زكريا بن أبي إسحاق المزكي وأبو سعيد بن أبي عمرو قالوا حدثنا أبو العباس محمد بن يعقوب أنبا محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد الحكم أنبا أبي وشعيب قالوا أنبا الليث عن بن الهاد عن بن شهاب عن بن المسيب عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال: سمعت رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم، يقول رأيت عمرو بن عامر الخزاعي يجر قصبه في النار كان أول من سيب السوانب قال سعيد السائبة التي تسبب فلا يحمل عليها شيء؛ والبحيرة التي يمنع درها للطواغيت فلا يجلبها أحد؛ والوصيلة الناقة البكر ت بكر في أول نتاج الإبل بأنثى ثم تنثى بعد بأنثى فكانوا يسيبونها للطواغيت يدعونها الوصيلة إن وصلت إحداهما بالأخرى؛ والحام فحل الإبل يضرب العشر من الإبل فإذا قضى ضرابه جدعه للطواغيت فأغفوه من الحمل فلم يحملوا عليه شيئا فسموه الحام قال الإمام البيهقي أخرجه في الصحيح من حديث صالح بن كيسان وغيره عن بن شهاب؛ قال البخاري ورواه بن الهاد

Abu Abdullah al Ḥāfīz, Abu Ṭāhir al-Faqīhi, Zakariyā ibn Abi Ishāq al-Muzaki and Abu Sa'eed ibn Abi 'Amr reported to us, they all said: Abul'Abbās Muḥammad ibn Ya'qub narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Abdullah ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam reports Abu Shu'ayb reports, they said al-Layth reports from Ibn al-Hād from Ibn Shihāb from Ibn al-Musayyib from Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, he said I heard the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him saying: *I saw 'Amr ibn Aāmīr al-Khuzā'i dragging his intestines in the fire. He was the first who started the custom of releasing animals (for the idols).*

Sa'eed said: *al-Sā'ibah*, is the animal which is let loose, nothing is carried upon it. *al-Bahīrah* a she-camel whose milk is kept for the idols, and nobody is allowed to milk it. *al-Waṣīlah* is the she-camel which gives birth to a she-camel as its first delivery, and then gives birth to another she-camel as its second delivery. People (then) used to let that she-camel loose for their idols if it gave birth to two she-camels successively without giving birth to a male camel in between. *Al-Hām* is a stallion camel used for copulation. If it had impregnated

ten she-camels, they used to call it a stallion camel and used to let it loose for the idols. So it was exempted from the work load, not carrying anything of burden, thus they called it a *Ḥāmi*.

Imām al-Bayhaqy said: 'It is reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* from the *ḥadīth* of Ṣāliḥ ibn Kaysān, and other than him from Ibn Shihāb; al-Bukhāri said it is narrated (via) Ibn al-Hād.'⁷

There are additional references for the narration within Bayhaqy's *Sunan al-Kubra*,⁸ A large number of scholars have reported this authentic narration in their respective collections, among them al-Bukhāri, Muslim, Ibn Ḥibbān, and al-Ṭabarāni.⁹ There is the citation which is in *al-Irshād fi Ma'rifa 'Ulamā' al-Ḥadīth lil-Khalīli*:

حدثني أبو مسلم غالب بن علي أخبرنا محمد بن عبد الله الأبهري بإفادة ابن بكير، حدثنا بكر بن محمد بن العلاء، حدثنا أحمد بن مضارب الكلبى حدثنا أبي عن محمد بن عمر عن سليمان بن بلال، حدثنا ربيعة بن أبي عبد الرحمن، قال: سمعت ذلك الفتى مالكا، عن الزهري عن

⁷ al-Bayhaqy, *Sunan al-Kubra*, [Vol. 10, no. 19709]. Also reported by al-Bukhāri in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* [Vol. 4, no. 4347]. Al-Jabari [Ibid, p. 145] outlines some explanation behind these terms as follows: 'In the pre-Islamic era, pagan Arabs used to dedicate camels and she-camels to their idols on different occasions. These animals were called Baḥīrah, Sā'ibah, Waṣīlah and Ḥāmi. Baḥīrah was a she-camel who had given birth five times and the last delivery being male. The pagan Arabs used to slit its ears and let it loose for free pasture. Sā'ibah was also a she-camel let loose for free pasture and water. Before starting a long journey, or if someone was ill, the pagan Arabs used to vow to consecrate a she-camel to their idols if they returned from the journey safely, or if the sick person recovered. Waṣīlah was a she-camel who had given birth to male and female twins. If a she-camel had given birth to a male, the pagan Arabs used to dedicate it to their idols, while if it had been delivered of a female, the new born female was kept for them. If the she-camel had been delivered of male and female twins then they used to let it loose for the sake of the idols. Ḥāmi is a stallion camel freed from work for the sake of the idols. If a camel had impregnated ten she-camels, the pagan Arabs used to call it a stallion camel and used to let it loose. The milk of these three types of she-camels was spared for the sake of the idols of the pagan Arabs. No one was allowed to milk them or carry anything on them. They were not restrained from any pasture or water. The pagan Arabs claimed that these practices were imposed by God. Therefore, God revealed this verse in order to disprove what they had invented against Him.'

⁸ al-Bayhaqy, *Sunan al-Kubra*, [Vol. 6, no. 11694]. One such being: Abu Abdullah al Ḥāfīz reported to me (*hawala*) Abu Sa'eed ibn Abi 'Amr reports, Abu Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abdullah al-Muzani narrated to us Ali ibn Muḥammad ibn Esa narrated to us Abul' Yamān narrated to us, Shu'ayb reported to me from al-Zuhri he said I heard Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyib speaking about it in its entirety. Thereafter, al-Bayhaqy commented by saying: 'It is narrated by al-Bukhāri in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from (the channel of) Abul' Yamān.'

⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhāri [Vol. 3, no. 3333], *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim [Vol. 4, no. 2856], *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān [Vol. 14, no. 6260], *Musnad* Aḥmad [Vol. 2, no. 7696 and 8773], al-Ṭabarāni, *Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ* [Vol. 8, no. 8774].

سعيد بن المسيب، عن أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم رأيت عمرو بن لحي يجر قصبه في النار وهو أول من سيب السوائب قال سليمان بن بلال: حدثني به مالك، عن الزهري، ويحيى بن سعيد، عن سعيد بن المسيب قال محمد بن عمر ثم سمعته من مالك

Abu Muslim Ghālib ibn Ali narrated to me Muḥammad ibn Abdullah al-Abhari reported to us, according to Ibn Bakir, Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Alā narrated to us Ahmad ibn Muḍārib al-Kalbi narrated to us my father narrated to us from Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr from Sulaymān ibn Bilāl, Rabi’ah ibn Abi ‘Abdar-Raḥman narrated to us he said I heard that as stated from al-Zuhri from Sa’eed ibn al-Musayyib from Abu Hurayrah, he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *I saw ‘Amr ibn Luḥay drag his intestines in the fire, and he was the first to set animals free for the idols.*

Sulaymān ibn Bilāl said: Mālik narrated it to me from al-Zuhri and Yaḥya ibn Sa’eed from Sa’eed ibn al-Musayyib. Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr said: Then I heard it from Mālik.¹⁰

The ahādith of the eclipse

Generally, many of the *ahādith* appear in relation to this mention the event of the eclipse. I would argue that this eclipse is *definitively* established. It is the eclipse which occurred on Monday the 29th of *Shawwal* in year 10 AH. This corresponds to 27 January 632 CE; it began after sunrise reaching its end after about 75minutes and fully ended after 210mins approximately. This was the day upon which Ibrāhim ibn Muḥammad passed away, may peace and blessings be upon him, his father and all his family. He died in the morning and was buried, then the solar eclipse happened. Imām Muslim cites the next tradition in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from the channel of Abu Ṣāliḥ from Abu Hurayrah:

حدثني زهير بن حرب حدثنا جرير عن سهيل عن أبيه عن أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم رأيت عمرو بن لحي بن قمعة بن جندب أبا بني كعب هؤلاء يجر قصبه في النار

¹⁰ Abu Ya’la al-Khalilī, *al-Irshād fi Ma’rifat ‘Ulamā’ al-Ḥadīth lil-Khalilī*

Zuhayr ibn Ḥarb narrated to me Jarir narrated to us from Suhayl from his father from Abu Hurayrah, he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *I saw ‘Amr ibn Luḥay ibn Qim’ah ibn Khindif, father of Bani Ka’b dragging his intestines in the fire.*¹¹

Al-Bukhāri also narrates this within the *Ṣaḥīḥ*.¹² It is to be found reported in the *Seerah* of Ibn Hishām, with a *isnād* that is resolutely authentic. The extended wording contains some important additional details:

قال ابن إسحاق: وَحَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ الْحَارِثِ النَّبِيِّ أَنَّ أَبَا صَالِحِ السَّمَانِ حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ ابْنُ هِشَامٍ: وَاسْمُ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ. عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَامِرٍ، وَيُقَالُ اسْمُهُ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ صَخْرٍ) يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، يَقُولُ لِأَكْثَمِ بْنِ [أبي] الْجَوْنِ الْخُرَاعِيِّ يَا أَكْثَمُ رَأَيْتَ عَمْرُو بْنَ لُحَيْ بْنِ قَمْعَةَ بْنِ جَنْدَبٍ يَجْرُ قُصْبَهُ فِي النَّارِ فَمَا رَأَيْتَ رَجُلًا أَشْبَهَ بِرَجُلٍ مِنْكَ بِهِ وَلَا بِكَ مِنْهُ فَقَالَ أَكْثَمُ عَسَى أَنْ يَصْنُرَنِي شَبَهُهُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ لَا، إِنَّكَ مُؤْمِنٌ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ إِنَّهُ كَانَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ غَيَّرَ دِينَ إِسْمَاعِيلَ فَتَنَصَّبَ الْأَوْثَانَ وَبَحَرَ الْبَحِيرَةَ وَسَيَّبَ السَّائِبَةَ وَوَصَلَ الْوَصِيلَةَ وَحَمَى الْحَامِي

Ibn Ishāq said: And Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhim ibn al-Ḥārith al-Taymi narrated to me that Abu Ṣāliḥ al-Sammān narrated it, that he heard it from Abu Hurayrah – (Ibn Hishām said Abu Hurayrah’s name is Abdullah ibn Aāmīr, its said his name is Abdar-Raḥman ibn Ṣakhr) – saying I heard the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him saying to Aktham ibn (Abi) al-Jawn al-Khuzā’i: *O Aktham, I saw ‘Amr ibn Luḥay ibn Qam’ah ibn Khindif dragging his intestines in the fire, and never did I see two men so much alike and you and he.* Aktham replied: ‘Will this resemblance harm me O Messenger of Allah? He said: *No, for you are a mu’min (believer) and he is a Kāfir (disbeliever); He was the first to change the Deen of Ismā’il, to set up idols and introducing the practice of al-Bahirah, al-Sā’ibah, al-Wasilah, and al-Hāmi.*¹³

Similar is cited in the work *al-Rawḍ al-Anaf*, as well as being reported in the *Seerah* of Ibn Kathir.¹⁴ After mention of this, Imām Ibn Kathir commented: ‘There are no traditions to this effect in the books (*sic.* canonical *ḥadīth*). It

¹¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim [Vol. 4, no. 2856]

¹² *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhāri [Vo3. 4, no. 332]

¹³ *Seerah* Ibn Hishām [Vol. 1, p. 76]

¹⁴ *al-Rawḍ al-Anaf* [Vol. 1, p. 65], *Seerah* Ibn Kathir [Vol. 1, p. 65].

is narrated regarding that, or similarly from Ibn Jarir from Hannād from ‘Abda from Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr from Abu Salamah from Abu Hurayrah from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. And that too is not in the books also.’¹⁵ I would argue that this isn’t strictly so. The channel of reporting by Abu Salamah from Abu Hurayrah is to be found in the books of *ḥadīth*, as it is narrated by way of Ibn Jarir. That is to be found in the *Tafsīr* of Ṭabari: ‘Hannād al-Sāri narrated to us he said Yunus ibn Bukeer narrated to us he said Muḥammad ibn Ishāq narrated to us, he said Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥārith narrated to us from Abu Ṣāliḥ from Abu Hurayrah, he said with this wording.’¹⁶

It is further cited in *al-Ibnāhu ‘ala Qabā’il al-Ruwāt*: ‘Abdul Wārith ibn Sufyān narrated to us he said Qāsim ibn Aṣḡagh narrated to us he said Aḥmad ibn Zuhayr narrated to us al-Faḍl ibn Ghanām narrated to us he said Salamah narrated to us from Ishāq from Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥārith al-Taymi, that Abu Ṣāliḥ narrated that he heard Abu Hurayrah saying – I heard the Messenger of Allah saying to Aktham, then he mentioned the remainder of the *ḥadīth*.’¹⁷ Muṣ’ab al-Zubayri mentioned this *ḥadīth* of Abu Hurayrah without its *isnād*. Thereafter he said: ‘What the Messenger of Allah said it is the truth, if he indeed has said it.’ This is also in the abridgement of *Musnad* al-Bazzār: ‘With it, the meaning of the previous *isnād*, Abdullah ibn Shabeeb narrated to us Ishāq ibn Muḥammad narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Ja’far ibn Abi Kathir narrated to us from Zayd ibn Aslam from Abu Ṣāliḥ from Abu Hurayrah, from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, he said: *The first to release animals for the idols and other than the covenant of the father Ibrāhīm was ‘Amr ibn Luḡay, indeed I saw him dragging his intestines in the fire.*’¹⁸

I would say about Aktham ibn al-Jawn, that his name is ‘Abd al-Uzza ibn Munqath ibn Rabia’ ibn Aṣram ibn Ḍabees ibn Ḥarām ibn Ḥabeesha ibn Salul ibn Ka’b ibn ‘Amr ibn Luḡay, Abu Ma’bad al-Khuzā’i, a Companion. He passed the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him with Abu Bakr

¹⁵ Ibn Kathir (1998), *The Life of Muhammad: al-Sira al-Nabawiyya*, Translated by Professor Trevor Le Gassick, The Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization, (Garnet Publishing: Reading), [Vol. 1, p. 44].

¹⁶ *Tafsīr* Ṭabari [Vol. 11, p. 117 (Shamela edition)]

¹⁷ *al-Ibnāhu ‘ala Qabā’il al-Ruwāt*, p. 19 (online edition). The work by Yusuf ibn Abdullah ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Barr ibn Aāṣim al-Numury al-Qurṭubi, d. 463 AH.

¹⁸ *Musnad* al-Bazzār [Vol. 2, no. 8914]

during *hijra*, to his tent while he was absent. Their guest was his wife, Umm Ma’bad and he is also the uncle of the great Companion Sulaymān ibn Ṣurad ibn Abi Jawn. Cited in the *Mustadrak* of al-Ḥākīm there is the narration from the channel of Abu Hurayrah by way of Abu Salamah:

أخبرني عبد الرحمن بن أبي الوزير حدثنا أبو حاتم الرازي حدثنا محمد بن عبد الله الأنصاري حدثنا محمد بن عمرو عن أبي سلمة عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم عرضت علي النار فرأيت فيها عمرو بن لُحَيّ بن قَمْعَةَ بن خندف، أبو عمرو، وهو يجز قصبه في النار؛ وهو أول من سيب السوائب؛ وغير عهد إبراهيم عليه السلام؛ وأشبهه من رأيت به أكنم بن أبي الجون؛ قال: فقال أكنم يا رسول الله: يضرني شبهه؟ قال لا إنك مسلم، وإنه كافر ثم قال الإمام الحاكم هذا حديث صحيح على شرط مسلم ولم يخرجاه

Abdar-Raḥman ibn Abi Wazir reported to me Abu Ḥātim al-Rāzi narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Abdullah al-Anṣari narrated to us Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr narrated to us from Abu Salamah from Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, he said: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: *The fire was displayed before me, I saw within it ‘Amr ibn Luḡay ibn Qam’ah bin Khindif, Abu ‘Amr, and he is dragging his intestines in the fire. He was the first to release animals for the idols, departing from the covenant of Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him, he resembles Aktham ibn Abi al-Jawn.* He said: Aktham said – O Messenger of Allah, will his likeness harm me? He (the Prophet) said: *No, you are a Muslim and he (was) a Kāfir.*

Thereafter Imām al-Ḥākīm said: ‘This *ḥadīth* is *Ṣaḥīḥ* upon the conditions of (Imām) Muslim but he didn’t record it.’¹⁹

It is, as he has said. It is also reported in other collections too.²⁰ Cited also in the *Tafsīr* of Mujāhid there is:

¹⁹ al-Ḥākīm *al-Mustadrak* [Vol. 5, no. 8279]

²⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān [Vol. 6, no. 7490], with the *isnād*: ‘Abdullah ibn Muḥammad al-Azdi reported to us he said Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm narrated to us al-Faḍl ibn Musa reported to us Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr narrated to us Abu Salamah narrated to us from Abu Hurayrah, concerning it to its end.’ Abu Ya’la cited this in his *Musnad* [Vol. 10, no. 6121]: ‘Abu Musa narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Abdullah al-Anṣari narrated to us Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr narrated to us from Abu Salamah from Abu Hurayrah, concerning it to its end.’ Also appearing in the *Tafsīr* of al-Ṭabari [Vol. 5, no. 12826, p. 87 (print edition)]: ‘Hannād narrated to us ‘Abda narrated to us from Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr from Abu Salamah from Abu Hurayrah concerning it, to its end.’

أنبا عبد الرحمن قال حدثنا إبراهيم قال حدثنا آدم، قال حدثنا أبو معشر عن محمد بن قيس عن أبي هريرة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال أبو معشر وحدثنا سهيل بن أبي صالح عن أبيه عن أبي هريرة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، قال إن أول من أله الإله وسيب السيوب وبحر البحائر وغير دين إبراهيم عليه السلام عمرو بن لحي بن قمعة بن خندف قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فرأيت يجر قصبه في النار يتأذى به أهل النار، صنمناه على ظهره وناقن كان سبيهما، ثم استعملهما بعضانه بأفواههما ويطانه بأخفافهما أشبهه ولده به أكنم بن أبي الجون فقال أكنم يا رسول الله أضرني ذلك شيئا؟ قال لا أنت رجل مؤمن وهو كافر

Abdar-Raḥman reports, he said, Ibrāhīm narrated to us he said Adam narrated to us he said Abu Ma'shar narrated to us from Muḥammad ibn Qays from Abu Hurayrah from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him; Abu Ma'shar said: And Suhayl ibn Ṣālīḥ narrated to us from his father from Abu Hurayrah from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, he said: *The first to deify the release of animals to gods, introducing the practice of al-Bāḥīrah, departing from the Deen of Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him, (was) 'Amr ibn Luḥay ibn Qam'ah ibn Khindif.* The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him said: *I saw him dragging his intestines in the fire, the people of the fire were harmed by it; his idols, saddled on his back, two she-camels biting him, trampling upon him with their hooves. He bears resemblance to his son, Aktham ibn Abi al-Jawn.* Aktham thus said: 'O Messenger of Allah, is that something that would harm me?' He replied: *No, you are a believing man and he is a kāfir.*²¹

As shown, the *ḥadīth* is narrated from Abu Hurayrah by way of the most authentic pathway, established by way of proven and trustworthy narrators, the ranks being in order of the Imām's: Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyib, Abu Ṣālīḥ Dhakwān, Abu Salamah ibn 'Abdar-Raḥman ibn 'Auf. All of which probably stemming from Kaḥkad ibn Qays, and this is *naql tawātur* (textually continuously recurrent transmission) from Abu Hurayrah.

Hadith of 'Aisha

The famous tradition reported from the channel of 'Urwa from 'Aisha is recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhāri:

²¹ *Tafsir* Mujāhid, p. 317. Cited in relation to the *Tafsir* of *Surah al-Mā'ida*, verse 103

حدثني محمد بن أبي يعقوب أبو عبد الله الكرمانى حدثنا حسان بن إبراهيم حدثنا يونس عن الزهري عن عروة أن عائشة قالت قال رسول الله رأيت جهنم يحطم بعضها بعضا ورأيت عمرا يجر قصبه وهو أول من سيب السوانب

Muḥammad ibn Abi Ya'qub Abu Abdullah al-Kirmāni narrated to me Ḥassān ibn Ibrāhīm narrated to us Yunus narrated to us from al-Zuhri from 'Urwa that 'Aisha said, the Messenger of Allah said: *I saw hell and its different portions were consuming each other. And saw 'Amr dragging his intestines (in it), he was the first person to establish the tradition of letting animals loose for the idols.*²²

Imām Muslim has the complete narration recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*:

Ḥarmīla ibn Yahya narrated to me Ibn Wahb reported to me Yunus reported to me (*ḥawala*) and Abu Ṭāhir and Muḥammad ibn Salama al-Muwārdi narrated to me, they said Ibn Wahb narrated to us from Yunus from Ibn Shihāb, he said 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr reported to me from Aisha, wife of the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, she said: There was an eclipse of the sun during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him. So, the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him went to the mosque and stood up and glorified Allah, and the people formed themselves in rows behind him. The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him made a long recital (of and then pronounced *takbir* and then observed a long *ruku'*. He then raised his head and said: *Allah listened to he who praised Him: our Lord, praise is due to You.* He then again stood up and made a long recital, which was less than the first recital. He pronounced *takbir* and observed a long *ruku'*, and it was less than the first one. He again said: *Allah listened to him who praised Him; our Lord, praise is due to You.*

[Abu Ṭāhir, one of the narrators didn't make mention of - he then prostrated himself]. He did like this in the second *rak'ah*, till he completed four *rak'ahs* and four prostrations and the sun became bright before he departed. He then stood up and addressed people,

²² *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhāri [Vol. 4, no. 4348]. It is also cited within the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, but in relation to a different subject [Vol. 1, no. 1154], with the *isnād* and addition: Muḥammad ibn Muqātil narrated to us Abdullah reported to us Yunus reported to us from al-Zuhri from 'Urwa, concerning it.

after lauding Allah as He deserved, and then he said: *The sun and the moon are two signs among the signs of Allah. These do not eclipse either on the death of anyone or on his birth. So when you see them, hasten to prayer.* He also said this: *Observe prayer till Allah dispels the anxiety (of this phenomenon) from you.* The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *I saw in my place everything which you have been promised. I even saw myself desiring to pluck a bunch (of grapes) from Paradise (and it was at the time) when you saw me moving forward. And I saw hell and some of its parts crushing the others, when you saw me moving back; and I saw in it Ibn Luḥay he was the first person to establish the tradition of letting animals loose for the idols.*²³

Imām Muslim recorded this narration from several pathways. It is also included across the corpus of *aḥādīth*.²⁴ The narration is recorded by Imām ‘Abd al-Razzāq in his *Muṣṣanaf*:

‘Abd al-Razzāq from Ibn Jurayj, he said I heard ‘Aṭā saying, I heard ‘Ubaydallah ibn Umayr saying, reported to me, which is the more authentic, so I thought he meant Aisha, she said: The sun eclipsed during the time of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. He thus stood in prayer, and so did the people. He led the people in prayer, (undertaking) the bowing, rising and bowing again. He would perform two prostrations in each bowing, with three prostrations in the third one, and then he would prostrate. He did not finish until the sun became clear again. On that day, some men fell unconscious and the water was poured on them due to what they experienced. When he would bow, he would say: *Allahu Akbar* and when he would rise, he would say: *Allah hears whoever praises Him.* Then he stood, praised Allah, extolling Him, and he said: *Indeed, the sun and the moon do not eclipse due to the death or birth*

²³ *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim [Vol. 2, no. 901]. Given the length of the narrative, only the English translation is included.

²⁴ For example in *Sunan al-Nasā’i* [Vol. 3, no. 1472], and in his *Sunan al-Kubra* [Vol. 1, no. 1857]. Al-Bayhaqy records this in his *Sunan al-Kubra* [Vol. 2, no. 3246] in its full length, thereafter he says: ‘It is narrated by al-Bukhāri in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Muḥammad ibn Muqātil from Abdullah ibn al-Mubārak; Muslim records this *ḥadīth* from Ibn Wahb narrating from Yunus.’ In another section of his *Sunan al-Kubra*, al-Bayhaqy records the same [Vol. 3, no. 6166], thereafter commenting: ‘It is narrated by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Muḥammad ibn Salama.’

of anyone, but they are two signs from the signs of Allah by which He frightens you. So when you see them eclipse, rush to remember Allah until they become clear again.

Zayd, in addition to ‘Aṭā mentioned in his sermon: ‘*But perhaps the best of people died at the edges of the earth, so the jinn spread that news. And that was due to al-Qadr.*’ He said: Tell me from other than ‘Ubayd, who said: Paradise and hell were shown to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, while he was in his prayer on the day the sun eclipsed. He delayed his prayer until those stationed behind him were near on top of one another and saying: ‘Which Lord should I ask? Which Lord should I ask?’ Then he proceeded and walked until he returned to his place of prayer. He saw, when paradise was shown to him, Abu Khuzā’ah ‘Amr ibn Luḥay, he was dragging his intestines (in the fire). He said: And they claimed that the pilgrim was stealing with his plow and saying, ‘O Lord, I do not steal, but my pharynx is stealing.’ And the woman who tied up her cat and did not feed it or release it to eat or drink until it died of starvation. Then, when he returned, paradise was shown to him again, and he went walking until he returned to his place of prayer. Then he said: ‘*I wanted to take some of its bunches (of grapes) so that I could show you, but I was not allowed.*’

Ibn Jurayj said: ‘And al-Ḥasan said: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was frightened that day to the point that he was dragging his cloak.’ ‘Abd al-Razzāq said: ‘It means that the *jinn* informed one another. And it means the redness that appeared in the moon. And ‘dragging his intestines’ means he was hunched over.’²⁵

I would argue that there is an obscure mix-up in the channel of narration, or besides it, between ‘Amr ibn Luḥay and the man who used to steal from the pilgrims. He is another man, different altogether, and not al-Mudlajji of the sea of seas. With regards to the *ḥadīth* of ‘Ubayd ibn Umayr to where he said: ‘Hasten to the remembrance of Allah until it clears,’ it is *Ṣaḥīḥ* and fully connected with each narrator listening to the other; narrated also as that of the *ḥadīth* of Imām Muslim mentioned before.

²⁵ *Muṣṣanaf* ‘Abd al-Razzāq [Vol. 3, no. 4926]. Given the length of the narrative, only the English translation is provided.

Hadith of Jābir ibn Abdullah

Mentioned in the *Musnad* of Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, there is the *ḥadith* of Jābir ibn Abdullah, with a *ḥasan isnād*:

حدثنا زكريا أنبأنا عبيد الله؛ وحسين بن محمد قال حدثنا عبيد الله عن عبد الله بن محمد بن عقيل عن جابر قال بينما نحن مع رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم في صفوفنا في الصلاة صلاة الظهر أو العصر فإذا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، يتناول شيئاً ثم تأخر فتأخر الناس فلما قضى الصلاة قال له أبي بن كعب: شيئاً صنعته في الصلاة لم تكن تصنعه، قال عرضت علي الجنة بما فيها من الزهرة والنضرة فتناولت منها قطفاً من عنب لآتيكم به فحيل بيني وبينه ولو أتيتكم به لأكل منه من بين السماء والأرض لا ينقصونه شيئاً، ثم عرضت علي النار فلما وجدت سفعها تأخرت عنها وأكثر من رأيت فيها النساء اللاتي إن اتمنن أفشين وإن يسئلن بخلن وإن يسألن الحفن، قال حسين: وإن أعطين لم يشكرن؛ ورأيت فيها لَحْيَ بن عمرو يجر قصبه في النار وأشبهه من رأيت به معبد بن أكرم الكعبي؛ قال معبد يا رسول الله أئحشى علي من شبهه، وهو والدي، فقال: لا أنت مؤمن وهو كافر؛ قال حسين وكان أول من حمل العرب على عبادة الأوثان؛ قال حسين تأخرت عنها ولولا ذلك لغشيتكم

Zakariyā narrated to us ‘Ubaydallah reports and Ḥussein ibn Muḥammad said: ‘Ubaydallah narrated to us from Abdullah ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Uqayl from Jābir, he said: Whilst we were with the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him with our ranks in prayer (be that) *dhur* or *‘aṣr*. If the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him was eating something, then he was late, so in turn the people were late. When he completed the prayer, Ubay ibn Ka’b said to him: You did something in the prayer that you didn’t do previously. He said: *I was shown paradise, with its flowers and beauty, so I took a bunch of grapes from it to bring to you all. However, a barrier came between me and it and even if I were to bring it to you, you would eat from it all that is between the heavens and earth, without it ever decreasing. Then I was shown the fire, when I saw its blazing flames, I kept my distance from it. I saw many women in it who would disclose secrets when entrusted; those stingy when asked (of them), and who would deny favours when requested.*

Ḥussein said: ‘*And even if they were given, they would not show gratitude.*’ And I saw Luḥay ibn ‘Amr dragging his intestines in the fire. I see that he resembles Ma’bad ibn Aktham al-Ka’bi. Ma’bad said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, should I fear that I resemble him? He said: *No, since you are a mu’min and he is a kāfir.*

Ḥussein said: ‘*He was the first to lead the Arabs into idol worship.*’

Ḥussein said: ‘*I kept my distance from the fire, if it wasn’t for that, I would have passed out.*’²⁶

It seems that the names have been mixed up amongst some of the narrators. Actually it is ‘Amr ibn Luḥay and Abu Ma’bad Aktham ibn Abi al-Jawn al-Khuzā’i then al-Ka’bi. Similarly, there is an error in the narrator making it the *dhur* or *‘aṣr* prayer, rather it is the *Ṣalātul-Kushuf* – the prayer of the eclipse.²⁷ I would argue that the previous *ḥadith* which is attributed to Jābir contains an error which is made by al-‘Ala ibn Hilāl ibn ‘Amr ibn Hilāl ibn Abi ‘Aṭṭiyah al-Bāhili al-Raqqi. He is the father of Hilāl ibn al-‘Alā al-Raqqi and he made it from Ubayy ibn Ka’b. This narrator, al-‘Alā ibn Hilāl ibn ‘Amr is *ḍa‘if* (weak) as he mixes both the channels of narration and changes reported names. It is not permissible that he be taken as an authority or relied upon, as stated by the Imām Ibn Ḥibbān.

However, the *ḥadith* of Jābir ibn Abdullah is *Ṣaḥīḥ*, attested to by other authentic corroboration and follow-on narrations. The following is narrated by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*:

وحدثني يعقوب بن إبراهيم الدورقي حدثنا إسماعيل بن علي بن هشام الدستوائي قال حدثنا أبو الزبير عن جابر بن عبد الله قال: كسفت الشمس على عهد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، في يوم شديد الحر فصلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، بأصحابه فأطال القيام حتى جعلوا يخررون، ثم ركع فأطال ثم رفع فأطال ثم ركع فأطال ثم رفع فأطال ثم سجد سجدتين ثم قام فصنع نحواً من ذلك، فكانت أربع ركعات وأربع سجعات، ثم قال: إنه عرض علي كل شيء تولجونه، فعرضت علي الجنة حتى لو تناولت منها قطفاً أخذته – أو قال: تناولت منها قطفاً – فقصرت يدي عنه، وعرضت علي النار فرأيت فيها امرأة من بني إسرائيل تُعذب في هرة لها ربطتها فلم تطعمها ولم تدعها تأكل من خشاش الأرض، ورأيت

²⁶ *Musnad* Aḥmad [Vol. 3, no. 14842]

²⁷ This can also be found in the *ḥadith* of Zakariyā ibn ‘Ady which is recorded in the *Musnad* of ‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd [Vol. 1, no. 1036]: Zakariyā ibn ‘Ady narrated to me ‘Ubaydallah ibn ‘Amr narrated to us from Abdullah ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Uqayl from Jābir, mentioned at length in its entirety. Al-Ḥākim narrates it in his *Mustadrak* [Vol. 4, no. 8788], mentioned at length in its entirety, he said: ‘Abdar-Raḥman ibn Ḥamdān al-Jullab reported to us in Ḥamdān, Hilāl ibn al-‘Alā al-Raqqi narrated to us my father narrated to us ‘Ubaydallah ibn ‘Amr narrated to us from Abdullah ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Uqayl from Ṭufayl ibn Abi ibn Ka’b from his father, may Allah be pleased with him.’ After which Imām al-Ḥākim said: ‘This *ḥadith* has a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*, but they did not report it.’

أيا ثمامة عمرو بن مالك يجز قصبه في النار؛ وإنهم كانوا يقولون إن الشمس والقمر لا يخسفان إلا لموت عظيم، وإنهما أبتان من آيات الله يريكموها فإذا خسفا فصلوا حتى تنجلي

And Ya'qub ibn Ibrāhim al-Duwraqi narrated to me Ismā'il ibn 'Ulaya narrated to us from Hishām al-Distawā'ee, he said Abul-Zubayr narrated to us from Jābir ibn Abdullah, he said: The sun eclipsed on one extremely hot day during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him prayed along with his Companions. He prolonged his standing in prayer till they began to fall down. He then observed a long *ruku*. He raised his head and then observed a long *ruku*. He then raised (his head and stood up) for a long time and then made two prostrations. He then stood up and did like this and thus he observed four *ruku's* and four prostrations and then said: *All these things were brought to me in which you will be made to enter. Paradise was brought to me till that if I (had intended) to pluck a bunch (of grapes) out of it, I would have got it, or he said: I intended to get a bunch (out of that) but my hand could not reach it. Hell was also brought to me and I saw in it a woman belonging to the Children of Israel who was tormented for a cat whom she had tied, but did not give it food nor set it free to eat the creatures of the earth; and I saw Abu Thumāma 'Amr ibn Mālik who was dragging his intestines in the fire. They (the Arabs) used to say that the sun and the moon do not eclipse except for the death of some great person; but (in reality) both these are among the signs of Allah which are shown to you; so when there is an eclipse, observe prayer till it brightens.*²⁸

Where it is said 'Amr ibn Mālik', that is from the *wahm* (delusions) of the narrators. It is in fact 'Amr ibn 'Aāmir, as will be outlined shortly. Similarly, where it is said, 'a woman from the Children of Israel,' it is in fact from Ḥimyar.

Hadith of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud

²⁸ *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim [Vol. 2, no. 904]. In a similar manner it is reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Khuzaymah [Vol. 2, no. 1381], in the *Musnad* of Aḥmad [Vol. 3, no. 15060], the *Sunan al-Kubra* of Bayhaqy [Vol. 3, no. 6107] amongst others.

This narration is recorded in the *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal:

حدثنا عبد الله قال قرأت على أبي حدثك عمرو بن مجمع حدثنا إبراهيم الهجري عن أبي الأحوص عن عبد الله بن مسعود عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال إن أول من سيب السوائب وعبد الأصنام أبو خزاعة عمرو بن عامر وأني رأيت يجز أمعاه في النار

Abdullah narrated to us, he said - I read (in audience) upon my father, 'Amr ibn Mujamih' narrated to you Ibrāhim al-Hajari narrated to us from Abul-Aḥwaṣ from Abdullah, from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, he said: *The first one to establish the custom of releasing animals and the worship of idols was Abu Khuzā'ah 'Amr ibn 'Aāmir, verily I have seen him dragging his intestines in the fire.*²⁹

In this regard, I would argue that the narrator 'Amr ibn Mujamih' ibn Yazeed ibn Abi Sulaymān al-Sakuni al-Kindi al-Kufi, thereafter, al-Baghdādi, is most likely considered to be *ṣaduq* (truthful) but with many mistakes. Ibrāhim al-Hajari is a *Ṣāliḥ* (acceptable) Shaykh, but he was criticised for raising some of the narratives of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud.³⁰ Bear in mind, that this *ḥadīth* is definitely not from among that, so we seek help and guidance from Allah, to say, it has an *isnād* which is *ḥasan* by itself, and judged *Ṣaḥīḥ* broadly together with the supporting evidences.

Hadith of al-Mughira ibn Shu'ba

The narration is cited again in the *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal:

Abdullah narrated to us he said I found in the book of my father by his own dictation, Abdul Mutā'al ibn Abdal Wahāb narrated to me Yahya ibn Sa'eed al-Umawī narrated to us al-Mujjālad narrated to us from 'Aāmir, he said: The sun eclipsed until its darkness intensified, so al-Mughira ibn Shu'ba stood up and led the people in prayer. He stood for the recitation of about two *Surahs*, then he performed a

²⁹ *Musnad* of Aḥmad [Vol. 1, no. 4258]. In his commentary on the *Musnad* Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ut said of this narration: '*Ṣaḥīḥ li-ghayrihi*; this *isnād* is *ḍa'eef*. It is *ḍa'eef* due to 'Amr ibn Mujamih; (the narrator) Ibrāhim al-Hajari, is *layyin al-ḥadīth*.'

³⁰ There is extensive comment upon both narrators ('Amr ibn Mujamih and Ibrāhim al-Hajari) among the scholarly authorities. The essential point here though should be that despite those criticisms and weakness of the narrators in question, the actual reported *matn* (textual wording) is actually broadly in conformity with the wider group of narratives that are quoted.

bowing similar to that, then raised his head, and performed another bowing like the previous one. He then stood up again, performed a similar bowing, and then performed a second prostration. At that point, the sun became visible again, so he prostrated, then stood for the recitation of about a *Surah*, and then performed another bowing and prostration. He then finished and ascended the pulpit, saying: 'Verily, the sun was eclipsed on the day Ibrāhim, the son of the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him, passed away.

(On that occasion) The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him stood up and said: *Verily, the sun and the moon do not eclipse due to the death or birth of anyone. They are but signs from the signs of Allah, the Almighty. So, if you see an eclipse, hasten to perform the prayer.* Then he came down and it was mentioned that the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him was in the prayer, and he blew between his hands. Then he extended his hand as if he was taking something, and when he finished, he said: *The fire came so close to me that I felt its heat blowing towards my face. Therein I saw those who introduced the practice of al-Baḥirah, the one who stole from the pilgrims and the woman from Ḥimyar who was being punished because of a cat she tied up.*³¹

Yaḥya ibn Sa'eed al-Umawi from Kufa was born in the year 114 AH. He heard from Mujjālad ibn Sa'eed who was elder, at a time when Mujjālad was strong. This *isnād* is *ḥasan* with a greater probability of it being *Ṣaḥīḥ*. The solar eclipse which was witnessed by the residents of Kufa occurred on Wednesday 24 *Jumada al-Thani*, 47 AH, which corresponds to 667 CE, and Allah knows best. It was a near total eclipse, beginning at sunrise, reaching its peak after an hour or so, ending approximately two-hours later.

Hadith of Abdullah ibn 'Abbās

Al-Ṭabarāni records this in his *Muj'am al-Kabir* upon the authority of Ibn 'Abbās:

³¹ *Musnad Aḥmad* [Vol. 4, no. 18167]

حدثنا أحمد بن المعلى الدمشقي حدثنا هشام بن عمار حدثنا عبد الله بن يزيد البكري عن بن أبي ذئب عن صالح مولى التوأمة عن بن عباس قال قال رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم أول من غير دين إبراهيم عليه السلام: عمرو بن لُحَيِّ بن قَمْعَةَ بن خُنْدِيف أبو خزاعة

Aḥmad ibn al-Mu'ala al-Dimishqi narrated to us Hishām ibn 'Aāmir narrated to us Abdullah ibn Yazeed al-Bakri narrated to us from Ibn Abi Zi'b from Ṣāliḥ, *mawla* of al-Tu'amah from Ibn 'Abbās, he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *The first to depart from the Deen of Ibrāhim peace be upon him was 'Amr ibn Luḥay ibn Qam'ah ibn Khindif, Abu Khuzā'ah.*³²

Appearing also in the *Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ*, thereafter having the follow-on comment of al-Ṭabarāni where he said: 'None narrated this *ḥadith* by way of Ṣāliḥ, *mawla* of al-Tu'amah, except Ibn Abi Zi'b, and none from Ibn Abi Zi'b except Abdullah ibn Yazeed al-Bakri, follow-up in that by Hishām ibn 'Aāmir.'³³ The hearing of the narrator Ibn Abi Zi'b from Ṣāliḥ, *mawla* of al-Tu'amah is *jayyid* (good); it is old and prior to his *ikhtilāṭ* (confusion and mixing up). However, if there are errors to be found therein then it would be from Abdullah ibn Yazeed al-Bakri because he is *ḍa'ef al-ḥadith*. Note here, that he is not Abu Hilāl Abdullah ibn Yazeed al-Sa'di al-Bakri, given that he is *thiqa* (trustworthy) and from the older scholars of Ibn Abi Zi'b narrating from Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyib. It is possible that he committed this to memory here, referring to the specific narration, and the *ḥadith* in any event is supported by corroborative channels and follow-ons as given previously; thus it has attestation as being from Ibn 'Abbās, and the *mursal* narratives from him are also *jayyid* in this regard. A follow-on narrative in this regard is to be found in *Akḥbār Makkah* of al-Azraqi:

حدثنا جدي قال حدثنا سعيد بن سالم عن عثمان بن ساج قال أخبرني ابن جريج قال قال عكرمة مولى ابن عباس عن ابن عباس قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم رأيت عمرو بن لحي يجر قصبه - يعني أمعاءه - في النار، على رأسه فروة، فقال له رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من في النار؟ فقال من بيني وبينك من الأمم. وقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم هو أول من جعل البحيرة والساتبة والوصيلة، والحام، ونصب الأوثان حول الكعبة، وغير الحنيفية دين إبراهيم عليه السلام

³² al-Ṭabarāni, *Muj'am al-Kabir* [Vol. 10, no. 10808]

³³ al-Ṭabarāni, *Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ* [Vol. 1, no. 201]

My grandfather narrated to us he said Sa'eed ibn Sālim narrated to us from Uthmān ibn Sāj, he said Ibn Jurayj reported to me he said that 'Ikrima, *mawla* of Ibn 'Abbās said that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: *I saw 'Amr ibn Luḥay dragging himself, meaning his intestines in the fire, and melting upon his head.* He said to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, who is in the fire? He said: *Who is between me and you and the nations?* The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: *He was the first to make (the practice of) al-Baḥīrah, al-Sā'ibah, al-Waṣīlah and al-Hāmi; he set up awthān (idols) around the Ka'ba, departing from the Ḥanīfiyah Deen of Ibrāhim, peace be upon him.*³⁴

Also in this regard, there is an additional follow-on narrative that is to be found in *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* by al-Kalbi:

قال هشام فحدثنا الكلبي عن أبي صالح عن ابن عباس قال: قال النبي، عليه السلام رفعت لي النار فرأيت عمراً رجلاً قصيراً أحمر أزرق يجرق قصبه في النار قلت من هذا؟ قيل: هذا عمرو بن لُحَيٍّ أول من بحر البحيرة، ووصل الوصيلة، وسبب السائبة، وحمى الحامي، وغير دين إبراهيم، ودعا العرب إلى عبادة الأوثان قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أشبه بنبيه به قطن بن عبد العزى. فوثب قطن فقال يا رسول الله! أياضني شبيهة شيئاً؟ قال لا، أنت مسلم وهو كافر وقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ورفع لي الدجال، فإذا رجل أعور، آدم، جعد. وأشبه بني عمرو به أكنم بن عبد العزى. فقام أكنم فقال يا رسول الله! هل يضرني شبيهي إياه شيئاً؟ قال: لا، أنت مسلم وهو كافر

Hishām said: al-Kalbi narrated to us from Abu Ṣāliḥ from Ibn 'Abbās, he said the Prophet peace be upon him said: *'One day I beheld the fire from afar and saw therein 'Amr ibn Luḥay, a short titan of red [complexion] and blue eyes, dragging his intestines in the fire.'* I asked, who is this? So he (the Prophet) said: *'He is 'Amr ibn Luḥay, the first to institute the practice of al-Baḥīrah, al-Sā'ibah, al-Waṣīlah and al-Hāmi; to change the Deen of Ibrāhim and call the Arabs to the worship of al-Awthān (idols).'*' The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him added: *'Among his descendants who resembles him the most is Qaṭan ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza.'* Hearing this, Qaṭan sprang to his feet and said: Messenger of Allah! Does the fact that I resemble him do me any harm? He replied: *'No, you are a Muslim and he is a kāfir.'*

³⁴ al-Azraqi, *Akhbar Makkah* [Vol. 1, p. 128]

And the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *'I was shown the Dajjāl and behold he was one-eyed, of brown complexion and had curly hair. The one among Bani 'Amr who resembles him most is Aktham ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza.'* Thereupon Aktham sprang to his feet and said: O Messenger of Allah, does the fact that I resemble him in looks do me any harm? He replied: *'No, you are a Muslim, he is a kāfir.'*³⁵

As a follow on narrative it is not a matter with a great deal of aplomb, because Muḥammad ibn al-Sā'ib al-Kalbi from Abu Ṣāliḥ from Ibn 'Abbās is one of the weakest *isnāds*. Contained within it, one of the narrators makes a clear blunder of confusion between 'Abd al-Uzza ibn Qaṭan, a man who perished during the period of *Jāhiliyya*, resembling the *Dajjāl*, and Aktham ibn Abi al-Jawn, who had the resemblance of 'Amr ibn Luḥay. The latter, asked innocently whether that resemblance would be of harm to him. Added in the narration too, from wild imagination, is the individual who was never created, namely Qaṭan ibn 'Abd al-Uzza, interpolating that he too asked regarding this matter of resemblance.

Writing in *al-Faṭḥ*, al-Ḥāfiẓ said: 'al-Ṭabarāni narrated from the *ḥadith* of Ibn 'Abbās, raising it: *The first to depart from the Deen of Ibrāhim peace be upon him was 'Amr ibn Luḥay ibn Qam'ah ibn Khindiḥ, Abu Khuzā'ah.* It was mentioned by al-Fāqihī from the channel of 'Ikrimah in *mursal form*, therein al-Miqdād said: O Messenger of Allah, who is 'Amr ibn Luḥay. He said: *'The father of those al-Hayy from Khuzā'ah.'*³⁶

The Mursal narratives

The first of the *mursal* narratives, which is good, is cited in the *Muṣṣanaḥ* of Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shayba:

حَدَّثَنَا الْفَضْلُ حَدَّثَنَا هِشَامُ بْنُ سَعْدٍ عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَسْلَمَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَدْ عَرَفْتُ أَوَّلَ النَّاسِ بَحَرَ الْبَحَائِرِ رَجُلٌ مِنْ بَنِي مُدَلِجٍ كَانَتْ لَهُ نَاقَتَانِ فَجَدَعَ أَدَانَهُمَا وَحَرَّمَ أَلْبَانَهُمَا وَظَهَرَ رُؤُوسُهُمَا، وَلَقَدْ رَأَيْتُهُ وَإِيَّاهُمَا فِي النَّارِ تُحْبِطَانِهِ بِأَحْقَافِهِمَا وَتُقْضِمَانِهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمَا؛

³⁵ al-Kalbi, *The Book of Idols*, [pp. 46/47]

³⁶ *Faṭḥ al-Bāri* [Vol. 7, p. 189]

وَلَقَدْ عَرَفْتُ أَوَّلَ النَّاسِ سَبَّ السَّوَائِبِ وَنَصَبَ النَّصَبِ وَغَيْرَ عَهْدِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَمْرُو بْنُ لَحْيٍ،
وَلَقَدْ رَأَيْتَهُ يَجْرُ قَصَبَهُ فِي النَّارِ يُؤْذِي أَهْلَ النَّارِ جَرُّ قَصَبِهِ

Al-Faḍl narrated to us Hishām ibn Sa’d narrated to us from Zayd ibn Aslam, he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *I know the first among the people that instituted the practice of al-Baḥīrah; a man from the tribe of Mudlij. He had two camels of which he severed their ears prohibited their milk and being utilised. Indeed I have seen him and them in the fire, convulsing, gnawing at him with their mouths. And indeed, I know the first among the people who started the custom of releasing animals (for the idols), departing from the covenant of Ibrāhīm - Amr ibn Luḥay. For I have seen him dragging his intestines in the fire, harming (further) the inhabitants of the fire by his intestines.*³⁷

Imām al-Ṭabari also makes mention of this within his acclaimed *Tafsir* with the following two-narrations in succession:

حدثنا الحسن بن يحيى قال أخبرنا عبد الرزاق قال أخبرنا معمر عن زيد بن أسلم قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إني لأعرف أول من سيب السوائب، وأول من غير عهد إبراهيم! قالوا من هو، يا رسول الله؟ قال عمرو بن لحي أخو بني كعب، لقد رأيتني بجر قصبه في النار، يؤذي ريحه أهل النار؛ وإني لأعرف أول من بحر البحائر! قالوا من هو، يا رسول الله؟ قال رجل من بني مدلج، كانت له ناقتان، فجدع أذانهما، وحرّم ألبانهما، ثم شرب ألبانهما بعد ذلك، فلقد رأيتني في النار هو، وهما يعصانه بأفواههما، ويخبطانه بأخفافهما

Al-Ḥasan ibn Yaḥya narrated to us ‘Abd al-Razzāq reported to us he said Ma’mar reported to us from Zayd ibn Aslam, he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *Indeed, I know the first among the people who started the custom of releasing animals (for the idols), departing from the covenant of Ibrāhīm.* They replied: ‘Who is it O Messenger of Allah?’ He said: ‘Amr ibn Luḥay, the brother of Bani Ka’b. For indeed I have seen him dragging his intestines in the fire, harming (further) the inhabitants of the fire by his intestines, the smell of which harms the people of the fire. And indeed I know the first among the people that instituted the practice of al-Baḥīrah. They replied: Who is it O Messenger of Allah? He said: *He was a man from Bani Mudlij who owned two camels. He cut*

³⁷ *Muṣṣanaḥ Ibn Abi Shayba* [Vol. 7, no. 35830]

*off their ears, forbade their milk. He then drank it thereafter. I have seen him in the fire wherein he was bitten and struck by their mouths and hoofs.*³⁸

حدثنا هناد قال حدثنا يونس قال حدثني هشام بن سعد، عن زيد بن أسلم أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال قد عرفت أول من بحر البحائر، رجل من مدلج كانت له ناقتان، فجدع أذانهما، وحرّم ألبانهما وظهورهما، وقال هاتان لله! ثم احتاج إليهما، فشرب ألبانهما، وركب ظهورهما. قال فلقد رأيتني في النار يؤذي أهل النار ريح قصبه

Hannād narrated to us he said Yunus narrated to us he said Hishām ibn Sa’d narrated to me from Zayd ibn Aslam, that the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *Indeed I know the first instituted the practice of al-Baḥīrah; a man from the tribe of Mudlij. He had two she-camels that he cut their ears, prohibited their milk and their work and he said – the two are dedicated to Allah! Thereafter, he found he needed them, so consumed their milk and rode them. He said: Indeed, I have seen him in the fire, causing the people of the fire harm by the smell of his burning intestines.*³⁹

Cited in *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān* by Ibn al-‘Arabi:

وَرَوَى ابْنُ الْقَاسِمِ وَغَيْرُهُ عَنْ مَالِكِ بْنِ أَنَسٍ عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَسْلَمَ عَنْ عَطَاءِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ أَوَّلُ مَنْ نَصَبَ النَّصَبِ، وَسَبَّ السَّوَائِبِ، وَغَيْرَ عَهْدِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَمْرُو بْنُ لَحْيٍ؛ وَلَقَدْ رَأَيْتَهُ يَجْرُ قَصَبَهُ فِي النَّارِ، يُؤْذِي أَهْلَ النَّارِ بِرِيحِهِ

Ibn al-Qāsim and other than him narrate from Mālik ibn Anas from Zayd ibn Aslam from ‘Aṭā ibn Yassār, that the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *The first to institute the practice of releasing animals (for the idols), departing from Ibrāhīm, is ‘Amr ibn Luḥay. Indeed I have seen him dragging his intestines in the fire, the smell of which harms the inhabitants of the fire.*⁴⁰

Here, I would argue that the root of this matter from ‘Aṭā ibn Yassār may well be from Ibn ‘Abbās, as it is to be found reported by al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*:

³⁸ *Tafsir al-Ṭabari* [Vol. 11, p. 120]

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Ibn al-‘Arabi *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān* [Vol. 3, p. 371]

حدثنا عبد الله بن مسلمة عن مالك عن زيد بن أسلم عن عطاء بن يسار عن عبد الله بن عباس قال انخسفت الشمس فصلى رسول الله ثم قال أريت النار فلم أر منظرا كالיום قط أفضع

Abdullah ibn Maslama narrated to us from Mālik from Zayd ibn Aslam from ‘Aṭā ibn Yassār from Abdullah ibn ‘Abbās, he said: The sun eclipsed and the Messenger of Allah prayed the eclipse prayer. He said: *I have been shown the fire and I never saw a worse and horrible sight than what I have witnessed.*⁴¹

This would seemingly establish it as a *ḥadīth* of Ibn ‘Abbās, yet this is not definitive, because of the possibility of it stemming from Abu Ṣāliḥ from Abu Hurayrah is still there, as it reported in the *Musnad* of al-Bazzār:

حدثنا عبد الله بن شبيب حدثنا إسحاق بن محمد بن محمد بن جعفر بن أبي كثير عن زيد بن أسلم عن أبي صالح عن أبي هريرة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال أول من سيب السوانب ونصب النصب، وغير عهد أبي إبراهيم عمرو بن لحي؛ لقد رأيته في النار يجر قصبة

Abdullah ibn Shabeeb narrated to us Iṣḥāq ibn Muḥammad narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Ja’far ibn Abi Kathir narrated to us from Zayd ibn Aslam from Abu Ṣāliḥ from Abu Hurayrah from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, he said: *The first to institute the practice of releasing animals (for the idols), departing from Ibrāhīm, is ‘Amr ibn Luḥay. I saw him dragging his intestines in the fire.*⁴²

Recorded in the *Seerah* of Ibn Hishām:

قال ابن إسحاق وحدثني عبد الله بن أبي بكر بن محمد بن عمرو بن حزم عن أبيه قال حدثت أن رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم، قال رأيت عمرو بن لحي يجر قصبة في النار؛ فسألته عمّن بيّني وبينه من الناس فقال هلكوا

Ibn Iṣḥāq said, and Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr ibn Ḥazm narrated to me from his father, he narrated that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: *‘I saw ‘Amr ibn Luḥay dragging his intestines in the fire.’* And when I asked

⁴¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* [Vol. 1, no. 421]

⁴² *Musnad al-Bazzār* [Vol. 2, no. 8914]

him about those who had lived between this time and mine he said that they had perished.⁴³

Recorded in *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥāba* by Ibn Ḥanbal:

حدثنا عبد الله بن يزيد قال حدثنا سعيد يعني بن أبي أيوب قال حدثني عبد الله بن خالد عن عبد الله بن الحارث بن هشام المخزومي أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال لا تسبوا مضر فإنه كان على دين إبراهيم؛ وإن أول من غير دين إبراهيم لعمرو بن لحي بن قمعة بن جندب، وقال رأيته يجر قصبه في النار

Abdullah ibn Yazid narrated to us he said Sa’eed, that is to say Ibn Abi Ayub narrated to us he said Abdullah ibn Khālīd narrated to me from Abdullah ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām al-Makhzumi that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: *Do not insult Muḍar, for he was upon the Deen of Ibrāhīm. And indeed the first to depart from the Deen of Ibrāhīm was ‘Amr ibn Luḥay ibn Qam’ah ibn Khindif.* And he said: *I saw him dragging his intestines in the fire.*⁴⁴

With regards to Abdullah ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām ibn al-Mughirah al-Makhzumi, he was from the senior *Tabi’een*, born during the lifetime of the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him. It has been said that his narrations from the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him are from the *mursal* type. As for Abdullah ibn Khālīd, he is al-Wābiṣi, but not renowned. However, his narrative is attested to by the previous evidence cited, together with additional attestation and follow-ons which are set out in the following paragraphs. Two narrations are cited by al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar in *Fath al-Bāri*, namely:

وروى ابن خبيب في تاريخه عن ابن عباس قال: مات عدنان وأبوه وأبوه معد وربيعه ومضر وقيس وتميم وأسد وضمي على الإسلام على ملة إبراهيم؛ وروى الربيع بن بكار من وجه آخر عن ابن عباس: لا تسبوا مضر ولا ربيعة فإنهما كانا مسلمين، ولأبن سعد من مرسّل عبد الله بن خالد رفعه: لا تسبوا مضر فإنه كان قد أسلم

Ibn Ḥabeeb narrated in his *Tārikh* from Ibn ‘Abbās, he said: ‘Adnān, his father, and his son Ma’d, together with Rabi’ah, Muḍar, Qays,

⁴³ A Guillaume (1967), *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ishaq’s Sirat Rasul Allah*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), [p. 35].

⁴⁴ *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥāba* [Vol. 2, no. 1524]

Tamim, Asad and Ḍabbah died upon Islam, upon the *millah* of Ibrāhīm.’ And al-Zubayr ibn Bakkār narrated from another pathway, from Ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Do not insult Muḍar nor Rabi’ah for indeed they were Muslims.’ By way of Ibn Sa’d, *mursal* from Abdullah ibn Khālīd, it is *marfu*, ‘Do not insult Muḍar, for he embraced Islam.’⁴⁵

قوله ابن عدنان يورن فعلان من العدن تقول عدن أقام، وقد روى أبو جعفر بن حبيب في تاريخه المخبر من حديث ابن عباس قال كان عدنان ومعد وربيعه ومضمر وخزيمة وأسد على ملة إبراهيم، فلا تذكروهم إلا بخير؛ وروى الزبير بن بكار من وجه آخر مرفوعا لا تسبوا مضمر ولا ربيعة فإنهما كانا مسلمين، وله شاهد عند ابن حبيب من مرسى سعيد بن المسيب.

His saying Ibn Adnān upon the pattern of *fa’lān*, deriving from the saying *’adn* means that Adnān settled. Abu Ja’far ibn Ḥabeeb narrated in his *Tārikh* (entitled) *al-Muḥabbar*, from the *ḥadīth* of Ibn ‘Abbās, he said: ‘Adnān, Ma’d, Rabi’ah Muḍar, Khuzaymah and Asad were upon the *millah* of Ibrāhīm, so mention them only with goodness. Al-Zubayr ibn Bakkār narrated from another pathway that is *marfu* ‘Do not insult Muḍar nor Rabi’ah for indeed they were Muslims.’ And it has attestation by way of Ibn Ḥabeeb from the *mursal* of Sa’eed ibn al-Mussayib.⁴⁶

Cited also in ‘*Umdat al-Qāri, Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* with mention of the *isnād* of Ibn Ḥabeeb:

وقال ابن حبيب حدثنا أبو جعفر عن ابن جريج عن عطاء عن ابن عباس قال مات أدد والد عدنان وعدنان ومعد وربيعه ومضمر وقيس عيلان وتيم وأسد وضبة على الإسلام على ملة إبراهيم عليه الصلاة والسلام فلا تذكروهم إلا كما يذكر به المسلمون؛ وعن سعيد بن المسيب أن رسول الله قال لا تسبوا مضمر فإنه كان مسلما على ملة إبراهيم عليه الصلاة والسلام؛ وعند الزبير بن بكار من حديث ميمون بن مهران عن ابن عباس يرفعه لا تسبوا مضمر ولا ربيعة فإنهما كانا مسلمين

Ibn Ḥabeeb said: Abu Ja’far narrated to us from Ibn Jurayj from ‘Aṭā from Ibn ‘Abbās, he said: ‘Adad, the father of Adnān, Adnān (himself), Ma’d, Rabi’ah, Muḍar, Qays, ‘Aylān, Taym, Asad and Ḍabbah died while upon al-Islam, upon the *millah* of Ibrāhīm, peace

⁴⁵ *Faṭḥ al-Bārī* [Vol. 10, p. 293]

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* [Vol. 11, p. 168]

be upon him. So mention them only as Muslims.’ And from Sa’eed ibn al-Mussayib, that the Messenger of Allah said: ‘Do not insult Muḍar, for he was a Muslim upon the *millah* of Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him.’ And from al-Zubayr ibn Bakkār from the *ḥadīth* of Maymun ibn Mihrān from Ibn ‘Abbās, which he attributed *marfu* ‘Do not insult Muḍar nor Rabi’ah for they were Muslims.’⁴⁷

It is also cited within *Subul al-Huda wal-Rashād fi Seerah Khayr al-‘Ibād*, which improves upon some of the *isnād*’s which are mentioned:

وروى ابن حبيب بسند جيد عن سعيد بن المسيب مرسل أن رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم، قال: لا تسبوا مضمر فإنه كان على ملة إبراهيم، ورواه الزبير والبلاذري بسند جيد عن الحسن مرسل مثله، ورواه البلاذري عن عبيد الله بن خالد مرسل نحوه. وروى ابن حبيب بسند جيد عن ابن عباس رضي الله تعالى عنهما قال: مات أدد والد عدنان، وعدنان، ومعد، وربيعه، ومضمر، وقيس عيلان وتيم وأسد وضبة وخزيمة على الإسلام على ملة إبراهيم، صلى الله عليه وسلم

Ibn Ḥabeeb narrated with a good *isnād* from Sa’eed ibn al-Musayyib, *mursal*, that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: ‘Do not insult Muḍar, for he was a Muslim upon the *millah* of Ibrāhīm.’ And it is narrated by al-Zubayr and al-Ballādhuri with a good *isnād* from al-Ḥasan, *mursal*, reporting similarly. It is narrated by al-Ballādhuri from ‘Ubaydallah ibn Khālīd, in *mursal* form. Ibn Ḥabeeb narrated with a good *isnād* from Ibn ‘Abbās, may Allah the Almighty be pleased with him, he said: ‘Adad, the father of Adnān, Adnān (himself), Ma’d, Rabi’ah, Muḍar, Qays, ‘Aylān, Taym, Asad, Ḍabbah and Khuzaymah died while upon al-Islam, upon the *millah* of Ibrāhīm, peace and blessings be upon him.’⁴⁸

It is also cited in the *Mu’jam* of Ibn ‘Asākir with a lengthy *isnad*; the reported wording being: ‘Do not insult Muḍar, nor Rabi’ah, for they were of the

⁴⁷ Badr al-Din al-Ayni *Umdat al-Qāri, Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* [Vol. 9, p. 24]

⁴⁸ *Subul al-Huda wal-Rashād fi Seerah Khayr al-‘Ibād* [Vol. 1, p. 291]

Muslims. *Do not insult Qass for he was a Muslim.*⁴⁹ Also appearing in *al-Manāqib al-Mazidiyah fi Akhbār al-Muluk al-Asdiya* by Abul'Baqa' al-Ḥilli:

وأخبرنا الحسن بن محمد أجازة عن أبيه عن أحمد بن عبدون عن أبي طالب الأنباري عن أبي بشر أحمد بن إبراهيم العمي عن أحمد بن عمرو الزبيقي عن عبد الله بن المكرم الضبي عن محمد بن زياد عن الميمون بن مهران عن ابن العباس رضي الله عنه. قال: قال رسول الله لا تسبوا مَضْرَ وربيعة، ولا تسبوا قساً فإنه كان مسلماً

Al-Ḥassan ibn Muḥammad Ajāza from his father from Aḥamad ibn 'Abdun from Abu Ṭālib al-Anbārī from Abu Bishr Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-'Amī from Aḥmad ibn 'Amr al-Zaybaqī from Abdullah ibn al-Mukram al-Ḍabbi from Muḥammad ibn Ziyād from al-Maymun ibn Mihrān from Ibn 'Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him. He said, the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: *Do not insult Muḍar nor Rabi'ah; do not insult Qass for he was a Muslim.*⁵⁰

There is *taṣḥeef* (mispronouncing, misspelling) regarding Abdullah ibn al-Mukram al-Ḍabbi, in fact he is Abu Nu'aym ibn al-Mukram al-Ḍabbi al-Kufī, a *thiqa* (trustworthy) narrator of reports. It is further cited in *al-Muntadham* by Ibn al-Jawzi.⁵¹ It is also recorded in *al-Ḥāwi lil'Fatāwi* by

⁴⁹ *Mu'jam* Ibn 'Asākir [Vol. 1, p. 300]. 'Abd al-Bāqī ibn al-Ḥussayn ibn Ibrāhīm Abu al-Ḥussayn al-Najjād al-Ma'ruf, his father is Bakteela, informed us by way of his reading upon him in Baghdad, Abu Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Umar ibn al-Maslama al-Rafeeli reports, by reading, Abu Ṭāhir Muḥammad ibn Abdar-Raḥman ibn al-'Abbās ibn Abdar-Raḥman al-Mukhlīṣ reports, Abu Abdullah Aḥmad ibn Sulaymān bin Dāwud ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭusī reports, he said al-Zubayr ibn Abi Bakr ibn Abdullah ibn Muṣ'ab ibn Thābit ibn Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr narrated to me Abu al-Mukram 'Uqba ibn al-Mukram al-Ḍabbi narrated to me narrated to me, he said Muḥammad ibn Ziyād narrated to me from Maymun ibn Mihrān from Ibn 'Abbās, he said the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said.

⁵⁰ Abul'Baqa' al-Ḥilli, *al-Manāqib al-Mazidiyah fi Akhbār al-Muluk al-Asdiya*, [Shamela edition, p. 92]

⁵¹ Here a further citation is made from Ibn al-Jawzi, *al-Muntadham* [Vol. 1, p. 106] in the Arabic edition, essentially carrying the same wording: *'Do not insult Muḍar and Rabi'ah, for they were of the Muslims.'*

al-Suyuṭī but contains the narrator Uthmān ibn Fā'id.⁵² Here, I would argue that this narrator has the accusation of being *ḍaef* levelled against him, that it is not permissible to rely upon him. However on this occasion it would appear that he has been truthful and retentive here.

The man: 'Amr ibn Luḥay

'Amr ibn Luḥay ibn Qam'ah ibn Khindif is 'Amr ibn 'Aāmir ibn Luḥay ibn Qam'ah ibn Ilyās ibn Muḍar ibn Nazzār ibn Ma'd ibn 'Adnān. His grandmother, the woman of Ilyās, to whom the son of Ilyās is attributed; he was famously attributed to his grandfather, Luḥay. It is said of 'Amr ibn Luḥay, that apparently his father 'Aāmir had no notable lineage, so people thus excluded him from mention in the channel of descent, and were satisfied with that. 'Amr ibn Luḥay – because no other person in the world was known by this name. He is also known as 'Amr ibn Rabi'ah ibn Ḥāritha ibn 'Amr ibn 'Aāmir. When his father 'Aāmir died, he left behind his wife, the mother of this 'Amr - Rabi'ah ibn Ḥāritha ibn 'Amr ibn 'Aāmir, and 'Amr was adopted. Thus by adoption, in full, it is 'Amr ibn Rabi'ah ibn Ḥāritha ibn 'Amr (Muzeeqiyā') ibn 'Aāmir (Mā'a al-Samā') ibn Ḥāritha (al-Ghaṭreef) ibn 'Imra al-Qays (al-Baṭreeq) ibn Māzin (and he is Jamā'ah Ghassān) ibn al-Azdi (and his name is Dara') ibn al-Ghuth ibn Nabt ibn Mālik ibn Zayd ibn Kahlān bin Sabā ibn Yashgib ibn Ya'rab ibn Qaḥṭān.

This is as stated by the genealogists and Allah knows best. The first lineage is based on birth, being Adnanite Ṣaleebah. The other lineage is based upon being adopted, being Qaḥṭānite, through adoption and alliance. Such practices were common among the Arabs, lineage often being established through alliance and loyalty. This 'Amr ibn Luḥay has the *kunya* of Abu Thamāmah.

⁵² al-Suyuṭī, *al-Ḥāwi lil'Fatāwi* [Vol. 3, pp. 323/324]. Abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn Khalaf ibn Ḥayyān al-Ma'ruf Bukeeh' recorded it in the book (*al-Gharar min al-Akhbār*), he said Ishāq ibn Dāwud ibn Esa al-Marwazi narrated to us Abu Ya'qub al-Sha'rānī narrated to us Sulaymān ibn Abdar-Raḥman al-Dimishqī narrated to us Uthmān ibn Fā'id narrated to us from Yahya ibn Talha ibn Ubaydallah from Ismā'il ibn Muḥammad ibn Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqāṣ from Abdar-Raḥman ibn Abi Bakr al-Ṣadeeq from the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, he said: *'Do not insult Muḍar nor Rabi'ah, for indeed they were both Muslims.'* And it is cited with its *isnād* from 'Aisha that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: *'Do not insult Tamim and Ḍabba, for indeed they were both Muslims.'*

The tribal ancestry is mentioned in the *ḥadīth* of Ibn ‘Abbās, by way of Abu Ja’far ibn Ḥabeeb. Some mentioned by others among the *Ṣaḥāba* and others are: Adad the father of Adnān, Adnān, Ma’d, Rabi’ah, Muḍar, Qays, ‘Aylān, Tamim (or Taym), Asad, Ḍubba, et al. All of them are older than ‘Amr ibn Luḥay, being upon the *millah* of Ibrāhim. From these *aḥādīth* together, which are mutually corroborating, their standing is derived, the affirmation being that they died upon the goodness of Islam. All praise and thanks are due to Allah the Almighty. With regards to Qass, from the apparent it is most likely that he is Qass ibn Sā’ida al-Iyādī, the famous preacher and bishop of Oman. He passed away before the beginning of the Prophetic mission. From his sermons they seem to indicate that he was akin to Waraqah ibn Nawfal, and we hope for the good for both of them by the will of Allah the Exalted. However, if ‘Qass’ is in fact a misspelling or mispronunciation of ‘Qays,’ that is, Qays ibn ‘Aylān ibn Muḍar, that would be the paternal grandfather of the major second-branch of the tribe of Muḍar, and Allah ultimately knows best.

In any event, the story of ‘Amr ibn Luḥay as one can evidently see, that he was the first to depart from the covenant of Ibrāhim and Ismā’il, peace and blessings be upon them, is resolutely established to the level of certitude by *tawātur* – continuously recurrent narratives. The matter is well known among the scholars, some of which mention it as a definitive statement without necessarily providing an *isnād* to accompany that. It can be viewed in the works of the martyr Imām Aḥmad ibn Naṣr al-Khuzā’i, in *Tārikh Baghdād* and in *Tahzeeb al-Kimāl*.⁵³

‘Amr ibn Luḥay ibn Qam’ah ibn Khindif, was the leader of the Khuzā’ah tribe, and he led them in the fierce wars that were waged against the rulers of Mecca, the descendants of Jurhum, who had custodianship since the time of Ismā’il. This was undertaken until he prevailed over the *ḥaram*, expelling them from it. Hence, he became the overlord of Mecca, controlling the sacred *Ka’ba* without any dispute. Apparently he even went as far as to claim Prophethood, communicating with the *Jinn*, even seeking to claim knowledge over matters spiritual and related to *Deen*. By all accounts, he was in possession of immense wealth. To the extent that it was said that he

⁵³ For the reader in English, a background overview of the various genealogies can be read in Volume 6 of *The History of al-Ṭabari* (1988), Translated by W. Montgomery Watt and M. V. McDonald, (State University of New York Press, Albany).

would pluck out the eyes of twenty of his camels. That bizarre custom was done if an owner had camels to the number of a thousand, supposedly to be as a protection against the envy of others; a ridiculous superstitious claim.⁵⁴ It is said that he used to feed the people, providing them with clothing during the season of pilgrimage. Perhaps he would slaughter thousands of camels during that season to facilitate it. He reached a level of leadership and renown for generosity that no Arab prior to him had ever attained, nor did any after him, until the advent of Islam. Given this, the Arabs considered him a ‘lord’ among them. Whenever he introduced a new practice, they would adopt it as a law.

With this infamy, Arab storytellers wove many myths and legends about him. Long tales were attributed to him, to the extent that it was claimed he had very long lifespan, tracing his era back to the days of *al-Amāleeq*, to the days of Sābur, ‘the broad-shouldered.’ It was mentioned that he ruled over the Ḥijāz, being revered during his lifetime. These are among other such tales which catapulted him to the realm of myths and legendary tales.⁵⁵ Perhaps, the change in the nature of the Abrahamic *talbiyah* is directly attributable to ‘Amr ibn Luḥay. Mention of this is made by Dr Jawād Ali:

‘Amr ibn Luḥay was a priest, as mentioned by the *Ahl-ul-Akbār* (people of historical reports/ accounts). He was from the Khuzā’ah which had migrated from the Yemen. He established his overlordship upon Mecca after he had seized power from the tribe of Jurhum, defeating its people. After which he was obeyed, his decrees followed. He was credited with the establishment of the remaining *Aṣnām* (idols) like al-Lāt, Isāf and Nā’ila. According to the view of the *Ahl-ul-Akbār*, he was regarded as the founder of these *Aṣnām* that remained until the time of the Prophet. They were (then) destroyed

⁵⁴ Mention of this is made in the *Seerah* of Ibn Kathir: ‘Their period of rule was damned, because it was during their period that idols were first worshipped in Hijaz. This came about because of their leader ‘Amr b. Luḥayy, God curse him; it was he who first influenced them towards idol worship. He was a man of enormous wealth. They say he gouged out the eyes of 20 camels to show that he owned 20,000 of them. It was a custom among the Arabs that anyone who came to own 1,000 camels should gouge out the eyes of one of them. By doing this he would avert the evil eye of malicious envy from them. Al-Azraqi was one of those who related this practice.’ See: Ibn Kathir (1998), *The life of the Prophet Muhammad*, Translated by Trevor Le Gassick (Garnet Publishing: Reading), [Vol. 1, p. 41].

⁵⁵ One can consult the seminal work of Dr Jawād Ali [*al-Mufaṣṣal fi Tārikh al-‘Arab Qablal’Islam*] in this regard.

upon his (Prophetic) order during the Year of Conquest, when the Muslims took over these locations. The *Ahl-ul-Akbār* further mention that ‘Amr ibn Luḥay was the first to alter the *Talbiyah* of Ibrāhīm. The original *Talbiyah*, worded as ‘*Labayk, Allahumma labayk, la sharika laka labayk,*’ he altered and made it:

لبيك اللهم لبيك، لبيك لا شريك لك، إلا شريكاً هو لك، تملكه وما لك

‘*At Your service, O Allah, at Your service! At Your service, You have no partner except a partner who is Yours, You own him and what he owns.*

It is mentioned that Iblees (the devil himself) appeared to him in the form of an old man from Najd, riding a golden coloured camel. He conversed with him for a while, then ‘Amr responded to the call of Iblees which he was deceived by. In that regard, people imitated and followed him.⁵⁶

Deception by an old man from Najd? How often does *Shayṭān* appear in this form! Perhaps the narratives from the people of historical reports/accounts are what Anas ibn Mālik, may Allah be pleased with him, meant, as it has been cited in the *Musnad* of al-Bazzār:

خَدَّثَنَا أَبُو كَامِلٍ وَهَلَالُ بْنُ يَحْيَى خَدَّثَنَا أَبُو عَوَانَةَ عَنْ قَتَادَةَ عَنْ أَنَسِ قَالَ كَانَ النَّاسُ بَعْدَ إِسْمَاعِيلَ عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ فَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ يَحْدُثُ النَّاسَ بِالشَّيْءِ يَرِيدُ أَنْ يَرُدَّهُمْ عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ حَتَّى أَدْخَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ فِي التَّلْبِيَةِ لَبِيكَ اللَّهُمَّ لَبِيكَ * لَبِيكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ * إِلَّا شَرِيكَاً هُوَ لَكَ * تَمْلِكُهُ وَمَا مَلَكَ، قَالَ فَمَا زَالَ، حَتَّى أَخْرَجَهُمْ عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ إِلَى الشَّرِكِ

Abu Kāmil and Hilāl ibn Yaḥya narrated to us Abu ‘Awānah narrated to us from Qatādah from Anas, he said: ‘After Ismā’il, the people were upon al-Islam. Yet the *Shayṭān* wanted to speak to the people to confuse and lead them away from al-Islam, until he inserted (the following) into the *Talbiyah*: *At Your service, O Allah, at Your service! At Your service, You have no partner except a partner who is Yours, You own him and what he owns.* He said: He continued to do so until he diverted them away from al-Islam into *al-Shirk*.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Dr Jawād Ali (1968), *al-Mufaṣṣal fi Tārikh al-‘Arab Qabla’Islam*, [Vol. 6, p. 80]

⁵⁷ *Musnad* al-Bazzār [Vol. 2, no. 7188]

It is also cited in *Majmu’ al-Zawā’id*, thereafter al-Haythamy said: ‘It is narrated by al-Bazzār, its men are the men of *Ṣaḥīḥ*.’⁵⁸ Here, I would argue that it is doubtful this is the *first* instance of *Shirk*, because the phrasing of – ‘*You have no partner except a partner who is Yours, You own him and what he owns,*’ implies the existence of a partner or partners that are known, being present in the mind. Clearly the intention behind inclusion within the *Talbiyah* formulation is to involve them in the rituals of *Ḥajj*. Otherwise, they are ‘partners’ which are known before that.

The innovations introduced by ‘Amr ibn Luḥay

As set out by the *Ahl-ul-Akbār*, here are some of the actions that were undertaken by the *Shayṭān* to achieve these ends. They are outlined in the following five-narratives which are presented in full below:

حدثني جدي حدثنا سعيد بن سالم عن عثمان بن ساج قال أخبرني محمد بن إسحاق أن عمرو بن لحي نصب بمنى سبعة أصنام، نصب صنما على القرين الذي بين مسجد منى والجمرة الأولى على بعض الطريق، ونصب على الجمرة الأولى صنما، وعلى المدعا صنما، وعلى الجمرة الوسطى صنما، ونصب على شفير الوادي صنما، وفوق الجمرة العظمى صنما، وعلى الجمرة العظمى صنما، وقسم عليهن حصى الجمار إحدى وعشرين حصاة، يرمى كل وثن منها بثلاث حصيات، ويقال للوثن حين يرمى أنت أكبر من فلان - الصنم الذي يرمى قبله

My grandfather narrated to me Sa’eed ibn Sālim narrated to us from Uthmān ibn Sāj, he said Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq reported to me that ‘Amr ibn Luḥay erected seven *Aṣnām* (idols) on al-Qareen between the *masjid* of Mina and the first *Jamarah*, on a particular path. He also erected a *Ṣanam* (idol) on the first *Jamarah*, another on al-Madā’, and another on the middle *Jamarah*. (Also) he erected a *Ṣanam* on the edge of the valley and above the greater *Jamarah*, as well as on it. He distributed twenty-one pebbles among them, and each idol was pelted with three pebbles. When throwing the pebbles, (the devotees)

⁵⁸ al-Haythami *Majmu’ al-Zawā’id* [Vol. 3, no. 5362]

would utter to the *Ṣanam*, ‘you are greater than so-and-so,’ referring to the previous *Ṣanam* that was pelted.⁵⁹

حدثنا أبو الوليد قال حدثني جدي قال حدثنا سعيد بن سالم القداح عن عثمان بن ساج قال أخبرني ابن إسحاق قال نصب عمرو بن لحي الخليفة بأسفل مكة، فكانوا يلبسونها القلائد، ويهدون إليها الشعير والحنطة، ويصبون عليها اللبن، ويذبحون لها، ويعلقون عليها بيض النعام، ونصب على الصفا صنما يقال له نهيك مجاود الريح، ونصب على المروة صنما يقال له مطعم الطير

Abul’Waleed narrated to us he said my grandfather narrated to us he said Sa’eed ibn Sālim al-Khidāh narrated to us from Uthmān ibn Sāj, he said, Muḥammad ibn Ishāq reported to me, he said: ‘Amr ibn Luḥay erected the *Ṣanam* that was called ‘al-Khalṣah,’ in the lower part of Mecca. They (the *mushrikeen*) used to adorn it with necklaces, and make offerings of barley and wheat. They would pour milk over it, slaughter animals and hang ostrich eggs upon it. He also erected a *Ṣanam* on (mount) *Ṣafā’* saying to it (that it is) ‘*Naheek Mujāwad al-Reeh’* (Flyer of the Wind), and upon (mount) *Marwa’* a *Ṣanam* that was said to it ‘*Maṭam al-Ṭayr’* (Food for the birds).⁶⁰

حدثنا عبد الله بن عمران قال حدثنا سعيد بن سالم القداح قال قال عثمان بن ساج أخبرني محمد بن إسحاق أن عمرو بن لحي نصب على الصفا صنما يقال له نهيك مجاود الريح، ونصب على المروة صنما يقال له مطعم الطير

Abdullah ibn ‘Imrān narrated to us he said Sa’eed ibn Sālim al-Qidāh narrated to us from Uthmān ibn Sāj, he said, Muḥammad ibn Ishāq

⁵⁹ al-Azraqi, *Akhbār Makkah* [Vol. 3, p. 125]. The second narration from the original Arabic text is here omitted. The reference to that is at [Vol. 7, p. 217]. Essentially, the wording is identical, but the opening *isnād* starts with ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Imrān al-Makhzumi narrated to us he said Sa’eed ibn Sālim narrated to us,’ etc.

⁶⁰ Ibid. [Vol. 1, p. 167]. Although not part of the original text, a couple of *ahādith* provide some additional information concerning ‘al-Khalṣah.’ As recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhārī: Abul’Yamān narrated to us Shu’ayb reported to us from al-Zuhri he said Sa’eed ibn al-Mussayib said that Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, reported to me that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: ‘*The Hour will not be established till the buttocks of the women of the tribe of Daws move while going round Dhi- al-Khalṣah.*’ ‘Dhi-al-Khalṣah’ was the idol of the Daws tribe which they used to worship in *Jāhiliyyah*. And also as recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim: Abdul Ḥameed ibn Bayyān narrated to me Khālīd reported to us from Bayyān from Qays from Jābir, he said: ‘During the era of *Jāhiliyyah* there was a temple called ‘*Dhu al-Khalṣah,*’ and it was called the Yemenite Ka’ba or the northern Ka’ba. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him said: *Will you rid me of Dhu al-Khalṣah?* So I went forth at the head of three-hundred-and-fifty cavalry from the tribe of Aḥmas and we destroyed it, and killed whomsoever we found there.’

reported to me that Amr ibn Luḥay erected a *Ṣanam* on (mount) *Ṣafā’* saying to it (that it is) ‘*Naheek Mujāwad al-Reeh’* (Flyer of the Wind), and upon (mount) *Marwa’* a *Ṣanam* that was said to it ‘*Maṭam al-Ṭayr’* (Food for the birds).⁶¹

My grandfather narrated to me Sa’eed ibn Sālim narrated to us from Uthmān ibn Sāj, he said Muḥammad ibn Ishāq reported to me that ‘Amr ibn Luḥay took al-‘Uzza to Nakhla. When the *Hajj* was completed and the circumambulation around the *Ka’ba*, (the pilgrims) wouldn’t regard this as complete until they reached al-‘Uzza. They would circumambulate her, seeking blessings and spend a day in devotion to her. Al-‘Uzza belonged to the tribe of Khuzā’ah. The Quraysh and Bani Kinānah, along with Muḍar, held great reverence for al-‘Uzza. The protectors and custodians of al-‘Uzza were the Bani Shaybān, who belonged to the Bani Sulaym, who had allegiance with Bani Hāshim.⁶²

Abul’Waleed narrated to us he said my grandfather narrated to us he said Sa’eed ibn Sālim narrated to us from Uthmān ibn Sāj, he said, Muḥammad ibn Ishāq reported to me, he said: ‘Amr ibn Luḥay erected the idol of Manāt on the coastal area near the sea, specifically in Qadeed. She (Manāt) was revered and worshipped by the tribes of ‘Azd and Ghassān. They used to perform pilgrimage to Manāt, holding her in high-esteem. After completing the circumambulation of the *Ka’ba* and departing from ‘Arafāt and Mina, they would not shave their heads except before Manāt. They would also perform that ritual shaving within its precinct. Her devotees would not traverse (the mounts) *Ṣafā’* and *Marwa’* given the presence of the two idols, ‘*Naheek Mujāwad al-Reeh’* and ‘*Maṭam al-Ṭayr.*’

This locale of the Anṣār used to venerate Manāt, when they performed *Hajj* or ‘*Umrah*, none would remain under the roof of their homes until they completed their pilgrimage. When a man entered a state of ritual garb, he would not enter his house, even if there was a need to do so. When returning from pilgrimage, he would encamp behind his house, and not touch the lintel of the door with his head. When Allah brought forth Islam and abolished the customs of

⁶¹ Op. Cit [Vol. 4, p. 91].

⁶² al-Azraqi, *Akhbār Makkah* [Vol. 1, p. 173].

Jāhiliyya, He sent-down the following verse: *Goodness does not consist of entering houses by the back [door]; the truly good person is the one who is mindful of Allah.* He said: Manāt was revered by the ‘Aws, Khazraj, Ghassān from the ‘Azd, as well as by those who followed their religion from the people of Yathrib and the people of Shām (the Levant). It was located on the coastal area near Mushalal near Qadeed.⁶³

A visit to the Levant

Crucially, some of the narratives show that ‘Amr ibn Luḥay saw these *Aṣṇām* in *Shām* (the Levant) and having taken a liking to them, imported them back into Arabia; perhaps Asāf and Nā’ilah were among them. The following is cited by al-Kalbi in *The Book of Idols*:

The mother of ‘Amr ibn-Luḥay was Fuhayrah, the daughter of Aāmīr ‘Amr ibn al-Ḥārith ibn ‘Amr al-Jurhami. It is also said that she was Qam’ah, the daughter of Muḍāḍ al-Jurhumi. It was al-Ḥārith who used to be the custodian of the *Ka’bah*. But when ‘Amr ibn Luḥay came [to Mecca] he disputed his right to its custody, and with the aid of the children of Ismā’il, fought the Jurhumites, defeated them, and cleared them out of the *Ka’bah*; he then drove them out of Mecca, and took over the custody of the Sacred House after them. He then became very sick, and was told ‘There is a hot spring in al-Balqā,’ in al-Shām (the Levant); if you would go there, you would be cured.’ So he went to the hot spring, bathed therein, and was cured. During his stay there, he noticed that the inhabitants of the place worshipped *Aṣṇām*. He therefore queried them saying, ‘What are these things?’ To which they replied, ‘To them we pray for rain, and from them we seek victory over the enemy.’ Thereupon he asked them to give him [a few of those idols], and they did. He took them back with him to Mecca and erected them around the *Ka’bah*.⁶⁴

In addition to the above, the following is presented in *al-Mufaṣṣal fi Tārikh al-‘Arab Qablal’Islam*:

⁶³ Ibid. [Vol. 1, p. 169]. The Qur’ānic verse cited is from 2: 189.

⁶⁴ al-Kalbi, *The Book of Idols*, [p. 4]. Slightly modified to take account of the original Arabic.

In another narration by Ibn al-Kalbi in his book *al-Aṣṇām* (the idols), the worship of idols is also attributed to Amr ibn Luḥay. However, it presents the story in a different form. Thus we say: ‘Amr ibn Luḥay, he is Rabi’ah ibn Ḥāritha ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Aāmīr ibn Ḥāritha ibn Tha’labah ibn ‘Imrul-Qays ibn Māzin ibn al-Azd, and he is Abu Khuzā’ah. His mother was Fuhayrah bint al-Ḥārith, and it is said that she was the daughter of al-Ḥārith ibn Muḍāḍ al-Jurhami, and she was a priestess. He had gained influence in Mecca and expelled the tribe of Jurham from within it, taking control of its leadership. He had an oracle of the *jinn* who was given the nickname Abu Thamāmah. He said: ‘Answer Abu Thamāmah,’ to which the reply came: ‘At your service from Tihāmah.’ He said: ‘Make haste, or get out of Tihāmah, accompanied by peace and luck.’ ‘Amr replied: ‘Aye, aye, there shall be no delay, Nothing shall hold me back.’

Thereupon the oracle rejoiced: ‘To the shores of Jeddah make your way; There you shall find *Aṣṇām* in fine array; With thee to Tihāmah take them back, Let nothing alarm you, fear no attack. Then bid the Arabs worship them, one and all, They will hear your voice and heed your call.’ ‘Amr proceeded to the shores of Jeddah dug the idols out of the sand, carried them to Tihāmah, and erected them there. When the time for the pilgrimage arrived, he summoned all the Arabs to their worship. ‘Awf ibn Udhrah ibn Zayd al-Lāt ibn Rufaydah ibn Thawr ibn Kalb ibn Wabarah ibn Taghlib ibn Ḥulwan ibn ‘Imrān ibn al-Ḥāf ibn Quḍā’ah answered his call. (‘Amr) gave him *Wadd*, which ‘Awf carried to Wādi al-Qura, and he erected it in Dumat Jandal. He also gave his son the name ‘Abd Wadd, who was the first to be named as such. Meanwhile, ‘Awf was the first to give one of his children the name, thereafter, the Arabs named their children after *Wadd*’.

This narrative follows a similar pattern to the first narration regarding the origin of idol worship among the Arabs before Islam, according to the opinion of historians, except for the difference in the location from which the idols were obtained. Here, Jeddah is mentioned, which is located on the coast of the Red Sea, while the other place mentioned is in the region of Balqā’ in the Levant. Although these locations differ geographically, they share one common aspect: they were intentionally situated along trade routes that attracted foreigners since ancient times. Does this imply that

these idols were imported from abroad, from the lands of the Levant (greater Syria) or Egypt, and that they were crafted by the people of the Levant, Egypt, or even the Romans? Another narration recalls that ‘Amr ibn Luḥay brought the idol Hubal from Hiyt in Iraq and placed it in the *Ka’ba*. It concludes with a minor adjustment and correction of some phrases in the narrations as they appear in their original sources.⁶⁵

It is not incredulous to assume that ‘Amr ibn Luḥay may have undergone a ‘civilisational shock’ during the period when he went to seek some form of medical treatment in the Levant, an area which at that time, was under Roman suzerainty. Culture, science, architecture, sculpture, had reached its peak under Rome at that time. Just like the people of the Levant, the Romans too were *mushrikeen*. As for the Jews, who were the relatives of the Arabs and believed in monotheism, they were under subjugation, often humiliated by their Roman overlords. If it is true that the man, ‘Amr ibn Luḥay had taken charge of Mecca in the middle of the second-century CE (approximately 140 CE), as will be mentioned shortly, there is no doubt that he would have heard about the destruction of the Temple after the defeat of the Jews in the revolt of 70 CE, or even the massacres that the Romans perpetrated against the Jews in the Bar Kokhba revolt (the Third Jewish Revolt or the ‘Jewish Expedition’), occurring around 130 CE. At which time, they were severely defeated, with the Romans prohibiting them from entering Jerusalem, scattering them to various lands.⁶⁶ It is not unlikely that he stood himself on the ruins and witnessed first-hand the traces of destruction, causing perhaps a severe intellectual earthquake in his thoughts.

It may well be that the man was unable to comprehend how the *mushrikeen* excelled so overwhelmingly, both culturally and militarily, over the people of monotheism. He fell into a whirlpool of doubts and suspicions, until his troubled conscience or the companionship of satanic *Jinn* whispered

⁶⁵ Dr Jawād Ali (1968), *al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-‘Arab Qablal’Islam*, [Vol. 6, pp. 78/79]. Although a little difficult to follow, Dr Ali is quoting directly from al-Kalbi (p. 45) up to ‘..the Arabs named their children after *Wadd*.’ Thereafter he presents his analytical points. This is not clearly distinguished in the Arabic text.

⁶⁶ For background to these events, one can consult the works of Flavius Josephus, (d.100CE). Regarding the Bar Kokhba Revolt, a useful introduction to the subject is to be found at chapter 4 of Volume 4 (The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period) from *The Cambridge History of Judaism* (2008), (ed) Steven T Katz.

to him that these ‘superior civilised individuals’ had gained access - through observation, revelation, or inspiration - to new facts about the angels, those spiritual celestial beings whom the primitive and backward Arabs of ignorance believed in as part of *Deen* from Ismā’il, knowing very little about them. The ‘new truth’ that he seemingly put forward, was that the angels were the ‘sons and daughters of God,’ and they are responsible for managing and administering different aspects of the universe, as each has their own specialisation.⁶⁷

Broadly it doesn’t befit a king to delegate tasks for the commoners to undertake, particularly since his children, either by adoption or direct royal lineage, are present to carry out his wishes. Therefore, they are gods/deities to be worshipped, their father rejoices in their worship and rewards it, in addition to the great benefit derived from their intercession and mediation. And it is perfectly acceptable to represent these supposed ‘deities’ through sculptures and images, just as the supposed advanced nations do! Having equipped himself with a new theory and magnificent artistic sculptures, ‘Amr ibn Luḥay, ruler of Mecca, leader of the unified Arabs, found no difficulty, especially with his reputation for visions, dreams, and supernatural inspiration to convince the noble and simple Adnanite Arabs to ‘develop’ their ‘naïve’ religion in order to keep up with the march of civilization!

The transition from *Tawḥeed* to *Shirk* happened suddenly, in a leap, through the effective efforts of single-preacher, ‘Amr ibn Luḥay ibn Qam’ah ibn Khindif, who was the bewitched and accursed *Shayṭān* that called to *Shirk* and actively instituted it. Thus, *Tawḥeed* receded, and the *Deen* of Ibrāhim was replaced within a single generation. However, the tide of darkness cannot reign indefinitely, and this was shattered by the coming of the leader of guidance, the beacon of light and truth, Abul’Qāsim Muḥammad ibn Abdullah, the Seal of Prophets, peace and blessings be upon him and his family. Indeed he, peace and blessings be upon him, uprooted *Shirk*, hook, line and sinker; eradicated *kufṛ* and manifested the true *Deen*, the easy and tolerant *al-Ḥanaḥiyah al-Ibrāhmiyah*. That also established

⁶⁷ Attributing angels as daughters, offspring or semi-divine entities / intermediaries between men and supposed ‘gods’ was not an uncommon feature of civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean, long pre-dating the Arabs. See: Robin Lane Fox (2006), *Pagans and Christians* (London: Penguin Books), [pp. 169/170].

within a single generation. All praise and thanks are due to Allah, there is no ‘other god’ except Him, and there is no Lord beside Him. Upon Him do we rely and seek support.

Decisive proofs shatter myths and legends

Hence, this is the viewpoint that we have elucidated. It is established from historical sources and evidences to refute the myths, superstitions and legends, which include the nonsense that is the tale of ‘al-Lāt’ being a man that used prepare *Saweeq* for the pilgrims, coupled with its nonsense that consumption of which would make one fat. Also, the myths woven around ‘Asāf’ and ‘Nā’ila’ that they allegedly committed adultery in the *Ka’ba* and were transformed into statues; this together with whatever baseless and fabricated legends that surround it. Moreover, that the ‘rocks’ of the *Ka’ba*, allegedly taken and then circumambulated, evolved or metamorphosed into later ‘deities.’

Given the overwhelming weight of evidence, none has the right to rely upon such utter nonsense. Only the ignorant may be excused, or perhaps a person who outright disbelieves in the Prophethood of our beloved Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets, peace and blessings be upon him and his family. Yet when one is acquainted with the plethora of evidence, excuses vanish much like the myths, legends and superstitions that for too long have held centre-stage. The accursed *Shayṭān* ‘Amr ibn Luḥay ibn Qam’ah ibn Khindif didn’t invent the ‘gods/deities’ out of the pure figment of his own imagination. Neither did he actually carve or make the *Aṣnām* himself. Rather, he was a transmitter, or conveyor, taking these from neighbouring environs. Even if it were to be argued that he had companions among the *Shayāteen Jimn*, who whispered and made suggestion thereof to lead him to the locations of buried/abandoned ancient *Aṣnām* or statues, these invariably would belong to those neighbouring environs and not be *native* to Mecca. Indeed these are definitely from ancient older civilisations, examples of which would include those *Aṣnām* entitled *Wadd*, *Suwā*, *Yaghuth*, *Ya’uq* and *Nasr*. Accordingly, the beliefs, superstitions, and rituals of the neighboring peoples of the Arabian Peninsula give us an approximate picture of what is similar to that among the Arabs.

Determining the approximate dates

It would appear that ‘Amr ibn Luḥay ibn Qam’ah ibn Khindif is not that old or ancient as one may at first think. That much can be surmised from a close careful reading of key lineages, which are outlined as follows:

دحية بن خليفة بن فروة بن فضالة بن زيد بن امرئ القيس بن الخزرج بن عامر بن بكر بن عامر بن عوف بن بكر بن عوف بن عذرة بن زيد اللات بن ربيعة الكلبي كان يشبه بجبريل عليه السلام بعثه النبي، صلى الله عليه وسلم، رسولاً إلى قيصر سكن مصر فمات في ولاية معاوية بن أبي سفيان

Dihya ibn Khaleefah ibn Farwah ibn Faḍāla ibn Zayd ibn Imrul’Qays ibn al-Khazraj ibn Aāmīr ibn Bakr ibn Aāmīr ibn ‘Auf ibn Bakr ibn ‘Auf ibn ‘Udhra ibn Zayd al-Lāt ibn Rafeeda al-Kalbi, he was similar to Jibreel, peace be upon him. The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him sent him as an emissary to Caesar; he resided in Egypt, died during the governorship of Mu’āwiyā ibn Abi Sufyān.⁶⁸

There are thirteen generations (literally ‘fathers’) between Dihya, may Allah be pleased with him, and Zayd al-Lāt (ibn Rafeeda al-Kalbi).

أسامة بن زيد بن حارثة بن شراحيل بن كعب بن عبد العزى بن يزيد بن امرئ القيس بن النعمان بن عامر بن عبد ود بن كنانة بن عوف بن زيد اللات بن ربيعة بن ثور بن كلب بن وبرة بن ثعلب بن حلوان بن عمران بن الحاف بن قضاة مولى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، كنيته أبو زيد وقد قيل أبو محمد. ويقال أبو زيد توفي بعد أن قتل عثمان بن عفان ونقش خاتمه جب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، قبض رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، وهو بن عشرين سنة وكان قد نزل وادي القرى، وأمه أم أيمن اسمها بركة مولاة رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم

Usāma ibn Zayd ibn Ḥāritha ibn Shurāheel ibn Ka’b ibn ‘Abd al-‘Uzza ibn Yazeed ibn Imrul’Qays ibn al-Nu’mān ibn ‘Aāmīr ibn ‘Abd Wadd’ ibn Kinānah ibn ‘Auf ibn Zayd al-Lāt ibn Rafeeda ibn Thawr ibn Kalb ibn Wabra ibn Tha’lab ibn Ḥilwān ibn ‘Imrān ibn al-Ḥāf ibn Quḍā’ah, *mawla* to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. His *kunya* (*nom de guerre*) is Abu Zayd, also it is said it is Abu Muḥammad. It is said that Abu Zayd passed away after

⁶⁸ Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Thiqāt* [Vol. 3, p. 117]. Further details can be reviewed in *The History of al-Tabari* (1997), Translated and annotated by Michael Fishbein, (State University of New York Press, Albany). [Vol. 8, pp. 28/29, 94, 100]

Uthmān ibn ‘Affān was killed; his ring was engraved with ‘Love of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him.’ He was twenty-years old when the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him passed away; he settled in *Wadi al-Qurra*, his mother Umm ‘Ayman – her name is Barakah, was a servant of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him.⁶⁹

Hence between Usāma ibn Zayd, may the bounty of Allah be upon him and his mother, and Zayd al-Lāt (ibn Rafeedah ibn Thawr ibn Kalb) there are twelve-generations.

امرؤ القيس بن عدي بن أوس بن جابر بن كعب بن عليم بن هبل بن عبد الله بن كنانة بن بكر بن عوف بن عذرة بن زيد اللات بن رفيدة بن ثور بن كلب الكلبي له إدراك ذكره بن الكلبي قال وقد أمره عمر بن الخطاب على من أسلم بالشام من قضاة وخطب إليه علي ومعه ابناه حسن وحسين فزوجهم بناته، وفي بنته الرباب يقول الحسين بن علي وكان له منها ابنته سكينه لعمرك إنني لأحب دارا تكون بها سكينه والرباب

Imrul’Qays ibn ‘Adi ibn Aws ibn Jābir ibn Ka’b ibn ‘Aleem ibn Hubal ibn Abdullah ibn Kinānah ibn Bakr ‘Auf ibn Udthra ibn Zayd al-Lāt ibn Rafeeda ibn Thawr ibn Kalb al-Kalbi, he has mention by Ibn al-Kalbi, he said: Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ordered him to be the one who embraced Islam in the Levant from Quḍā’ah. Ali married his sons Ḥasan and Ḥussein to his daughters. His daughter, al-Rabāb, al-Hussein ibn Ali had his daughter Sakina from her and he said: ‘By your life, I truly love a home where tranquility resides, and al-Rabāb.’⁷⁰

Thus, between the *Ṣaḥābi* Imrul’Qays ibn ‘Adi, may Allah be pleased with him and Zayd al-Lāt (ibn Rafeedah ibn Thawr ibn Kalb), there are eleven-generations.

محمد بن السائب الكلبي بن بشر بن عمرو بن الحارث بن عبد الحارث بن عبد العزى بن امرئ القيس بن عامر بن النعمان بن عامر بن عبد ود بن كنانة بن عوف بن عذرة بن زيد اللات بن رفيدة بن ثور بن كلب، ويكنى محمد بن السائب الكلبي أبا النضر وكان جده بشر

⁶⁹ Ibid. [Vol. 3, p. 58]

⁷⁰ Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Isābah fi Tamyiz Ṣaḥāba* [Vol. 1, p. 215]

بن عمرو وبنوه السائب وعبيد وعبد الرحمن شهدوا الجمل مع علي بن أبي طالب عليه السلام، وقتل السائب بن بشر مع مصعب بن الزبير

Muḥammad ibn al-Sā’ib al-Kalbi ibn Bishr ibn ‘Amr ibn al-Harith ibn ‘Abdal-Harith ibn Abd al-‘Uzza ibn Imrul’Qays ibn Aāmīr ibn al-Nu’mān ibn Aāmīr ibn Abd Wadd ibn Kinānah ibn ‘Awf ibn Udthra ibn Zayd al-Lāt ibn Rafeeda ibn Thawr ibn Kalb; his *kunya* was Muḥammad ibn al-Sa’ib al-Kalbi, Abul’Naḍra. His grandfather, Bishr ibn ‘Amr, his tribe and his sons al-Sā’ib ‘Ubayd, Abdar-Raḥman, witnessed al-Jamal with Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, peace be upon him. al-Sā’ib ibn Bishr was killed along with Muṣ’ab ibn al-Zubayr.⁷¹

Thus between Bishr ibn ‘Amr, who is from the generation of the *Ṣaḥāba* and Zayd al-Lāt (ibn Rafeedah ibn Thawr ibn Kalb), there are twelve-generations. A further mention is made in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra* of Ibn Sa’d when speaking of Yazeed ibn Mu’āwiya ibn Abi Sufyān:

وأمه ميسون بنت بحدل بن أنيف بن دلجة بن قنافة بن عدي بن زهير بن حارثة بن جناب بن ذهل بن عبد الله بن كنانة بن بكر بن عوف بن عذرة بن زيد اللات بن رفيدة بن ثور بن كلب

His mother, Maysun bint Buḥdal ibn Aneef ibn Dalajah ibn Qīnāna ibn ‘Adi ibn Zuhayr ibn Ḥāritha ibn Junāb ibn Dhal ibn Abdullah ibn Kinānah ibn Bakr ibn ‘Awf ibn Udthra ibn Zayd al-Lāt ibn Rafeedah ibn Thawr ibn Kalb.⁷²

So between his maternal grandfather Buḥdal, who is from the generation of the *Ṣaḥāba* and Zayd al-Lāt there is thirteen generations. Recorded in *al-Seerah al-Nabawiyah*, there is:

فأم العباس وضرار: نُثَيْلَةُ بِنْتُ جَنَابِ بْنِ كَلْبِ بْنِ مَالِكِ (بِنِ عَيْدِ مَنَافِ) بْنِ عَمْرِو بْنِ عَامِرِ بْنِ زَيْدِ مَنَاةَ بْنِ عَامِرٍ، وَهُوَ الضَّحْيَانِ بْنِ سَعْدِ بْنِ الْخَزْرَجِ بْنِ تَيْمِ اللَّاتِ بْنِ النَّمْرِ بْنِ قَاسِمِ بْنِ هَنْبِ بْنِ أَفْصَى بْنِ جَدِيلَةَ بْنِ أَسَدِ بْنِ رَبِيعَةَ بْنِ نَزَارٍ، وَيُقَالُ أَفْصَى بْنُ دَعْمِيِّ بْنِ جَدِيلَةَ

Umm al-‘Abbās and Ḍirār: Nutaylah bint Janāb ibn Kuleeb ibn Mālīk (Ibn Abd Manaf) ibn ‘Amr ibn Aāmīr ibn Zayd Manāt ibn Aāmīr, and

⁷¹ Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra* [Vol. 6, p. 358]

⁷² Ibid. [Vol. 1, p. 30]

he al-Ḍuḥayān ibn Sa'd ibn al-Khazraj ibn Taym al-Lāt ibn al-Namr ibn Qāsiṭ ibn Hanb ibn Asfṣ ibn Jadeela ibn Asad ibn Rabeeah ibn Nazzār; and it is said, Afṣa ibn Du'ammi ibn Jadeela.⁷³

Here, between al-'Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him and Taym al-Lāt ibn al-Namr ibn Qāsiṭ there are ten or eleven generations, by way of the maternal lineage. The Arabs used to refer to Zayd al-Lāt and Taym al-Lāt prior to the advent of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, by approximately twelve generations, at the very least. This is of course assuming that the genealogical channels are accurate and have no omissions. However, we would be more cautious to say that the first six-names in any of those genealogical channels are precisely accurate, without any obvious omissions. These are the six generations. As for the six names above them, it is possible that some omissions or even abbreviations have occurred. In reality and originally, they consist of nine names, with a third of them deleted due to their lesser fame. Therefore, the total number of generations is approximately around sixteen, which is the region of 500 years. Amr ibn Luḥay ibn Qam'ah ibn Khindif was certainly present *before that* and he may have been in the early second-century CE. Broadly that would align with the fact that the Quraysh, under the leadership of Quṣay ibn Kilāb, took control of Mecca, expelling the Khuzā'ah around 440 CE. The Khuzā'ah ruled Mecca for around 300 years after defeating the Jurhum and driving them out, around 140 CE. Further to this, there is an amusing narrative that is highlighted in *The Book of Idols*, by al-Kalbi:

They then adopted al-'Uzza as their goddess. She is, in point of time, more recent than either al-Lāt or Manāt, since I have heard that the Arabs named their children after the latter two before they named them after al-'Uzza.

- Thus I have found that Tamim ibn-Murr had called his son(s) Zayd Manāt ibn Tamim ibn Murr ibn Ad ibn Ṭābakha
- And 'Abd al-Manāt ibn Ad
- Similarly, in the name of al-Lāt, Tha'labah ibn Ukābah named his son Taym al-Lāt.

⁷³ *al-Seerah al-Nabawiyah* [Vol. 1, p. 238]

- (Among others) Taym al-Lāt ibn Rafeedah ibn Thawr
- Zayd al-Lāt ibn Rafeedah ibn Thawr ibn Burdah ibn Murr ibn Ad ibn Ṭābakha
- Taym al-Lāt ibn al-Nimr ibn Qāsiṭ
- 'Abd al-Uzza ibn Ka'b ibn Sa'd ibn Zayd Manāt ibn Tamim
- Tamim ibn Murr named his son Zayd Manāt ibn Tamim ibn Murr ibn Ad ibn Ṭābakha
- And 'Abd Manāt ibn Ad
- Tha'labah ibn Ukābah named his son Taym al-Lāt.
- Tamim al-Lāt ibn Rafeedah ibn Thawr
- Zayd al-Lāt ibn Rafeedah ibn Thawr ibn Burdah ibn Murr ibn Ad ibn Ṭābakha
- Tamim al-Lat ibn al-Nimr ibn Qāsiṭ
- 'Abd al-'Uzza ibn Ka'b ibn Sa'd ibn Zayd Manāt ibn Tamim

It is therefore more recent than the first two. 'Abd-al-'Uzza ibn-Ka'b is among the earliest compounded names the Arabs used in conjunction with al-'Uzza. The person who introduced al-'Uzza was Dhālim ibn Asad. Her idol was situated in a valley in Nakhlat al-Shā'miyah that was called Hiraḍ, which was alongside al-Ghameer, to the right of the road from Mecca to Iraq, above Dhāt 'Irq; nine miles from al-Bustān. Over her (Dhālim) built a sanctuary called Bāss in which the people used to receive oracular communications. The Arabs as well as the Quraysh were won't to name their children 'Abd al-'Uzza. Furthermore al-'Uzza was the greatest idol among the Quraysh. They used to journey to her, offer gifts unto her, and seek her favours through sacrifice.⁷⁴

Cited in *Mu'jam al-Buldān*:

الغزى، بضم أوله، في قوله تعالى (أفرأيتم اللات والعزى)، اللات صنم كان لتقيف، والعزى سمرة كانت لغطفان يعبدونها، وكانوا بنوا عليها بيتا وأقاموا لها سدنة، فبعث النبي، صلى الله عليه وسلم، خالد بن الوليد إليها فهدم البيت وأحرق السمرة. والعزى تأنيث الأعز مثل الكبرى، والأعز بمعنى العزيز والعزى بمعنى العزيزة. وقال ابن حبيب: العزى شجرة كانت

⁷⁴ *The Book of Idols*, [p. 18]. Here the text has been modified to more closely align with the original Arabic.

بنخلة عندها وثن تعبدته غطفان وسدنتها من بني صرمة بن مرة، قال أبو منذر: بعد ذكر مناة واللات ثم اتخذوا العزى؛ فساقه نصاً

(Regarding) al-‘Uzza, including the first (mentioned), as per the statement of the Almighty, He said: ‘Have you considered al-Lāt and al-‘Uzza?’ al-Lāt was the *Ṣanam* of al-Thaqeef, and al-‘Uzza was a goddess that was worshipped by Ghaṭafān. They built a temple sanctuary for her with erected pillars with a custodian. The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him, sent Khālīd ibn al-Waleed to demolish the sanctuary and burn the idol. (As a term) al-‘Uzza is the feminine form of ‘al-Aazz,’ similar to ‘al-Kubra,’ carrying the feminine meaning of ‘al-Aziz,’ and al-‘Uzza carrying the feminine meaning of the mighty or powerful. Ibn Ḥabeeb said: al-‘Uzza was a tree located in a sanctuary of al-Nakhla, where the (tribe of) Ghaṭafān placed an idol dedicated for her worship. Its custodians were from the tribe of Bani Ṣamra ibn Murra. Abu Mundhir said: After the mention of Manat and al-Lat, thereafter al-‘Uzza was adopted, the text carrying that meaning.⁷⁵

Mention of the comparative age of the *Aṣṇām* vis-à-vis one another, is also made in *Fatḥ al-Bāri* by Ibn Ḥajar, by way of summation:

قال هشام بن الكلبي كانت مناة أقدم من اللات فهدمها عليّ عام الفتح بأمر النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم؛ وكانت اللات أحدث من مناة، فهدمها المعيرة بن شعبة بأمر النبي، صلى الله عليه وسلم، لما أسلمت ثقيف؛ وكانت العزى أحدث من اللات، وكان الذي اتخذها ظالم بن سعد بوادي نخلة فوق ذات عرق، فهدمها خالد بن الوليد بأمر النبي، صلى الله عليه وسلم، عام الفتح

Hishām ibn al-Kalbi said: Manāt was older than al-Lāt, it was destroyed by Ali in the year of conquest by order of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. As for al-Lat, she was more recent than Manāt, that was destroyed by al-Mughira ibn Shu’ba (again), by order of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, after (the tribe of) Thaqeef submitted to Islam. As regards al-‘Uzza, she was more recent than al-Lāt, it was taken by Dthālīm ibn Sa’d in Wadi Nakhla, which is above Dhāt ‘Irq. She was demolished by Khālīd ibn al-

⁷⁵ al-Ḥamawī, *Mu’jam al-Buldān* [Vol. 4, p. 116]

Waleed by order of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in the year of conquest.⁷⁶

I would argue that in relation to where al-Kalbi said: ‘Tamim ibn Murr named his son Zayd Manāt ibn Tamim ibn Murr ibn Ad ibn Ṭābakha,’ this may well contain an element of exaggeration, because it is more likely that Tameem died as a Muslim, as mentioned in a narration. Therefore, it is *unlikely* that Zayd Manāt is the son of Tameem Ṣaleebah. Rather, he is Zayd Manāt ibn Fulān ibn Tameem, and the lineage has been shortened by omitting the name of ‘Fulān’ (e.g. so-and-so). Perhaps there were multiple individuals that were referred to as ‘Fulān,’ given their limited fame, which is quite common in genealogical listings.

Here, we would hasten to add that everything previously mentioned is related to the essence of the Arab tribes from Northern Arabia, the descendants of Ismā’il, those who lived alongside them from the non-Ismā’ili tribes, such as Jurham in ancient times; *al-muwaḥideen al-mu’mineen* (believing monotheists, the followers of the Prophet Ṣāliḥ from the remnants of Thamud and the remnants of Midyan. Perhaps there were some believers from among the followers of Hud, the remnants of ‘Aād, although their habitation is more likely to be in Yemen, and not the northern Arabian Peninsula; in recent times, the tribes of Khuzā’ah, sections from Quḍā’ah, Kalb, Ṭay and those who settled in the northern Arabian lands.

With regards to the Southern Arabs, the Yemenite Qaḥṭāni Arabs, as well as the Nabateans of Iraq and the Levant, it appears that they had the greater trappings of civilisation. They were people that inhabited cities and villages, having agriculture, industry and trade. It is rare to find them among the nomadic Bedouins who herd camels, as it is more common among the Arabs of northern Arabia. By far, they possessed greater skill in writing, inscriptions and sculpture. As a whole, such people seem to have tended towards *Shirk*, as evidenced by the story of the Queen of Sheba, who embraced Islam via the efforts of the Prophet Sulaymān, peace be upon him. The history of the southern region is generally well known. Judaism and monotheism spread gradually in Yemen, but even so, there remained scattered minorities of *mushrikeen*. Then Christianity came, along with the

⁷⁶ *Fatḥ al-Bāri* [Vol. 8, p. 612]

stories of the People of the Ditch; the conflicts between Abyssinia and the Yemenite kings, and later the Persians. Such events are well documented thus there isn't a great need to dwell further upon them.

13. Lat, Lies and Mythology

In order to comprehend the criticality of this topic, 'what is the reality of al-Lāt?' and its exact relationship to the topic of *Tawḥeed*, one must have due regard to the very dangerous text found within the corpus of writings from Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (MIAW).¹ Unblemished, unaltered, it is quoted here in full:

If you reflect on this great matter and know that the *kuffār* acknowledge all of this to Allah alone, who has no partner, and that they only believed in their gods to seek intercession and draw closer to Allah, as the Most High said: '*They worship alongside Allah things that can neither harm nor benefit them, and say, 'These are our intercessors with Allah,'* [10: 18]. And in another verse: '*[As for] those who choose other protectors beside Him, saying, 'We only worship them because they bring us nearer to Allah,'* [39: 3]. If this becomes clear to you and you understand it well, the *mushrikeen* have another argument, which is that they say it is truth – 'but the *kuffār* believe in *al-Aṣnām*.' (In response) the definitive answer is thus: to be told that the *kuffār* in his time, peace and blessings be upon him, there were among them those who believed in idols. (Yet) some of them believed in the grave of a righteous man, like al-Lāt.

Among them, are those that believed in the *Ṣāliḥeen* (the righteous), they are the ones referred to by Allah, when He the Mighty and Sublime said: '*Those they pray to are themselves seeking a way to their Lord, even those who are closest to Him. They hope for His mercy and fear His punishment,*' [17: 57]. He the Almighty said that

¹ In the original Arabic edition the chapter is entitled '*What is the reality of al-Lāt?*' Modified here for the English translation.

those whom they call the *kuffār* and claim to love them, are (in fact) righteous people who are in obedience to Allah, having hope and fear. If you discern the truth that He the Almighty, the Blessed, mentioned in His Book that they believed in the *Ṣāliḥeen* and that they only wanted to gain intercession with Allah by drawing near to Him, believing in those *Ṣāliḥeen*, and you discerned the truth that Muḥammad peace and blessings be upon him, he did not differentiate between those who believed in *al-Aṣnām* (the idols) and those who believed in the *Ṣāliḥeen*, rather he fought all of them, judging them as *kuffār*.²

One must note with all accuracy and care, the unbridled false claim that is asserted in the quote, ‘The *kuffār* acknowledge all of this to Allah alone, who has no partner.’ With regards to where this matter was linked – the ‘belief in the grave a righteous man,’ with al-Lāt, and seeking to assert that this is as being a definitive proof upon the matter, this provides the necessary indication that definitively seeking to resolve this question, the truth and reality of al-Lāt, is not only a topic of importance among many, but rather it is a central issue of Islam or *kufr*, in other words, it is a matter of life and death.

The Qur’ānic Text

Without doubt, the best approach to address this topic and discern the ultimate truth regarding al-Lāt is to refer to *al-Kitāb al-Aziz*, the Holy Qur’ān, the text: ‘*which falsehood cannot touch from any angle, a Revelation sent down from the Wise One, Worthy of All Praise.*’³ Contained therein, ‘al-Lāt’ is mentioned only once – in *Surah al-Najm* (Chapter 53).

[Disbelievers], consider al-Lāt and al-‘Uzza, and the third one, Manāt - are you to have the male and He the female? That would be a most unjust distribution! These are nothing but names you have invented yourselves, you and your forefathers. Allah has sent no authority for them. These people merely follow guesswork and the whims of their souls, even though guidance has come to them from

² *Mu’walifāt al-Shaykh al-Imām Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb* [Vol. 1, p. 146]

³ *Qur’ān*, 41: 42

their Lord. Is man to have everything he wishes for, when the present life and the life to come belong only to Allah?

*There are many angels in heaven whose intercession will be of no use until Allah gives permission to those He will, whose words He will accept. Those who deny the life to come give the angels female names. They have no knowledge to base this on: they merely follow guesswork. Guesswork is of no value against the Truth. So [Prophet] ignore those who turn away from Our revelation, who want only the life of this world. Their knowledge does not go beyond that. Your Lord knows best who strays from His path and who follows guidance.*⁴

Indeed, this is the entire wording of the *Surah*. Up to verse eighteen, the first grouping of verses sets out the context for the infallibility of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. He doesn’t speak from his own desire; it is but a revelation that is sent unto him. His heart did not distort what he saw or what has come to him, peace and blessings be upon him. Doubt and the lingering whisper does not enter into his heart, peace and blessings be upon him. There is no general mention within this context of angels or other heavenly beings, except in the sole reference made to *Jibreel* (Gabriel), peace be upon him, where He the Exalted said: ‘*It was taught to him by [an angel] with mighty powers and great strength,*’ which is at the beginning of the *Surah*. With regards to the three, al-Lāt, al-‘Uzza and Manāt, they were beliefs held by the Adnany Arabs, or some of them who had believed that:

1. They are angels, the daughters of Allah. Glory be unto Him, for He is far above what they falsely ascribe to Him. Al-Lāt is thus believed in as being *one of the daughters* of Allah. In any case, the pagan Arabs hated that the new-born be a girl, yet they were happy to ascribe female children to Allah instead of males whom they preferred. So the verse rebuked them: ‘*are you to have the male and He the female? That would be a most unjust distribution!*’ According to the words of the Quraysh, there was exaggeration in the glorification of ‘al-Uzzi,’ the daughter of

⁴ *Qur’ān*, 53: 19/30. The original Arabic text quotes the *entire Surah*, all 62 verses. Here, only the verses which were highlighted in the Arabic text are provided in the translation. Translations though tend to vary slightly, particularly for the opening verses.

Allah; mother of al-Lāt and Manāt; for them al-Lat is the ‘granddaughter of Allah,’ as she is also one of ‘Allah’s daughters.’

2. Alternatively, al-Lāt is the ‘consort of Allah,’ being from the genus of the *Jinn*, so she is considered as being one of the esteemed high ranking nobility of the *Jinn*.

Definitely, ‘al-Lāt’ is feminine, with there being unanimous agreement upon that confirmed in the majority of narratives and channels that have been outlined in this book. It is the statement of Zayd ibn ‘Amr ibn Nufayl, as it has been cited in the *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* (the book of idols) by Hishām ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbi. It is also the statement of Abu Mālik, al-Suddi, Ibn Zayd, al-Ḍaḥḥāk and Muḥammad ibn al-Sa’ib al-Kalbi. It is repeatedly emphasised in the narrative regarding the demolition of her temple in al-Ṭā’if by al-Mughira ibn Shu’bah, as reported in Ibn Shabba’s *Tāriḡh al-Medina* from al-Zuhri, and from other channels other than that of al-Zuhri in *al-Maghazi* by al-Wāqidi. Moreover, it is the statement reported from Abu Bakr al-Ṣadeeq, may Allah be pleased with him, when he retorted to the insult of ‘Urwa ibn Mas’ud al-Thaqafī. Abu Bakr replied to him ‘Suck al-Lāt’s clitoris. (You think) we would flee and abandon him alone?’ That has been reported in one of the most authentic channels, cited by al-Imām al-Bukhārī in his collection of *Ṣaḡīḡh*:

حدثني عبد الله بن محمد حدثنا عبد الرزاق أخبرنا معمر قال: أخبرني الزهري قال أخبرني عروة بن الزبير عن المسور بن مخرمة ومروان يصدق كل واحد منهما حديث صاحبه قالوا خرج رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم زمن الحديدية حتى كانوا ببعض الطريق، فقال عروة عند ذلك أي محمد أرايت إن استأصلت أمر قومك هل سمعت بأحد من العرب اجتاح أهله قبلك، وإن تكن الأخرى فإني والله لأرى وجوها وإني لأرى أشوابا من الناس خليقا أن يفروا ويدعوك! فقال له أبو بكر امصص ببطر اللات نحن نفر عنه وندعه؟! فقال من ذا؟ قالوا أبو بكر، قال أما والذي نفسي بيده لو لا يد كانت لك عندي لم أجزك بها لأجبتك!

Abdullah ibn Muḥammad narrated to me ‘Abd al-Razzāq narrated to us Ma’mar reported to us he said al-Zuhri reported to me he said ‘Urwa ibn al-Zubayr reported to me from al-Miswar ibn Makhrama and Marwan each attesting to the veracity of the *ḥadīth* of his companion, they said: the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him set out during the time of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah until they were some way (along the journey). ‘Urwa ibn Mas’ud said: ‘O Muhammad! Won’t you feel any scruple in extirpating your relations?’

Have you ever heard of anyone amongst the Arabs extirpating his relatives before you? On the other hand, if the reverse should happen, (nobody will aid you, for) by Allah, I do not see (with you) dignified people, but people from various tribes who would run away leaving you alone.’ (Upon hearing this) Abu Bakr said to him: ‘**Suck al-Lāt’s clitoris.** (You think) we would flee and abandon him alone.’ ‘Urwa replied: ‘Who is that?’ They said: It is Abu Bakr. He said: ‘By Him in Whose Hands my life is, were it not for the favour which you did to me and which I did not compensate, I would retort on you!’⁵

The narration is reported from various channels, appearing in the *Musnad* of al-Imām Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Sunan al-Kubra* of al-Bayhaqy, the *Musnad* of Abu Ya’la and many others.

Tafsir of the verses

At this juncture it is critical to review the *Tafsir* of the verses in question. Very often only small fragments are presented, at times skewing crucial points. In this regard, the *Tafsir* of Imām al-Ṭabari is pertinent:

Said concerning the interpretation of the Almighty’s saying: ‘[Disbelievers], consider al-Lāt and al-‘Uzza, and the third one, Manāt - are you to have the male and He the female? That would be a most unjust distribution!’ He the Exalted in His remembrance said: Have you considered, O *mushrikeen*, al-Lāt, and ‘she’ is from Allah, the letter ‘*ta*’ was appended to it thus making it of the feminine; as it has been said ‘Amr for the masculine and ‘Umara for the feminine. It was said for the masculine ‘Abbās, for the feminine ‘Abbasa. Likewise, the *mushrikeen* named their idols by the names of Allah the Exalted, may His Names be remembered and sanctified, so they said from Allah, al-Lāt and from al-Aziz, al-Uzza. They claimed that they are the daughters of Allah the Exalted – (yet) Allah is far from what they say and fabricate. And He, may He be glorified, said unto them: Have you seen, O people that claim al-Lāt, al-‘Uzza and Manāt are

⁵ *Ṣaḡīḡh* al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Shuruṭ* (the Book of Conditions). Disingenuously most English, if not all translations either purposely omit the statement of Abu Bakr altogether, or completely obfuscate the reported wording, often substituting it with ‘he abused ‘Urwa’ in reply to his chiding.

the three-daughters of Allah? Do you lay claim to the male? He said: Do you choose for yourselves the male offspring among children and hate the new-born as female, yet you make for Him the female who you don't like for yourselves, but you kill her (the new-born female) out of hatred?

The pronunciation of the word 'Lāt' differed among the reciters. The readers of the garrison cities read it by minimising the letter 'ta' according to the meaning that was described. It has been mentioned that 'al-Lāt' was a house among date-palm trees that was worshipped by the Quraysh. Some of them said that it was located in the town of al-Ṭā'if. Among those who said as such are:

Bishr narrated to us he said Yazeed narrated to us he said Sa'eed narrated to us from Qatādah (concerning the verse): '[Disbelievers], consider al-Lāt and al-'Uzza,' (he said): 'As for al-Lāt, she was located in al-Ṭā'if.'

Yunus narrated to us he said Ibn Wahb reported to us he said Ibn Zayd said concerning the interpretation of the verse: '[Disbelievers], consider al-Lāt and al-'Uzza,' he said: 'al-Lāt was a house (sanctuary) in the valley of al-Nakhla that was worshipped by the Quraysh.'

Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid and Abu Ṣāliḥ had the reading of al-Lāt with emphasis on the letter 'ta,' making it an adjective (related to) the idol that they worshipped. And they said: 'It was a man who prepared the *saweeq* for pilgrims.⁶ After he died, people attended upon his grave and started worshipping it.'

Among those who have mentioned that report stating that are:

Bishr narrated to us he said 'Abdar-Raḥman narrated to us he said Sufyān narrated to us from Maṣūr from Mujāhid (concerning the verse): '[Disbelievers], consider al-Lāt and al-'Uzza,' he said: 'He was preparing the *saweeq* for pilgrims and people converged at his graveside.'

⁶ The word '*saweeq*' has been left transliterated throughout the chapter as it is particularly difficult to find a direct corresponding word in translation. It refers to a type of gruel that was consumed. Lane's dictionary entry for the word has that it is a sort of meal, akin to gruel, consisting primarily of either wheat or parched barley, at times moistened with water, ghee (clarified butter) or sheep fat.

Mu'ammil narrated to us he said Sufyān narrated to us from Maṣūr from Mujāhid (concerning the verse): '[Disbelievers], consider al-Lāt and al-'Uzza,' he said: 'al-Lāt prepared the *saweeq* for the pilgrims.'

Ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us he said Mihrān narrated to us from Sufyān from Maṣūr from Mujāhid, concerning where He has said: 'al-Lāt,' he said: 'He used to prepare *saweeq* for the pilgrims, upon passing away, people became devoted at his graveside.'

Ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us Jarir narrated to us from Maṣūr from Mujāhid concerning where He has said: 'al-Lāt,' he said: 'A man that used to prepare *saweeq* for the *mushrikeen*, when he passed away, people became devoted at his graveside.'

Aḥmad ibn Hishām narrated to us he said 'Ubadyallah ibn Musa narrated to us from Isrā'il from Abu Ṣāliḥ concerning where He said: 'al-Lāt,' he said: al-Lāt was the one who used to service their gods preparing the *saweeq* and he was located at al-Ṭā'if.'

Aḥmad ibn Yusuf narrated to me he said Abu 'Ubayd narrated to us he said 'Abdar-Raḥman narrated to us from Abul' Ashab from Abu Jawzā' from Ibn 'Abbās, he said: 'He was preparing *saweeq* for the pilgrims.'

(al-Ṭabari) Regarding the first of the two-readings, that is the most correct according to us, in that it is the reading which has the letter 'ta' without stressing it, related to the meaning of that attribute as read earlier. There is a confirmed *ijmā'* from the reciters of the garrison cities regarding that. With regards to al-'Uzza, there is disagreement among the scholars of interpretation about that. Some of the said that (the name) related to trees that they (the *mushrikeen*) worshipped. Among those who have stated that:

Ibn Bashār narrated to us he said Mu'wamil narrated to us he said Sufyan narrated to us from Mansur from Mujahid (concerning mention in the verse of) 'al-'Uzza,' he said: 'al-'Uzza (was) a tree.'

(al-Ṭabari) Others have said that 'al-'Uzza' was a white-stone. Those who mentioned that:

Ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us he said Ya'qub narrated to us from Ja'far from Sa'eed ibn Jubayr he said: 'al-'Uzza is a white stone.'

(al-Ṭabari) Others have said that it was a house located in al-Ṭā'if that was worshipped by (the tribe of) Thaqif. Those who mentioned that:

Yunus narrated to us he said Ibn Wahb reported to us he said Ibn Zayd said in relation to where He said '*al-Uzza*,' he said: al-Uzza was a house located in al-Ṭā'if, it was worshipped by Thaqif.

(al-Ṭabari) Others have said that it was a sanctuary in the valley of al-Nakhla. Among those who have said that:

Bishr narrated to us he said Yazeed narrated to us he said Sa'eed narrated to us from Qatādah (concerning mention in the verse of) '*and the third one, Manāt*,' he said: 'As for Manāt, there were gods in Qadid which were worshipped, that is to say, al-Lāt, al-Uzza and Manāt.'

Yunus narrated to us he said Ibn Wahb reported to us he said Ibn Zayd said in relation to where He said '*and the third one, Manāt*,' he said: 'Manāt was a house (sanctuary) in Mashallal which was worshipped by Banu Ka'b.'

Arab linguists differed regarding the pronunciation of the last letter of the words 'al-Lāt' and 'Manāt.' Some of the grammarians of Basra said that when one pauses after them, they should be pronounced al-Lāt, similarly it is said of Manāh [منة] as Manāt [منات]. Others have said with regards to 'al-Lāt,' it was made as al-Lat [اللت], the Arab linguists being silent upon pronunciation of the letters 'ta,' and 'ha,' saying: 'I saw Talhat.' And for everything that is written with the 'ha' it stands with a 'ta' upon it, 'toward the blessing of your lord' and 'a tree.'

While some grammarians of Kufa pronounced al-Lāt as being '*[Disbelievers], consider al-Lah*,' others used to say that there is some discretion in pronunciation (of words) that are with the letter 'ha,' (ending): 'Mercy from my lord' [رحمة من ربي] and 'And a tree sprouts forth,' [وشجرة تخرج]. What is added is permissible with that (having the letter) 'ta,' and 'ha.' But when it is connected, it can either be pronounced with 'ta,' or 'ha' sound at the end. This opinion is the more likely and the most adopted one among Arabs even if there were other opinion. Some of the rhetoricians from Basra were saying

that al-Lāt, al-Uzza and the third, Manāt, were idols made of stone that were inside the *Ka'ba* and worshipped there.⁷

One will notice that al-Imām al-Ṭabari stood firmly in line with the truth, with certitude and emphasising it is 'confirmed *ijmā'* from the reciters of the garrison cities upon the recitation of al-Lāt with a light '*ta*.' That is contrary to any anomalous reading which is purportedly attributed to Ibn 'Abbās and only followed by a small minority. It is false and invalid. Establishing Qur'ān reading is not a haphazard affair. Rather, readings are confirmed by way of textual *tawātur* or firmly established *ijmā'*, not by any other way. Imām al-Ṭabari was not beguiled, let alone deceived by myths about a man preparing *saweeq*.

Pronunciation and variant readings

One of the obsessive adherents to the sect of Wahhābism objected to this, attempting to stubbornly argue that the pronunciation with stress on the letter 'ta' was transmitted by *tawātur* from the pathway of al-Lahaby from al-Bizzi from Ibn Kathir, and a channel by way of Ruways from Ya'qub. In response to that, we would say this is not *Ṣaḥīḥ*, the channels are not transmitted by way of *tawātur*. Each one of them is debatable, with what is established from al-Ṭabari, Abu Shāmāh and al-Jazary in opposition to it. Notwithstanding this, a narrative channel from al-Lahaby from al-Bizzi is not of particular firm regard, because al-Bizzi, may Allah forgive him, was known to disagree with the majority and is on record as having retracted some of that. Concerning Ya'qub, he is Ya'qub ibn Ishāq ibn Zayd al-Ḥaḍrami (d. 205AH) from the later followers, junior class of the *atbāh' al-Tābi'een*. Unlike his Shaykh, the *Tabi'* Abu 'Amr ibn al-Alā' (d. 154AH) he is known for his adherence to *tawātur*. His reading was only by way of what was proven to him from all. In other words, this is by way of *tawātur* or *ijmā'*.

With regards to the core aspects of this chapter, the matter of al-Lat, whether the recitation is stressed or lightened, there are only two-readings as mentioned, no others:

⁷ *Tafsir al-Ṭabari*, [Vol. 11, pp. 519/522]

1. It is impossible for both of them to be invalid. In fact, this is contrary to what has been transmitted by *tawātur*. The decisive established proof is by way of where He the Exalted expressly states ‘*Indeed We have revealed (sent down) al-dhikr and We will most surely be its guardian.*’⁸ Indeed, opposing that is regarded as properly being a matter of *kufṛ* (disbelief), the one rehearsing it exiting the fold of Islam altogether, unless the impediments to *takfeer* apply.
2. Likewise it is impossible to consider the narratives upon light pronunciation as void because it was reported by way of *muttawātur*. It is the *ijmā’* of the seven-reciters, including Ibn Kathir, which is a matter that is well known from him. The exception being the channel by way of al-Lahaby from al-Bizzi from Ibn Kathir, which is nothing. It is an odd, anomalous and invalid reading as we outlined. More likely altogether that he did not take it from Ibn Kathir. Also, it is the *ijmā’* of the ten-reciters, except for what is narrated by way of Ruways to Ya’qub, and indeed the *ijmā’* of the entirety of the *Salaf*, bar that of Ibn ‘Abbās, Mujāhid and Abu Ṣāliḥ. Perhaps some of the students of Ibn ‘Abbās, or their students, followed the minority reading in this regard, as mentioned by al-Ṭabari earlier.⁹

Thus, as confirmed by al-Ṭabari in his *Tafsir*, the channels regarding the light pronunciation is a matter of authoritative *ijmā’* from among the reciters, be that old or new. Al-Ṭabari does not mince his words: ‘There is a confirmed *ijmā’* from the reciters of the garrison cities regarding that.’¹⁰ The idea of authoritative *ijmā’* here is not one of mere opinion or even theory. It is authoritative *ijmā’* based upon textual transmission, being among the highest forms of *tawātur*, that which is continuously recurrent. Imām al-Ṭabari was a great, studious scholar. A world renowned polymath, a *mujtahid muṭlaq* (scholar of the highest juristic rank) and the leading authority in *Tafsir* and recitation. His opinion carries considerable weight, not being overlooked or disregarded so easily, even where he asserts the view that there is no substantive evidence to support the reading with emphasis in pronunciation.

⁸ *Qur’ān* 15: 9. Here we have departed from Professor Haleem’s translation, opting for a more literal rendering.

⁹ Here, the Arabic edition repeats the quotes from the long-citation earlier from al-Ṭabari. The repetition has been omitted from the English edition.

¹⁰ *Tafsir al-Ṭabari*, [Vol. 11, pp. 519/522]

We do not claim it is a matter that is definitive, reaching the level of whoever disputes it exists the fold of Islam. It is a matter of *ijtihād* and diligence. Yet al-Ṭabari is such an authority within this realm of knowledge, *Tafsir*, recitation, that his opinion must be seriously considered. In fact, he takes precedence over many other later scholars such as Abu Shāmah, al-Jazari, and al-Subki. Recitation of the word with a light pronunciation upon the letter ‘*ta*’ is definitively the Qur’ān reading, none would dispute that except a *kāfir*.

Without the need for extensive commenting, the matter should be abundantly clear. Al-Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar struck the tone of the matter when he commented upon this in *Fath al-Bāri*, he wrote: ‘The majority settled upon the reading with light emphasis. The emphasis (upon the ‘*ta*’) is from the reading of Ibn ‘Abbās and a group of those who followed him. It is also narrated from Ibn Kathir, but the well-known (reading) from him is to lighten the emphasis as per the majority.’¹¹ The comments of al-Ḥāfiz should be duly noted, especially regarding the majority reading. It would also strengthen our position that the emphasis attributed to Ibn Kathir is false. Imām Ibn Kathir, outlined the following in his acclaimed *Tafsir*:

The Almighty says in reproaching the *mushrikeen* for worshipping *al-Aṣṇām*, *al-Andād* (peers) and *al-Awthān*, making houses (sanctuaries) for them that were similar to the *Ka’ba* which was built by the *Khalil* of *al-Raḥman* (Ibrāhim) peace be upon him. (He says): ‘[Disbelievers], consider *al-Lāt* and *al-Uzza*.’ *al-Lāt* was a white stone or rock which was inscribed and contained in a house (sanctuary) in *al-Ṭā’if* that had curtains and servants (custodians), surrounded with a courtyard which was hallowed by the people of *al-Ṭā’if*. They were the tribe of *Thaqif* and its adherents. They used to take pride in it among other tribes of the Arabs other than the *Quraysh*.

Ibn Jarir (al-Ṭabari) said: ‘They derived some words from the names of Allah. They said *al-Lāt* is the feminine form of the word Allah, the Almighty is far above what they claim.’ It was narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās, Mujāhid and al-Rabi’ ibn Anas, that they read ‘*al-Latt*’ with stress upon the letter ‘*ta*’ and interpreted it (to mean that it

¹¹ al-Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar *Fath al-Bāri* [Vol. 8, p. 778]

referred) to a man who used to prepare *saweeq* for the devotee pilgrims during the period of *Jāhiliyya*. When he died there were gatherings around his grave and they used to worship him. Al-Bukhāri said: Muslim, he is Ibn Ibrāhim narrated to us Abul’Ashab narrated to us Abul’Jawzā’ narrated to us from Ibn ‘Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him, (concerning the verse where) He said: ‘*al-Lāt and al-Uzza*,’ he said: ‘al-Lāt was a man that used to prepare *saweeq* for the pilgrims.’

Ibn Jarir (al-Ṭabari) said: ‘al-Uzza’ is derived from al-Aziz and she was a tree upon which there was a sanctuary and curtains in the valley of Nakhla. It was between Mecca and al-Ṭā’if. They Quraysh used to pay honour (and homage) to her. Similar to what Abu Sufyān said on the day of Uḥud: ‘To us *al-Uzza* and for you no *Uzza*.’ The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: ‘*Allah is our Helper and you have no help at all.*’

As narrated by al-Bukhāri in the *ḥadith* of al-Zuhri from Ḥumayd ibn Abdar-Raḥman from Abu Hurayrah, he said the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said: ‘*Whoever amongst you swears in his oath 'by al-Lāt and al-Uzza', then he should say: There is no god except Allah. And whoever says to his companions, 'Come let me gamble with you,' then he must give something in charity (as expiation).*’ This is referring to those who said it as a slip of the tongue since they were used to it during the period of *Jāhiliyya*. As al-Nasā’i said in relation to the day and the night: Aḥmad ibn Bakkār reported to us ‘Abdul Ḥumayd ibn Muḥammad narrated to us, they said Makhlad narrated to us Yunus narrated to us from his father; Muṣ’ab ibn Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqāṣ narrated to me from his father, he said: ‘I swore by al-Lāt and al-Uzza and my companions said to me: ‘What a bad thing you have said! You have said something horrible.’ So I went to the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him and told him about that. He said (for me to say): ‘*There is no god but Allah, alone without partner. He has all dominion; all praise is due to Him and He is able to do all things.*’ *Spit to your left three times, seek refuge with Allah from the Shayṭān, and do not say that again.*’¹²

¹² *Tafsir* Ibn Kathir [Vol. 7, pp. 455/456]

Then al-Imām Ibn Kathir spoke of al-‘Uzza and Manāt up to where he said:

Ibn Ishāq said: ‘al-Lāt was (held and venerated) by Thaḳif at Ṭā’if. Its shrine and custodians were Bani Mu’attib.’ I would say: During the Prophetic mission, the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him, sent al-Mughira ibn Shu’ba and Abu Sufyān Ṣakhr ibn Ḥarb to raise it to the ground, in its place a *masjid* was built in Ṭā’if.¹³

Similar to what has been stated above, the following is also recorded in *Fath al-Qadir* by Imām al-Shawkāni with some additional pointers:

‘[Disbelievers], consider *al-Lāt* and *al-Uzza*, and the third one, *Manāt*.’ When Allah, may He be Glorified, told these stories, He said to the *mushrikeen*, scolding and rebuking them – ‘*Have you seen (consider).*’ That is to say, about the (so-called) ‘gods’ that you worship besides Allah, do they have power that can be described with them? Did they reveal anything to you as Allah revealed to Muḥammad, or are they mere inanimate objects that make no sense having no benefit? He mentioned these three *Aṣnām* which were well known among the Arabs given their established great belief in them. Al-Wāḥidi and others said: ‘They derived their names from the names of Allah the Almighty.’ They said al-Lāt is (derived) from Allah, al-‘Uzza derived from al-Aziz; it is the feminine form of al-Izz, with the meaning of al-Aziza. Manāt was derived from Allah with the meaning of Him having ordained something. The majority read al-Lāt with a light ‘ta.’ It was said that it is taken from the name of Allah, Glory be to Him, far above what they ascribe. It is said it is ‘*yaleet*’ and the (letter) ‘*ta*’ is originally (in it). It is said it is an addition originating (from the verb) ‘*lawā*,’ ‘*yalu*’ to bend; they used to bend their necks while undertaking visitation (to it).¹⁴

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Although not mentioned in the original text, al-Shawkāni does seem to echo al-Zamakhshari [d. 538AH/1144CE] here. In his *Tafsir, al-Kashāf ‘an Ḥaqā’iq al-Tanzeel* [Vol. 5, p. 641] al-Zamakhshari writes: ‘*al-Lāt, al-Uzza and Manāt*,’ the *Aṣnām* (idols) (of the pagan Arabs) which were feminine. Al-Lāt was (ascribed to) Thaḳif in al-Ṭā’if. It is said she was located (in the valley) at Nakhla and worshipped by the Quraysh. And she is (the name) in *fa’alat* form (derived from the root) *la/wa/ya* [لوى], (this is because) they were turning to her, circling around to worship her. Or, to circumvent her, that is to say, to undertake circumambulation of her.’

Disagreement exists among the reciters as to whether it stops with the letter ‘*ta*’ or ‘*ha*.’ The majority concurred upon it being with ‘*ta*.’ Al-Farrā’ opted for the ‘*ta*’ even when stopping at it to following the recitation of the Qur’ān; it is written with the letter ‘*ta*.’¹⁵ Ibn ‘Abbās, Ibn al-Zubayr, Mujāhid, Maṣṣūr, Ibn al-Mu’tamir, Abul’Jawzā’, Abu Ṣālīḥ and Ḥumayd, all read ‘*al-Lāt*’ with emphasis upon the letter ‘*ta*.’ That reading was also reported by Ibn Kathir. It was said that it is the name of a man who used to prepare *saweeq* to feed the pilgrims. When he died, they stayed around his grave and began to worship him. It is *ism* (name) *fā’il* (relating to his action) originally for this man. Mujāhid said: ‘He was a man that stayed on top of a mountain preparing (food with) fat that fed the pilgrims; it was in the valley of Nakhla, when he died he was worshipped.’ Al-Kalbi said: ‘He was a man of Thaqeef who had goats.’ It is said: ‘He is Aāmīr ibn al-Dharb al-Adu’wāni, this was *ṣanam* of Thaqeef, as was said by the poet:

*Do not support al-Lāt, for Allah will make her perish
How can it support you, that which has not support?*

He said in al-Ṣiḥāḥ, ‘al-Lāt’ was the name of a *ṣanam* of Thaqeef and it was (located) at al-Ṭā’if. Some of the Arabs (pronounce) it with the letter ‘*ta*’ others with the letter ‘*ha*’ (at the end).¹⁶

Thereafter, Imām al-Shawkāni spoke about al-‘Uzza and Manāt, up until where he said:

He (Allah) said: ‘*and the third one*,’ this (begins) the mention of Manāt describing her as the other third-one. And the third is nothing but another (of the three). Abul’Baqqā’ said: ‘The description (of Manāt) with (being) the other, is for confirmation, the description of the third, being shaped by the others (mentioned). The Arabs described the second, using the word another.’ Al-Khaleel said: ‘He said that in order to arrange the rhyme of the verse, by His (utilising) the other.’ Al-Ḥussain ibn al-Faḍl said: ‘It has precedence, delay and ordering, have you seen / considered al-Lāt, al-‘Uzza the other and Manāt the third (of them)?’ It is said that the use of describing it with

¹⁵ Yaḥya ibn Ziyād al-Farrā’, the famous grammarian of Kufa [d. 207AH/823CE].

¹⁶ al-Shawkāni *Faḥ al-Qadir*, [Vol. 5, p. 107]

the word ‘the other’ acts as a means of emphasis (in the address) to the *mushrikeen* because they used glorify them.¹⁷

It is said this is (further used) as a matter of contempt and dispraise, just like (where) He said: ‘*the last of them will say of the first*,’¹⁸ that is, putting them in front of their leaders. Then the He, may He be glorified, repeated the rebuke, reproaching them for what they have said. He says: ‘*are you to have the male and He the female?*’ In other words, how do you assign to Allah that what you hate of the females, yet you assign to yourselves the males which you covet? It is said that they said that the angels are the daughters of Allah. It is (thus) said, what is therefore meant is that how do you (the *mushrikeen*) make al-Lāt, al-‘Uzza and Manāt, who are feminine according to your claim, partners with Allah, yet it is the very feminine nature that you despise (if a child is born).¹⁹

A summary of the discussion is cited in the *Tafsir* of al-Māwardi:

With regards to al-Lāt, al-‘Amash used to place stress upon it (the letter ‘*ta*’) whereas the other reciters lightened it. So for the lighter (pronunciation), there are two statements regarding it, the first of which: it was a *ṣanam* located in al-Ṭā’if, the claim that its owner (custodian) used to prepare *saweeq* for his companions, said by al-Suddi. Secondly, it was a rock upon which *saweeq* was prepared, being located between Mecca and al-Ṭā’if, it was said by ‘Ikrima. As for those who (read it) with emphasis, there are two-views, the first of which is that it refers to the man who used to kneed the *saweeq* upon a stone, its consumers would get fat; when he died they gathered

¹⁷ Again here al-Shawkāni does seem to echo al-Zamakhshari. In his *Tafsir* [Vol. 5, p. 643] he writes: ‘*al-ukhrā*’: is a deprecatory designation in the sense of one who is put back on a lower rank. Similar is (the linguistic usage in) Allah’s words: ‘*The last of them will say of the first, ‘Our Lord, it was they who led us astray,*’ [7: 38] namely, the last regarding importance and rank.’

¹⁸ Qur’ān 7: 38. In full, the two-verses read: ‘*Allah will say, ‘Join the crowds of jinn and humans who have gone before you into the Fire.’ Every crowd curses its fellow crowd as it enters, then, when they are all gathered inside, the last of them will say of the first, ‘Our Lord, it was they who led us astray: give them double punishment in the Fire’ – Allah says, ‘Every one of you will have double punishment, though you do not know it’ - and the first of them will say to the last, ‘You were no better than us: taste the punishment you have earned.’*

¹⁹ *Faḥ al-Qadir*, al-Shawkāni [Vol. 5, p. 107]

upon his grave and worshipped him, such was said by Ibn ‘Abbās and Mujāhid. The second, that he was a man who used to kneed the *saweeq* for the gods which was based at al-Ṭā’if, al-Suddi said that.²⁰

Having due regard to the comments made by the exegetes, I may add to this by stating the following:

1. These statements about al-Lāt – what she is, where she is, appear at first glance to be varied, even conflicting. In reality though, they are not. This is because among the ancients, what they called ‘al-Lāt’ is one particular aspect related to her worship, or some of the idols that were devoted to her, or some of the idols that were representations or substitutes for her. Hence, it is not surprising that there is a main or central temple dedicated to al-Lāt in al-Ṭā’if, but *other* locations too that are dedicated to her worship and specifically in Mecca. Without doubt, those temples contain some of the idols, statues, and other supposed sacred objects such as trees or rocks inside the temple building or contained within its courtyard sanctuary. It is unlikely that there was no idol devoted or dedicated to al-Lāt contained with the *Ka’ba* at that time, since it housed hundreds of idols. What has been said here about al-Lāt verbatim would by necessity also apply to that of other idols like Manāt, al-‘Uzza, Wadd’, Suwā’, Yaghuth, Ya’uq, Nasr and other than them among the *tawāgheet*. But the *main* temple is usually located in another place. For example, the main temple dedicated to Manāt was probably located in al-Mushallal.
2. The problem as it relates to comprehending the wording and ordering as expressed in the verse, with the word of ‘*al-ukhra*’ (the other), usually assigned to the second, with the goddess Manāt being designated the other, third-in-line of the aforementioned false deities. Attempting to solve the problem by considering the use of commas is not convincing. After giving this matter considerable thought we would say, in the precise language the reading is expressing: Have you considered al-Lāt (the first goddess in rank, she is the mother), al-‘Uzza (the second in rank, her first daughter) and Manāt, (the goddess), who

²⁰ *Tafsir* al-Māwardī [Vol. 5, p. 397]. The *Tafsir* (exegesis) of Abu al-Ḥasan Ali ibn Muḥammad al-Māwardī [d. 448AH/1058CE].

is the third (in rank and she is her other daughter). And Allah knows best.

3. Marking the distinction between pronunciation of the word al-Lāt with the letter ‘*ha*’ as opposed to the ‘*ta*’ for Qur’ān reading, emphasises that it is invalid to read it by stressing the letter ‘*ta*.’ Al-Shawkāni attributed it to al-Kis’āi from Kufa, al-Ṭabari attributing it to *some* of the grammarians of Kufa without specifying them. The following is cited in *Tāj al-‘Arus*:
al-Kis’āi stood with the (reading) al-Lāt with (the letter) ‘*ha*.’ Abu Ishāq said: ‘This is *qiyās*. What is best, is to follow the *muṣḥaf*, standing (with the reading) of (the letter) ‘*ta*.’’ Abu Maṣṣūr said: ‘The statement of al-Kis’āi standing with the (reading of it) with the letter ‘*ha*,’ indicates that he didn’t consider it be from ‘*al-Latta*.’ The *mushrikeen* who worshipped her rejected the name of Allah, may He be Exalted, He is far and away above their false statements, their obstinacy and disbelief in His great name. I say: the light reading without emphasis is another statement from the *ahl-ul-Ishtiqaq*, which is that ‘*al-Lātu*’ is a verb (denoting) twisting, because they used to go around her, in other words, circumambulate (the idol). Our Shaykh said: In this regard, al-Bayḍawī follows al-Zamakhshari.²¹
4. Careful attention must be given to the reported wording of the narratives, strikingly, the absence of any mention of ‘a grave’ when discussing those false gods, or their idols, temples, custodians, supposed sacred objects as well as the myths and legends, *except* where it relates to the story of al-Lāt, and the preparation of the *saweeq*. This is only mentioned in the narrative reported from Mujāhid, where he says: ‘He was preparing for them *saweeq*, when he died they worshipped him, gathering at his graveside.’ This will be expounded upon shortly. Mention of the supposed ‘grave’ is not found in any other account – nor is there any mention that the sanctuaries of the idols had any graves. Indeed, there were trees, rocks, idols, a carved white rock of al-Lāt; items upon which sacrifices were made, but no tomb or grave whatsoever.
5. Lastly, it is imperative to delineate a decisive ruling concerning the reading of ‘*al-Lātt*’ with emphasis upon the final letter ‘*ta*’. It is invalid,

²¹ *Tāj al-‘Arus Min Jawāhir al-Qāmus* [Vol. 5, p. 75]

except if we were to find a pathway from the Arabic language which confirms that it is made feminine. This is because making ‘*al-Lātt*’ with emphasis upon the last letter to denote ‘a man preparing *saweeq*,’ as outlined by some of the commentators above, in actuality contradicts the decisive verses of the Qur’an that are demonstrative of these three false goddesses - *al-Lāt*, *al-‘Uzza* and *Manāt*, as being feminine, perceived by the *mushrikeen* as angelic in origin.

Extensive research has been undertaken within this subject area, examining the generation narratives and scrutinising the different forms and pathways for the Arabic language. We didn’t find for the word ‘*al-Lātt*,’ [اللات] with emphasis upon the letter ‘*ta*’ any meaning or inference apart from this - ‘*al-Lātt*,’ [اللات] or utilising the language of the people of Najd, ‘*al-Lāttat*’ [اللاتيت], a man who prepares the *saweeq*. Hence it is required to make a definitive ruling that the reading of the word with emphasis upon the letter ‘*ta*,’ is patently false. Narratives accompanying or supporting this would also be rejected as being false. This is what will be considered in detail, by the permission of Allah. Concerning these narratives, without a shred of doubt, that which has allegedly been reported from the Imam, the sea of knowledge, Abdullah ibn ‘Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him and from his trustworthy students regarding the interpretation of the Qur’an, will be scrutinised in turn.

Deciphering the Narratives

Regarding the narrative reports that have been recorded, these in turn require some diligent assessment. There seems to be no doubt what has been narrated from the famous interpreter of the Qur’an, the Imām Abdullah ibn al-‘Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him, from the *thiqāt* (trustworthy narrators) from his students. Scrutiny needs to be had upon these reports, the first of which appears in *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhāri.

حَدَّثَنَا مُسْلِمُ بْنُ أَبِرَاهِيمَ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْأَشْهَبِ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْجَوْزَاءِ عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا فِي قَوْلِهِ اللَّاتُ وَالْعُزَّى، كَانَ اللَّاتُ رَجُلًا يَلْتُ السُّبُوقَ لِلْحَاجِّ

Muslim ibn Ibrāhīm narrated to us Abul’Ashab narrated to us Abul’Jawzā’ narrated to us from Ibn ‘Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him, (concerning the verse where) He says: ‘*al-Lāt and al-*

‘*Uzza*,’ (he said): ‘*al-Lāt* was a man who used to kneed (or mix) the *saweeq* for the pilgrims.’²²

One may see from the wording as it appears in al-Bukhāri it is *limited* to ‘a man who used to kneed (or mix) the *saweeq* for the pilgrims.’ There is no mention whatsoever of his death, ‘a grave’ or anything else. Contained within the compendium of the statements from al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal there is the following:

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْأَشْهَبِ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْجَوْزَاءِ... ذَكَرْتُ لَهُ قَوْلَ مَنْ قَالَ أَبُو الْأَشْهَبِ لَمْ يَلِقْ أَبَا الْجَوْزَاءِ

Yahya narrated to us Abul’Ashab narrated to us Abul’Jawzā’ narrated to us... mentioning to him the saying from what he said: ‘Abul’Ashab did not meet Abul’Jawzā.’²³

In *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari, the narrative appears as follows:

حَدَّثَنِي أَحْمَدُ بْنُ يَوْسُفَ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو عُبَيْدٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ عَنْ أَبِي الْأَشْهَبِ عَنْ أَبِي الْجَوْزَاءِ عَنْ بَنِي عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: كَانَ يَلْتُ السُّبُوقَ لِلْحَاجِّ

Aḥmad ibn Yusuf narrated to me he said Abu ‘Ubayd narrated to us he said Abdar-Raḥman narrated to us from Abul’Ashab from Abul’Jawzā’ from Ibn ‘Abbās: ‘He was kneading the *saweeq* for the pilgrims.’²⁴

In *Majmu’ al-Fatāwa*’ by Ibn Taymiyyah, we find:

وَقَالَ بَعْضُ بَنِي حَمِيدٍ فِي تَفْسِيرِهِ حَدَّثَنَا سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ دَاوُدَ عَنْ أَبِي الْأَشْهَبِ عَنْ أَبِي الْجَوْزَاءِ عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ اللَّاتُ رَجُلٌ يَلْتُ السُّبُوقَ لِلْحَاجِّ

And He said, that is to say, ‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd in his *Tafsir*: Sulaymān ibn Dāwud narrated to us from Abul’Ashab from Abul’Jawzā’ from Ibn ‘Abbās, he said: ‘*al-Lāt* was a man kneading *saweeq* for the pilgrims.’²⁵

²² *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhāri, [Vol. 6, no. 4859]

²³ *Mawsusa’ Aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal fi-Rijāl al-Ḥadīth wa ‘Ilal*, [Vol. 1, p. 197]

²⁴ *Tafsir al-Ṭabari*, [Vol. 11, pp. 519/522]

²⁵ Ibn Taymiyyah *Majmu’ al-Fatāwa*’ [Vol. 27, p. 159]

Given the above, we would say as follows: Abul’Ashab is Ja’far ibn Ḥayyān al-‘Atārīdi al-Baṣri, *thiqa* (trustworthy) by *ijmā’* (consensus). However, the possibility of him *hearing* from Abul’Jawzā’ is very remote, because Abul’Jawzā’ was martyred at the Battle of Jamājim in the year 83AH. The birth of Abul’Ashab could not be before the year 70AH, as it is set out in the *Musnad* of Ibn al-Ja’d:

حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ زُهَيْرٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ يَحْيَى بْنَ مَعِينٍ يَقُولُ أَبُو الْأَشْهَبِ وُلِدَ عَامَ الْخَفْرَةِ

Aḥmad ibn ibn Zuhayr narrated to us he said I heard Yaḥya ibn Ma’een saying: ‘Abul’Ashab was born in the year of al-Ḥufra.’²⁶

He was contemporaneous to Anas ibn Mālīk, who lived in Basra for twenty-years and he didn’t narrate anything reliable from him. As reported in *Tahzeeb al-Tahzeeb*:

وقال ابن أبي خيثمة حدثنا موسى بن إسماعيل قال كان حماد بن زيد يقول لم يسمع أبو الأشهب من أبي الجوزاء

And Ibn Abi Khuthayma said Musa ibn Ismā’il narrated to us he said Ḥammād ibn Zayd was saying: ‘Abul’Ashab did not hear from Abul’Jawzā’.’²⁷

Indeed, Ḥammād ibn Zayd is one of the established Imām’s of Baṣra, who adheres to strict principles, it is not conceivable that he is certain of this matter except that he has learned it directly from Abul’Ashab.²⁸ So one must ask, how can it be that Abul’Ashab purportedly has *riwayyāt* (narrative channels of reporting) from Abul’Jawzā’? It is in fact more likely that Abul’Ashab never heard anything from Abul’Jawzā’, so the wording of *ḥadathanā* (narrated to us) as reported by al-Bukhārī seems to be a matter of *wahm* (delusion) stemming from Abul’Ashab. Or, it is from a strange

²⁶ *Musnad* Ibn al-Ja’d, [p. 459, no. 3148]

²⁷ al-Ḥāfiẓ *Tahzeeb al-Tahzeeb* [Vol. 2, no. 135, p. 88].

²⁸ In *al-Ṭabaqat al-Kubra* [Vol. 7, no. 3306, p. 210], Ibn Sa’d records the following entry for him: ‘His *kunya* (*nom de guerre*) was Abu Ismā’il. He was *thiqa thabt* (resolutely trustworthy), *ḥujjah* (established authority) with many *aḥādīth*. Aārim ibn al-Faḍl said: ‘Ḥammād ibn Zayd died on Friday, 10 *Ramaḍān*, 179AH when he was 81.’ In *al-Taqrīb* [no. 1498, p. 173] al-Ḥāfiẓ cites the same, that he was *thiqa thabt* and an established *faqih* (jurist).

category of *Tadlees* (misrepresentation in reporting). Cited within the compendium of the statements from al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal there is:

قال عبد الله حدثني أبي عن عبد الرحمن بن مهدي قال كنا إذا وقفنا أبا الأشهب نقول له قل سمعت الحسن يقول سمعت الحسن، أو غيره

Abdullah said: my father narrated to me from Abdar-Raḥman ibn Mahdi, he said: If we were to stop by Abul’Ashab we would say to him (that) he said: ‘I heard al-Ḥasan,’ (he was) saying I heard al-Ḥasan or other than him.²⁹

Also within the same text the next statement is of note:

قال عبد الله حدثني أبي قال حدثنا عفان قال حدثنا أبو الأشهب. قال: حدثنا خليل العصري قال أبو جزي أين لقيت خليدا؟ قال لا أدري

Abdullah said: my father narrated to me he said ‘Affān narrated to us he said Abul’Ashab narrated to us he said Khulayd al-‘Asari narrated to us he said Abu Juzzi said – where did you find Khulayd? He said I don’t know.’³⁰

It has been narrated by the Imām’s Abdar-Raḥman ibn Mahdi, as it has been presented according to al-Ṭabari, and Abu Dāwud al-Ṭayālisi, as mentioned by Ibn Taymiyyah from ‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd in his *Tafsir* both of them (reporting) with ‘*an* / ‘*an* (from – from). No doubt both of which have precedence over Muslim ibn Ibrāhim in virtue and status of *thiqāt* (trustworthiness). Especially because Muslim ibn Ibrāhim is junior to them, in age by around twenty-years. The oldest *ḥadīth* he has heard is singular from Abdullah ibn ‘Awn, who died in 151AH. So he heard from Abul’Ashab after 150AH. Abul’Ashab was a Shaykh that was blind, heavily reliant upon memorisation; by which time he was over eighty-years of age, it is very difficult to ensure that the memory is not failing by that point. Secondly, there is goodness and integrity within the narrator Muslim ibn Ibrāhim, however that isn’t to the same level of exactitude as Abdar-Raḥman ibn Mahdi, being a disciple of Shu’ba in exercising considerable diligence

²⁹ *Mawsusa’ Aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal fi-Rijāl al-Ḥadīth wa ‘Illal*, [Vol. 1, p. 197]. Cited also in the ‘*Illal* of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, no. 396.

³⁰ *Ibid*. Again, further cited in the ‘*Illal* at: [2070, 2452 and 5280].

in checking with the *Shuyukh* (pl. *Shaykh*), what they are narrating, whom they specifically heard from.³¹ The wording as it has been attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās reported by al-Bukhāri in actuality contradicts the *Ṣaḥīḥ* report stemming from Abul’Jawzā’ as will be discerned shortly. In fact, it would seem highly unlikely that Abul’Jawzā’, who was the diligent committed companion of Abdullah ibn ‘Abbās for over ten-years, during which time he asked the Shaykh about all verses in the Qur’ān, would come forth with a report that conflicted with his great companion and Shaykh.³²

Given the weight of evidence, we would argue that the *ḥadith* from Imām al-Bukhāri is *munqaṭi* (interrupted), falling altogether from being considered within the ranks of substantive proof. Direct attributable blame shouldn’t fall upon al-Bukhāri because the narrative reached him in this manner by hearing. The *ilal* (defects) that have been outlined herein did not reach him. All praise is due to Allah who encompasses everything with His knowledge. Even for the sake of argument if we assume that it is established from Ibn ‘Abbās, it is not possible to note with diligence his alleged wording, all of it being *mawquf*, not a single letter of it *marfu*:

1. It doesn’t provide any detail or comment upon the nature of the given man, be it good or bad.
2. There is no mention of the specific ‘stone’ upon which the *saweeq* was prepared/kneaded, as per the other narratives. An exposition upon the nature of that stone upon which the ‘wonderous’ *saweeq* was prepared, which made people fat from consuming it - if the narrative purportedly from Ibn ‘Abbās is correct. Perhaps it is a large engraved rock that was located at al-Ṭā’if in the temple of al-Lāt.
3. No mention is made of ‘death’ or a ‘grave.’

³¹ In *al-Ṭabaqat al-Kubra* [Vol. 7, no. 3345, p. 218], Ibn Sa’d records the following entry for him: ‘His *kunya* (nom de guerre) was Abu Sa’eed. He was *thiqa* (trustworthy) with many *aḥādith*. He was born in 135AH and died in Basra 198AH aged 63.’ In *al-Taḥreeb* [no. 4018, p. 393] al-Ḥāfiẓ classes him as: ‘*Thiqa thabt* (resolutely trustworthy), *ḥāfiẓ*, with established knowledge of (the science of) men and *ḥadith*.’

³² Also mentioned by Ibn Sa’d in his entry for him in *al-Ṭabaqat al-Kubra* [Vol. 7, p. 224]. He records: ‘Abul’Jawzā’ said: “I lived with Ibn ‘Abbās in his house for 12-years, during which time there was no verse of the Qur’an about which I did not ask him about.” They said that Abul’Jawzā’ went out with Ibn al-Ash’ath and was killed in the Battle of al-Jamājim in 83AH.’

4. There is no exposition regarding what these ‘pilgrims,’ or perhaps devotees are actually doing within this story. Are they pilgrims visiting the house of Allah at the *ḥarām* or are they pilgrims to the temple of al-Lāt or even other *ṭawāgheef*?

The Second Narrative

The second narrative report is cited in the *Majmu’ al-Fatāwa’* of Ibn Taymiyyah:

وَقَالَ سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ حَدَّثَنَا حَمَّادُ بْنُ زَيْدٍ عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ مَالِكٍ عَنْ أَبِي الْجَوْزَاءِ قَالَ اللَّاتُ حَجَرٌ كَانَ يُلْتَمَسُ السُّوَيْقُ عَلَيْهِ فُسِّمِيَ اللَّاتُ

And Sulaymān ibn Harb said Ḥammād ibn Zayd narrated to us from ‘Amr ibn Mālik from Abul’Jawzā’ he said ‘al-Lāt was a stone upon which the *saweeq* was prepared/kneaded, so it was called al-Lāt.’³³

The report is *mawquf* upon Abul’Jawzā’. As for Sulaymān ibn Ḥarb and Ḥammād ibn Zayd they are from among the astute established scholars. ‘Amr ibn Mālik al-Nakri is among the established narrators of Abul’Jawzā’, being *thiqa* (trustworthy). Here the *isnād* is *Ṣaḥīḥ* upon which further proofs can be established without doubt. This is the wording as reported from Abul’Jawzā’ and he had been in attendance with Ibn ‘Abbās as well as ‘Aisha, the mother of the believers, in Medina for twelve years, during which time he asked them about each and every verse as it appears in the Qur’ān. Broadly this is close to what has been reported in *al-Muḥtasib fi Tabayyin Ujuhu Shawādth al-Qirā’at wal’Iyḍāḥ ‘anha*:

قال أبو الفتح رويانا عن قطرب كان رجل بسوق عكاظ يلبت السويق والسمن عند صخرة، فإذا باع السويق والسمن صب على الصخرة، ثم يلبت فلما مات ذلك الرجل عبت تقيف تلك الصخرة، إعظاما لذلك الرجل صاحب السويق

Abul’Fath said: ‘It was narrated from Qaṭrab that there was a man who used to prepare the *saweeq* and fat (ghee) in the market of ‘Akkāz near a rock when he sold them. He would prepare the *saweeq* upon that rock then knead it. When the man died, (the tribe of) Thaqif

³³ Ibn Taymiyyah *Majmu’ al-Fatāwa’* [Vol. 27, p. 159]

worshipped that rock in honouration of that man who prepared the *saweeq*.³⁴

Nota bene the wording as outlined by Abul’Jawzā’, all of which are *mawquf* upon him. None of this attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Aisha or anyone else, particularly those who had lived during the age of pre-Islamic ignorance, *al-Jāhiliyya*:

1. Within this narrative there is no mention of ‘a man called al-Lāt,’ neither whether he is righteous or wicked. Rather, he or she is referred to as being either a rock or a stone.
2. By greater reasoning, there is also no mention whatsoever of ‘death’ let alone a ‘grave.’ It would seem that Mujāhid is the only one who actually mentions this, even then he does not specifically attribute it to Ibn ‘Abbās, as will be outlined shortly.
3. In the round, it doesn’t sit in conformity to the wording as per either Mujāhid or Abu Šālih, so it must be from other than them and not their elders. Moreover, it doesn’t sit in conformity with the statement alleged to be reported from Ibn ‘Abbās from al-Bukhāri, which provides additional verification that the narrative he cites is invalid, the channel of reporting broken.

Hence it would seem for Abul’Jawzā’ that al-Lāt is either a stone or a rock that the people in their antiquity used to consume the ‘*saweeq*’ from. If the story has a factual historical basis, it would appear that this *saweeq* would have been some form of offering to those that were visiting the goddess al-Lāt. Alternatively, it may have been an offering that was purchased and presented before ‘*al-Rabba*’ (the goddess) as the people of al-Ṭā’if used to call it. With the passage of time, the temple of the goddess of al-Lāt expanded, with the stone being included within the sanctuary of the temple. The *saweeq* perhaps no longer prepared upon it. The stone thus became the idol of al-Lāt, thus being named after it. Again, with the passage of time, later generations or some of them may have thought that the naming of that was derived from the word related to kneading or preparing the *saweeq*.

³⁴ Abul’Fath Uthmān ibn Jinni al-Mawsali [d. 392AH], *al-Muḥtasib fi Tabayyin Ujuhu Shawādth al-Qirā’at wal’Iyāḥ ‘anha*, [Vol. 2, p. 294]

With this, the reading of ‘*al-Lāttu*’ is pronounced with emphasis, an *ijtihad* by those who came before with this story, and in principle it wouldn’t necessarily contradict the text of the Qur’ān.

The Third Narrative

Cited in the *Tafsir* of Imām al-Ṭabari, with an *isnād* that is strikingly authentic from Mujāhid:

حدثنا بن بشار قال حدثنا عبد الرحمن قال حدثنا سفيان عن منصور عن مجاهد أفرأيتم اللات والعزى، قال كان يلت السوق للحاج فغكىف على قبره

Ibn Bashār narrated to us he said ‘Abdar-Raḥman narrated to us he said Sufyān narrated to us from Maṣūr from Mujāhid (concerning the verse): ‘[*Disbelievers*], consider *al-Lāt* and *al-Uzza*,’ he said: ‘He was preparing the *saweeq* for pilgrims and people stayed at his graveside.’³⁵

Also cited in the *Tafsir* there is another narrative with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*:

حدثنا مؤمل قال حدثنا سفيان عن منصور عن مجاهد أفرأيتم اللات، قال اللات كان يلت السوق للحاج

Mu’amil narrated to us he said Sufyān narrated to us from Maṣūr from Mujāhid (concerning the verse): ‘[*Disbelievers*], consider *al-Lāt* and *al-Uzza*,’ he said: al-Lāt prepared the *saweeq* for the pilgrims.³⁶

In the *Majmu’ al-Fatawā*’ of Ibn Taymiyyah, there is the following, again with a *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād*:

وقال عبد بن حميد في تفسيره حدثنا قبيصة عن سفيان عن منصور عن مجاهد أفرأيتم اللات والعزى قال كان رجل يلت السوق فمات فأتجذ قبره مصلى

And ‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd said in his *Tafsir*: Qabeeṣa narrated to us from Sufyān from Maṣūr from Mujāhid (concerning the verse): ‘[*Disbelievers*], consider *al-Lāt* and *al-Uzza*,’ he said: ‘He was a man

³⁵ *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari [Vol.11, p. 520, (print edition), *Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyyah*, 2013]

³⁶ Ibid.

kneading the *saweeq*. When he died, his grave was taken as a place of prayer.³⁷

The next two narrations appear in the *Tafsir* of Imām al-Ṭabari:

حدثنا بن حُمَيْدٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا مِهْرَانُ عَنْ سَفْيَانَ عَنْ مَنْصُورٍ عَنْ مُجَاهِدِ اللَّاتِ، قَالَ كَانَ يَلْتِ السُّوَيْقِ فَمَاتَ فَعَكَفُوا عَلَى قَبْرِهِ

Ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us he said Mihrān narrated to us from Sufyān from Manṣūr from Mujāhid (regarding): ‘*al-Lāt*,’ he said: ‘He was preparing the *saweeq*, for pilgrims. When he died they devoted themselves to his graveside.’³⁸

Although, Ibn Ḥumayd’s wording is well-known.

حدثنا بن حُمَيْدٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا جَرِيرٌ عَنْ مَنْصُورٍ عَنْ مُجَاهِدِ فِي قَوْلِهِ اللَّاتِ قَالَ رَجُلٌ يَلْتِ لِلْمَشْرِكِينَ السُّوَيْقِ فَمَاتَ فَعَكَفُوا عَلَى قَبْرِهِ

Ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us he said Jarir narrated to us from Manṣūr from Mujāhid (regarding where) He says ‘*al-Lāt*,’ he said: ‘He was a man of the *mushrikeen* who prepared the *saweeq*; when he died, they devoted themselves to his graveside.’³⁹

Once again, from the *Majmu’ al-Fatawā’* of Ibn Taymiyyah:

وَرُوِيَ عَنِ الْأَعْمَشِ قَالَ كَانَ مُجَاهِدٌ يَقْرَأُ اللَّاتَ مُتَقَلِّبَةً وَيَقُولُ كَانَ رَجُلٌ يَلْتِ السُّوَيْقِ عَلَى صَخْرَةٍ فِي طَرِيقِ الطَّائِفِ وَيُطْعِمُهُ النَّاسَ فَمَاتَ فُقْبِرَ فَعَكَفُوا عَلَى قَبْرِهِ

It was narrated from al-‘Amash that he said: Mujāhid used to read *al-Lāta* [اللَّاتُ] with that additional emphasis and he was saying: (al-Lāt) was a man that used to prepare the *saweeq* upon a stone in the region of al-Ṭā’if and he would feed the people. Thus when he died and was buried, they devoted themselves to his graveside.⁴⁰

³⁷ Ibn Taymiyyah *Majmu’ al-Fatawā’* [Vol. 27, p. 159]

³⁸ *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari [Vol. 11, p. 520, (print edition)]

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibn Taymiyyah *Majmu’ al-Fatawā’* [Vol. 27, p. 159]

Looking at the narratives as a whole, one must accurately read the words that have been reported from Mujāhid. All of them are *mawquf* to him with not a single letter being *marfu’*; moreover, there is no mention here of attribution to Ibn ‘Abbās, nor *from where* he obtained this version of events from the people who actually lived during the era of *Jāhiliyya*. Once again:

1. No determination is given regarding this man as to whether he was righteous or a wicked satanic individual.
2. There is no clear mention of what the bystanders to this are doing within the story, whether they are pilgrims to the house of Allah at the *ḥarām*, or pilgrims and devotees to the worship of al-Lāt, or even other *ṭawāgheet*. Nor is it clear if we follow the trajectory of the narration of Ibn Ḥumayd, which is supported by others in this regard to be mentioned shortly, whether all bystanders or passers-by regardless of their ultimate direction, were from the *mushrikeen*.
3. The addition that has been made, ‘he is al-Lāt’ has given rise to confusion, as the phrasing is not decisive in meaning:
 - a) It is possible that a devotee intended to create a new ‘god’ with the title of ‘al-Lāt.’
 - b) Or, even that ‘al-Lāt’ already existed as being construed as a ‘divine being’ either manifesting or incarnating in the said individual in question, to the extent that it was deemed appropriate to refer to him as being ‘al-Lāt’

Follow-on narratives to the report of Mujāhid

Additional wording has been reported by way of Sa’eed ibn Manṣūr, which is: ‘He used to kneed the *saweeq* for them, feeding the passers-by. When he died, he was worshipped. They said: He is al-Lāt.’⁴¹ This is also *mawquf* upon Mujāhid, within which it is mentioned to feed ‘the passers-by,’ no differentiation is given between pilgrims (or devotees) or the ordinary passer-by. Also cited from Mujāhid: ‘al-Lāt was a man during the era of *Jāhiliya*. He had sheep, he would graze them, and take from the raisins of

⁴¹ al-Suyuti has mention of this in *al-Durr al Manthur* [Vol. 6, p. 163]. There are two entries as per the *Sunan* of Sa’eed ibn Manṣūr [Vol. 7, no. 2084/2085, pp. 454/456]. The entry referred to here is the former, with the full *isnād* as: Sa’eed narrated to us he said Sufyān reported to us he said I heard it from two (narrators) from Ibn Abi Najih, or Ḥumayd or Dāwud, and from all of them from Mujāhid.

al-Ṭā'if and cheese; from that he made Ḥayis, feeding whoever passed by.⁴² When he died, he was worshipped; they said - He is al-Lāt.' He used to place emphasis upon the reading of al-Lāt, as it is narrated by Sa'eed ibn Manṣūr and al-Fāqihī. The following is mentioned in *Akhbār Makkah* by al-Fāqihī without an *isnād*:

عَنْ مُجَاهِدٍ قَالَ كَانَ رَجُلٌ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ عَلَى صَخْرَةٍ بِالطَّائِفِ وَعَلَيْهَا لَهُ غَنَمٌ فَكَانَ يَسْلُوا مِنْ رَسُلِهَا وَيَأْخُذُ مِنْ زَبِيبِ الطَّائِفِ وَالْأَقْطِ فَيَجْعَلُ مِنْهُ حَيْسًا وَيَطْعَمُ مَنْ يَمُرُّ بِهِ مِنَ النَّاسِ فَلَمَّا مَاتَ عَبْدُوهُ

From Mujāhid, he said: He (al-Lāt) was a man during the era of *Jāhiliyya*, upon a rock in al-Ṭā'if, he had sheep that he would graze. He prepared a dish from raisins and curd from al-Ṭā'if, from which he made 'Ḥayis' to feed those who passed by. When he died, he was worshipped.⁴³

Within the *Tafsir* of al-'Alusi, there is:

وأخرج الفاكهي عنه أنه لما مات قال لهم عمرو بن لحي: إنه لم يموت ولكنه دخل الصخرة فعبدها وبنوا عليها بيتا، وأخرج ابن المنذر عن ابن جريج أنه قال: كان رجل من ثقيف يلبس السويق بالزيت فلما توفي جعلوا قبره وثنا، وزعم الناس أنه عامر بن الظرب أحد عدوان

Reported by al-Fāqihī, (was that) when he died, 'Amr ibn Luḥay said – 'He didn't die, but instead he entered the rock.' So they worshipped it and upon it built a house (shrine). Ibn al-Mundthir reports from Ibn Jurayj that he said: 'He was a man of Thaqif kneading the *saweeq* with oil. Upon his death, they made his grave a *wathn* (idol). The people claimed that he was 'Aāmīr ibn al-Dtharīb, one of the enemies.'⁴⁴

Given this, I would say that there is nothing essentially new that these narratives provide. Rather, it can be seen as a confirmation of what has already been established by way of the *Ṣaḥīḥ isnād's*, reinforcing that which was mentioned by al-Ṭabari in relation to what is reported from Ibn Ḥumayd,

⁴² A type of food prepared from the proceeding ingredients and others.

⁴³ *Akhbār Mecca*, al-Fāqihī [Vol. 5, p. 143]

⁴⁴ *Tafsir* al-'Alusi [Vol. 14, p. 55]. Shihāb al-Dīn Abul'Ṭhāna Maḥmūd ibn 'Abdullāh al-'Alusi [d. 1270AH/1854CE] was the Mufti of Baghdad during the Ottoman era.

namely, that food was being provided to the general public among the *mushrikeen*. Here then it would seem there is attestation to the truth that Ibn Ḥumayd was mentioning.

The Fourth Narrative

Cited in the *Tafsir* by al-Ṭabari there is a manifestly the *Ṣaḥīḥ* report to Abu Ṣāliḥ:

حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ هِشَامٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُوسَى عَنْ إِسْرَائِيلَ عَنْ أَبِي صَالِحٍ فِي قَوْلِهِ
الَلَّاتُ قَالَ الَلَّاتُ الَّذِي كَانَ يُقَوْمُ عَلَى آلِهَتِهِمْ، يَلْتُ لَهُمُ السَّوِيقَ، وَكَانَ بِالطَّائِفِ

Aḥmad ibn Hishām narrated to us he said 'Ubadyallah ibn Musa narrated to us from Isrā'il from Abu Ṣāliḥ concerning where He said: 'al-Lāt,' he said: 'al-Lāt was the one who used to service their gods preparing the *saweeq* and he was located at al-Ṭā'if.'⁴⁵

It is also in the *Majmu' al-Fatawā'* of Ibn Taymiyyah:

وقال يعني عبد بن حميد في تفسيره أو سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ حَدَّثَنَا عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُوسَى عَنْ
إِسْرَائِيلَ عَنْ السَّيِّدِيِّ عَنْ أَبِي صَالِحٍ قَالَ الَلَّاتُ الَّذِي كَانَ يُقَوْمُ عَلَى آلِهَتِهِمْ وَكَانَ يَلْتُ لَهُمُ
السَّوِيقَ

And he said: Namely, 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd in his *Tafsir*, or Sulaymān ibn Ḥarb: 'Ubadyallah ibn Musa narrated to us from Isrā'il from al-Suddi from Abu Ṣāliḥ, he said: 'al-Lāt was the one who used to service their gods and he was preparing the *saweeq* for them.'⁴⁶

I would submit, Abu Abdullah Aḥmad ibn Hishām ibn Bahrām al-Madā'ini is *thiqa* (trustworthy). But that which is from Imām 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd or Imām Sulaymān ibn Ḥarb is more reliable and firmly established. The *ziyādat al-thiqa* (addition made by the trustworthy narrator) is deemed *maqbul* (acceptable). It is necessary to give preference to al-Suddi in the *isnād*. Overall the *isnād* is *ḥasan li-dhatihi* (graded good by itself); a *ḥasan* narrative that is close to being from among that which is considered *Ṣaḥīḥ* to Abu Ṣāliḥ.

⁴⁵ *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari [Vol. 11, p. 520, (print edition)]

⁴⁶ *Majmu' al-Fatawā'* [Vol. 27, p. 159]

Concerning Abu Ṣāliḥ Bādthām, *mawla* of Umm Hā'ni, by himself he was not left or had accusations levelled against him. Rather he was blamed for rather obscene *Tadlees* (misrepresentation in reporting) from Ibn 'Abbās; he definitely took from his *mawla*, Umm Hā'ni bint Abu Ṭālib and Ibn 'Abbās, as well as other *Ṣaḥāba* and the *Kibbār al-Tābi'een* (senior figures of the successors to the Prophet's Companions). That is important because he has knowledge of the *akhbār* (pl. *khabr*, report) relating to *Jāhiliyya* of the type known by the likes of Mujāhid and Abul'Jawzā'. Hence it is right to give due consideration to his narratives just as it is to that of Mujāhid and Abul'Jawzā'.

One must have due regard with diligence to the wording that has been reported from Abu Ṣāliḥ, all of which are *mawquf* upon him, with not even a letter being *marfu'*; and there is no mention of Ibn 'Abbās, or for that matter, who specifically it has been obtained from since it relates to the era of *Jāhiliyya*. Additionally, the following points arise:

1. Clarification is provided that this man is not *Ṣāliḥ* (righteous), but rather he is wicked, a servant of the false gods, a *mushrik kāfir*.
2. There is conformity with the reported narrative of Mujāhid, but at first glance it appears to contradict that which has been reported by Abul'Jawzā'.
3. And crucially, there is no mention therein of 'death' or a 'grave.' It seems as though Mujāhid was the only narrator to mention this, the grave in particular, and even then, it wasn't attributed to Ibn 'Abbās.

In the round, this is the best out of what has been reported. There is through another channel of narration purportedly from Ibn 'Abbās which contains unacceptable additions, and there shouldn't be any doubts raised in its refutation.

The Fifth Narrative

Cited in *Faṭḥ al-Bāri* by al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar:

وَأَخْرَجَ بِنَ أَبِي حَاتِمٍ مِنْ طَرِيقِ عُمَرُو بْنِ مَالِكٍ عَنْ أَبِي الْجَوْزَاءِ عَنْ بَنِ عَبَّاسٍ وَأَلْفَظُهُ فِيهِ زِيَادَةٌ كَأَنَّ يَلْتُ السَّوِيقَ عَلَى الْحَجَرِ فَلَا يَشْرَبُ مِنْهُ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا سَمِنَ فَعَبَدُوهُ

And Ibn Abi Ḥātim reports from the channel of 'Amr ibn Mālik from Abul'Jawzā' from Ibn 'Abbās, and the wording of its addition is: 'He was preparing the *saweeq* upon a stone, none would consume it except that they would become fat, so they worshipped him.'⁴⁷

It is cited in *Durr al-Manthur*:

وَأَخْرَجَ ابْنُ أَبِي حَاتِمٍ وَابْنُ مَرْدَوَيْهِ عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: كَانَ اللَّاتُ يَلْتُ السَّوِيقَ عَلَى الْحَجَرِ فَلَا يَشْرَبُ مِنْهُ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا سَمِنَ فَعَبَدُوهُ

Ibn Abi Ḥātim and Ibn Mardawayh report from Ibn 'Abbās, he said: al-Lāt was preparing the *saweeq* upon a rock, none would consume it except that they would become fat, so they worshipped him.⁴⁸

Also appearing in the *Tafsir* of al-'Alusi:

وَأَخْرَجَ ابْنُ أَبِي حَاتِمٍ وَابْنُ مَرْدَوَيْهِ عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ أَنَّهُ كَانَ يَلْتُ السَّوِيقَ عَلَى الْحَجَرِ فَلَا يَشْرَبُ مِنْهُ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا سَمِنَ فَعَبَدُوهُ

Ibn Abi Ḥātim and Ibn Mardawi report from Ibn 'Abbās, (he said) that he was preparing the *saweeq* and the wording of its addition is: 'He was preparing the *saweeq* upon a stone, none would consume it except that they would become fat, so they worshipped him.'⁴⁹

This is also cited in *al-Muḥtasib fi Tabayyin*:

قَالَ أَبُو حَاتِمٍ: كَانَ رَجُلٌ يَلْتُ لَهُمُ السَّوِيقَ، فَإِذَا شَرِبَ مِنْهُ أَحَدٌ سَمِنَ، فَعَبَدُوا ذَلِكَ الرَّجُلَ

Abu Ḥātim said: He was a man preparing the *saweeq* for them. If any consumed it they would become fat. Consequently they worshipped that man.⁵⁰

Abu Ḥātim is mentioned, rather it is Ibn Abi Ḥātim. However, I would argue that it has not been possible to determine its root from Ibn Abi Ḥātim. All those who came after al-Ḥāfiẓ seems to attribute it to *Faṭḥ al-Bāri*. On

⁴⁷ *Faṭḥ al-Bāri* [Vol. 8, p. 778]

⁴⁸ al-Suyūṭī *Durr al-Manthur fi al-Tafsir bil' Mā'thur* [Vol. 7, p. 653].

⁴⁹ *Tafsir al-'Alusi* [Vol. 14, p. 55]

⁵⁰ Abul'Fath, *al-Muḥtasib fi Tabayyin Ujuhu Shawādth al-Qirā'at wal'Iyḍaḥ 'anha*, [Vol. 2, p. 294]

occasion, it is mentioned as attributed to Ibn Mardawayh, but without citation of the *isnād*. The reprehensible nature of the *matn* (reported text) does not need further substantive *daleel* to warrant its rejection: what kind of ‘*saweeq*’ is this, that the pilgrim consumes and becomes fat, after a few mouthfuls or after a few days? Is there anything so utterly ridiculous than that? As for the *isnād*, between the Imām ‘Abdar-Raḥman ibn Abi Ḥātim and ‘Amr ibn Mālik al-Nakhra there is at least two or missing narrators, by necessity. I shall speculate here, at least one of those narrators is either *daef* (weak) with many errors, mixing the East with the West, or even worse, an outright liar who will receive from Allah what he deserves. Other narratives have included all manner of additions, sometimes mixed with other stories, although their veracity is not established.

Attempts at deciphering the myths

Hence this has arisen with the present inquiry. There is also a relevant section upon this which appears in the seminal work of Dr Jawād Ali entitled: *al-Mufaṣṣal fi Tāriḥ al-‘Arab Qablal’Islam*:

When we take into account the opinion of Ibn al-Kalbi that ‘Amr ibn Luḥay said to the people – ‘Behold, your lord has entered this stone,’ or that the man who was by the rock did not die, but entered it or that the spirit of a dead person settled in it. Indeed we need to look at this opinion with something of seriousness, it does not exclude that this opinion refers to what is called ‘fetichism’ which is the worship of stones in the terminology of religious scholars. And they mean by it: the worship of spirits that the worshipers believe to be in those stones, especially strange stones that have not been shaped by human hands but the worship is based on their shape and creation in nature, and it is one of the superstitious forms of worship in relation to worshipping *al-Suwar* (images), *al-Tamātheel* (statues), and *al-Aṣnām* (idols).⁵¹

Hence, we would argue: ‘Amr ibn Luḥay ibn Qam’ah ibn Khindif is the one who has probably invented the story of the man entering into a rock, after which he was lost without trace, with his death and loss of the body. Perhaps

⁵¹ Dr Jawād Ali, (1968) *al-Mufaṣṣal fi Tāriḥ al-‘Arab Qablal’Islam*, [Vol. 6, p. 232]

he explained the matter by saying that the *Rabba* (the ‘goddess’) al-Lāt chose him for her service and worship, settling in him or uniting with him. That would perhaps explain how he became ‘al-Lāt.’ Conversely, he could have tried to explain it away by arguing that he was but a mere manifestation of al-Lāt, being a lower earth evil deity, who resides with humans above earth, but disguised in the form of a man, returning perhaps to an underworld thereafter. In any event, neither of these explanations is far from the worship of the idol. Myth, symbols, superstition and indeed legend seems to underpin what is regarded for this cultic type worship.

One should not cast the aspersion to say that the Arab descendants of Ismā’il were not at this level of philosophical thinking relating to merging, incarnating and other cultic ideas. In fact we say, did they invent it in the first place? According to them, such ideas were *imported*, then adapted, simplified and applied to the specific local environment, which isn’t dissimilar to how ‘Amr ibn Luḥay al-Khuzā’i imported *al-Aṣnām*, as mentioned earlier. Especially since the tribes at al-Ṭā’if was considered from ancient times a city of wisdom with a degree of civilization and progress. Some of people such as al-Ḥārith ibn Kalada travelled to study medicine, philosophy and the reports from the Kings of the Persians, Rome and elsewhere.⁵²

According to this channel of narration, al-Lāt is a custodian of the sanctuary dedicated to the false gods, a *mushrik kāfir*. The existence of the man in question, whose name and acclaim among people spread widely, cannot be ruled out entirely, that is, if there is a trace of historical veracity to the tale. He could be ‘Amr ibn al-Dharab the famous aggressor, as some of the *riwāyāt akhbāriyah* indicate. Amr ibn Luḥay feared competition from him, so he disposed of him in a deceitful way, then invented the deception of what his demise was for the people. If this is true, it has nothing to do with the subject of ‘making graves into mosques,’ of what the deviant sect

⁵² ‘Al-Ḥārith b. Kalada b. ‘Amr b. ‘Ilāj al-Thaqafī (fl. sixth-seventh centuries C.E.) was known to historians of physicians—such as Ibn Juljul (d. after 384/994), Ibn al-Qifī (d. 646/1248), and Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a (d. 669/1270)—as “the physician of the Arabs.” He is said to have been of the Thaqif tribe and to have been born in the town of al-Ṭā’if, the fief of that tribe, during the Jāhiliyya, the “age of ignorance” that preceded the advent of Islam.’ See: Bruce Inksetter, “al-Ḥārith b. Kalada”, in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Devin J. Stewart. Accessed online, 20 February 2023 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_30329> First published online: 2017.

of Wahhābism calls ‘grave worship.’ The critical point is that this only was given credence because *they believed* al-Lāt was a divine being. Perhaps this is the most reasonable and rationally consistent analysis for the myths surrounding this historical episode.

That is not altogether a completely outlandish analysis. In fact, Shaykh al-Mu‘allimī, who is considered among the sect of Wahhābism as a respected figure, was compelled to flatly contradict the views of the renegade Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (MIAW) and set out an analysis that is not dissimilar to that of our own. Cited within his collected works he said:

(It is possible) that ‘Amr ibn Luḥay may have said to them ‘That rock is blessed because it was close to the *Aṣnām*, and the *saweeq* was prepared upon it for the pilgrims.’ Then, its owner was swallowed up, even though the description and name of that custodian al-Lāt, was pronounced with emphasis (upon the end letter ‘*ta*’), and claimed to be the name of one of the angels, al-Lāt pronounced without stressing the last letter. ‘Amr invented this name to make it ring true, that it is derived from the word of glory, as has been mentioned by al-Waḥidi and others. It should be made into a memorial for this king and entitled with the name al-Lāt.’⁵³

He also mentioned that there are other possibly explanations, stating: ‘Within the story there is a strong mix up, that requires attention.’⁵⁴ Similar has been written al-Qazwini:

At al-Ṭā’if, there is rock which is called al-Lāt that is under the minaret of its mosque. It was a rock in ancient times a man would sit upon to prepare the *saweeq* for the pilgrims. When he died, ‘Amr ibn Luḥay exclaimed ‘He didn’t die, but he entered this rock!’ He ordered his people to worship that rock. There were two demons named al-Lāt and al-‘Uzza that would converse with the people. At al-Ṭā’if the people made al-Lāt into a goddess and built a house (sanctuary) and temple dedicated to her. They would circle it in reverence. It contained a square white rock. When al-Ṭā’if embraced al-Islam, the

⁵³ *Athār Shaykh al-‘Allaamah Abdar-Raḥman ibn Yahya al-Mu‘allimī* [Vol. 2, p. 508]

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him, sent Abu Sufyān ibn Ḥarb and Mughira ibn Shu’ba to destroy it. Today, (remnants) of the rock remain under the minaret of the mosque in al-Ṭā’if.⁵⁵

As for the classification of this matter as being ‘fetishism’ by Dr Jawād Ali, this is a mistake. It arises from not diligently reading texts and harmonising them. Closely reading the sentence ‘Your lord has entered this rock,’ implies that the entry of the man or his spirit into the rock is the entry of a deity, or signification that there is deification occurring. It is not merely the alleged entry by the spirit of the dead person, but a *transformation* occurring whereby the rock then becomes a specific *wathan* (idol), containing properties associated with a *ṣanam*.

Despite the comment of Dr Jawād Ali in reference to the ‘religious scholars,’ in general they don’t tend to adhere to strict principles in unpicking the actual beliefs of different religions and classifying them as primitive or advanced. Although they undertake diligent work in collecting large data, be that in the form of descriptive material, observational points and the like, when the analysis begins to be undertaken they often proceed from fixed previous (often entrenched) psychological biases. Or even at times, analysis and summation can become clouded by phantasms and wild assumptions, which is contrary to the correct scientific method.

al-Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar made an attempt to try and reconcile the differing viewpoints upon this without weighing preference to one or another. But he affirmed that ‘al-Lāt was not ‘Amr ibn Luḥay.’ It seems like the attributes the statement to him that ‘He didn’t die, but entered the rock,’ thereby enabling a house (sanctuary) to be built over it and worshipped. Other details were mentioned, some of which are important, as he writes in *Fatḥ al-Bāri*:

Ibn Abi Ḥātim reported from the channel of ‘Amr ibn Mālik from Abul’Jawzā’ from Ibn ‘Abbās, with the wording contained in the addition as: ‘He was preparing the *saweeq* upon a stone. None would consume lest they would become fat. So he was worshipped.’ There is disagreement concerning the name of this man. As narrated by al-

⁵⁵ al-Qazwini *Athār al-Bilād wa Akhbār al-‘Ibad* [p. 98]. Zakariyā’ ibn Muḥammad ibn Mahmud al-Qazwini [d. 682 AH/1283CE]

Fāqīhi from the channel of Mujāhid, he said: ‘He was a man during the era of *Jāhiliyya*. He had sheep, he would graze them, sitting upon a rock. He would take from the raisins of al-Ṭā’if and cheese; from that he made Ḥayis, feeding whoever passed by. When he died, he was worshipped. Mujāhid used to place emphasis upon the reading of al-Lāt. From the channel of Ibn Jurayj regarding it, he said: ‘Some people made the claim that he was ‘Aāmir ibn al-Dharib.’ ...He was a leader among the Arabs at his time, during which the poets who exclaim:

*Among us there is a leader who decides
And he does not rescind what he decides.*

Al-Suhayli reported that it was ‘Amr ibn Luḥay ibn Qama’ah ibn Ilyas ibn Mudar, he said: ‘And it is said that he is ‘Amr ibn Luḥay, and he is Rabia’ ibn Hāritha, and he is the father of Khuza’a.’ Some have altered the words of al-Suhayli thinking that Rabia’ ibn Hāritha is a different name for al-Lāt, but that isn’t the case. Rabia’ ibn Hāritha is the name of a tribe in what has been said. What is *Ṣaḥīḥ* is that al-Lāt is other than ‘Amr ibn Luḥay. Indeed it is reported by al-Fāqīhi from another pathway from Ibn ‘Abbās, that when al-Lāt died, ‘Amr ibn Luḥay said to them that he didn’t die but entered (merged) with the rock, (so) you should worship it and build a house (sanctuary) upon it.

It has also been previously mentioned in the *manāqib* (virtues) of Quraysh that ‘Amr ibn Luḥay was the individual who led the Arabs to worship *al-Aṣṇām*, and this narration supports that. As told by Ibn al-Kalbi, his name was Ṣimrah ibn Ghannam and al-Lāt, she was located in al-Ṭā’if. It is said in Nakhla and in ‘Ukādh, the first being more correct. It is reported by al-Fāqīhi also from the channel of Miqsam from Ibn ‘Abbās. Hishām ibn al-Kalbi said that (the idol) Manāt was older than al-Lāt, being destroyed at the hand of Ali by the command of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him in the year of conquest. al-Lāt was more recent than Manāt and it was destroyed by al-Mughria ibn Shu’ba, (again) by the command of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him as (the tribe of) Thaḳif embraced Islam. (Regarding) al-Uzza, she was more recent than al-Lāt, taken by Dthālim ibn Sa’d in the valley of Nakhla above a stream.

It was destroyed by Khālid ibn al-Waleed by the command of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him in the year of conquest.⁵⁶

As for Ibn Taymiyyah, he is regarded by the sect of Wahhābism as the Shaykh of Islam, the role model; the supreme and ultimate reference to which all gravitate toward. A totem of the highest magnitude. Recognised by allies or enemies alike as being one of the smartest people to inhabit the earth. Here is his categorisation and analysis as recorded within *Majmu’ al-Fatāwa’* – it is left to the reader to either laugh or cry:

A group from the *Salaf* (early predecessors) pronounced al-Lāt with emphasis upon the letter ‘*ta*.’ It was said that it is a name which is derived from the name of Allah. Al-Khaṭṭābi said: The *mushrikeen* used to use the name of Allah for some of their *Aṣṇām*, so Allah converted this name into that of ‘al-Lāt,’ to preserve His and be a rejection of that. I would say: There is no contradiction between the two-statements and pronunciations for there was a man who used to prepare (or mix) the *saweeq* upon a stone, they would worship at his grave and call him by this name and shorten it. And they intended to say that he was a god as they used to call the *Aṣṇām* gods, so the name of this came together. al-Lāt was for the people of al-Ṭā’if and they used to call it *al-Rabba* (the goddess). There is no contradiction (here) between the reading and sayings.⁵⁷

For the sake of completeness, we reiterate the denial that Abdullah ibn al-‘Abbās may Allah be pleased with him has anything to do with these narrations, let alone the pronunciation of any such phrasing. Even if, for the sake of argument, that the phrasing ‘He was a man preparing the *saweeq* upon a rock, none would consume it except that they would become fat, so they worshipped him,’ was textually transmitted by *tawātur*, we would say, so what? Indeed, there is no question that the Imām Abdullah ibn al-‘Abbās may Allah be pleased with him, is an ocean of knowledge, the interpreter of the Qur’ān. He is, by Allah, descending from the pure *ahl-ul-bayt*, whom it is prohibited to give charity too, as honour and exclusivity. He is, by Allah,

⁵⁶ *Fath al-Bāri* [Vol. 8, p. 778/779]. Given the length of the quotation, the original Arabic text is omitted.

⁵⁷ Ibn Taymiyyah *Majmu’ al-Fatāwa’* [Vol. 27, p. 159]

the Imām with *thabt* (established veracity), *thiqa* (trustworthy), *ṣādiq* (truthful) and a *mu'min* (true believer). However, he never said that he had himself witnessed a mythological 'man called al-Lāt,' nor did he allege to have ever consumed the strange *saweeq* prepared upon a stone. This is neither his claim nor that of any of the scholars who were his teachers from the senior trustworthy Companions – none claimed to have seen, witnessed or heard anything to that effect.

The best of the narrations about this matter do not mention the word 'death,' let alone 'a grave,' so they have no direct correlation to the matter of graves or the dead. Other narratives are imprecise, vague or even fantastical – 'a man entering the rock, not dying.' Regarding the narration that does mention a death and a grave, it is only stemming from Mujāhid ibn Jabr. He is without doubt, an Imām with *thabt* (established veracity), *thiqa* (trustworthy), *sādiq* (truthful), and yet even with all of this, nothing has been reported that he stood at the alleged grave of that mythological man, nor did he hear it from anyone who did. Mujāhid ibn Jabr was born during the era of Islam. Crucially, nowhere in the narratives reliant upon his authority does he mention or specify that this was taken from any Companions of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. At best, one can only assume that he was attempting to articulate the belief held by people during the era of *Jāhiliyya* – a period he did not witness – at the lowest common denominator. The same reasoning would reasonably also apply to Abu Ṣāliḥ, the slave of Umm Hāni and to Abul-Jawzā'.

There remains only one possibility which is left, that it is part of what the Arabs had circulated in reports, myths, legends or the like, none of which is absolutely reliable. The transmitters of these are from the Bedouin Arabs of *Jāhiliyya*; *mushrikeen* filled with tribalistic and racist overtures. People who were known for their ignorance, arrogance, boastfulness and not being reliable in accuracy of reporting. Notwithstanding all of that, we do not rule out that such stories may have a historical origin or root that has been lost amidst myth and legend, being subject to exaggeration or even distortion against the backdrop of a chaotic tribalistic competition for power and resources. Perhaps ongoing research, particularly archaeological excavation may help in future to unpick the complex background to determine what the precise historical origin is.

Detractors or even sceptics might postulate that Ibn 'Abbās, but also Mujāhid ibn Jabr, Abul-Jawzā', and Abu Ṣāliḥ may Allah be pleased with them all, only reported the story in the manner of confirmation, believing that it actually occurred. They narrated it as such because they assumed its underlying truthfulness. We would reply, this may be true, particularly in the case of the Ibn 'Abbās, the ocean of knowledge whose honesty and trustworthiness is renowned. But to such to such detractors or even sceptics, we say, who has told you that Ibn 'Abbās is *ma'sum* (infallible)? He isn't. As such he is not secured protection against falling into the mistake of accepting a myth regarding this, or to be deceived by liars or the false testimony given by the early *mushrikeen*. The same rationale also would apply equally to Mujāhid ibn Jabr, Abul-Jawzā', and Abu Ṣāliḥ may Allah be pleased with them all. The Seal of the Messengers sent by Allah, rendered *ma'sum* by Allah, was not protected from the deceit of potential litigants in court. Nor rendered *ma'sum* in judgement based upon the evidence as presented before him, in which there may well be deceitful witnesses, shrewd liars and the like. We have earlier outlined the comprehensive evidences related to that topic, denial or rejection of which would lead one to exit the fold of Islam.⁵⁸ Against this backdrop, any detractor or sceptic cannot be assured that Ibn 'Abbās or any of the Companions or successors could have inadvertently be misled or beguiled by such accounts.

Truth stands distinct from falsehood. This and other similar accounts, whether they have a kernel of veracity or not, do not extend beyond the matter they relate to. Not a single letter of them has (or even should) be attributed to the speech of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. With certitude they are not stemming from *wahy* (revelation). There is no established evidence for them as they are nothing more than the myths, legends and tales of the Arabs, as outlined earlier. They are not from the preserved *dhikr* that has been protected, reaching us safely and in totality, free from corruption let alone lacunae. Even if there is a kernel of historical veracity for the story of the custodian – 'al-Lāt,' who mysteriously disappeared or was disposed of by 'Amr ibn Luḥay al-Khuzā'i, who then manufactured the narrative into legend concerning his entry or merging with a rock, the fact is that al-Lāt predates them all, well known in antiquity. al-

⁵⁸ See Volume 1 of this book series of *Tawḥeed*.

Lāt was worshipped long before, known as being feminine, regarded as being a divine object or entity, either celestial or a celestial goddess from the daughters of Allah. Or, considered as being from a lower-earthly domain but from the daughters of Iblees.

Evidence from the archaeological / historical record

Modern research in archaeology, inscriptions as well as historical documentation from other civilisations has that al-Lāt was known among many Semitic peoples long before the advent of Islam.⁵⁹ The Arabic word for ‘al-Lāt’ is originally derived from the Semitic word ‘*Ilāh,*’ or ‘*El*’ denoting the meaning of a god or deity, as it is in English.⁶⁰ The Arabic word ‘Allah’ seems to have its origin in the Semitic word ‘*Elat,*’ which is the feminine form of the word ‘*El*’ in most Semitic languages. This word corresponds to ‘*El*’ or ‘*Ilāh,*’ in Arabic, which after being inflected with the definite article becomes the word for the divine, ‘Allah’ in Arabic. As a word, ‘*Ilāh*’ was found in ancient Akkadian which was spoken by the people of Mesopotamia before the time of Ibrāhim, which is long before the Arab tribes came into existence.

This demonstrates the depth of learning behind the statement of Imām Ibn Jarir al-Ṭabari, who said that ‘al-Lāt is derived from (the word) Allah,’ because it appears that this form of expression was commonly known and widespread among linguists and commentators. Therefore, al-Ṭabari did not find it necessary to mention a specific source, as it was well-known among

⁵⁹ Ahmad al-Jallad’s work on the Safaitic inscriptions shows that among the pre-Islamic Arabian nomads, al-Lāt is *well known*, crucially for the present analysis, already identified as a female deity. ‘Safaitic’ is the name that has been given for the alphabet used by nomads in the ancient deserts of north Arabia, northeast Jordan and southern Syria. As al-Jallad explains, the texts were carved at the latest around three-centuries prior to the rise of Islam. ‘Allāt,’ appears as the *most cited* ‘goddess’ across the inscriptions, being invoked over fourteen hundred times, across the variants of her name. al-Jallad also notes that ‘Allāt was known by the epithet *mlkt ʾlry* “queen of abundance/fertility,” possibly linking her with the Venus/Aphrodite/Ishtar complex.’ See: Ahmad al-Jallad (2022), *The Religion and Rituals of the Nomads of Pre-Islamic Arabia: A Reconstruction Based on the Safaitic Inscriptions*, (Brill: Leiden) and Ahmad al-Jallad and Karolina Jaworska (2019), *A Dictionary of the Safaitic Inscriptions*, (Brill: Leiden), [p. 93].

⁶⁰ Al-Jallad writes: ‘...the inscription CIS II 185 (a city referenced in the Safaitic inscriptions and in which a handful of Safaitic-writing people dwelt) which calls Allāt *m ʾlhy dy m ʾrn rb ʾl* “mother of the gods of our lord Rabb-ʾEl” and suggests that a familial relationship between the gods was possible.’ [Ibid., p. 59]

the general public and not something he came up with himself. In a similar manner, the same could also be said of ‘Manāt,’ which most likely corresponds to *al-Maniya*, ‘goddess of death’ and fate, which has been known since antiquity. It is considered a female deity, in some Semitic languages, as with al-Lāt, the word is made feminine with an open ‘ta’ as in ‘Manāt,’ and others with a ‘*taa marbuta,*’ as it is more common in the Arabic language. Some languages have said it as ‘*manut*’ or ‘*manutu.*’

There are historical inscriptions that indicate ‘*Ilat,*’ or ‘*al-Alilat,*’ was known to the Chaldeans, the people of Ibrāhim, before his era by more than a millennia. Therefore al-Lāt is ‘Asheerah, or Ishtār or Ishtarut, or Astarte, Ashtart, Atirat, al-Ilat, Ilat in her own right according to the myths of the Canaanites. There was also a ‘goddess’ who was called ‘al-Lato’, who represented the summer season for the ancient Babylonians.

Contained with some legends, this entity, among many guises and names, be that: Ishtar, Estar, Ishara, Ish-Hara, Astar, Atar, Attar, Athar, Ath-Tar – was perceived as being a goddess of love, fertility and war. She was given rather unusual titles, like ‘the celestial prostitute,’ and ‘the whore of Babylon.’ It has been said that she is not al-Lāt in reality but rather her younger sister. Perhaps this depiction is the most renowned among the Eastern Semites – the Sumerians, Akkadians, Chaldeans, Babylonians and the Assyrians. Within that region too, mention is made of another ‘goddess,’ being located within the region of Euphrates who is called ‘*Ellat,*’ with the emphasis being placed upon the middle letter(s) of ‘l’. This entity being responsible for the underworld – the world of the dead, demons, spirits, or even hell. More commonly she is identified with the name ‘Ereshkigal,’

queen of the underworld among the Sumerians, who as a civilisation, existed long before the time of Ibrāhim, peace be upon him.⁶¹

Extension into the Greco-Roman pantheon

It also seems that the Greeks imported their pantheon of ‘gods,’ or at the very least some of them from the Near East, namely northern Iraq and Syria. This isn’t a great surprise given the regional proximity, Western Europe at that time not featuring at all in civilisation. We note from the mythology of the Greeks the name ‘Leto,’ [Λητώ], or ‘Lato’ [Λατώ]. She was regarded as being the daughter of the Titans Coeus and Phoebe. Myths from Olympia outline that the great god Zeus fell in love with her beauty, seduced her and she consequently gave birth to two-divine offspring: Apollo, a son and Artemis (or Diana), her daughter.

The Romans gave her the name ‘Latona.’ It is possible that ‘Lito’ or ‘Latona’ is simply a latinised ‘al-Lāt,’ perhaps being adapted to the local Greco-Roman environment. What could provide weight to this assumption is that the Greek myths claim that ‘Lito’ was born on the island of Kos, opposite to Bodrum in modern day Turkey. That denotes her ‘Asiatic’ origin. She has a sister named ‘Asteria’ being similar to the word ‘Astar’ but also used for ‘Ashtar’ or ‘Ashtart’ the sister of al-Lāt in the vernacular of the Semitic peoples of the Near East, the Sumerians, Akkadians, Chaldeans, Babylonians and the Assyrians.

It may well be that al-Lāt was also dubbed a deity or goddess by herself, being known as ‘Latia’ for the Romans, or at least some of them, particularly those who had settled in the British Isles. She was worshipped and considered as being a ‘mother goddess.’ A Latin inscription confirms this

⁶¹ The original Arabic edition has a short summation of points largely drawn from internet sources, most of which are now defunct. Readers in English should note the academic literature within this field is fairly extensive. Some useful introductory works on this area include: *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (DDD) Third edition (1995), Karel van der Toorn, Pieter W. van der Horst (Editor), Bob Becking (eds), (Brill: Leiden), [esp. pp. 285/286 and 274/275]. Shirly Natan-Yulzary (2020), ‘Lady Athirat of the Sea – A New Look at KTU 1.4 ii 3-11,’ *Aula Orientalis* [Vol. 38, no. 1, pp. 131/146]. Florella Scagliarini (2007), ‘The word šlm/šnm and some words for “statue, idol” in Arabian and other Semitic languages,’ *Papers from the fortieth meeting of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* held in London, 27/29 July 2006, [Vol. 37, pp. 253/262]. Javier Teixidor, (1979), *The Pantheon of Palmyra*, (Brill: Leiden). Aziz al-Azmeh (2014), *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allah and His People*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

was found in the English village of Burgh by Sands, which is near the city of Carlisle in the north of England. The inscription reads: ‘*Deo Lati Lucvis Vrsei*,’ meaning ‘dedicated (or specifically set aside) to the worship of the goddess Latia.’ Mention is also made of this in *al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārikh al-‘Arab Qablal’Islam*:

al-Lāt was considered among the gods that were worshipped by the Nabateans. Her name is mentioned in the stone texts, and ‘Salhud’ and ‘Tadmur,’ and she is from the places inhabited by the Nabateans. It is ‘*ha/la/ta*,’ ‘*ha/lat*,’ and ‘*hā-lat*,’ in Safaitic texts. Her meaning, that of al-Lāt, is because the letter *alif* is a defining letter within the Safaitic dialect. It is mentioned more than sixty-times within their writings. Moreover, she is one of the most frequently mentioned gods with the texts of the Nabateans, indicating the popularity of her worship that existed among them.⁶²

Cited also within the same work:

The Nabateans worshipped the goddess ‘al-Lāt’ as a mother-deity,⁶³ she was considered by Robert Smith, as the mother goddess of the city of Petra, being equated to the goddess Artemis among the people of Carthage. Al-Lāt was also worshipped in Tadmur (Palmyra) in the land of Madin among the Lihyanites. Epiphanius described the temple of the goddess al-Lāt in the city of Petra and mentioned that it was the temple of the ‘Virgin Mother,’ as she was also worshiped by the people in the city of Elusa.⁶⁴ It would appear that the worship of al-Lāt was transferred from the Nabateans and the northern Arab tribes to the people in the Hijaz. The goddess al-Lāt is mentioned in the *History of Herodotus* as being one of the famous Arab deities,

⁶² Dr Jawād Ali, *al-Mufaṣṣal* [Vol. 6, pp. 232/233]

⁶³ Al-Jallad writes: ‘The three goddesses mentioned in Q. 53: 19-22, al-Lāt, al-‘Uzza and al-Manāt, were worshipped in Nabataea, and with varying degrees of popularity in north-west Arabia. Al-Lāt was the most popular deity in North Arabia, invoked in almost all of the epigraphic corpora, and was probably the most ancient; she is found in theophoric names dating back to the early first millennium BCE.’ See: Ahmad Al-Jallad ‘The Linguistic Landscape of pre-Islamic Arabia: Context for the Qur’an,’ in *Oxford Handbook of Qur’anic Studies* (2020), (ed) Mustafa Shah and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (Oxford University Press: Oxford), [p. 124].

⁶⁴ *Epiphanius* of Salamis, Bishop of Salamis, [d. 403CE].

known also as Alilat or Alelat. There has been some change in wording due to the nature of the Greek language.

Herodotus mentions it in the previous manner. Therefore, its significance is that this is the first feminine *ṣanam* whose name is explicitly mentioned in a Greek text from antiquity. She is equated with the goddess Minerva or Athena among the Greeks. Some orientalist have claimed that al-Lāt represents the sun as a feminine deity, while Reinhard Dessin argues that she doesn't, but rather the planet Venus. The names of men were added to al-Lāt, such as Tayyim al-Lāt; Zayd al-Lāt, 'Aā'idth al-Lāt, Sheeh al-Lāt, Shakam al-Lāt and Wahb al-Lāt. What is striking among this is that we don't notice the presence of the name 'Abd al-Lāt' among that from the pagans of *Jāhiliyya*.⁶⁵

Broadly, this is a good text, although some corrections need to be made to it, for example: there are instances of the Arabs having the name 'Abd al-Lāt although it is quite rare.⁶⁶ The following instance is found in the *Mu'jam al-Kabir* of al-Ṭabarāni: from Abu Mu'āwiya ibn 'Abd al-Lāt ibn Nimr al-'Azd, may Allah be pleased with him, I heard the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him saying: '*Trust is among the 'Azd, while modesty is in the Quraysh.*'⁶⁷

Secondly, Dr Ali's mention of equating al-Lāt with Minerva or Athena of the Greeks, is not an old statement as is the case with Herodotus as the context may suggest, but rather it is a later development among the Nabateans, especially among the people of the kingdom of Palmyra as well as the Romans who controlled the lands of Greater Syria. Among the

⁶⁵ Dr Jawād Ali *al-Mufaṣṣal*, [Vol. 6, p. 233]

⁶⁶ 'In line with the earliest Ancient Near Eastern tradition, personal names reflected religious affiliation, name such as 'Abdullāt ('Servant of Lāt'), Sa'dullāt ('joy of Lāt) and 'Abdmanāt ('Servant of Manāt').' See: Muntasir F. al-Hamad and John F. Healey, 'Late Antique Near Eastern Context: Social and Religious Aspects,' in *Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies* (2020), (ed) Mustafa Shah and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (Oxford University Press: Oxford), [p. 86]. At Palmyra, there was also the ruler 'Wahballāt (a gift of Allāt),' latinized as 'Septimius Vaballathus,' [267/272CE], which Dr Ali appears to have alluded to earlier. A bust for this bearing the inscription is held at the British Museum, item no 125038: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1885-0418-3> [accessed 9 Feb-2023]. See also: René Dussaud (1955), *La pénétration des Arabes en Syrie avant l'Islam*, (Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner: Paris), [p. 52].

⁶⁷ al-Ṭabarāni *Mu'jam al-Kabir* [Vol. 22, no. 979]

Romans in Syria she was equated with Minerva the goddess of wisdom and arts. Archaeologists have found the remains of a temple dedicated to her in Tadmur (Palmyra) and some sculptures that date back to around 150CE.

Herodotus

Arguably one of the most prominent historical texts from antiquity was that written by the famous Greek historian, Herodotus of Halicarnassus. Often referred to as the 'father of history,' his work is still studied to this day. He was born around 490BCE, more than a thousand-years before the commencement of the Prophetic mission. Herodotus writes that he travelled the ancient world recording his comments and observations which he then compiled into his work of history. Contained within that text is his comment upon the 'gods' which were present among the Arabs. He notes that there was a female deity called 'Alilat.' This implies that this deity was worshipped by the Nabateans.⁶⁸

The following are certain Persian customs which I can describe from personal knowledge. The erection of statues, temples, and altars is not an accepted practice among them, and anyone who does such a thing is considered a fool, because, presumably, the Persian religion is not anthropomorphic like the Greek. Zeus, in their system, is the whole circle of the heavens, and they sacrifice to him from the tops of mountains. They also worship the sun, moon, and earth, fire, water, and winds, which are their only original deities: it was later that they learned from the Assyrians and **Arabians the cult of**

⁶⁸ Brzozowska notes that 'al-Lāt' was well attested to among the Nabateans, she writes: 'The cult of the goddess did not cease to exist after Nabataea fell under Roman rule in 106, but by assimilating elements typical of the ancient religion it acquired a new dimension. Al-Lāt began to be equated with Athena, as is evidenced by a basalt stele representing the goddess, which was discovered in Sharaba, not far from Bostra.' And also confirmed by archaeological evidence: 'Excavation proves the existence of the cult of Al-Lāt in Hegra (Madā'in Šālīh) in the south of the Nabatean kingdom. A baetyl found in this city contains an image of the enthroned goddess. However, one may find oneself puzzled by the lack of any traces of the deity being worshipped in Petra. The reason for the absence of the cult in Nabataea's capital can be found in the fact that the city served as an important centre of another female old Arabian deity: Al-'Uzza.' See: Zofia A. Brzozowska (2015), 'The Goddesses of Pre-Islamic Arabia (Al-Lāt, Al-'Uzza, Manāt),' in *Byzantium and the Arabs: The Encounter of Civilizations* (ed.) Teresa Wolinska and Pawel Filipczak, (Uniwersytet Lodzki: Lodz), [pp. 58/59].

Uranian Aphrodite. The Assyrian name for Aphrodite is Mylitta, **the Arabian Alilat**, the Persian Mitra.

The only gods the Arabs recognise are Dionysus and Urania; the way they cut their hair – all round in a circle, with the temples shaved – is, they say, in imitation of Dionysus. Dionysus in their language is Orotalt and **Urania Alilat**.⁶⁹

I would argue that the text of Herodotus implies that there is a female goddess called al-Lāt who was *known* and *worshipped* by the Syrians (the Nabateans) regardless of his claim that she is the one the Greeks call Aphrodite Urania, the goddess of celestial love, or the goddess of astronomy and astrology, or anything else otherwise. In any event, the three-female deities of al-Lāt, al-‘Uzza and Manāt are explicitly mentioned in the text of the Qur’ān as having been partners with Allah, worshipped besides Him. This is what is meant *regardless* of the Arab’s belief that they were angels, the daughters of Allah, the consorts or whether they represent the sky, the sun, the planet Venus, or were perceived as being the mistress / goddess of the underworld or anything else. Those remain secondary considerations to that prime aspect.⁷⁰

With all the foregoing evidence that has been presented, how did ‘al-Lāt,’ who was considered as being one of the ‘daughters of Allah,’ a feminine celestial deity, being of the same essence and origin of her father; a ‘wife or consort of Allah,’ a being from the *Jinn*, all of a sudden morph into a male human being? A human being made of flesh and blood, herding sheep, preparing *saweeq*? Mixing it with a fat that made pilgrims become fat? Is there anything more ludicrous or outlandish than this? Given the plethora of evidence how can anyone remain under the misconceived notion that al-Lāt was a *purely local* Arab invention with no historical background

⁶⁹ Herodotus, *The Histories*, Translated by Aubrey De Selincourt, (2003), (Penguin Books: London), [Book 1, p. 61 and Book 3, p. 173].

⁷⁰ Some scholars have held the position, though at times contentious, that many of the supposed deities were ‘astral’ in nature. For example: ‘It has long been noted that many of the deities worshipped in Arabia in pre-Islamic times were fundamentally astral in character, even if we eschew the exaggeration which would claim that *all* Arabia (or even all Semitic) religion was astral in origin.’ See: Muntasarir F. al-Hamad and John F. Healey, ‘Late Antique Near Eastern Context: Social and Religious Aspects,’ in *Oxford Handbook of Qur’anic Studies* (2020), (ed) Mustafa Shah and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (Oxford University Press: Oxford), [p. 86].

in the world? Worse still, to claim that she was a ‘man preparing *saweeq* for pilgrims,’ or even worse, ‘righteous servant of Allah’?

If that wasn’t enough, here is another example of the mental corruption of the sect of Wahhābism and their obsession with graves. The following is cited in *Mawsua’ al-Rad ‘ala al-Ṣufiyya*:

It is (cited) within *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhāri [no. 4859] from Ibn ‘Abbās ‘al-Lāt was a man who used to kneed (or mix) the *saweeq* for the pilgrims.’ Also reported by Ibn Abi Ḥātim from Ibn ‘Abbās, ‘he used to prepare the *saweeq* upon a stone, none would consume it lest they become fat, so they worshipped him.’ And this is some of his *karāmah* (wonderous acts/events), may Allah have mercy upon him, he was a righteous man according to the testimony of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah in this *hadith*.

al-Fākihi narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās: ‘That when al-Lāt died, ‘Amr ibn Luḥay said to the people: He didn’t die, but he entered (or merged into) the rock. So they worshipped it and built a house (sanctuary) upon it.’ al-Lāt was located at al-Ṭā’if – see: *Faḥ al-Bāri* [Vol. 8, p. 787]. Then, these righteous ‘*Auliyyah*, may Allah have mercy upon them and be pleased with them, were given various types of worship, from among them being *dua*’, reliance, fear, oaths, vows, sacrifice, seeking help, visitations of their symbols and statues at their graves, shrines and other than that.⁷¹

After reading such an abomination, it is left to the reader to either laugh or cry.

Concluding remarks

The infamous deviant sect of Wahhābism has not only been successful in terrorising and killing the people of Islam with the sword, but they have also managed to undertake a campaign of rigorous intellectual terrorism, to the point that the Ḥanafī scholars of Deoband in India, who claim to be the

⁷¹ Abu ‘Abd al-Muḥsin, *Mawsua’ al-Rad ‘ala al-Ṣufiyya* [no. 116, p. 257]. In English, the title refers to the work as being an encyclopaedic compendium for the refutation of Sufiism.

people of *fiqh* (legal jurisprudence), diligence and scrutiny, surrendered their minds, raising the proverbial white flag in surrender. They said:

‘It’s said with regards to the *mushrik* Arabs in the Arabian Peninsula and that they were ‘*quburiyah*’ (worshippers of graves), the matter is clear and well-known without the need to prove the matter or mention it; for they were *quburiyah* who were worshipping the graves and those inhabiting them. The Imām Maḥmud al-Alusi [d. 1170AH] clearly outlined that al-Lāt was a man from Thaqif who used to prepare the *saweeq* with oil upon a stone. When he died, they made his grave a *wathn* (idol). He used to prepare that (*saweeq*) so whoever consumed it would get fat. Hence he was worshipped and that stone was too in honour.’⁷²

All of this from the ‘*Efforts of the Hanafi Scholars in Nullifying the Beliefs of Grave-Worshippers*’? We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return! One should find the analysis as set out herein to be more than sufficient to utterly obliterate the dangerous destructive claim that was made by the *Azraqi* MIAW, founder of the infamous *Khawārij* sect of Wahhābism which opened this chapter, namely: ‘(In response) the definitive answer is thus: to be told that the *kuffār* in his time, peace and blessings be upon him, there were among them those who believed in idols. (Yet) some of them believed in the grave of a righteous man, like al-Lāt.’⁷³

Yet the truth of the matter is that making a claim with the saying that al-Lāt, as it is mentioned in the Qur’ān, is supposedly a *Rajalun Ṣāliḥ* - ‘righteous man,’ accompanied by the supposed myth of his grave, is not simply a mistaken understanding. Rather, it is a false statement altogether, an outright lie against the manifestly clear text of the Qur’ān. Thus by necessity, maintaining that lie is judged to be from the statements of *kufr* (disbelief). Refuge must be sought with Allah, no one should be reiterating it after the totality of evidence that has been marshalled here. Only those still ignorant of the fact would be excused, including those who disbelieve

⁷² *Juhud Ulama’ al-Hanafiyah fi Ibtāl ‘Aqā’id al-Quburiyah* [Vol. 1, p. 411]. Loosely rendered into English as: ‘Efforts of the Hanafi Scholars in Nullifying the Beliefs of Grave-Worshippers.’

⁷³ *Mu’walifat al-Shaykh al-Imām Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb* [Vol. 1, p. 146]

altogether in the finality of the Prophethood and Seal of the Messengers, Muḥammad peace and blessings be upon him and his family.

14. How did mankind leave *Tawḥeed* originally?

Previously it was established with conclusive evidence to the level of certitude, that the Arabs had effectively abandoned the *Deen* of Ismā'il because of one man. That man, a *Shayṭān* among the innumerable *Shayāṭeen* of men, was 'Amr ibn Luḥay ibn Qam'ah ibn Khindif, may the curse of Allah be upon him. It has also been definitively established that the fable surrounding 'al-Lāt,' (the 'man' mythically preparing the *saweeq*), circumambulation of stones taken from the *Ka'ba* and other such legends, are not worthy of being considered within the category of established or firm knowledge. Rather, they should only be mentioned by way of astonishment, anecdotes or as trivialities in light-hearted social gatherings. What should be given precedence, now and always, is what is soundly attributable to the Seal of Prophethood, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. Given that all those previously fables are borne of delusion and falsehood, what probative or evidential value is there to the accounts regarding the emergence of *Shirk* from among the people of Nuḥ peace be upon him or those who were prior to him, after the initial *Tawḥeed* of the first of mankind, Adam, peace be upon him?

There has been attempts at explaining this. Often, and as usual, there is the false and fabricated attribution to the Imām, acclaimed litterateur, Abdullah ibn 'Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him. Little wonder that attempts try, even belatedly, to pin a statement to his attribution, for he was a prolific scholar, the interpreter of the Qur'ān, and a foremost intellectual. Allah bestowed upon him a remarkable mind that never ceased to question, explore and seek truth and knowledge. All of this is a blessing and benefit for the wider Muslim *Ummah*, provided that those who have come after him have properly exercised due diligence in studying, scrutinising, reviewing and seeking verification. Firstly, it is *necessary* to expose the falsehood of

the alleged attributions to Ibn 'Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him, many of which are fanciful and do not fit the one rightly regarded as the interpreter of the Qur'ān. Secondly, it is important to critically study the meanings and statements with an enlightened deep thinking, and to ascertain whether they are definitely *marfu'* (raised and attributable) or not. Submission, however, should be solely to Allah and His Messenger, without any increase or decrease, without blindly accepting anything. As is necessary, nay obliged, always and forever, we must begin with the wording as set out by Allah the Exalted and Majestic where He has said:

قَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ إِنَّهُمْ عَصَوْنِي وَاتَّبَعُوا مَنْ لَمْ يَزِدْهُ مَالَهُ وَوَلَدَهُ إِلَّا خَسَارًا وَمَكَرُوا مَكْرًا كَبِيرًا وَقَالُوا لَا تَذَرُنَّ آلِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا وَلَا سُوَاعًا وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا وَقَدْ أَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَلَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا ضَلَالًا

Noah said, 'My Lord, they have disobeyed me and followed those whose riches and children only increase their ruin; who have made a grand plan, saying, "Do not renounce your gods! And do not renounce Wadd', Suwā', Yaghuth, Ya'uq, or Nasr!' They have led many astray. Lord, bring nothing but destruction down on the evildoers!'¹

Explanations from the Exegetes

The following is recorded in the seminal *Tafsir* of Imām al-Ṭabari concerning these verses:

He the Exalted in His remembrance is saying informing us about what the nation of Nuḥ (said): 'And they said - do not renounce your gods! And do not renounce Wadd', Suwā', Yaghuth, Ya'uq, or Nasr.' These were a group from the progeny of Adam, as it was mentioned about the gods that the people were worshipping. It is from among the reports that have reached us, what is narrated as follows:

Ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us he said Mihrān narrated to us from Sufyān from Musa from Muḥammad ibn Qays (concerning where He said) 'Ya'uq and Nasr,' he said: 'They were a group of righteous men from the progeny of Adam, having followers who followed them. When they died, their followers remarked 'If but only we had images

¹ Qur'ān, 71: 21/24

of them, it would make us more eager to worship when we remembered them.’ So they fashioned such images. But when they died and others came after them, Iblees approached them and said: ‘(Your forebears) used to worship them, through them they provided rain,’ so they worshipped them.

Ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us he said Mihrān narrated to us from Sufyān from his father from ‘Ikrimah, he said: ‘There were ten-generations between Adam and Nuḥ, all of them upon al-Islam.’

Others have said – these are the names of the *Aṣṇām* of the people of Nuḥ. With regards to those who mentioned that:

Bishr narrated to us he said Yazeed narrated to us he said Sa’eed narrated to us from Qatādah, concerning where He says: *Do not renounce your gods! Do not renounce Wadd’, Suwā’ , Yaghuth, Ya’uq, or Nasr.* he said: ‘*Wadd’* was to Kalb at Dumat al-Jandal, *Suwa’* was for Hudheel at Rayāt, *Yaghuth* was to the tribe of ‘Uṭayf from the Murād at al-Jurf, near Sabā.’ (Regarding) *Ya’uq*, it was to the Hamdān in Balakh, and *Nasr* to the Dhi Kallāh from Ḥimyar. He (Qatādah) said: ‘And these were the gods that were worshipped by the people Nuḥ, then they were taken on by the Arabs after that. But Allah is above anything that is made of wood, clay or stone.’

Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Alā narrated to us he said Ibn Thawr narrated to us from Ma’mar from Qatādah (concerning the verse): ‘*Do not renounce your gods! And do not renounce Wadd’, Suwā’ , Yaghuth, Ya’uq, or Nasr.*’ He said: ‘These were the gods that the people of Nuḥ worshipped, then they were worshipped by the Arabs after that. *Wadd’* was at Doumat al-Jandal; *Suwā’* for Hudheel, *Yaghuth* to the tribe of ‘Uṭayf from Murād at al-Jurf. *Ya’uq* to the Hamdan and Nasr for Dhi Kallāh from the Ḥimyar.

Ali narrated to me he said Abu Ṣāliḥ narrated to us he said Mu’āwiyah narrated to us from Ali from Ibn ‘Abbās, regarding where He says: *Do not renounce your gods! And do not renounce Wadd’, Suwā’ , Yaghuth, Ya’uq, or Nasr.* He (Ibn ‘Abbās) said: ‘These were the *Aṣṇām* worshipped at the time of Nuḥ.’

I narrated from al-Ḥussein he said I heard Abu Mu’ādth saying ‘Ubayd narrated to us he said I heard al-Ḍaḥḥāk saying in relation to where He says: *Do not renounce your gods! And do not renounce*

Wadd’, Suwā’ , Yaghuth, Ya’uq, or Nasr.’ He (al-Ḍaḥḥāk) said: ‘This is the *Aṣṇām* that were worshipped in the time of Nuḥ.’

I narrated from al-Ḥussein he said I heard Abu Mu’ādth saying ‘Ubayd narrated to us he said I heard al-Ḍaḥḥāk saying in relation to where He says: *Do not renounce your gods! Do not renounce Wadd’, Suwā’ , Yaghuth, Ya’uq, or Nasr.* He (al-Ḍaḥḥāk) said: ‘It is the gods that used to be in the Yemen.’

Yunus narrated to me he said Ibn Wahb reported to us he said Ibn Zayd said in relation to His saying: *Do not renounce your gods! Do not renounce Wadd’, Suwā’ , Yaghuth, Ya’uq, or Nasr.* He (Ibn Zayd) said: ‘This is the gods that they used to worship.’

Disagreement exists among the (Qur’ān) reciters regarding the recitation of where He says ‘*Wuddan.*’ The majority of the reciters from Medina recited it was ‘*Wuddan,*’ with a *ḍamma*’ upon the letter *waw*, while the majority of the reciters in Kufa and Basra recited it was ‘*Waddan,*’ with a *fatha* upon the letter *waw*. The correct opinion among us is that both recitations are well-known among the reciters of the garrison cities, so whichever is utilised, it is correct.

As for where He says: ‘*They have led many astray,*’ He the Exalted in His remembrance is saying that which was the report from the saying of Nuḥ, who said that many people had gone astray by worshipping these *Aṣṇām* (idols) that were created in the forms of those individuals who were mentioned in this context. The misguidance is attributed to them because those who worshipped them were led astray, considering them as the source of misguidance.²

Tafsir al-Baghawi

Some additions with channels of reporting are provided in the next *Tafsir*, that from al-Baghawi:

And they said unto them – ‘*do not forsake your gods,*’ that is to say, do not abandon their worship. Namely, do not forsake *Wadd’*, as read by the people of Medina, ‘*Wuddan,*’ with a *damma* upon the letter

² *Tafsir al-Ṭabari* [Vol.13, pp. 253/255, (print edition), *Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyyah*, 2013]

waw. The remainder read this with a *fatha*; ‘and neither *Suwā*, nor *Yaghuth*, nor *Ya’uq* and *Nasr*,’ these are the names of their gods.

Muhammad ibn Ka’b said: ‘These are the names of ‘righteous people’ that were from the era between Adam and Nuḥ. When they died, they had followers who would emulate the example they set in worship. Then Iblees came to them and said: ‘If you make images of them, it would be easier for you to engage in worship, increasing your devotion.’ They did that. Then a generation came after them and Iblis told them: ‘Indeed, those who came before you used to worship them, so you (should) worship them too. Thus, the worship of *awthān* came from that. Those images were given names because they were modelled on the images of those people from among the Muslims.’

‘Abd al-Wāhid ibn Aḥmad al-Maliḥiyu reported to us Aḥmad ibn Abdullah al-Na’eemi reported to us Muḥammad ibn Yusuf reported to us Muḥammad ibn Ismā’il narrated to us Ibrahim ibn Musa narrated to us Hishām narrated to us from Ibn Jurayj, and he said Aṭā’ from Ibn ‘Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him said: All the *awthān* (idols) which were worshiped by the people of Noah were worshiped by the Arabs later on. Regarding *Wadd*, it was worshipped by the tribe of Kalb at Dumat al-Jandal; *Suwā* was (the tribe of) Hudtheel; *Yaghuth*, to (the tribe of) Murād, then to Bani Ghūṭayf at al-Jurf, near Sabā’. *Ya’uq*, was to Hamdān, and *Nasr* was for the Ḥimyar, the branch of Dhi al-Kallā’. The names, were of righteous men from the people of Noah. When they died, *Shayṭān* whispered to their people, encouraging them to set up statues in their councils where they used to sit and deliberate and they called them by their names. But they were not worshipped until after those people had died and knowledge of such was lost.³

It was narrated by way of Ibn ‘Abbās that the (great) flood buried these *awthān* covering them with the earth. They remained so until the *Shayṭān* brought them forth for the Arab *mushrikeen*. The Arabs had other *Aṣnām* too, (such as) al-Lāt who was for the tribe of Thaqeef, al-‘Uzza was to Sulaym, Ghaṭafān and Jashm; Manāt was at

³ Connected to ‘Muḥammad ibn Ismā’il,’ which is al-Bukhārī. The same appearing in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in the book of Prophetic commentary.

Qadid, Isāf, Nā’ila and Hubal were the reserve of the people of Mecca.⁴

Here I would say that we notice al-Baghawi, who is from among the reliable scholars of *ḥadīth*, mentioning the words of Muḥammad ibn Ka’b al-Quraṣī in a manner of emphasis, ‘he said.’ This seems to indicate his confidence in its authenticity and reliability.

Tafsir al-Tha’labi

There is also what is cited in the *Tafsir* of al-Tha’labi:

al-Ḥussein reported to me he said Abdullah ibn Yusuf narrated to us Abdullah ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Aziz al-Baghawi narrated to us he said Muḥammad ibn Bakkār ibn al-Mirqān narrated to us he said Abu Ma’shir narrated to us from Yazid ibn Ziyād from Muḥammad ibn Ka’b he said: Adam, peace be upon him, had five-sons: *Wadd*, *Suwā*, *Yaghuth*, *Ya’uq*, and *Nasr*. They were ‘*Aābid* (upon worship); when one of them passed away, they were grief stricken. *Shayṭān* came to them and said: ‘Would you like me to make images resembling him in your place of prayer, so that way you look at it you remember him? They replied: ‘We dislike having anything in our place of prayer that we would worship.’ He (*Shayṭān*) said: ‘Then place it at the rear of the *masjid*.’ They replied, ‘Yes.’ So he fashioned images for them made of copper and lead. Then another son (of Adam) died, so he fashioned an image for him, then another, repeating the same.

He (Muḥammad ibn Ka’b) said: ‘Thus, the objects increased, as they do today, continuing to be adhered to, *mā’shā’Allah*. Thereafter, they abandoned the worship of Allah, may He be Exalted. The *Shayṭān* came to them and said: ‘Why don’t you worship anything?’ They replied: ‘Whom should we worship?’ He said: ‘These are your gods and the gods of your forefathers. Don’t you see them sculpted in your place of worship?’ So they started worshipping them besides Allah the Mighty and Sublime. This was until Allah the Mighty and Sublime sent Noah and called them to worship Allah, may He be

⁴ *Tafsir* al-Baghawi [Vol. 5, p. 157]

Exalted. They thus said: ‘Do not abandon your gods,’ until where He the Almighty said ‘and Nasr.’

And Sufyān narrated from Musa from Muḥammad ibn Qays (regarding the verse): ‘Do not renounce Wadd,’ he said: ‘They were a group of righteous people between (the era of) Adam and Nuḥ, peace be upon them. They had adherents who followed them. When they died, their followers said: ‘If only we could make images of them, we would be more eager to worship when we remember them.’ So they made images of them. Iblees whispered to them ‘They worshipped them (the images); and through them they provided rain.’ So they worshipped them.’

Ibn ‘Abbās said: Nuḥ was guarding the body of Adam upon a mountain which was in India. This was to prevent the *kāfireen* from circumambulating his grave. Thus the *Shayṭān* said to them: ‘These people are proud of you, they claim that they are the sons of Adam without you. But it is a body, and I will fashion an image like it for you to circumambulate.’ So he carved five *Aṣṇām* and made them worship them. They were: *Wadd*, *Suwā*, *Yaghuth*, *Ya’uq*, and *Nasr*. During the time of the (great) flood, they were buried and covered by the earth. They remained so, until *Shayṭān* brought them forth to the Arab *mushrikeen*.⁵

Tafsir al-Samarqandi

The next citation is taken from the *Tafsir* entitled *Baḥr al-Ulum*, by Abu Layth Naṣr ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Samarqandi, seeking to recount how these ‘gods’ originated. He writes:

⁵ *Tafsir* al-Tha’labi [Vol. 10, p. 46]. The last portion of this citation is omitted. This is where an account of which Arab tribes took possession of the various idols. Al-Tha’labi records: ‘Quḍā’ah took possession of *Wadd*’, being worshipped at Dumat al-Jandal. Then it was passed down via their lineage until it reached (the tribe of) Kalb; at the advent of Islam, they still possessed it. Al-‘Alā and An’am from the Ṭayy took *Yaghuth* to the Murād who worshipped it in their time; thereafter the tribe of Nājiyah wanted to possess it from (the clans of) al-‘Alā and An’am. They took it to al-Ḥuṣṣein, brother of the tribe of al-Ḥārith ibn Ka’b. Regarding *Ya’uq*, it was the preserve of the Kahlān, then inherited through lineage until it reached the Hamdān. As for *Nasr*, the Kha’tham worshipped it. Regarding *Suwā*’ this was the preserve of the Dhi Kallāh’ who worshipped it.’

And they said: ‘Do not abandon your gods,’ as said by some to others, and it is said that the leaders had said to the common folk – ‘Do not abandon,’ meaning, do not forsake the worship of your ‘gods’, ‘And do not renounce *Wadd*’, *Suwā*’, *Yaghuth*, *Ya’uq*, or *Nasr*.’ These are the names of the *Aṣṇām* they used to worship, (thus) do not abandon the worship of these *Aṣṇām*. Nāfi’ recited it was ‘*Wuddan*,’ with a *ḍamma* upon the letter *waw*, the remainder recited it with a *fatha* (only). Each having the same meaning, referring to the name of the *ṣanam* ‘*Wadd*.’ Qatādah said: ‘These are the gods that were worshipped by the people of Nuḥ, then the Arabs worshipped them after that.’

al-Qutubi said: ‘*Wadd*’ is a *ṣanam*, and from that, the Arabs would provide names (like) ‘Abd Wadd’, and similarly ‘Abd Yaghuth.’ Then He says: *They have led many astray*, meaning these *Aṣṇām* have led many people astray. Namely, many misled among the people, which is similar to where He says ‘*Lord, the (idols) have led many people astray*,’ [14: 36]. Then He says: ‘*Lord, bring nothing but destruction down on the evildoers*,’ in loss and foolishness.⁶

Probability, not certainty

With regards to the summary of this matter as per al-Ṭabari, the majority of interpreters, and what the commonality of the narratives concur upon, is that *Wadd*’, *Suwā*’, *Yaghuth*, *Ya’uq*, and *Nasr*, were the false deities of the people of Nuḥ, thereafter these were worshipped by some of the Arabs. As for the matter of them being considered ‘gods’ by some of the Arabs, represented as *Aṣṇām*, this is a matter well known. It is established by way of continuously recurrent narratives from both the exegetes and historians.⁷ Moreover, inscriptions have been found in the ruins of Sabā, Ma’in, Ḥimyar, Thamud and Liḥyān. Whether these false gods from the people of Nuḥ were represented in the form of or as *Aṣṇām* can only be considered as a probable matter, it is not entirely agreed upon. Thus, to examine the wording of the verse it would be: ‘*And they said*,’ some of them to the others, particularly the leaders and notables to the common folk, ‘*Do not renounce your gods!*

⁶ *Tafsir* al-Samarqandi [Vol. 3, p. 408]. Abu Layth al-Samarqandi, [d. 373AH].

⁷ The listing is summarised for example by Ibn Ḥazm in *Jamharat Ansāb al-Arab*, [pp. 491/494]

And do not renounce’ especially those considered as the greater deities, ‘*Wadd*’, *Suwā*’, *Yaguth*, *Ya’uq*, or *Nasr*.’ And Nuḥ said: ‘*They have led many astray*,’ many have gone astray by worshipping these false gods; ‘*bring nothing but destruction down on the evildoers*,’ do not increase the wherewithal of the wrongdoers, especially the leaders and notables, except in their demise.

Mention of the *khāṣṣ* (specific) after the ‘*ām* (general) is for emphasis upon the general exposition. It is further found in the work entitled: *al-Nukat al-Dalāt ‘alal Bayyān fī Anwāh’ al-Umum wal’ Aḥkām* by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ali ibn Muḥammad al-Karajī al-Qaṣṣāb, where he remarks:

There’s evidence that in the expression of Arabic the mention of the specific names serves as a form of emphasis, as we have mentioned in other areas from this book. *Wadd*’, *Suwā*’ *Yaguth*, *Ya’uq* and *Nasr* are explanations of the generic term ‘gods,’ or they refer to something else. If they are an explanation relating to deities, then the statement is emphasised by the wording of ‘*Do not abandon*.’ If they are something else altogether, then the statement itself is one of emphasis.⁸

Moreover, it is noted that the exegetes from the *Salaf* discussed the origins of these ‘gods’ or *Aṣnām* among the people of Nuḥ, within this is included Qatādah, al-Ḍaḥḥāk, Ibn Zayd, and Ali ibn Ṭalḥa in the channel from Ibn ‘Abbās. Others have provided different viewpoints among them including Muḥammad ibn al-Quradi, Muḥammad ibn Qays and, allegedly, Ibn ‘Abbās from the channel of narration in al-Bukhārī. As for what is mentioned where the verse relates to saying that many have been led astray, there are four-viewpoints as per those mentioned by al-Ṭabari previously. The first, from *Tafsir al-Baghawi*: ‘Muqātil said: Their leaders have led many people astray.’⁹ This is chosen by Ibn Juzzi in his *Tafsir* too, he writes: ‘*They have led many astray* – the leaders have led many astray from among the people of Nuḥ; meaning they have led many of their followers astray. And this is the statement of Nuḥ, peace be upon him. Likewise, the *dthālimeen* only

⁸ al-Qaṣṣāb, *Anwāh’ al-Umum wal’ Aḥkām* [Vol. 4, p. 422]. al-Qaṣṣāb [d. 360 AH] approximately.

⁹ *Tafsir al-Baghawi* [Vol. 5, p. 158]

increase in misguidance from what he says, hence it is his *dua*’ against them.’¹⁰

Second, is what is reported in the *Tafsir* of Ibn Jawzi: ‘He, the Mighty and Sublime said: ‘*They have led many astray*.’ One of them, the *Aṣnām* have misled many from among the people, that is to say, they have been misguided because of them. Secondly, the leaders have misled many from among the people.’¹¹ Also in *Tafsir al-Rāzi*:

Know, that when Nuḥ narrates about them, that they said to their followers (in response) ‘*Do not abandon your gods*.’ He (Nuḥ) said: ‘*They have led many astray*.’ There are two aspects to this matter. Firstly, those leaders who had already misled many people before these advisors recommended them to adhere to the worship of the *Aṣnām*. And this was not the first occasion that they engaged in misguidance. Secondly, it is possible that the pronoun refers to the *Aṣnām* themselves, like where He says: ‘*(Lord) the [idols] have led many people astray!*’¹²

Cited in *Tafsir al-Bayḍāwī* - ‘*They have led many astray*, whether the pronoun (they) refers to either the leaders of the *Aṣnām*, similar to where He says *(Lord) they have led many people astray! Bring nothing but destruction down on the evildoers*.’¹³ And also in *al-Baḥr al-Muḥeet* the *Tafsir* of Abu Ḥayyān Muḥammad ibn Yusuf ibn Ali ibn Yusuf ibn Ḥayyān Atheer al-Deen al-Andalusi:

‘*Misled astray*,’ that is, the leaders and their followers; ‘*many*,’ from those that followed them among the general people. And this is a report from Nuḥ, peace be upon him, about what had occurred under their influence of misguidance. Al-Ḥasan said: ‘*They have led many astray*,’ meaning, the *Aṣnām*. The pronoun refers back to them, as it does to the individuals (mentioned), as stated in the verse ‘*(Lord) the [idols] have led many people astray!*’ Its application is to the closest

¹⁰ *Tafsir Ibn Juzzi* [Vol. 2, p. 416]

¹¹ al-Jawzi, *Zā’ d al-Maseer fī-’Ilm al-Tafsir* [Vol. 4, p. 344]

¹² *Tafsir al-Rāzi*, [Vol. 30, p. 658]. The verse quoted at the end is from 14: 36

¹³ *Tafsir al-Bayḍāwī* [Vol. 5, p. 250]

mentioned, but reference to the leaders is more prominent, since they are the ones being mentioned, the meaning is applicable to them.¹⁴

The third viewpoint, comes by way of Ibn ‘Aṭīyah in his *Tafsir, al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz fi-Tafsir al-Kitāb al-Aziz*:

And He says ‘*They have led many astray*,’ (which) is a report (arising) from narration from Nuḥ about them, and it is disconnected from what he mentioned about them. The meaning is that these people have greatly misled many people, including their followers and the common people. Then Nuḥ invoked Allah Almighty against them, that they would not increase in anything except further misguidance. He mentioned the wrongdoers to encompass all those who followed their path. Al-Ḥasan said in his book *al-Naqāsh* – ‘By saying *They have led many astray* - he meant the *Aṣnām*. He expressed them through a pronoun as a representation of how the majority of their people treated them as if they had intellects and attributed to them the actions of reason.¹⁵

Lastly, the fourth interpretation is what is cited in the *Tafsir* of al-Māturidi: ‘The *Aṣnām* do not have the capacity to cause misguidance, but the meaning of the addition here is that it was created in the form that if that body was one of those who go astray, it would go astray. Similar is said regarding the interpretation of where He the Mighty and Sublime said: *And were deluded by worldly life*,’ [7: 51].¹⁶

Tafsir al-Qurtubi and the Opinion of the Majority

The viewpoint which was mentioned by al-Ṭabari regarding these five names: *Wadd*, *Suwā*, *Yaghuth*, *Ya’uq*, and *Nasr*, as being ‘the gods of the people of Nuḥ’ is the opinion of the *jumhur* (majority), but it is not *ijmā*. The second viewpoint, which is old, considers them only as *Aṣnām* that were worshipped by the Arabs, with no further connection to the people of Nuḥ,

¹⁴ Abu Ḥayyān *al-Baḥr al-Muḥeet* [Vol. 10, p. 287]

¹⁵ Ibn ‘Aṭīyah *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajiz* [Vol. 5, p. 376]

¹⁶ *Tafsir* al-Māturidi [Vol. 10, p. 235]

or his era. The following is cited in the *Tafsir* of al-Qurtubi after mentioning the verses:

Ibn ‘Abbās and other than him have said: ‘They are *Aṣnām* and (graven) images. The people of Nuḥ worshipped them, after which the Arabs worshipped them.’ And this is the statement of the *Jumhur* (the majority). It is said: They were the preserve of the Arabs, no others worshipped them. They were the greatest and most revered *Aṣnām* among them. That is why they were specifically mentioned after where He the Almighty said they said: ‘*Do not renounce your gods*.’ The meaning of the statement is that the people of Nuḥ said to their followers ‘*Do not renounce your gods*.’ The Arabs (also) said to their people, ‘*Do not renounce Wadd*, *Suwā*, *Yaghuth*, *Ya’uq*, or *Nasr*.’ Then it is mentioned afterwards about the people of Nuḥ peace be upon him. According to the first statement, all of the speech is about the people of Nuḥ.¹⁷

It is also that which appears in the *Tafsir* of al-Māwardi, namely, Abul’Ḥasan Ali ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥabeeb al-Baṣri al-Baghdādi, the famous al-Māwardi:

Concerning these *Aṣnām*, (there are) two viewpoints: one of them, is that they were worshipped by the Arabs exclusively, and the meaning of the statement is as what was said to the people of Nuḥ, when they said to their followers: ‘*Do not abandon your gods*.’ The Arabs said the same to their kith and kin, ‘*Do not renounce Wadd*, *Suwā*, *Yaghuth*, *Ya’uq*, or *Nasr*.’ Then mention of that, reverted back to the people of Nuḥ.¹⁸

Its form is also outlined by Ibn ‘Aāshur in *al-Taḥrir wal’Tanweer*, here trying to break through the impasse:

Indeed some of the exegetes were obliged to interpret the composition of the (Qur’ānic) verse as the *mu’ād* of the pronoun. They said, it is

¹⁷ *Tafsir* al-Qurtubi, [Vol. 18, p. 307]. Repetition of the verse at the beginning of the quote is omitted.

¹⁸ *Tafsir* al-Māwardi [Vol. 6, p. 104]

referring to the *mushrikeen* of the Arabs. The suggestion was that this mention occurred in relation to the story of Nuḥ for the purpose of exemplification. Meaning, that some Arabs said to one another, ‘*And do not renounce Wadd’, Suwā’, Yaghuth, Ya’uq, or Nasr,*’ like the people of Nuḥ said to their followers, ‘*Do not abandon your gods.*’ Then, mention returns to the people of Nuḥ, which is a clear exposition of the components of how the speech is arranged. The best explanation, as some of the exegetes have viewed it, and what we intend to expound, is that the *Aṣṅām* of the people of Nuḥ were lost, submerged in the flood.

Their names, though, were preserved in the memory of those who were saved along with the Nuḥ from the believers. They used to teach their young generations what happened to their ancestors for worshipping those *Aṣṅām*. The names remained in circulation among the ancient Arabs as reported in their traditions. ‘Amr ibn Luḥay al-Khuzā’i who inaugurated the worship of *Aṣṅām* to the Arabs erected statues for worship and gave them the names of the *Aṣṅām* of Nuḥ’s people in addition to other names. There isn’t a need for the exegete to go into the attributes of the *Aṣṅām*, that had these names among the Arabs, or to mention the specific tribes that worshiped them bearing these names.¹⁹

Given this, I would argue that Ibn ‘Aāshur’s outline as suggested does have merit. But it doesn’t definitely resolve the matter at hand because it is very well possible that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, would invite some of the pilgrims from the people of Yemen during certain *Ḥajj* seasons, some who were devotees to these five-*Aṣṅām*. He would call them to *Tawḥeed*, reminding them that they are the descendants of Nuḥ, recounting to them the suffering their ancestor endured with the *mushrikeen* among his people, particularly the elders, notables and leaders, and their insistence on clinging to the false *Aṣṅām*. Some of those people of Yemen responded with the worst of answers, namely that they insisted upon the adherence to *Wadd’, Suwā’, Yaghuth, Ya’uq, and Nasr;* that they wouldn’t believe in him, or abandon them – or something along those lines. Hence, the revelation of *Surah Nuḥ* (chapter 71) came and was recited to them.

¹⁹ Ibn ‘Aāshur, *al-Taḥrīr wal-Tanweer* [Vol. 29, p. 209]

A third viewpoint of interpretation

Here I would argue that Allah has opened up the possibility of a third viewpoint, which is both moderate and we believe to date, no one has argued previously. Its meaning is that these five-*Aṣṅām* were in actual fact the greatest chiefs and leaders of the people of Nuḥ during his era. Therefore, with due regard to the nature of the statement as it appears in the verses, it would be as follows: *And they said*, some from among them, specifically their chiefs and leaders had said, *Do not renounce*, the worship of *your gods*, to worship the single-God of Nuḥ. *Do not renounce*, namely obedience to your chiefs and leaders, *Wadd’, Suwā’, Yaghuth, Ya’uq or Nasr,* lest Nuḥ becomes your leader. Nuḥ said: *They have led many astray*, in particular the five aforementioned names, *Lord, bring nothing but destruction down on the evildoers*, especially the five.

Looking at the statements made by the *mufasirren* (exegetes) in the round, one can see that several issues appear to have been huddled together, without expressly disentangling them. The fact that several South Arabian tribes *later* had five-*Aṣṅām* bearing the same names as mentioned in the verses from *Surah Nuḥ*, doesn’t have a direct impact on interpreting the verses as they stand. Moreover, unlike the verses that recount the story of Ibrāhim, peace be upon him, these verses in question relating to Nuḥ do not mention the word for idol(s) – *ṣanam / Aṣṅām*. Rather, they expressly state ‘your gods,’ [الِهَتِكُمْ]. We cannot say with any degree of certainty, unless it is established by *wahy*, that the people of Nuḥ had these false ‘gods’ represented in the form of *Aṣṅām* or whether they were abstractions. That is a later iteration of the Arabs. Identifying the five listed names as being the leaders and/or chiefs from the people of Nuḥ peace be upon him, would seemingly fit clearly with the wording as expressed in the opening two verses: ‘*Noah said, ‘My Lord, they have disobeyed me and followed those whose riches and children only increase their ruin; who have made a grand plan, saying.*’

Hence, all praise is due to Allah, this is arguably the best and most appropriate rendition within the given context. It decisively resolves the issue of attributing the matter of leading astray to the appropriate parties. The pronoun related to ‘they’ (*they have led many astray*) refers back to its nearest root, as mentioned. In principle that cannot be violated without clear

evidence. The discourse relates to the people of Nuḥ, nothing else. It is about their ‘gods’, leaders and chiefs. The rendition outlined provides enhancement to the meaning, more suitable to the eloquence of the Qur’ān without the need for generalisation or placing the specific upon the general. Having this perspective towards the matter provides other benefits, among them are included:

1. That the ‘gods’ which the Arabs had, or to be precise some of them, notably from South Arabia, represented by the well-known five *Aṣṣnām* as mentioned, originally trace back to the names of the arrogant tyrannical leaders from the people at the time of Nuḥ peace be upon him. They are not *from the era* of Nuḥ. This is an indication for the critical researcher to strive to understand this fascinating historical evolution, and perhaps we will be able to return to the matter soon or in another context. Precisely *how* these South Arabian tribes had *Aṣṣnām* matching these five names, remains a mystery, because no *wahy* (revelation) has come to provide clarity upon the matter.
2. The names mentioned are what appears to be of Arabic origin or a proto-Arabic precursor, and it is conceivable that they are derived from trilateral roots - *Wadd’*, *Yaghuth*, *Ya’uq*, *Nasr*, which are still utilised in contemporary Arabic except for *Suwā’*. This may give a strong indication that the language of the people of Nuḥ is an ancient form of Arabic or a precursor to such that is no longer in use, perhaps it is mother of all known Semitic languages.

The infamous Athar attributed Ibn ‘Abbās

The *athar* (narrative) is to be found in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī, the wording in full as follows:

حدثنا إبراهيم بن موسى أخبرنا هشام عن ابن جريج وقال عطاء عن ابن عباس رضى الله عنهما صارت الأوثان التي كانت في قوم نوح في العرب بعد، أما ود كانت لكلب بدومة، الجنذل، وأما سواع كانت لهذيل، وأما يغوث فكانت لمراد ثم لبني غطيف بالجرف عند سبا، وأما يعوق فكانت لهمدان، وأما نسر فكانت لحمير، لآل ذي الكلاع. أسماء رجال صالحين من قوم نوح، فلما هلكوا أوحى الشيطان إلى قومهم أن انصبوا إلى مجالسهم التي كانوا يجلسون أنصابا، وسموها بأسمائهم ففعلوا فلم تعبد حتى إذا هلك أولئك وتنسخ العلم عبت

Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā narrated to us Hishām reported to us from Ibn Jurayj - Aṭā’ said from Ibn ‘Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him: All the *awthān* which were worshiped by the people of Noah were worshiped by the Arabs later on. Regarding *Wadd’*, it was worshipped by the tribe of Kalb at Dumat al-Jandal; *Suwā’* was (the tribe of) Hudtheel; *Yaghuth*, to (the tribe of) Murād, then to Bani Ghutaḥayf at al-Jurf, near Sabā’. *Ya’uq*, was to Hamdān, and *Nasr* was for the Ḥimyar, the branch of Dhi al-Kallā’. The names, were of righteous men from the people of Noah. When they died, *Shayṭān* whispered to their people, encouraging them to set up monuments in their councils where they used to sit and deliberate and they called them by their names. But they were not worshipped until after those people had died and knowledge of such was forgotten.

It is also cited in *Akhbār Makkah* by al-Fāqihī, with the channel from Muḥammad ibn Thawr from Aṭā’ from Ibn ‘Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him, the wording matching that of al-Bukhārī.²⁰ However, the following appears in the *Tafsir* of ‘Abd al-Razzāq:

عَبْدُ الرَّزَّاقِ عَنْ مَعْمَرٍ عَنْ قَتَادَةَ فِي قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى ﴿لَا تَدْرُونَ إِلَهَتَكُمْ﴾ وَلَا تَدْرُونَ وِدًّا وَلَا سِوَاعًا وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا قَالَ كَانَتْ إِلَهَةً يَعْبُدُهَا قَوْمُ نُوحٍ ثُمَّ كَانَتْ الْعَرَبُ تَعْبُدُهَا بَعْدَ فَكَانَ وِدًّا لِكَلْبٍ بِدُومَةَ الْجَنْدَلِ، وَكَانَ سِوَاعٌ لِهَذِيلٍ، وَكَانَ يَغُوثٌ لِبَنِي غَطِيفٍ مِنْ مُرَادٍ بِالْجَرْفِ، وَكَانَ يَعُوقٌ لِهَمْدَانَ، وَكَانَ نَسْرٌ لِذِي الْكَلَاعِ مِنْ حَمِيرٍ

‘Abd al-Razzāq: from Ma’mar from Qatādah, concerning where He the Almighty says: ‘Do not renounce your gods! Do not renounce *Wadd’*, *Suwā’*, *Yaghuth*, *Ya’uq*, or *Nasr!*’ He said: ‘They were the ‘gods’ worshipped by the people of Nuḥ, thereafter, the Arabs worshipped them. *Wadd’* was at Kulayb in Doumat al-Jandal; *Suwā’* was to the Hudtheel, *Yaghuth* was to the tribe of Ghutaḥayf from Murād at Jarf, *Ya’uq* was at Hamdān and *Nasr* was to the Dhi al-Kallāh from Ḥimyar.’²¹

²⁰ al-Fāqihī, *Akhbār Makkah* [Vol. 5, p. 141, no. 71, *Shamela* edition]. The original Arabic book provides the narration of al-Fāqihī in full. Here for the translation, this is omitted as it is identical to the wording which is reported in Bukhārī. The only difference to the *isnād*, is that it begins with Muḥammad ibn Thawr.

²¹ *Tafsir* ‘Abd al-Razzāq [Vol. 3, p. 349]

Note here that Qatādah did not provide a further addition. Thereafter in his *Tafsir*, ‘Abd al-Razzāq immediately followed it up with:

عَنْ ابْنِ جُرَيْجٍ عَنْ عَطَاءِ الْخُرَّاسَانِيِّ عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ مِثْلَهُ إِلَّا أَنَّهُ قَالَ صَارَتْ الْأَوْثَانُ الَّتِي كَانَتْ فِي قَوْمِ نُوحٍ فِي الْعَرَبِ ثُمَّ ذَكَرَ مِثْلَ حَدِيثِ قَتَادَةَ

From Ibn Jurayj from Aṭā’ al-Khurāsāni from Ibn ‘Abbās, reporting similar to it, except that he said: ‘All the *Awthān* (idols) which were worshiped by the people of Nuḥ were worshiped by the Arabs later on,’ then he mentioned similar to the *ḥadith* of Qatādah.²²

Identifying the narrator Aṭā’ as being Aṭā’ al-Khurāsāni is also recorded in *al-Jamah al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*:

أَخْرَجَهُ أَبُو مَسْعُودٍ فِي تَرْجَمَةِ عَطَاءِ بْنِ أَبِي رَبَاحٍ، ثُمَّ قَالَ إِنَّ حِجَابَ بْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَبْدَ الرَّزَّاقِ رَوِيَاهُ عَنِ ابْنِ جُرَيْجٍ فَقَالَ عَنْ عَطَاءِ الْخُرَّاسَانِيِّ. وَقَدْ ذَكَرَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ الْبُرْقَانِيُّ عَنِ الْإِسْمَاعِيلِيِّ نَحْوَ ذَلِكَ، وَحَكَاهُ عَنِ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الْمَدِينِيِّ. وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ

It is reported by Abu Mas’ud in the biography of Aṭā’ ibn Abi Rabaḥ, thereafter he said: Ḥajjāj ibn Muḥammad and ‘Abd al-Razzāq narrated it from Ibn Jurayj, they said from Aṭā’ al-Khurāsāni. It is mentioned by Abu Bakr al-Barqāni from al-Ismā’ili, mentioning about that and it is narrated from Ali ibn al-Madini, and Allah knows best.²³

The truth behind this *athar* (narrative) is that it is not established as being from Ibn ‘Abbās because it is interrupted in two places. Al-Bukhāri reports it only with the forename given - Aṭā’, without further attribution. ‘Abd al-Razzāq reports this *athar* in his *Tafsir* with an explicit attribution, stating it is Aṭā’ al-Khurāsāni from Ibn ‘Abbās. The majority of scholars concur that al-Bukhāri errs here, thinking that the Aṭā’ is Aṭā’ ibn Abi Rabaḥ. In fact, the correct viewpoint is that it is Aṭā’ al-Khurāsāni as it is recorded in the *Muṣṣanaḥ* of ‘Abd al-Razzāq. Ḥajjāj ibn Muḥammad al-‘Awar followed suit in this and both of them firmly established by the judge of Sana’a Hishām ibn Yusuf al-Abnāwi in Ibn Jurayj. It should be noted that the narrator

²² Ibid.

²³ al-Ḥumaydi *al-Jamah’ al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* [Vol. 2, p. 84 (Shamela edition)]

Hishām ibn Yusuf clarifies that the Aṭā’ is Aṭā’ al-Khurāsāni, which is confirmed by what the Imām Ali ibn al-Madini said in *al-Ilal*:

سمعت هشام بن يوسف قال: قال لي ابن جريج سألت عطاء عن التفسير من البقرة وآل عمران؟ فقال: اعفني من هذا. قال هشام: فكان بعد إذا قال: عطاء، عن ابن عباس قال الخراساني. قال هشام: فكتبنا ما كتبنا، ثم مللنا. قال علي: يعني كتبنا (ما كتبنا) أنه عطاء الخراساني. قال علي بن المديني: وإنما كتبت هذه القصة لأن محمد بن ثور كان يجعلها: عطاء، عن ابن عباس فظن الذين حملوها عنه أنه عطاء بن أبي رباح

I heard Hishām ibn Yusuf say, ‘Ibn Jurayj said to me; I asked Aṭā’ about the *Tafsir* from *al-Baqara* and *al-Imrān*.’ So he said: ‘Spare me from this.’ Hishām said: ‘It was after when he said: ‘Aṭā’ from Ibn ‘Abbās,’ he said: ‘al-Khurāsāni.’ Hishām said: ‘We wrote what we wrote, then tired.’ Ali said: ‘By - we wrote what we wrote – meaning, that he is Aṭā’ al-Khurāsāni.’ Ali ibn al-Madini said: ‘Rather, I wrote this story because Muḥammad ibn Thawr used to make it (as) - Aṭā’ from Ibn ‘Abbās. So those who transmitted it thought it was (referring to) Aṭā’ ibn Abi Rabaḥ.²⁴

It can be found in the seminal work *Tuḥfat al-Ashrāf bi’Marifatul Atrāf*, as well as in *Tahzeeb al-Tahzeeb*, together with many other references too.²⁵ In actuality, the blame for this error doesn’t fall upon the Imām’s Ibn Jurayj or al-Bukhāri, it actually lies with Hishām ibn Yusuf and his companions, from among them, Muḥammad ibn Thawr. They were negligent in this matter with the reluctance to put the full proper attribution of Aṭā’ al-Khurāsāni. Instead, it was abbreviated to just Aṭā’. It is *wājib* to provide the full attribution and it should have been recorded when dictating it, otherwise it is *Tadlees al-Shuyukh* (misrepresentation of scholars), be that intentional or otherwise.

Aṭā’ al-Khurāsāni did not hear from Ibn ‘Abbās. Moreover, Ibn Jurayj did not hear *Tafsir* from Aṭā’ al-Khurāsāni, rather, he took it from a book by way of his son, ‘Uthman ibn Aṭā’ and looked at it. From this, Ibn Jurayj did not see anything untoward with it by saying: ‘*Akhbaranā fi Manāwala*

²⁴ See: al-Mizzi, *Tahzeeb al-Kamāl fi Asmā’ al-Rijāl* [Vol. 7, no. 4568, p. 158]. The entire entry for Aṭā’ al-Khurāsāni spans [pp. 153/158].

²⁵ See: al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Mizzi, *Tuḥfat al-Ashrāf bi’Marifatul Atrāf* [Vol. 5, p. 90], essentially repeating what is in *Tahzeeb*; and al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahzeeb al-Tahzeeb* [Vol. 7, p. 190]

wal'Kitābah.' Šāliḥ ibn Aḥmad Ḥanbal mentioned in *al-'Ilal* from Ali ibn al-Madini, he said: 'I asked Yaḥya ibn Sa'eed al-Qaḥṭān about the *ḥadith* of Ibn Jurayj from Aṭā' al-Khurāsāni, so he said *daef* (weak), (even though) he would say *Akhbaranā* (reported to us).' He said: 'Yet it is nothing, it is just a book that is handed to him.'²⁶ In fact I would argue, it is far worse than that. It was actually handed to him by his son, Uthmān ibn Aṭā' al-Khurāsāni and he speaks in relation to that, but he is not considered *thiqa* or *qawi*. It cannot be ascertained whether he has tampered with the book, neither do we know the level of organisation or arrangement that it was in, let alone its formatting, criteria or even punctuation marks. Yet this is the very same Aṭā' ibn Abi Muslim al-Khurāsāni, may Allah have mercy upon him, that was known to be on *Jihad*, virtues and worship. Even with that he is not considered to be among the scholars known for being diligent or having precision. He has *irsāl* and *Tadlees* and this is *maqṭu'*. Scholars are agreed upon his ranking and status. It is also said of him that he conceals defects and may on occasion deceive.

Ibn Hajar's objections

al-Ḥāfiẓ claimed that this *ḥadith*, is specific to him, and another *isnād* by itself, according to al-Bukhāri could possibly be attributed to Aṭā' ibn Abi Rabaḥ. This is outlined in *al-Tahzeeb* in response to the argument made by al-Mizzi:

I say: the author presents this from the context that the Aṭā' which is mentioned in these two *ḥadith* is al-Khurāsāni, that there was *wahm* (delusion) which took place in the attribution of al-Bukhāri regarding their sourcing, because Aṭā' al-Khurāsāni did not hear from Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn Jurayj did not hear the *Tafsir* from Aṭā' al-Khurāsāni. Hence the two *ḥadith* are each *munqaṭi* in two places, and al-Bukhāri sourced it upon the assumption that (the Aṭā' mentioned) was (Aṭā')

²⁶ Reference to this citation can also be found in in the *'Ilal* of al-Tirmidhi, *Faṭḥ al-Bāri* by Ibn Ḥajar, [Vol. 10, p. 832] and by al-Suyūṭi, *al-Tawshih Sharḥ al-Jāmi' al-Šaḥīḥ* [Vol. 4, p. 300]. The phrasing, '*Akhbaranā fi Manāwala wal'Kitābah*' which is left transliterated broadly relates to receipt by way of transference in writing. See: See: Ibn Šalāḥ, (2006) *An Introduction of the Science of Ḥadith [Kitāb Ma'rifa Anwā' Ulum al-ḥadith]*, translated by Dr. Eerik Dickinson (Reading: Garnet Publishing), [pp. 118/122].

Ibn Abi Rabāḥ. Yet it is not conclusive that al-Bukhāri included them on the basis of Aṭā' al-Khurāsāni, it is doubtful matter. There is no hindrance to the possibility that Ibn Jurayj heard the two *ḥadith* from Aṭā' ibn Abi Rabāḥ in a context different from that of *Tafsir*, excluding them from his *Tafsir*.

If their veracity in the *Tafsir* of Aṭā' al-Khurāsāni can be established, it doesn't prevent them from also being assigned to Aṭā' ibn Abi Rabāḥ. This is clear, but it is required. It is not appropriate to judge al-Bukhāri based upon possibilities, since the cause of the confusion is towards his *Shaykh*, Ali ibn al-Madini. It is confirmed that the editor was aware of this cause, if not the case, he would have provided a statement from this copy in his *Tafsir*, not specifically to just these two *ḥadith*. And Allah knows best, particularly given that al-Bukhāri had mentioned Aṭā' al-Khurāsāni in *al-Ḍua' fā'*.²⁷

In response to this, we would argue that these are nothing but fallacies borne of stubbornness. al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Mizzi made mention of the two *ḥadith* in the entry for Aṭā' al-Khurāsāni in *Tahzeeb al-Kamāl* because they are definitely attributed to him. Moreover, it is also stated that al-Bukhāri included them based upon *his belief* that they were stemming from Aṭā' ibn Abi Rabaḥ. Thus, what al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar has outlined doesn't provide any compelling evidence to rebut this matter. Moreover, al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar errs where he says that there is the possibility that Ibn Jurayj heard the two narrations in a different context or subject to that of *Tafsir* from Aṭā' ibn Abi Rabaḥ. To respond directly to this, yes, it is not *logically* impossible, but it misses the most critical point – did it *actually happen*? This is a matter of narration which can only be established by way of a reliable narrative that is worthy of consideration. So where is that narration? It is absent, it doesn't exist. Compounding this is the testimony of Hishām ibn Yusuf. He said that what Ibn Jurayj had from Aṭā' ibn Abi Rabaḥ in terms of *Tafsir* was limited to that of *Surah al-Baqara* (ch2) and *al-'Imran* (ch3), at the most, which is what the *faqih* would need, and certainly not as far up to, or including *Surah Nuḥ* (ch71). Aṭā' ibn Abi Rabāḥ is foremost a *faqih*, not a man from *Tafsir*. Hence there is no weight to any argument that this could have been heard or

²⁷ Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahzeeb al-Tahzeeb* [Vol. 7, p. 190]

mentioned under a different subject other than *Tafsir*, neither does it hold any plausibility.

The attribution of blame or confusion to the Shaykh of al-Bukhāri, Ali ibn al-Madini is another clear error, bordering on obstinacy. There is no necessity of reason nor *Shari'ah* requiring al-Bukhāri to know *everything* relating to *'Ilal* from Ali ibn al-Madini. It is possible that Ali ibn al-Madini may have compiled the book after al-Bukhāri journeyed in search of knowledge. Furthermore, it is noted the quote of al-Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar contains exaggeration to present the matter as being what it is not. Lastly, the claim that if this were not the case, al-Bukhāri would have included a statement upon this in the book of *Tafsir*. Yet this imposes on al-Bukhāri something that he didn't commit to. His work is entitled *al-Jāmi al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar*, and the book of *Tafsir* in *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhāri is not a compendium of *Tafsir*, but a very concise one. If al-Ḥāfiz had reviewed the matter of *Tafsir* verse by verse, he might have found that this particular version doesn't provide greater information for other specific areas. Alternatively, al-Bukhāri may have lent towards one *Tafsir* as opposed to another. In fact, al-Ḥāfiz provides an echo of this in *Fath al-Bāri*, where he says:

Except how could that be concealed from al-Bukhāri given his strictness in the conditions of continuous reporting, relying mostly upon Ali ibn al-Madini in relation to the *'Ilal*. His Shaykh was studious and he is the one who drew attention to the story. What supports this is that he did not write about the sourcing in this copy, (regarding) what is mentioned for the *isnād* in two places, the other in relation to *nikāḥ*. If the matter was concealed to him more so the reason to take it out because from the apparent it appears it conforms to his conditions.²⁸

Suffice here is to provide the words of Imām al-'Ayni, as he writes in *Umdat al-Qāri Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri*:

²⁸ *Fath al-Bāri* [Vol. 9, p. 577]. The reference to the other entry that al-Ḥāfiz refers to is the narration included in the book of divorce, as it pertains to marrying the *mushrikāt* who embraced Islam and their *'iddah*. Here the *isnād* given by al-Bukhāri is: Ibrāhīm ibn Musa narrated to us Hishām ibn Yusuf reported to us from Ibn Jurayj - Aṭā' said, from Ibn 'Abbās.

وقيل: في معاضدة البخاري في هذا، إنه بخصومه عند ابن جريج عن عطاء الخراساني، وعن عطاء بن أبي رباح جميعاً ولا يخفى على البخاري ذلك مع تشدده في شرط الاتصال واعتماده عليه، ويؤيد هذا أنه لم يكثر من تخريج هذا وإنما ذكره بهذا الإسناد في موضعين هذا والآخر في النكاح، ولو كان يخفى عليه ذلك لاستكثر من إخرجه لأن ظاهره على شرطه. قلت: فيه نظر لا يخفى لأن تشدده في شرط الاتصال لا يستلزم عدم الخفاء عليه أصلاً: فسبحان من لا يخفى عليه شيء

And it was said: Regarding the support of al-Bukhari in this matter, it is specific to Ibn Jurayj, from both Aṭā' al-Khurāsāni, and Aṭā' ibn Abi Rabaḥ. And that is not hidden from al-Bukhāri given his strictness upon the conditions underpinning continuity of transmissions, and the reliance he placed upon it, he did not often mention this narration. Rather, he only mentioned it with this *isnād* in two instances: this, and another concerning marriage. If it were hidden from him, he would have mentioned it more often because its apparent meaning is in line with its condition. I say: *fihī nazar*, his strictness in the conditions for the connectivity of the channel does not necessitate that it is not (a matter) concealed from him originally. Glory be unto Him, of which nothing is concealed.²⁹

What strengthens the argument for the invalidity of making the attribution of Aṭā' to Aṭā' ibn Abi Rabaḥ in this *athar* which al-Bukhāri cited, is confirmation that the ruling to be applied here is the narrative is in fact broken, and that this is actually not from Ibn 'Abbās. He is innocent from the attribution made in this narrative. There are a series of additional points that will further substantiate this argument. Among them are the following - firstly, the inappropriate use of the phrasing within the narration – ‘the names of righteous men from the people of Nuḥ,’ which does not accord with the eloquence and linguistic accuracy for which Ibn 'Abbās is renowned for, let alone the preservation and astute memory of Aṭā' ibn Abi Rabaḥ. It would have been better or more appropriate to say, for example ‘The names of righteous men that were before the time of Nuḥ, or ‘The names of righteous men from the companions of the Prophets who had existed before Nuḥ,’ as it was mentioned in another pathway of the same *ḥadīth*, albeit even if *ḍa'eef* or *bāṭil*. That will be mentioned shortly. Similarly, the other stories which resemble these and the alternate channels which mention ‘men or

²⁹ al-'Ayni, *Umdat al-Qāri Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri* [Vol. 19, p. 377]

Aṣṇām after Adam or from the children of Adam,’ or ‘men or *Aṣṇām* after Nuḥ.’

Internet discussions

Both the early scholars as well as those contemporary have queried the form this has taken. Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Uthaymeen touched upon this in his *Sharḥ Kashf al-Shubuhāt*, even if tentatively. He wrote: ‘And this *Tafsir* raises a novel problem where he, may Allah be pleased with him says: ‘These are the names of righteous men from the people of Nuḥ. The apparent meaning of the Qur’ān is that it is before Nuḥ.’ After mentioning the verse in the *Surah* he continues: ‘The apparent meaning of the verse is that the people of Nuḥ used to worship them, and Nuḥ censured them regarding that. The context of the verse indicates what Ibn ‘Abbās mentioned, except that the apparent context suggests that these righteous people existed *before* Nuḥ, peace be upon him. And Allah knows best.’³⁰

Responses to objections of this sort are generally weak, tending to resort to figurative interpretation as a means to escape from the truth. It is permissible to say that a man or men are from the people of a certain individual, even if they existed before him. This was claimed by one so called ‘Abu Umar al-Samarqandi,’ in response to an objection raised by Abul’Waleed in a discussion forum, *Multaqa Ahl-ul-Ḥadith*. He wrote: ‘There’s no valid objection, and Allah knows best, between the *ayah* and the *athar*. This is because it is possible that the man or men are from the people of a certain person even if they existed before him. As for the *athar* transmitted from Ibn ‘Abbās may Allah be pleased with him, he says in it ‘from the people of Nuḥ’, he doesn’t say ‘before Nuḥ.’ Strangely, Abul’Waleed himself referred to the break in the *ḥadith* and here he said: ‘Note – this *athar* is subject to a break in transmission between Aṭā’ and Ibn ‘Abbās. (This is) because the Aṭā’ which is mentioned is Aṭā’ al-Khurāsāni, which is correct. Likewise, Ibn Jurayj did not hear *Tafsir* from Aṭā’ al-Khurāsāni, but rather took it from his son, he is Uthmān. Ibn Ḥajar, may

³⁰ al-Uthaymeen, *Sharḥ Kashf al-Shubuhāt*, [p. 25]. Shaykh Uthaymeen d. 1421 AH [2001 CE]. A full translation of this work is available to the reader in English: al-Uthaymeen (2015), *Explanation of Muhammad Ibn’ Abdul-Wahhaab’s Removal of Doubts*, Translated by Qasim Mutiva, Second edition (IIIN Bookstore and Da’wah Center: Philadelphia), see: [pp. 85/87]

Allah have mercy upon him, attempted to address the issue in a manner which is not widely accepted; see: *Fath al-Bāri*, Volume 8.’

The response was skilful, excellent. In response to the question about why al-Bukhāri included the *athar* in his collection of *Ṣaḥīḥ* despite its broken channel, the brother Muḥammad ibn al-Ameen, may Allah grant him success, remarked: ‘Why did al-Bukhāri include the *athar* in his collection of *Ṣaḥīḥ* despite its broken channel and he could have remarked upon the matter?’ The response was al-Bukhāri included it because he saw it as being *Ṣaḥīḥ*! Then he said: ‘Yet there is a problem as to whether he can assure ourselves as to whether Ibn ‘Abbās has taken it from an Israelite story or not, and Allah knows best.’ He responded: ‘Perhaps you mean that this *athar* is also narrated by Muḥammad ibn Ka’b in a similar manner as mentioned by al-Suyuṭi in *al-Durr al-Manthur*. If that is the case, then it is possible that Muḥammad is the one who narrated it from Ibn ‘Abbās, and this possibility is stronger. However, if I have misunderstood your question, please clarify it. May Allah bless you. What is your opinion on what Ibn Ḥajar narrated from (Ali) Ibn al-Madini and Yaḥya (ibn Sa’eed) al-Qaḥṭān regarding this *ḥadith*?’ Clearly he has done himself a major disservice with such a grave mistake. The *ḥadith* is not originally from Ibn ‘Abbās, it could well be a fabrication and false attribution to him. Despite that, it would seem more probable that Muḥammad ibn Ka’b al-Quraḥi is the narrator who narrated it from Ibn ‘Abbās. Naturally, the individual named ‘Muḥammad al-Ameen’ didn’t respond to Abul’Waleed’s last question. Nor for that matter did anyone else provide a glimmer of a response in that regard. Then the discussion shifted to debating when the prayer of *istikhara* should be performed, assuming that the archival arrangement in the comprehensive library is accurate! In truth, the men from the renegade sect of Wahhabism have put their minds into retirement by obstinately refusing to think let alone contemplate. They have attributed sanctity and even infallibility to Ibn Taymiyyah and MIAW, so it is right that they are judged as *Rawā’if al-Sunnah* (rejectionists of the *Sunnah*).

Second, the channel of narration from Ali ibn Abi Ṭalḥa from Ibn ‘Abbās regarding the verse upon which he said: ‘This is the *Aṣṇām* that was worshipped during the era of Nuḥ,’ is short and concise, only to those words. As has been outlined in the *Tafsir* by al-Ṭabari, the *isnād* being: ‘Ali narrated to us Abu Ṣāliḥ narrated to us Mu’āwiya narrated to me from Ali from Ibn

‘Abbās.’ It is *Ṣaḥīḥ* as per *al-Masbur min al-Tafsir bil’Mā’tthur*: ‘It is cited by al-Ṭabari with a good *isnād* from Ali ibn Abi Ṭalḥa from Ibn ‘Abbās.’³¹ Moreover, the majority of the scholars concur that this is better, because even though Ali ibn Abi Ṭalḥa did not hear from Ibn ‘Abbās, he only narrates what he heard from Mujāhid and al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad. As has been outlined in *Jāmi’ al-Taḥseel*: ‘Duḥaym said: ‘He did not hear *Tafsir* from Ibn ‘Abbās.’ Abu Hātim said: ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭalḥa from Ibn ‘Abbās is *mursal*. But he narrates from Mujāhid and al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad. Mentioned by our Shaykh al-Mizzi in *al-Tahzeeb*, that he narrates from Ka’b ibn Mālik, and that is also *mursal*.’³² The clear absence of any narrative by way of Ali ibn Abi Ṭalḥa concerning the story of the ‘righteous men from the people of Nuḥ,’ or before him, and that his narration is succinctly limited to the phrase: ‘This is the *Aṣnām* that was worshipped during the era of Nuḥ,’ in his great work of *Tafsir* provides cogent evidence for what we have set out previously. Namely, that the claim of attribution of Aṭā’ being Aṭā’ ibn Abi Rabāḥ and not Aṭā’ al-Khurāsāni is quite clearly wrong. And Ibn ‘Abbās himself is absolved from any attribution to this.

Third, what we said regarding the channel of narration from Ali ibn Abi Ṭalḥa from Ibn ‘Abbās also applies to the channel of narration by way of al-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Muzā’him. Indeed, he is known to take *Tafsir* from Ibn ‘Abbās either directly or from Sa’eed ibn Jubayr. When mention of the verse concerning the great deluge occurs, his statements are concise: ‘This is the *Aṣnām* that was worshipped during the era of Nuḥ,’ and ‘It is the gods that existed in Yemen,’ as mentioned by al-Ṭabari in his *Tafsir*.³³

Fourth, as it has been cited in *Iṭḥāf al-Zā’ir wa Iṭrāf al-Qayyim lil’Sā’ir* by Abul’Yaman Ibn Asākir:

al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad reported to us in writing, may Allah have mercy upon him, Abu Ṭāhir al-Ḥāfiẓ narrated to us Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wāhid ibn ‘Abd al-Aziz reported to us Muḥammad ibn Ali ibn ‘Amr reported to us Muḥammad ibn Ya’qub ibn Ishāq reported to us Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Umar narrated to us al-‘Abbās ibn Abdullah narrated to us Abul’Mughira narrated to us Ismā’il ibn

³¹ *al-Masbur min al-Tafsir bil’Mā’tthur* [Vol. 4, p. 540]

³² *Jāmi’ al-Taḥseel*, p. 240

³³ *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari [Vol.13, pp. 253/255, (print edition), *Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyyah*, 2013]

‘Ayyāsh narrated to us Ibn Jurayj narrated to me from Ikrima from Ibn ‘Abbās, may Allah be pleased with, in relation to the saying of Allah the Mighty and Sublime: ‘*And do not renounce Wadd’, Suwā’ , Yaghuth, Ya’uq, or Nasr!*’

He said: ‘These are the names of righteous men from the Companions of Prophets that were before Nuḥ.’ He said: ‘When they perished, the *Shayāteen* inspired their *awliyā’* to set up stone monuments within their councils/gatherings, calling them by their names to remind them of them.’ He said: ‘They acted upon this, but they were only worshipped when those had perished, until those (following them) had (too) perished and the study of knowledge (receded), they were worshipped.’ He said: *Wadd’* was to Kalb at Dumat al-Jandal, with regards to *Suwā’*, this was at Hudtheel. Regarding *Yaghuth*, it was to the Murād thereafter to the tribe of Ghateef at Jawf near Sabā’. As for *Ya’uq*, it was at Hamdān and *Nasr* was to the Ḥimyar thereafter to Dhi Kallah.’³⁴

However, despite being from the well renowned scholars that are *thiqa* and *ḥāfiẓ*, Ibn Jurayj did not meet Ikrima, nor did he hear from him. That much is confirmed from *Jāmi’ al-Taḥseel*:

ذكر بن المدني أنه لم يلق أحدا من الصحابة وقال أيضا لم يسمع بن جريج من المطلب بن عبد الله بن حنطب كان يأخذ أحاديثه من بن أبي يحيى عنه وذكر بن المدني أيضا أصحاب بن عباس ثم قال ولم يلق يعني بن جريج منهم جابر بن زيد ولا عكرمة ولا سعيد بن جبير وقال بن الجنيذ سألت يحيى بن معين سمع بن جريج من مجاهد قال في حرف أو حرفين في القراءة لم يسمع غير ذلك وكذلك قال البرديجي وغيره،... إلخ

(Ali) Ibn al-Madini mentioned that he did not meet a single Companion. And he also said, that Ibn Jurayj did not hear from al-Muṭṭalib ibn Abdullah ibn Ḥaṭṭab, he used to take his *aḥādith* from Abu Yaḥya. Ibn al-Madini further mentioned about the students of Ibn ‘Abbās, then he said, meaning that Ibn Jurayj didn’t meet Jābir ibn Zayd, nor Ikrima nor Sa’eed ibn Jubayr. And Ibn Junayd said, I asked Yaḥya ibn Ma’in whether Ibn Jurayj heard from Mujāhid. He

³⁴ Ibn Asākir, *Iṭḥāf al-Zā’ir wa Iṭrāf al-Qayyim lil’Sā’ir* [p. 67]

said: In one or two letters of reading, but nothing heard other than that. And like al-Burdaji and other than him, etc.³⁵

Despite his accolades, Ibn Jurayj is considered as being a *mudallis* with having the worst of *tadlees*. As he is described by Imām al-Dāraqutni: ‘The evilest of *tadlees* is the *tadlees* of Ibn Jurayj, for he has ugly *tadlees* which is only used when from a *majruḥ*.’³⁶ Thus, it is concluded that Ibn Jurayj must have taken this from a man (narrator) who is *majhul majruḥ*. Accordingly, it is highly likely that the *ḥadīth* of al-Bukhāri is from Aṭā’ al-Khurāsāni, who in turn has taken that from a *majhul majruḥ* by itself. He trusted him and believed him, in turn attributing it to being from Ibn ‘Abbās. Or, it could be from the acts of his son Uthmān ibn Aṭā’ al-Khurāsāni, who included him in his father’s book.

This is if the *isnād* from Abul’Yaman Ibn Asākir to Ismā’il ibn ‘Ayyāsh is regarded as being reliable. However, it is not because the narrator Muḥammad ibn Ya’qub ibn Ishāq is Muḥammad ibn Ya’qub ibn Ishāq al-Khaṣeeb, and he has an entry in *Tārikh Baghdād*: ‘Muḥammad ibn Ya’qub ibn Ishāq al-Khaṣeeb: narrates from his brother Aḥmad and from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Umar al-Yamāni, Abu Ḥafṣ ibn Shāheen narrated from him.’³⁷ It is known that he narrates from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Umar ibn Yunus al-Ḥanafī al-Yamāni, resident of Baghdad. This narrator though has many *manākeer* (pl. *munkar*, disclaimed reports) and other strange things, he has been accused of fabricating and stealing *ḥadīth*, as it has been mentioned in *Tārikh Baghdād*, *Ṭabaqāt Isfahān*, *Lisān al-Mizān* and in *al-Kashaf al-Ḥatheeth*.³⁸ It is not unlikely that he may have stolen the *matn* of al-Bukhāri, and placed it to this *isnād*, in an effort to enhance it. Despite that, he did not dare seek to make the attribution for this to Aṭā’ ibn Abi Rabāḥ, but instead did so to make it appear from Ikrima, but in doing so rendered this invalid, unreliable and fallen. One shouldn’t be surprised by

³⁵ *Jāmi’ al-Taḥseel* [Vol. 1, p. 472]

³⁶ Several references can be sourced for this quote from al-Dāraqutni, including that provided by Ibn Ḥajar in *Ṭabaqāt al-Mudalliseen*, [p. 41]. Essentially here meaning that the *Tadlees* of Ibn Jurayj occurs from narrators who have been severely criticised.

³⁷ *Tārikh Baghdād* [Vol. 3, p. 391]

³⁸ *Tārikh Baghdād* [Vol. 5, p. 65], i [Vol. 3, p. 75], *Lisān al-Mizān* [Vol. 1, p. 282] and *al-Kashaf al-Ḥatheeth* [Vol. 1, p. 59].

this. The One who has power over all things, encompassing all with knowledge, the Mighty and Sublime has emphatically said:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَرُزُّنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

*Indeed, we have revealed the dhikr and indeed are its preserver.*³⁹

Criticism not censure

Despite what has been outlined thus far, this is not a blemish or attack on Imām al-Bukhāri. Indeed he was truly a mountain of a Ḥāfiz, the Imām of the temporal world of his time. If he made a mistake or had a minor delusion, that is not a wholesale discreditation of him, for he was not infallible. Various *wahm* that he had were evident in his work entitled *Kitāb al-Tārikh al-Kabir*, as has been long identified, for example by Imām al-Khaṭṭeeb al-Baghdādi in his work entitled - *Muwaḍḍiḥ Awhām al-Jamah’ Wal’Tafreeq*. Contained within the seminal book, he took pains to refute many of the ignorant who claimed knowledge and denied such research and investigation with solid arguments. We mention this to highlight the depth of his knowledge and his keenness in addressing such matters. He wrote:

In the book entitled *al-Tarikh* by Abu Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Ismā’il al-Bukhāri, there are several instances which provide corroboration to what Abul’Ḥasan al-Dāraqutni mentioned where he combined two things into one and one thing into two, and so on and so forth. Such instances are mentioned, by the will of Allah the Almighty, clarifying their intended meanings and bringing them closer to our belief and supporting our claims with evidence. His followers, including those who share similar misconceptions, except for al-Bukhāri in this regard, also follow his path. We discuss the differences among scholars regarding these matters and identify who is closer to the correct position in what they claim. Then we proceed to outline the structure of this book and present it in a concise manner, properly organised by chapter.

Some who read this work, after reviewing what we have written may harbour a grievance towards us with negative assumptions. They

³⁹ *Qur’ān*, 15: 9

may in fact perceive that the intention is to criticise those who came before us, to expose the faults of our esteemed scholars of the *Salaf*. How could that be when we have mentioned them, benefited from their radiant knowledge, followed in their footsteps, and clearly depicted their teachings? We have taken inspiration from their noble path, distancing ourselves from ignorance. There is no comparison between them and us except as mentioned by Abu ‘Amr ibn al-Alā’: Abul’Ḥasan Ali ibn Aḥmad ibn Umar al-Muqri reported to us Abu Ṭāhir ‘Abd al-Wāhid ibn Umar ibn Muḥammad ibn Abi Hishām reported to us Muḥammad ibn al-‘Abbās al-Yazeedi narrated to us al-Rayāshi narrated to us from al-Ṣami’i, he said: Abu ‘Amr said, ‘We are but nothing when compared to those preceding us, like the tip of a date palm amidst the long roots.’

When Allah the Almighty appointed leaders and guides for each community, it became incumbent upon the seekers of guidance to follow their clear signs and for those who uphold the truth to follow in their footsteps. Those blessed with the ability to research, comprehend, and discern in the field of knowledge have a duty to elucidate what has been neglected and rectify what has been overlooked. For they are not infallible and immune from error, nor are they free from occasional lapses. This is the right of the scholar upon the learner and the obligation of the latter to the former. It is hoped that those who come across our book *The History of Medina* and the accounts of its narrators, including the mention of its scholars unrelated to its inhabitants, will consider our excuses. We have presented in it the virtues and merits of al-Bukhāri, dispelling any doubts about our intentions and addressing any accusations of tampering with his work, if Allah the Almighty so will.⁴⁰

One must conclude that the narratives which are *munqaṭi* and *mursal* narratives, together with fabrications and outright lies, should be consigned to the dustbin of history. They were outlined only to demonstrate the corruption that has befogged the minds from the sect of Wahhābism, leading to not only their intellectual bankruptcy, but also their profound misguidance doctrinally. With their excessive extremism, coupled with deviant practices,

⁴⁰ al-Khaṭṭeab al-Baghdādi, *Muwaḍḍiḥ Awhām al-Jamah’ Wal’Ṭafreeq* [Vol. 1, p. 12]

they have waged war for too long against the Muslim *Ummah*. If it is blindly assumed that the narration purportedly from Ibn ‘Abbās is textually transmitted by *tawātur*, it doesn’t change the situation. Even if it was the case, which it isn’t, it is not a binding proof, because a single Companion is not considered infallible in his statements, opinions or acts. There is no difference between *Tafsir* or other than that. Nor is there any real meaning to the viewpoint of those who would claim that his statement in matters of *Tafsir* holds the ruling of being *marfu’* if it is not contradicted that by way of another Companion. We would say, bring forth your substantive proof if you are indeed truthful.

Even for this particular story, there are *other* channels of narration that have emerged that are in basic agreement with some details, yet differ crucially in others. Some of these channels of narration have many other additions and are from a group of *Ulemā’* of the *Tābi’een*, like ‘Urwa ibn al-Zubayr, Muḥammad ibn Qays, ‘Ubayd ibn Umayr, Ikrimah, al-Ḍaḥḥāk, Muḥammad ibn al-Bāqir, Qatādah, Ibn Ishāq and other than them. Some have been already mentioned, others will be set out shortly.

People would circulate these narratives, which were taken from a host of different sources, be that the stories of the Arabs, writings from the People of the Book or even the tales of the Nabateans. If we were to argue on the assumption made earlier that the narrative of Ibn ‘Abbās is credible, it would be of no surprise that he may have heard them from these variant sources. With the passage of time, he may well have believed that there was a kernel of truth underpinning these narratives, selecting those he deemed more reliable, then articulating them with the best wording and accuracy. No one doubts that Ibn ‘Abbās was a meticulous and erudite scholar. Maybe towards the end of his life he expressed a view upon such matters, given that the senior Companions, their scholars, the Mothers of Believers and the esteemed veterans of the campaigns had passed away, leaving only the like of Abdullah ibn Umar and Anas ibn Mālik, who were not the leading scholars of *Tafsir*, thus no one really objected to what Ibn ‘Abbās had said.

Even if we were to accept the view of the majority, which suggests that these were the names of deities worshipped by the people of Nuḥ, that would mean they existed over four thousand years before the advent of the Islamic

mission, or perhaps even much earlier.⁴¹ These names were passed down among the Arabs and other Semitic people until they reached the tribes mentioned by the narrative, predominantly South Arabian Yemeni tribes, through the influence of Ibn ‘Abbās and possibly others, as evident from the text of the Qur’ān, *Ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth*, *Seerah* as well as other materials. How did such beliefs arise in such an era that is so remote into the depths of pre-history? Knowledge of such can only be determined by way of transmission that is *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Yet there is no *Ṣaḥīḥ* transmission nor is there any *Wahy* that specifically addresses this. The *athar* of Ibn ‘Abbās is not *marfu’* and cannot be construed as *Wahy*. Stories such as these are nothing more than Israelite or Arabian myths, popular Nabatean folklore or the like. The good Imām, Qatādah seemed to readily acknowledge this, confining himself only to the first part of the *ḥadīth* purportedly to be from Ibn ‘Abbās, as did al-Ḍaḥḥāk, Ibn Zayd, and Ali ibn Ṭalḥa in his channel of narration from Ibn ‘Abbās.

The second half of the *athar* alleged to be from Ibn ‘Abbās, provides for detail concerning the names, purportedly to be from ‘righteous men’ from the people of Nuḥ.⁴² Yet the level of detail provided is internally inconsistent. It refers to the whisper made by *Shayṭān* and how this led to monuments being set up. But this can’t be determined by eye-witness account, and matters related to the unseen can only be provided for by *Wahy*. Compounding this, is how the narrative ends, by arguing that the monuments made were only worshipped *after* the people had died and knowledge of the original purpose forgotten. But if this was truly forgotten, how was it then ‘rediscovered’ for the purposes of the narration? The implication, for those who unquestioningly accept the *athar* alleged to be from Ibn ‘Abbās as being akin to *Wahy*, is that this must have been from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, despite not being attributed to him. But *Wahy* cannot, indeed does not, contain any inherent contradictions. Nor can the claim be advanced of the narrative being raised and attributed to the Prophet when clearly it is not. If the reasoning leading to the blind acceptance of the *athar*

⁴¹ It may well be that 4,000 years leans towards an incredibly conservative estimate. The era of Noah is probably at the earliest around 12,000 BCE given the scientific data we have on global cataclysmic flooding, or possibly even earlier, which cannot be excluded. If it is in fact the latter, then that would place his era far into the depths of pre-history, probably beyond 20,000 BCE.

⁴² Here in the Arabic edition there is a repetition of the narratives which have already been cited. For ease of reading, these have been omitted from the translation.

is not clearly defined, then naturally consideration need be given to other similar narratives which have similar import.

‘By the rivers of Babylon’ - fables and myths

To begin, following the last point made, the next infamous narrative is to be found within the *Tafsir* of Ibn Abi Ḥātim:

Aḥmad ibn Maṣṣūr narrated to us al-Ḥasan ibn Musa narrated to us Ya’qub narrated to us from Abul’Munṭaḥhar, he said, we mentioned Yazid ibn Muhallab in the presence of Abu Ja’far while he was standing praying. When he completed his prayer he said: ‘You mentioned about Yazid ibn Muallab, he was killed in the first land in which other than Allah was worshipped.’ Then, he mentioned *Wadd’*. ‘He said: *Wadd’* was a Muslim man that was beloved by his people. When he died, they encamped around his grave in the land of Babylon, and they mourned him. When Iblees saw their sorrow caused by his death, he disguised himself in the image of a man and said to them: ‘I have seen your sorrow because of this man’s death; can I make an image like him which could be put in your meeting place to make you remember him?’ They replied: ‘Yes.’

So he made an image that was likened to him. They put it in their meeting place in order to be reminded of him. When Iblees saw their interest in remembering him, he said: ‘Can I build a *timthāl* (statue) of him in the home of each one of you so that he would be in everyone’s house and you could remember him?’ They replied: ‘Yes.’ So he made a *timthāl* in his likeness for each of the households, and it reminded them of him. He said: And their children learned about what was done, so they made them see what they were made of and they reproduced it. They also learned about their remembrance of him, until they took him as a god whom they worshiped besides Allah – the children and their children. The first to be worshipped instead of Allah was the statue named *Wadd’*.⁴³

Al-Suyūṭī makes similar mention of this in *al-Durr al-Manthur*:

⁴³ *Tafsir* Ibn Abi Ḥātim, [Vol 10, pp. 3375/3376]. Ibn Kathir also records this in his respective *Tafsir* [Vol. 4, p. 427] and al-Suyūṭī in *al-Durr al-Manthur* [Vol. 8, p. 294]

وأخرج عبد بن حميد عن محمد بن كعب رضي الله عنه في قوله: (ولا يغوث ويعوق ونسرا وقد أضلوا كثيرا)، قال كانوا قوما صالحين بين آدم ونوح، فنشأ قوم بعدهم يأخذون كأخذهم في العبادة فقال لهم ابلis لو صورتم صورهم فكنتم تنظرون إليهم، فصوروا ثم ماتوا فنشأ قوم بعدهم فقال لهم ابلis: إن الذين كانوا من قبلكم كانوا يعبدوها

Narrated by ‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd from Muḥammad ibn Ka’b, may Allah be pleased with him, concerning where He says: ‘(Nor renounce) *Yaghuth, Ya’uq, or Nasr! They have led many astray.*’ He said: They were a righteous people between Adam and Nuḥ. A people that came after them also took after them in worship. Iblees said to them: ‘If you had images of them, you would gaze upon them in memorial.’ So they did this. As that generation passed away, other generations inherited the practice. Iblees said to them that those preceding them had worshipped them.⁴⁴

Do remember, as mentioned earlier, as per the *Tafsir* of al-Baghawi, his recording of the statement of Muḥammad ibn Ka’b that these were the names of ‘righteous people’ from the era of Adam and Nuḥ, peace be upon them.⁴⁵ Again, as noted by al-Suyuti in *al-Durr al-Manthur*:

وأخرج أبو الشيخ في العظمة عن محمد بن كعب القرظي قال: كان لأدم خمسة بنين ود وسواح ويغوث ويعوق ونسر فكانوا عبادا فمات رجل منهم فحزنوا عليه حزنا شديدا فجاءهم الشيطان فقال: حزنتم على صاحبكم هذا؟ قالوا: نعم، قال هل لكم أن أصور لكم مثله في قبلكم إذا نظرتم إليه ذكرتموه؟ قالوا لا، نكره أن تجعل لنا في قبلكم شيئا نصلي إليه، فأجعله في مؤخر المسجد؟ قالوا: نعم، فصوره لهم حتى ماتت خمستهم فصور صورهم في مؤخر المسجد، وأخرج الأشياء، حتى تركوا عبادة الله وعبدوا هؤلاء فبعث الله نوحا

Abu Shaykh cited in *al-Adthma* from Muḥammad ibn K’ab al-Quraḥi, he said: Adam had five sons; *Wadd’, Suwā’, Yaghuth, Ya’uq* and *Nasr*. They were ‘*Aābid* (righteous worshippers). When a man would die, the remaining survivors would grieve for him excessively. The *Shayṭān* came to them and said: ‘You are saddened by the loss of this companion?’ They replied: ‘Yes.’ He said: ‘Shall I depict an image the like of him for your *qiblah*; if you look at it, you will mention him?’ They replied: ‘No. We would dislike to make

⁴⁴ al-Suyuti *al-Durr al-Manthur* [Vol. 8, p. 293]

⁴⁵ See footnote 4. The citation from the *Tafsir* of al-Baghawi [Vol. 5, p. 157] is re-quoted. To avoid the repetition, this is omitted here.

anything like that in relation to our *qiblah* that we pray towards.’ (Shayṭān asked) It can be made at the back of the *masjid* (then)? They replied: ‘Yes.’ So he made an image of him for them. Subsequently, each of the (remaining) four-men died, one after the other. So he made images of each five at the back of the *masjid* and brought out those things out until they abandoned the worship of Allah. So Allah sent Nuḥ.⁴⁶

I would say, that the highlighted phrase ‘brought out those things,’ doesn’t have much meaning. It is either a distortion or an alteration with omission; it should properly be deleted. Perhaps it was originally ‘their children took these and reproduced them,’ as it is in similar narratives. Muḥammad ibn K’ab al-Quraḥi narrated each of these two differing stories. The second story has been narrated as if it is the narration by an eyewitness, who was personally present at the events, especially when *Shayṭān* came to them visiting as a guest. So this legend has no relation with the subject of ‘turning the graves into mosques,’ or ‘seeking refuge in graves,’ but it seems to be related to the subject of making images/statues for those which were people. The images, objects, or statues were placed in the back-end of the mosque, because they hated to put anything in the direction of prayer as the story alleges. Unfortunately the narrator, may Allah forgive him, neglected to tell us which direction this *qiblah* was facing – Mecca, Jerusalem, somewhere in the East or the North Pole? Al-Suyuti also cites the following in *al-Durr al-Manthur*:

وأخرج الفاكهي عن عبيد الله بن عبيد بن عمير قال أول ما حدثت الأصنام على عهد نوح، وكانت الأبناء تبر الأباء، فمات رجل منهم فجزع عليه فجعل لا يصبر عنه فاتخذ مثالا على صورته، فكلموا اشتاق إليه نظره ثم مات ففعل به كما فعل، ثم تتابعوا على ذلك فمات الأباء فقال الأبناء: ما اتخذ هذه أبوانا إلا أنها كانت آلهتهم فعبدوها

It is reported by al-Fāqihī from ‘Ubaydallah ibn ‘Ubayd ibn Umayr, he said: ‘The first occurrence of *Aṣnām* was during the era of Nuḥ, with the children honouring their ancestors. When a man from among them died, (the kin) were greatly saddened, without finding solace to bear the loss. So an image was made to resemble the deceased, whenever the deceased was missed, (the living) would look at it.

⁴⁶ Op. Cit.

Then (the children) died and the next generation followed suite. When the ancestors passed away the descendants said: ‘Our ancestors only took these as their gods, so we will worship them too.’⁴⁷

I would say this is a different attempt to explain the emergence of *Shirk*, but it doesn’t relate to the topic of ‘taking graves into mosques,’ or ‘seeking refuge in the grave,’ or the like, which is the obsession of the sect of Wahhābism. Rather, it seems to relate to the veneration of ancestors. A practice, taking a photo or image of the deceased which is not too dissimilar to that found in cultures of the Far East like China. The images are kept in the home, but there is no indication provided in the narrative that this was in graves, temples or mosques. So there isn’t a direct connection here to ‘taking graves into mosques,’ or ‘seeking refuge in the grave.’ As cited earlier, from the *Tafsir* of al-Ṭabari, the narration from Muḥammad ibn Qays stating that originally these were ‘righteous men’ from the progeny of Adam, peace be upon him.⁴⁸

I would say in relation to this, it seems lesser than the previous narratives. No mention is made of specific generations or the descendants / lineage of Adam. Neither is there a mention of *Shayṭān* appearing in human form, but rather it is a suggestion from him. Notably, there is no mention of ‘graves’ in this narrative but the depiction of images appears central to it. The location of these images or objects isn’t mentioned, although the inference would be that they were in the domestic dwelling. Crucially, the story mentions there was a change in belief. With the worship of these images or objects, there was the attribution that this had power over providing rain. The image thus perhaps is a conduit, clearly not a grave.

There is a unique channel recorded by Abu al-Rabi’ah Sulaymān ibn Musa ibn Sālim ibn Ḥassān al-Kilā’y al-Ḥumayri in his work of *Maghāzi*, he writes:

al-Wāqidi mentioned with an *isnād* from Abu Hurayrah, that the first to worship the *Aṣnām* occurred in the era of Nuḥ, peace be upon him,

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ As per footnote 2 above, *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari [Vol.13, pp. 253/255]. The reporting line from Ibn Ḥumayd, which is the first al-Ṭabari quotes in the long citation made earlier. For the sake of brevity, the repetition here is omitted.

and that *Wadd*, *Suwā*, *Yaghuth*, *Ya’uq* and *Nasr* were righteous men from the people of Nuḥ, people devoted to worship and righteousness. They died and were found by their family, but the people felt lonely given their loss. A man said to them: ‘Shall I not make images of them for you, from wood? So that you can look at them, finding solace therein?’ They replied: ‘Yes, if you are able.’ He said: ‘I can make images of them, but I cannot breathe a spirit into them.’ So he fashioned images (so much so) that they looked alive. The people of each house took an image of their companion, placing it therein, allowing some respite from grief. They remained as such, as Allah willed, until the generation perished.

Then, another generation succeeded them, then another, being upon that until they perished. Thereafter, a fourth-generation emerged, they said: ‘If we worshipped these people, they would have brought us closer to Allah and interceded for us with Him. They only increase us in the good, but we desire what brings us closer to Him.’ So they worshipped them until they perished, and it was worshipped after them. During the deluge at the time of Nuḥ peace be upon him, those *Aṣnām* were submerged and they stayed as such for as long as Allah willed. Then, ‘Amr ibn Luḥay brought them forth and apportioned them to the (various Arab) tribes.’⁴⁹

Here I would say that this channel doesn’t mention Iblees at all originally. It is also at odds with most of the other channels of reporting in this regard, being uniquely strange, particularly with regards to the mention of drawing close via them and seeking intercession. Evidently, such an accurate depiction in terms of the details given is suggestive of being an eyewitness account. But clearly that is completely false – the channel cannot have a trustworthy eyewitness to events with an *isnād* that is *mutaṣṣil*. It can only be provided by *wahy* (revelation) – and there is no *wahy* for this. Its purpose, is imaginary in purport, from the *ijtihād* of Abu Hurayrah, *if* the attribution to him is proved to be correct. It can only be understood by way of

⁴⁹ al-Ḥumayri, *al-Iktafā’ bi’ mā Taḍamnahū min Maghāzi Rasool-Allah wal’Thalātha al-Khulafā’*, pp. 64/65. Accessible via *The Internet Archive*: < <https://archive.org/details/Ektfaa/Ektfaa1-part1/page/n7/mode/2up>>

comparison against the fables and myths which were circulating among the Arabs at that time. Indeed, they are unbridled fantasies.

Analytical comments

Given the narratives that have been mentioned the following analytical points can be put forth. To begin, the theme relates to the sense of reverence or excessive love for the righteous and one's ancestors. *Shayṭān*, takes advance of this opportunity to whisper the suggestion to inaugurate monuments to be set up in their assembles in which they gathered, perhaps they were statues of their images. Although acceptance of the initial trap made by the *Shayṭān* came to fruition, the beginning generations did not worship the monuments. Thus, as per our approach to the understanding of what constitutes *ibādah* (worship), they didn't seem to accept any form of attribution of *Uluhiyyah* (divinity), including *Rububiyyah* (lordship) to these objects. Hence it wouldn't matter whether they bowed before them or addressed with salutations to the righteous, there was no *a priori* belief that the monuments or depictions were representation of other gods, or a set from a wider pantheon.

Secondly, comes the matter of 'forgotten knowledge,' or 'acquired/study of knowledge,' is also relevant. The matter of 'knowledge' in the context given, is that relating to the reality of these stone monuments, and not necessary knowledge per se, in other words, it doesn't relate to knowledge concerning *Deen* or matters of worldly affairs. Although the actual timespan isn't strictly fixed within the narratives, the inference is that there was ignorance regarding the original or true nature of these stone monuments (or statuettes and engraved images). That much is explicitly stated in the narrative which was attributed to Imām Abu Ja'far Muḥammad ibn al-Bāqir, they were known by the names. Perhaps these were inscribed on the base of the structure, assuming that writing was known at that time.

Thirdly, comes the point of 'that it was worship.' Given our correct definition of the terms, this would mean that the people had attributed some form of *Uluhiyyah*, including *Rububiyyah* or association besides Allah, to these objects. They perhaps believed that Allah or some part of Allah had merged or united with them, or that the objects were independent governing entities, having the power to bring rain through their intrinsic abilities or a

self-sustaining power. Naturally, this would constitute clear *kufir* and it is a belief of *Shirk*. Hence the follow-on additional rites that may have been associated with the monuments, is a secondary matter, even if it provides an addition to the belief of *kufir*. It is but the practical manifestation of that belief which precedes the action. It is not something that can be conceived independently of the belief to which it stems from. That much is clear as has been explicitly stated in the narrative attributed to Ubaydallah ibn Umayr, 'When the ancestors passed away the descendants said: 'Our ancestors only took these as their gods, so we will worship them too.' The belief *leads* to the establishment of specific acts or rites.

This, according to the sect of Wahhābism would mean that they bowed, prostrated, or lit candles, burned incense or had other such practices. And all of that to monuments whose true nature is unknown originally. What is only known is the association by names, without any appreciation of the reality of those names, and with certainty, they have no connection whatsoever with 'righteous men' from a bygone era. This is because the knowledge *had been forgotten* and none mentioned it any more. In the round, to actually believe that this constitutes some form of doctrinal or legal evidence shows you just how warped the minds of the leaders from the sect of Wahhābism really is. Not a single letter of these phantasms can be found in the divine texts, despite the wild claims of Imām Ibn Taymiyyah, as has been mentioned in *Majmu' al-Fatāwa'*:

وَهَذَا كَانَ أَوَّلَ سَبَابِ الشِّرْكِ فِي قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعِبَادَةِ الْأَوْثَانِ فِي النَّاسِ قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ كَانَ بَيْنَ
أَدَمَ وَنُوحٍ عَشْرَةُ قُرُونٍ كُلُّهُمْ عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ ثُمَّ ظَهَرَ الشِّرْكَ بِسَبَبِ تَعْظِيمِ قُبُورِ صَالِحِيهِمْ

And this was the first cause of *Shirk* among the people of Nuḥ and the worship of *Awthān* among the people. Ibn 'Abbās said: 'Between Adam and Nuḥ, there were ten *qarn*, all of them adhering to Islam.' Then *Shirk* emerged due to the veneration of the graves of their righteous people.⁵⁰

قَالَ غَيْرُ وَاحِدٍ مِنَ السَّلَفِ هُوَلَاءِ كَانُوا قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ فِي قَوْمِ نُوحٍ فَلَمَّا مَاتُوا عَكُفُوا عَلَى
قُبُورِهِمْ فَلَمَّا طَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ عَبَدُواهُمْ

⁵⁰ Ibn Taymiyyah, (2000), *Majmu' al-Fatāwa'* [Vol. 1, p. 155 (print edition, Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah: Beirut)]

More than one from the *Salaf* said: ‘These (people) were from a righteous people, individuals (who were) from the people of Nuḥ. When they died, their followers devoted themselves to their graves. As time passed, they began worshipping them.’⁵¹

Here, we would hasten to say, that Allah forbid that Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah would be one to deliberately do this, because it is a clear and utter fabrication. Rather, it stems from just how far he was blinded to this. That blindness caused him to misinterpret the texts, seeing into them that which isn’t there, turning a blind eye to what is *actually* present. Thereafter, the followers of the sect of Wahhābism blindly adopted this position too, following their totem much like a pack of animals follows its head.

Even more fables and myths!

The following is recorded in the *Tafsir* of Ibn Kathir:

وَرَوَى الْخَافِضُ ابْنَ عَسَاكِرَ فِي تَرْجَمَةِ شَيْبِثَ، عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، مِنْ طَرِيقِ إِسْحَاقَ بْنِ بَشْرٍ قَالَ وَأَخْبَرَنِي جُوَيْبِرٌ وَمُقَاتِلٌ عَنِ الصَّخَّالِكَ عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: وُلِدَ لِأَدَمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، أَرْبَعُونَ وَلَدًا، عَشْرُونَ غُلَامًا وَعَشْرُونَ جَارِيَةً، فَكَانَ مَعَهُ عَائِشٌ مِنْهُمْ: هَابِيلُ، وَقَابِيلُ، وَصَالِحٌ، وَعَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ - وَالَّذِي كَانَ سَمَاءَ عَبْدِ الْخَارِثِ - وَوَدَّ، وَكَانَ وَدَّ يُقَالُ لَهُ "شَيْبِثٌ" وَيُقَالُ لَهُ: "هَبَةُ اللَّهِ" وَكَانَ إِخْوَتُهُ قَدْ سَوَّدُوهُ، وَوُلِدَ لَهُ سَوَاعٌ وَيَعْقُوثٌ وَيَعْقُوقٌ وَنَسْرٌ

And narrated by al-Ḥāfīz Ibn ‘Asākir in his biographical entry for Sheeth, peace be upon him, from the channel of Ishāq ibn Bishr, he said Juwaybir and Mu’qātil reported to me from al-Ḍaḥḥāk from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘Adam had forty children, twenty male, twenty female. Among those who lived were, Hābeel (Abel) and Qā’bil (Cain), Ṣāliḥ, and Abdar-Raḥman, the latter named ‘Abd al-Ḥārith; Wadd’ who was also named Sheeth, and he was told he was the a ‘gift of Allah.’ And his brothers had blackened him; he had the children (named) Suwā’, Yaghuth, Ya’uq and Nasr.’⁵²

I would say, *Ma’Sha’Allah!* Narrators have disagreed over the names of the sons of our Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him; is al-Ṭāhir by itself the same as al-Ṭayyib or are they nicknames for Abdullah, or other than that?

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 242

⁵² *Tafsir* Ibn Kathir, [Vol. 8, p. 235]

And yet, *with certitude we somehow know* that Wadd’ is Sheeth, and also the ‘gift of Allah’? Suwā’, Yaghuth, Ya’uq and Nasr are the offspring of Wadd’, whichever lived from among them or died in infancy?

وَقَالَ ابْنُ أَبِي حَاتِمٍ حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو عُمَرَ الدَّورِيُّ حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو إِسْمَاعِيلَ الْمُؤَدَّبُ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مُسْلِمِ بْنِ هُرْمَزٍ عَنْ أَبِي حَزْرَةَ عَنْ عُرْوَةَ بْنِ الرَّبِيعِ قَالَ اشْتَكَى آدَمُ، عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، وَعِنْدَهُ بَنُوهُ: وَدَّ، وَيَعْقُوثُ، وَيَعْقُوقُ وَسَوَاعٌ، وَنَسْرٌ - قَالَ وَكَانَ وَدَّ أَكْبَرَهُمْ وَأَبْرَهُمْ بِهِ

Ibn Abi Ḥātim said my father narrated to us Abu Umar al-Douri narrated to us Abu Ismā’il al-Mu’waddab narrated to me from Abdullah ibn Muslim ibn Hurmuz from Abu Ḥamza from ‘Urwa ibn al-Zubayr, he said: ‘Adam, peace be upon him, suffered an illness, (during which) he was attended to by his sons Suwā’, Yaghuth, Ya’uq and Nasr. He said: And Wadd’ was the eldest and most kind with him.’⁵³

Similar is recorded in *al-Durr al-Manthur*, and we see that the four-names now become siblings to Wadd’ instead of sons, a supposed metamorphosis! Worse still, the myths have evolved into lengthy epics, probably more suited for cinematic production, especially within the narratives from the *Shia*. For amusement and entertainment only, here is one notable example worthy of cinematic production:

We have narrated from Muḥammad ibn Musa al-Mutawakkil from Abdullah ibn Ja’far from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Isa, from al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥjub, from Muḥammad ibn al-Nu’mān al-Aḥwal, from Yazid ibn Mu’āwiya, who said: I heard Abu Ja’far saying in the Prophet’s mosque, peace and blessings be upon him, that *Shayṭān* the accursed, was the first to create an image resembling Adam, in order to tempt people and lead them astray from the worship of Allah the Almighty. He had affection for the offspring of Cain and was the successor of Cain over his children and those who were present with them at the foot of the mountain, venerating and obeying him. When Cain died, his brothers mourned him, and one named Suwā’ came to lead them. However, their father’s wealth did not benefit them.

⁵³ Ibid.

Then *Shayṭān* approached them in the image of an old man. He said: 'I have heard about the great loss you have suffered from the death of your beloved Wadd'. Would you like me to create an image resembling Wadd', upon which you can find solace and comfort?' They replied: 'Yes, please do.' So the wicked one approached the carcass of a whale and melted it until it turned into water. Then he formed an image resembling Wadd' in his house. They rushed towards the image, kissing it, placing their cheeks on it, and prostrating to it. Suwā' in particular, desired to be venerated and worshipped. He leaped onto the image of Wadd', scratched it until there was nothing left of it, and incited them to kill. He admonished them, saying, 'I will assume the role that Wadd' used to fulfil. I am his son. If you kill me, you will have no leader.' So they turned towards Suwā', showing him veneration and obedience. But Suwā' did not last long before he died.

Then another one named Yaghuth succeeded him. They mourned over the death of Suwā', and *Shayṭān* approached them again, saying, "I am the one who created the image of Wadd' for you. Would you like me to create a likeness of Suwā' in a form that cannot be altered by anyone?" They replied: 'Do so.' So he took a piece of aromatic wood and fashioned it into the likeness of Suwā' and placed it in his house. This wood was called *khalāf* because *Shayṭān* made a form of Suwā' from it, in contrast to the image of Wadd'. They prostrated to it, venerating and extolled it. They said to Yaghuth: 'We trust you not to deceive us concerning this idol as your father nearly did with the likeness of Wadd'.' They appointed guards and a curtain over the house. They would visit the idol on a designated day, showing greater reverence than they had shown to Suwā'. When Yaghuth saw this, he killed the guards and removed the curtain at night, reducing the idol to rubble. When they learned of this, they approached to kill him, but he vanished, evading them. They searched for him, but he remained hidden. They eventually found his head and venerated it. Then he died, and another one named Ya'uq succeeded him. They appointed guards over the idol and venerated it more intensely. They built a stone house for it and made a pact not to open the door of that house except once a year.

This pact was named *bay'ah* at that time. This is because they made a pact and agreement among themselves, this intensified their devotion to Ya'uq. So Ya'uq resorted to arms. He threw them into the wall with fire at night, causing the house, the idol, and the guards to burn, with the idol lying in ruins. They panicked and plotted to kill Ya'uq. He said to them: 'If you kill your leader, your affairs will be ruined.' Ya'uq did not last long before he died, and another one named Nasr succeeded him. They appointed guards over the idol and venerated it intensely. They divided into two groups, one worshipping Nasr and the others worshipping the idol. They resided in a village near their brethren until Nasr died. Then the Prophethood of Idris peace be upon him emerged, and the news reached him about the people worshipping an idol resembling Ya'uq and that Nasr was worshipped besides Allah. He went to them with his followers and arrived in the city where Nasr's followers were. He defeated them, killed those who resisted, and the rest fled. They dispersed throughout the lands. He ordered the idol to be carried and thrown into the sea. Each group took a portion of the idol and named it after their own tribe. They remained for centuries, knowing only those names.

Then the Prophethood of Nuḥ peace be upon him came. He called them to worship Allah alone and abandon the idols they used to worship. Some of them said: *Do not renounce your gods! And do not renounce Wadd', Suwā', Yaghuth, Ya'uq, or Nasr!* Therefore, from the descendants of Cain, whom the curse of Allah was upon, idol worship became prevalent. And in *al-'Ilal*, it is mentioned that the origin of fire worship was with Cain, who was cursed. When Allah did not accept his sacrifice, *Shayṭān* came to him and said: 'The fire has accepted the sacrifice of your brother because he worships it.' Cain replied: 'I worship another fire.' So he built houses for fire, and only his descendants inherited the worship of fire. He was the first to build houses for fire.⁵⁴

These stories are nothing more than a collection of disparate myths, legends, fantasies and the like. Whether they stemmed from popular Arab myth at the time or have been mixed with that and tales from Nabatean, Syriac,

⁵⁴ Abdal Malik ibn Ḥussein ibn Abdal Malik al-'Aāṣimi al-Makki, *Samuṭ al-Nujum al-'Awali fi Anbā' al-Awā'il wal'Tawāli* [Vol. 1, p. 35], (d. 1111AH).

Israelite legends. As has been shown, a group of exegetes such as Qatādah, al-Ḍaḥḥāk, Ibn Zayd, completely avoided this altogether. And it is *Ṣaḥīḥ* that what has been brought upon the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās are limited statements in line with those other exegetes. Thus, it is not permissible to marshal anything beyond that.

15. How did the idols from the era of Noah end up with the Arabs?

Naturally this presents a vexing question given the timespan between the era of Nuḥ (Noah) peace be upon him to the Adnanite Arabs. Muslim historians didn’t leave the matter entirely in a vacuum, rather they sought to locate narratives to explain *how* these *Aṣnām* (idols) from the recess of pre-history ended up with the Arabs. We begin, with the citation that is taken from *al-Munimaq fi Akhbār Quraysh*, by Abu Ja’far Muḥammad ibn Ḥabeeb ibn Umayyah al-Baghdādi:

He said: ‘Amr ibn Rabi’ah, and he is a priest of Khuzā’ah, had a servant who was a *Jinn*. ‘Amr had the *kunya* (*nom de guerre*) of Abu Thumāmah. So his *Jinn* came to him and said ‘Answer O Abu Thumāmah,’ he replied, ‘Here I am from Tihāmah.’¹ The *Jinn* said – ‘Make haste, from Tihāmah; may you have good fortune and safety.’ He said, ‘I have no repost or dwelling.’ The *Jinn* said: ‘Go to the coast of Jeddah, where you will find therein *Aṣnām*; bring them to Tihāmah, make haste.’ Afterwards, invite all the Arabs to worship them, they will respond to you.’ So ‘Amr arrived at the shore of Jeddah and found there the *Aṣnām* of *Wadd*, *Suwā*, *Yaghuth*, *Ya’uq*, and *Nasr*. These were the *Aṣnām* that were worshipped during the time of Idris and Nuḥ peace be upon them.

The *Aṣnām* were beached there by the (great) flood, covered in sand and hidden. ‘Amr uncovered them, carried them to Tihāmah. He called upon the Arabs to worship them, and they responded to his call. ‘Awf ibn Kinānah ibn Udthra ibn Zayd al-Lāt ibn Rafeedah ibn Kalb took (possession of) *Wadd*, erecting it in Dumat al-Jandal, it

¹ ‘Tihāmah,’ a region that is often referred to as being the lowland strip of coast running along the Red Sea, as far north, near the Gulf of Aqaba and south to the Yemen.

was to the Quḍḍā'ah. Al-Ḥārith ibn Tameem ibn Sa'd ibn Hudheel ibn Mudrikah too (possession of) *Suwā'* and it was worshipped in Rahāṭ by Muḍar. An'am ibn 'Amr ibn al-Murādi too (possession of) Yaguth, to a place called Mazḥaj in the Yemen; the tribe of Mazḥaj and its allies worshipped it. Mālik ibn Marthad ibn Jutham ibn Ḥāshid ibn Jathm ibn Khaywān ibn Nawf ibn Hamdān took (possession of) Ya'uq, it was in a village called Khaywān, and worshipped by the tribe of Hamdān and its clients. Ma'd took one to Ḥameer (namely) Nasr, and to Dhi Ra'een; Ḥameer and its allies worshipped it. It was in an area of the land of Saba called Balkhah.²

Here, it can be seen that the narrative has sought to inadvertently address the enormous timescale between the great flood from the time of Nuḥ peace be upon him, to the time of 'Amr ibn Luḥay. The 'supernatural element,' provided by the *Jinn* informing him of *where* to find the beached washed up *Aṣṇām* from that era. Next, we turn to the report as cited in *Akhbār Makkah*, which reiterates the theme as previously mentioned:

From Ibn al-Kalbi, he said: 'Amr ibn Rabi'ah had an oracle *Jinn* who came to him and said: 'O Abu Thumāmah, respond and make haste. Go to the coast of Jeddah where you will find *Aṣṇām*. Bring them to Tihāmah and do not hesitate. Then invite the Arabs to worship them, and they will respond.' 'Amr proceeded to the shores of Jeddah and found the *Aṣṇām* of *Wadd'*, *Suwā'*, *Yaguth*, *Ya'uq* and *Nasr*. These were the *Aṣṇām* which were worshiped during the era of Idris (Enoch) and Nuḥ (Noah), peace be upon them. They were beached there from the (time of) the flood; sand covering them. So 'Amr dug them out and took them to Tihāmah. During the pilgrimage season he called upon people to worship them and they responded.³

Mention is made of Amr ibn Rabi'ah' that is to say, 'Amr ibn Luḥay. However, in *Tafsir al-Sirāj al-Muneer*, there is a different line of narrative. The 'satanic element' is there, but this introduces some other themes too:

² Abu Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ḥabeeb ibn Umayyah al-Baghdādi [d. 245AH] *al-Munimaq fi Akhbār Quraysh*, [p. 94].

³ *Akhbār Makkah* [Vol. 5, p. 139]

وروي عن ابن عباس أنّ نوحاً عليه السلام كان يحرس جسد آدم عليه السلام على جبل الهند فيمنع الكافرين أن يطوفوا بقبره، فقال لهم الشيطان: إن هؤلاء يفخرون عليكم ويزعمون أنهم بنو آدم دونكم وإنما هو جسد وأنا أصور لكم مثله تطوفون به، فصوّر لهم هذه الأصنام الخمسة وحملهم على عبادتها، فلما كان أيام الطوفان دفنها الطين والتراب والماء فلم تزل مدفونة حتى أخرجها الشيطان لمشركي العرب، وكان للعرب أصنام آخر، فاللات كانت لتقديد وإساف ونائلة، وهبل كانت لأهل مكة، وكان إساف حيال الحجر الأسود، ونائلة حيال الركن اليماني، وكان هبل في جوف الكعبة

And it is narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that Nuḥ peace be upon him used to guard the body of Adam, peace be upon him upon a mountain in India to prevent the *kāfireen* from undertaking *Ṭawaf* (circumambulation) around his grave. *Shayṭān* said unto them: 'These people are haughty upon you, claiming they are the children of Adam, yet excluding you. It is, but a body. And I can create a likeness for you to undertake *Ṭawaf*.' He thus fashioned five *Aṣṇām* and urged them to worship them. When the days of the (great) flood occurred, they were buried by mud, soil and water, remaining so until the *Shayṭān* brought them forth for the Arab *mushrikeen*. The Arabs had other *Aṣṇām* too, al-Lāt belonged to Qadid, as well as Isāf and Nā'ila; Hubal, the preserve of the people of Mecca. Isāf was placed by the black stone; Nā'ila by the Yemeni corner, Hubal was (placed) inside the *Ka'ba*.⁴

Evidently, one can see that such narratives are not borne of *wahy* (revelation). Providing a cogent account of events so far back, potentially into the recess of pre-history, cannot be done except by divine *wahy*; no channel of narration can extend that far back. One can choose from any number of myths or legends which surround this matter. What is clear though, is that these myths, including the notion of *Aṣṇām* waiting to be pulled from the darkest depths, are based upon false premises. According to the central core common to them, the assistance of satanic *Jinn* are required to move their allies among satanic humans to locate these lost or buried *Aṣṇām* so that people can be misguided to worship them. Countless other myths exist in this area. Ultimately, Allah knows best regarding the truth of the matter. It is sufficient to protect oneself from the harm of hearsay.

⁴ *Tafsir al-Sirāj al-Muneer*, [Vol. 4, p. 286]. Similar is also recorded in the *Tafsir* works of al-Qurṭubi and Jalalayn.

There is another preposterous solution to what would seem to be a problem that is illusory. This is to be found in the *Tafsir* of al-Qāsimi:

Firstly, al-Rāzi said: Regarding their transference from the people of Nuḥ to the Arabs, it poses a dilemma because the world was destroyed during the time of the flood. So how did those *Aṣnām* survive, and how did they transfer to the Arabs? It cannot be said that Prophet Nuḥ peace be upon him, placed them in the ark and preserved them, as he came to deny and destroy them. So how can it be claimed that he placed them in the ark with the intention of preserving them? This concludes his statement.

(Concerning this) and we would say: The answer to the question is obvious, which is that their transfer to the Arabs occurred through the transmission of the history and customs of the people of Nuḥ and their descendants, carried by travellers and traders. The events of the earlier centuries in later times are recorded through the accounts of the predecessors. It is clear that human nature inclines more towards ignorance than knowledge, especially when falsehood is adorned in a way that appeals to it, making it more adhesive. Thus, after knowledge declined and was lost, the worship of these idols took place, as indicated by the narration of Ibn ‘Abbās recorded by al-Bukhāri: ‘The origins (of the idols) had become obscure, whereupon people began worshipping them.’⁵ It is strange that al-Rāzi couldn’t find a way out of his question, despite being on the verge of a solution.

Secondly, al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar said in *Fath al-Bāri*, that al-Wāqidi had said: ‘*Wadd*’ (was fashioned) in the form of a man, *Suwā*’, that of a woman; *Yaghuth* a lion, *Ya’uq* a horse and *Nasr*, as a bird.’ This is *Shadth* (anomalous), the *mashur* (well known) is that they were images of humans, which is buttressed by the previous evidence regarding the reason for their worship.

Thirdly, Ibn al-Qayyim stated in *Ighātha al-Lahfān*, that the first thing *Shayṭān* tempted the *mushrikeen* with was their intense focus upon graves and images of their people, so that they would remember

⁵ Here, the allusion being the narration from Ibn ‘Abbās reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhāri in the book of *Tafsir* regarding the verse 71: 23.

them through these images.⁶ Just as Allah the Almighty narrated their stories in His book; He said: ‘*And they said - Do not renounce your gods!*’ [71: 23]. Then he (Ibn al-Qayyim) said: *Shayṭān* manipulated the *mushrikeen* in their worship of *Aṣnām* through various means, tailored to the capabilities and intellect of each group. Some were lured into worshipping *Aṣnām* as a means of honouring the deceased, whom they depicted in the form of these *Aṣnām*, as was previously mentioned regarding the people of Prophet Nuḥ peace be upon him. That is why the Prophet, peace be upon him, cursed those who took graves as places of worship, forbade praying towards graves, and supplicated to Allah the Exalted, that His grave not become an idol to be worshipped. He also prohibited his nation from taking his grave as a place of celebration.⁷

Next, there is mention of the following again within the *Tafsir al-Sirāj al-Muneer*:

al-Māwardi said: With regards to *Wadd*’, it was the first *ṣanam* worshipped, named as such due to the devotion towards him. After the people of Nuḥ (it was adopted by) Kalb in Dumat-al-Jandal, as per the statement of Ibn ‘Abbās and ‘Aṭā. Regarding *Suwā*’, it was attributed to Hudeel along the coast, as per their statement. Al-Rāzi said: *Suwā*’ was in Hamdān. Concerning Yaghuth, (it was to the tribe of) Ghaṭīf from Murād, which was in al-Jawf from Sabbā’ as per the statement of Qatādah. Al-Mahdawi said: It was to Murād then Ghaṭafān. Abu Uthmān al-Nahdi said: I saw Yaguth, it was made from lead. They used to carry it on a bare camel and walk around it, without placing it on the ground until it was blessed. Once the blessing occurred, it was brought down and the people would say – ‘It is satisfied with the house.’ Regarding Ya’uq, it was for Hamdān, some said it was for Murād. Concerning Nasr, it was for Dhi al-Kilāh’ from Ḥimyar, as per the statement of Qatādah and Muqātil. Al-Wāqidi said: *Wadd*’ was the image of a man; *Suwā*’ an image of a

⁶ The full title of the work by Ibn al-Qayyim is *Ighātha al-Lahfān fī Maqāsid al-Shayṭān - ‘Supporting the Distressed Against the Tricks of Satan.’* An English translation, albeit slightly abridged is available published by *Darussalam*, 2014.

⁷ *Tafsir* al-Qāsimi [Vol. 9, p. 325]

woman, Yaghuth the form of a lion, *Ya'uq* that of a horse and Nasr, an eagle from the birds.

Al-Baqā'i said: This doesn't contradict that they (the idols) were (borne of) the images of righteous men, because their depiction can be extracted from their qualities. So *Wadd'* represented perfection in masculinity; *Suwā'* femininity in worship, Yaghuth, bravery, *Ya'uq*, athleticism and Nasr, great longevity.⁸

An eye-witness account

Cited in *al-Taḥrīr wal' Tanweer* there is:

Abu Uthmān al-Nahdi said: I saw *Yaghuth* it was a *ṣanam* (idol) made of lead. They would carry it upon a camel that was called '*Aḥrad*,' the letter *ha* being pronounced softly, while walking with it. They wouldn't disturb it until it was brought to provide blessings. Once it was brought, it was lowered and then said: May your home be blessed; they would then construct a sanctuary around it. *Yaghuth* was in the form of a lion. Hamdān had a *ṣanam* called *Ya'uq*, which was in the image of a horse. Ka'lān was from Saba', thereafter his sons inherited it until it (came down to) Hamdān. And Ḥimyar and Dhi Kallāh' from among them, the *ṣanam* was named *Nasr*, which was in the form of an eagle from the birds.⁹

The *takhrij* (sourcing) for the wording of Abu Uthmān al-Nahdi has come via *al-Durr al-Manthur*:

وأخرج عبد بن حميد وابن المنذر وابن مردويه عن أبي عثمان قال رأيت يغوث صنما من رصاص يحمل على جمل أجرد فإذا بكرك قالوا: قد رضي بركم هذا المنزل

⁸ *Tafsir al-Sirāj al-Muneer*, [Vol. 4, p. 286].

⁹ *al-Taḥrīr wal' Tanweer*, [p. 193]. Ibn Sa'd has a detailed entry on Abu Uthmān al-Nahdi in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra* [Vol. 7, pp. 97/98], noting that his name was Abdar-Raḥman ibn Mull; he was alive in the time of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, but didn't see him. He was *thiqa* (trustworthy), having met and narrated from several senior Companions. Although initially residing in Kufa, he died in Basra at the beginning of the governorship of al-Ḥajjāj. In *al-Taqrīb* [p. 393, no. 4017], al-Ḥāfiẓ records he was *thiqa thabt* (resolutely trustworthy) being from the senior *Tabi'een*. He died in the year 95AH and it was said that he was 130 years old.

And reported by 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd, Ibn al-Mundthir and Ibn Mardawiyh from Abu Uthman, he said: I saw the *ṣanam Yaghuth*, being made of lead, carried upon a bare camel. When it received a blessing they would say: Your lord is satisfied with this abode.¹⁰

There are two-further narrations, together with the *isnād's* which are worthy of detailed consideration, the first of which is cited in the work of Abu Nu'aym:

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ الْحَسَنِ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عُثْمَانَ بْنِ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو دَاوُدَ الْحَفَرِيُّ عَنْ (يحيى بن) زَكَرِيَّا بْنِ أَبِي زَائِدَةَ عَنْ عَاصِمِ (هُوَ الْأَحْوَلُ) عَنْ أَبِي عُثْمَانَ قَالَ رَأَيْتُ يَغُوثَ صَنْمًا مِنْ رِصَاصٍ، يُحْمَلُ عَلَى جَمَلٍ أَجْرَدٍ، فَإِذَا بَرَكَ الْجَمَلُ، قَالُوا قَدْ رَضِيَ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ هَذَا الْمَنْزِلَ

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥasan narrated to us Muḥammad ibn Uthmān ibn Abi Shayba narrated to us Abu Dāwud al-Ḥafri narrated to us from (Yaḥya ibn) Zakariyā' ibn Zā'idah from Aāṣim (he is al-Aḥwal) from Abu Uthmān, he said: 'I saw *Yaghuth* it was a *ṣanam* (idol) made of lead carried upon a bare camel. When the camel knelt down, they said – your lord blesses you with this abode.'¹¹

حدثنا ابن أبي شيبة حدثنا أبو داود الحفري حدثنا يحيى بن زكريا عن عاصم عن أبي عثمان، قال: رأيت يغوث صنما من رصاص يحمل على جمل أجرد فإذا بلغ واديا فبرك فنزل فيه قالوا: قد رضي لكم ربكم هذا الوادي

Ibn Abi Shayba narrated to us Abu Dāwud al-Ḥafri narrated to us Yaḥya ibn Zakariyā' narrated to us from Aāṣim al-Aḥwal from Abu Uthmān, he said: 'I saw *Yaghuth* it was a *ṣanam* (idol) made of lead carried upon a bare camel. When it reached a valley to be blessed, it descended (with the camel); they said: your lord blesses you with this valley.'¹²

In his history of Damascus, Ibn 'Asākir cites essentially the same, connected

¹⁰ al-Suyuti, *al-Durr al-Manthur* [Vol. 8, p. 293]

¹¹ Abu Nu'aym, *Ma'rifa al-Ṣaḥāba* [Vol. 4, no. 4705]

¹² al-Baghawi, *Mu'jam al-Ṣaḥāba* [Vol. 4, no. 1951]

to the aforementioned *isnād* and with the same wording.¹³ However, Ibn ‘Asākir also records another narrative which provides additional details:

قرأت على أبي القاسم زاهر بن طاهر عن أبي عثمان الصابوني أخبرنا أبو العباس محمد بن أحمد بن محمد السليطي أخبرنا أبو حامد أحمد بن محمد بن الحسن الحافظ حدثنا أحمد بن حفص وعبد الله بن محمد الفراء وقطن بن إبراهيم قالوا أخبرنا حفص حدثني إبراهيم عن عاصم الأحول عن أبي عثمان انه قال أسلمت في حياة رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم، وقد حججت بيغوث وكان صنما من رصاص لقضاعة، **تمثال امرأة**، وعبدت ذا الخلصة، ودورت الأدورة: ثم انتفتت الإسلام

I read (in audience) upon Abul-Qāsim Zāhir ibn Tāhir from Abu Uthmān al-Ṣābuni, Abul’Abbās Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Salayṭi reported to us Abu Ḥāmid Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥāfīz reported to us Aḥmad ibn Ḥafṣ, Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Firāra’ and Qaṭan ibn Ibrāhīm narrated to us, they said Ḥafṣ reported to us Ibrāhīm narrated to me from Aāsim al-Aḥwal from Abu Uthmān that he said: ‘I embraced Islam during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, and I had (previously) made pilgrimage to Yaguth, which was a *ṣanam* made from lead, belonging to (the tribe of) Quḍḍā’ah; (Yaguth) was a statuette of a woman. I also had worshipped Dhi al-Khalṣa, revolving around them. After which, I converted to Islam.’¹⁴

I would therefore argue, it seems that ‘*Yaghuth*’ is the *ṣanam* which was in the form or image of a woman. Perhaps *Suwā’* is represented in the form of a lion. The order has been reversed as per al-Wāqidi or those narrating from him. Such reversals are not uncommon altogether and can also appear in authentic reports. Yet this doesn’t invalidate the report itself or necessitate that it should be rejected outright. Rather, when considering the reports or narratives collectively, it would strongly suggest that the *Aṣnām* of *Wadd’*, *Suwā’*, *Yaghuth*, *Ya’uq* and *Nasr* were in the forms, or representations of, a man, woman, lion, horse and an eagle, whether in that precise order or otherwise.

¹³ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimishq* [Vol. 35, pp. 471/472]. In the original Arabic version, the narration is mentioned in full, although it is identical in reported wording and *isnād* up to al-Baghawi.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Furthermore, regarding the statement referred to previously from al-Baqā’i, in principle this has merit and shouldn’t necessarily be rejected outright. The use of symbolism or analogies with animals or their forms to convey a particular meaning is a well-known practice among various civilisations. Therefore, the *Aṣnām* potentially having such characteristics wouldn’t in principle provide negation that they had originally been representations of ‘righteous men’ in antiquity. Just as it wouldn’t necessarily preclude the notion that the idea being conveyed could symbolise other entities, be that in the celestial realm, angelic spirits, abstract concepts, or other possibilities. Conversely, the variation in the depiction of images confirms the invalidity of any to claim that the *origin* of these *Aṣnām*, or to be more precise, the false gods as represented by these *Aṣnām*, were somehow originally ‘righteous men’ from among the descendants of Adam. Despite the varied meanings, it is a well-known phenomenon among the Semites, even the ancient Egyptians, that when there was a desire to emphasise a particular meaning like bravery, authority, kingship etc for a human being or deity, it would be depicted within the representation of that *ṣanam*, the example being elements of a lion and a human. The head would be that of a human, the body that of a lion, like the statue of the Sphinx in Egypt, which is a likely representation of King Khafre, the building of the Great Pyramid.¹⁵

Abu Ḥayyān al-Tawḥeedi al-Andalusi posited an objection in his *Tafsir, al-Baḥr al-Muḥeet*, which was as follows: ‘It is said that *Wadd’* was depicted in the form of a man; *Suwā’* in the image of a woman, *Yaghuth* in the form of a lion, *Ya’uq*, that of a horse and *Nasr* in the form of an eagle. This contradicts what was previously mentioned, which is that they were based upon the images of righteous men.’¹⁶ The objection noted here carries

¹⁵ Broadly this point is more in line with the mainstream position within archaeology. However that dogma has been put to severe criticism over the last three-decades, for example by the late John Antony West and Professor Robert Schoch. Water weathering on the body of the Sphinx enclosure, originally identified in passing by René Adolphe Schwaller de Lubicz, demonstrably shows that the Sphinx was carved at a much earlier epoch, possibly at the end of the last ice age. The head of the Sphinx is not Khafre, little evidence exists to actually substantiate this. It has been re-carved to the face of a human, possibly originally being the head of a lioness, but forensic analysis shows that the features it was carved to, is not the later Egyptian king, and seems to be more in line a sub-Saharan African bone structure, more common in areas like Chad and Niger.

¹⁶ Abu Ḥayyān al-Tawḥeedi [d. 1023 CE], *Tafsir, al-Baḥr al-Muḥeet* [Vol. 8, p. 335]

considerable weight, comparable to the statement from al-Baqā'i, perhaps it is the most plausible argument. Recent excavations, artifacts, and Himyarite inscriptions have indicated that the Himyarites also recognised and associated *Wadd*' with 'a moon god.' In their later periods, these deities had stronger connections with celestial bodies and planets than with supposed 'righteous men.' If it is proven that Prophet Nuḥ (Noah), peace be upon him, resided in northern Iraq, which is a plausible assumption but has not as yet been categorically established, then the ancient people of Iraq worshipped stars, celestial bodies, and higher spirits, and Allah knows best. Another view, is that the Prophet Nuḥ peace be upon him, was sent to a people who inhabited the southern coast of the Black Sea, when it was a freshwater lake, isolated from the world's seas, around five-thousand years before the noble Prophetic mission.¹⁷ Conversely, myths and legends can evolve and undergo modifications throughout history, especially when one people borrow them from another. They are then combined and adapted to fit the new environment, often resulting in the distortion of names to align with the phonetics and rules of the new language. The entire matter is immersed in the profound darkness of ancient history and the folds of distant mysteries. al-Ḥāfīz Ibn Ḥajar posited a striking objection in *Fath al-Bāri*, where he wrote:

The collection of what has been said about these *Aṣnām* can be divided into two opinions. One of them suggests that these *Aṣnām* existed among the people of Nuḥ, while the other suggests that they were the names of 'righteous men' until the end of the story. However, I say that the correct view is that they were initially objects of worship by the people of Nuḥ, and later others followed them in this practice. This is supported by the statement that they were not worshiped until those people perished, and knowledge was neglected in this regard. This view is attributed to Abu Dharr, al-Kushmayhani,

¹⁷ There is now a substantial body of scientific research which covers cataclysmic flooding of the earth, but that puts the approximate dating for this at the end of the last ice-age / Younger Dryers, around 9,000 BCE. Secondly, as per the work of Giorgio De Santillana and Hertha Von Dechend (1977), *Hamlet's Mill*, every known civilization on earth seems to have an existent memory of the flood, that being encoded in myth and storytelling to convey the event, but also astronomical phenomena witnessed.

and the loss of knowledge refers specifically to the knowledge of those specific images.

It is narrated by way of al-Fākihi from the channel of Ubaydallah ibn Ubayd ibn Umayr, who said: 'The first occurrence of *Aṣnām* took place during the era of Nuḥ and it was the children who revered their fathers. When a man from among them died, they grieved for him intensely and couldn't bear his absence. So they made an image in his likeness and whenever they missed him, they would look at it. Then, when that person died, the same was done to him as before. This practice continued until it was perpetuated. After the fathers died, the children said: 'Our fathers did not do such things, except that they were their gods,' and they thus worshipped them. Al-Wādiqī posited and said: '*Wadd*' was depicted in the form of a man, *Suwā'*, in the form of a woman; *Yaghuth*, in the form of a lion, *Ya'uq* as that of a horse and *Nasr*, in the form of a bird.' This is *shadth*, as it contradicts what is known, that they were in the images of humans, as this is indicated in the aforementioned reports as required in the rationale for their worship, and Allah knows best.¹⁸

In response, we would argue that the 'objection' advanced by al-Ḥāfīz, is no objection at all. It holds no validity in terms of analysis, because al-Wādiqī mentioned only what he knew of the various forms or depictions of these *Aṣnām*, whether that was based upon his own observations, what he acquired from his extensive travels and first-hand exploration of landmarks and artifacts; reading of the original inscriptions and historical documents, or whether it is based upon narratives that he received from eyewitnesses in the pre-Islamic era, such as that from Abu Uthmān al-Nahdi. Moreover, al-Wādiqī's time is more recent, namely there were only two to three generations between him and those who had witnessed the pre-Islamic era. He has no motive or benefit in seeking to lie, may Allah protect him from such an accusation. Bearing in mind that this historical, or archaeological aspect of the discussion, given that at the time, it had no political or religious importance, the narratives cannot be rejected out of hand, nor can they be confronted or substituted with narratives born of pure myth that are cut off and separated by the passage of time by literally thousands of years. Here is

¹⁸ Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bāri* [Vol. 8, pp. 853/854]

but a snapshot of what has been written regarding these five-false deities without very much reference to ancient sources. This is as set out in *al-Mufaṣṣal fi Tāriḫ al-‘Arab Qabla’Islam*, together with some additional comment where required.

Wadd’

Regarding *Wadd’*, as described by Ibn al-Kalbi in his book *al-Aṣnām* (he was): ‘A statue of a huge man, as big as the largest of human beings, covered with two robes, clothed with the one and cloaked with the other, carrying a sword on his waist and a bow on his shoulder, and holding in [one] and a spear to which was attached a standard, and [in the other] a quiver full of arrows.’ Ibn al-Kalbi took this description of *Wadd’* from his father from Mālik ibn Ḥāritha al-Ajdāri. (This man) Mālik ibn Ḥāritha al-Ajdāri, belonged to the tribe of ‘Aāmir al-Ajdār, who were the tribe (affiliated with) *Wadd’*. Ibn al-Kalbi said that his father, Muḥammad ibn al-Sā’ib al-Kalbi narrated to him that Mālik ibn Ḥāritha said to him: ‘He himself had seen *Wadd’*, and that his father was won’t to send him to it with some milk saying, “Offer it unto your god to drink.” Mālik added, ‘I used to drink the milk myself!’ He would return to his father thereafter, the father thinking that he had given the milk to *Wadd’*.

Jāriyah ibn Aṣram al-Ajdāri, from the tribe of ‘Aāmir ibn ‘Auf, known as ‘Aāmir al-Ajdār, mentioned that he had seen *Wadd’* which was in the form of a man, in Dumat al-Jandal. It is also reported that some of the tribes which had worshipped *Wadd’* were Tamim, Ṭayy, al-Khazraj, Hudhayl and Lakhm.¹⁹

Suwā’

With regards to *Suwā’*, the location (of the idol) was in Rahāt, in the land of Yanbu. It is mentioned that the *ṣanam* was in the form of a woman, being associated with the *ṣanam* (at) Hudheel. Ibn al-Kalbi attributes the spread of its worship, as was his custom, to ‘Amr ibn Luḥay. He mentioned that Muḍar ibn Nazzār responded to ‘Amr ibn

¹⁹ Dr Jawād Ali *al-Mufaṣṣal*, [Vol. 6, p. 256]. The embedded references are to al-Kalbi’s *The Book of Idols*, [pp. 45/46].

Luḥay, to which he gave a man from Hudheel (he was called al-Ḥārith ibn Tamim ibn Sa’d ibn Hudheel ibn Mudrikah ibn Iyās ibn Muḍar, *Suwā’*). He was in the land called Rahāt from Baṭn Nakhla, where those following Muḍar worshipped it. It was mentioned, by Ibn Ḥabeeb, that he was in Nu’mān, and that it was worshipped by the tribe of Kinānah, Hudheel, Muzeenah and ‘Amr ibn Qays ibn ‘Aylān. Its custodians were the tribe of Ṣāhila from Hudheel. In another channel of narration, that *Suwā’* was worshiped by Dhi al-Kallāh’. Al-Ya’qubi said it was to Kinānah.

Another narration, which goes to Ibn al-Kalbi, claims that *Suwā’* was a *ṣanam* that was from Rahāt, in the land of Yanbu, a region near the city. Its custodians were the tribe of Liḥyān. Then it is said that he didn’t hear that the name of this *ṣanam* as being mentioned in the poetry of Hudheel, but that it was in that from Yemen. Another narration states that *Suwā’* was a *ṣanam* of the Hamdān.²⁰

Ibn al-Kalbi said that he didn’t hear that the name of this *ṣanam* as being mentioned in the poetry of Hudheel, but a man from among the Arabs had said:

You see them turn and surround, as the Hudhayl convene upon Suwā’;
*Majesty of the sacrifice in Rahāt, picked from among the choicest flocks.*²¹

Some of the people of historical reports attributed the destruction of the *ṣanam* *Suwā’* to Ghāwi ibn Dthālim al-Salami (Ghāwi ibn ‘Abd al-‘Uzza); they mentioned that this *ṣanam* was the preserve of the tribe of Sulaym ibn Manṣur. While he was at the idol, two foxes approached and started to gnaw at it and urinate upon it. Upon witnessing this, he exclaimed: ‘Is this a lord upon whose head two foxes urinate? Whoever has foxes urinate upon him is disgraced!’ Then he said, O people of Sulaym – by Allah this *ṣanam* neither brings benefit nor harm, nor can it prevent anything.’ He broke this *ṣanam* and joined with the Prophet during the Year of Conquest. The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him asked him, ‘What is your

²⁰ Ibid, pp. 257/258

²¹ An attempt made to put the stanzas into some form of legible English. Looking at some translations of it, e.g. *Book of Idols*, generally these are not correct.

name?’ He replied, ‘Ghāwī ibn Abd al-‘Uzza.’ The Prophet said: ‘No, you are Rāshid ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi.’ He made a covenant with his people. It is said that this incident actually happened to ‘Abbās ibn Mirdās al-Sulami or it is said to Abu Dharr al-Ghifāri.²²

In the eighth-year of the *Hijrah*, the *ṣanam* Suwā’ was destroyed. The one who destroyed it was ‘Amr ibn al-Aās. Upon reaching the *ṣanam*, the custodian (of it) asked him – ‘What do you want?’ He replied, ‘I want to demolish *Suwā’*.’ The custodian said: ‘You aren’t capable of doing so!’ ‘Amr said: ‘You are still upon falsehood,’ so he destroyed it and found nothing in its treasury. Thereafter, he said to the custodian, ‘What do you think now?’ He replied: ‘By Allah, I submit to Islam!’²³

Here I would say, the belief of the custodian before he submitted, is that ‘his god *Suwā’*,’ was supposedly able to prevent destruction of its sanctuary and statue, by itself, its own ‘power.’ How well that worked out!

Yaghuth

From combing the narratives, it becomes clear that the *ṣanam* ‘Yaghuth’ was located at Jarsh, or a hill that was near to this city. Regarding its custodians, they were from the tribe of An’am ibn Ala’ from Ṭayy; they were in Jarsh. Around the year 623, the same year in which the Battle of Badr occurred, a dispute arose over the *ṣanam*. The tribe of Murād wanted the *ṣanam* to be with them, with them having custodianship; while the tribe of An’am wanted to keep right over it. So the An’am fled with the *ṣanam* to the tribe of al-Ḥārith, namely, al-Ḥārith ibn Ka’b in Najrān, and kept it after their defeat in that conflict with the tribe of Murād. In the war that occurred between the tribe of An’am and Ghatif, the worshippers of *Yaghuth* carried their *ṣanam* with them and fought, seeking assistance and support

²² Ibid. [Vol. 6, p. 259]. Ibn Kathir records an account of this too in the *Seerah* [Vol. 4, pp. 125/126]. What an honour to be named by the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him. In the footnote to [p. 126], it is noted that the man’s original name was (translated into English as) ‘Misleader, son of the slave of al-‘Uzza, renamed by the Prophet as – ‘Right-guided, son of the slave of my Lord.’

²³ Ibid. Both Ibn Kathir [Vol. 4] and al-Ṭabari in his *History* [Vol. 8, p. 188] record this event.

from it. In relation to that, the verses of poetry are said to have been spoken:

*Yaghuth led us unto the Murād
And we vanquished them before morning*

It would seem that the tribe of An’am and other worshippers of this *ṣanam* used to carry it with them in battle with other tribes. It is not unlikely that the name of this *ṣanam* is related to the concept that its adherents had of seeking help and assistance from it. Some researchers have speculated that it represents the deity of a lion. It was a totem for the tribe of Madḥij, defending them and their tribe, just as the Israelites did when they called for the ‘copper serpent’ – Nehushtan,²⁴ which was a totem too, converging with the viewpoint of Smith.²⁵

In the era of *Jāhiliyya*, we find several men by the name of ‘Abd Yaghuth. Some belonged to the tribe of Madḥij, others from the Quraysh, some from the Hawāzin. During the battle of al-Kulāb, ‘Abd Yaghuth was the leader of the tribe of al-Ḥārith ibn Ka’b against that of Tamim. Duryad ibn al-Ṣamah had a brother called ‘Abd Yaghuth. From the tribe of Madḥij, ‘Abd Yaghuth ibn Waqqāṣ ibn Ṣullā’ah al-Ḥārithi, who was killed by the Tamim on the second day of al-Kulāb. From the tribe of Zahra, (there is) ‘Abd Yaghuth ibn Wahb and Ubayd Yaghuth, whose mother was Ṣafiyah bint Hishām ibn ‘Abd Manāf. This indicates that their worship was known among the tribes of Madḥij, Jarsh, Quraysh, Hawāzin and other tribes like Taghlib.²⁶

Here I would say, regarding the statements of Smith and others about a ‘Totem,’ they serve as an example of what we previously mentioned, that Western scholars of ‘religions’ and ‘religious studies,’ are not reliable when it comes to interpreting the beliefs of different religious communities or

²⁴ For background on this see: Münnich, Maciej, פולחן נחשי ארד בכנען ובישראל, ‘The Cult of Bronze Serpents in Ancient Canaan and Israel,’ *Iggud: Selected Essays in Jewish Studies / מבחר מאמרים במדעי היהדות*, vol. 2005, יד, p. 39*-56*. *JSTOR*, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23531298>> Accessed 25 June 2023.

²⁵ This would seem to be in reference to the Scottish Orientalist, William Robertson Smith. The footnote to the print copy of Dr Jawād Ali’s *al-Mufaṣṣal* [Vol. 6, p. 261] has the reference as: Smith (1927) ‘The Religion of the Semites,’ *Journal of Philosophy*, [p. 227].

²⁶ Dr Jawād Ali, *al-Mufaṣṣal* [Vol. 6, pp. 261/262]

categorising them as primitive or advanced. This is because, in their analysis and classification, they rely on preconceived psychological assumptions or distorted imaginations which underpin their unfounded hypotheses, contradicting sound scientific methodology. Despite spending their entire lives and exerting great effort in collecting vast amounts of descriptive material and observational information, analysis can be plagued by this.

Ya'uq

Also, 'Ya'uq' appears among the *Aṣṇām* farmed out among the tribes by 'Amr ibn Luḥay. He presented it to Mālik ibn Marthad ibn Jashm ibn Ḥāshid ibn Jashm ibn Khaywān ibn 'Nawf ibn Hamdān, who placed it in the locale of Khaywān, where the tribes of Hamdān and Khawlān and those allied to them, where it was worshipped. This was in Arḥab. Yā'qut al-Ḥammawī mentioned that Ibn al-Kalbi said: They took 'Ya'uq' to Khaywān, taken to that village near Sana'a (Yemen) that was two-nights distance from Mecca. I have not heard of the Ḥimyar or any other naming their people after 'Ya'uq'. (Perhaps because) they were close to Sana'a during the era of Dhi Nawwās who accepted Judaism.

al-Ṭabrisī attributed the worship of 'Ya'uq' to the (people of) Kahlān. He mentioned that they inherited this, generation to generation, from Kahlān until it reached Hamdān. Mentioned in another narrative, it is said that 'Ya'uq' was the name of a *ṣanam* worshipped by Kinānah. There are some lines which are attributed to Mālik ibn Namaṭ al-Hamdāni, the designation of Dhi al-Ma'āshir, and it is from the tribe of Khārīf or from Yām ibn Aṣi, the text is:

*Allah brings wellbeing and misfortune in the world
Ya'uq can neither hurt, nor heal.*²⁷

Given this, I would say, that the litterateurs and specialists in language say: 'The Arabs say, so-and-so plucks and feathers,' meaning, that he has a benefit. The origin of this expression is that the individual feathers the arrow and makes it, then he adds feathers to it so that it can be used. They use this as a metaphor for someone who has goodness and benefit. However, the

²⁷ Ibid. [Vol. 6, p. 262]

words of Mālik ibn Namaṭ al-Hamdāni, may Allah be pleased with him, appear deeper than that. He seems to show that it refers to creation, destiny, and governance. This indicates that he and the people of Hamdān in general, held the belief, prior to acceptance of Islam, that 'Ya'uq,' creates, determines, and governs in the world.

Nasr

As for *Nasr*, it belonged to Ḥimyar. It is said 'Amr ibn Luḥay bestowed it to Dhi Ra'een (he was) named Ma'd Yakrib, he put it in a place called Balkha in the land of Sabā'. It was worshipped in Ḥimyar until the days (of the king) Dhi Nawwās, but there was conversion with him (to Judaism) and the *ṣanam* was abandoned. It is said that the devotees of *Nasr*, the Dhi al-Kallah' were from Ḥimyar, set out in some of the narratives. Mentioned by Muḥammad ibn Ḥabeeb, that Ḥimyar were silent about the greatness and admiration held for *Nasr*; it was in Ghumdān at the palace of the king of Yemen. al-Ya'qubi mentioned that Ḥimyar and Hamdān were positioned with Ṣanā'.

In Hebrew, *Nasr* is 'Nasher'. It is an idol among the Lihyanites as well. It should also be among the idols of the North Arabian tribes, as its name appears in Hebrew and Syriac sources as the name of an Arabian deity. The Talmud refers to an idol that the Arabs used to worship, called 'Neshra,' which is the same as *Nasr*. The name of the idol *Nasr* also appears among the Sabaeans. It was one of the gods worshipped among many Semitic people, particularly in the Arabian Peninsula.²⁸

I would say, the central deity of the Assyrians, appears to be *Nasr*, but they also refer and give the name of 'Ashur.' Their *Aṣṇām* take the form of the body of a human being with the head and wings of an eagle. And Allah knows best.

Phantasms

²⁸ Ibid. [Vol. 6, 264]

In conclusion, in light of the above, the only certain definitive point is that *Wadd*, *Suwā*, *Yaghuth*, *Ya'uq*, and *Nasr* were *Aṣṇām* that were worshipped by some Arab tribes. They existed during the era of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, being revered by those tribes, as is shown by the narratives. Everything else above and beyond that, is nothing but pure speculation, myth and legend. It contains no standing proof and cannot be used as evidence. Whoever seeks to rely upon any of that to build matters of *Deen* upon, has none to blame but themselves. Here, is an example for admonition and reflection, by Abdul Qādir ibn Ḥabeebullah al-Sindī, a dwarf from among the dwarves of the sect of Wahhābism, a teacher at the Institute of the Holy Mosque in Mecca:

This verse [*sic.* 46: 5/6] was revealed in Mecca and describes the condition of the *mushrikeen*, those who used to worship *al-Aṣṇām* like al-Lāt, al-'Uzza, al-Hubal and other than those *Aṣṇām*. The verse explains the condition of the *mushrikeen*, their foolishness, the corruption of their nature, as they used to invoke *al-Aṣṇām* besides Allah the Almighty. Although their *ibādah* and *duā*' were not intended for these *Aṣṇām* themselves, they took them as symbols and rituals of their owners, in order to imagine their presence through these objects of stone, when invoking and seeking help from them.

As cited by al-Imām al-Bukhāri in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*; likewise by Ibn al-Mundthir and Ibn Mardawiyh in their (respective works of) *Tafsir*, narrated upon the authority of Abdullah ibn 'Abbās, may Allah the Almighty be pleased with him, he said: 'All the *awthān* which were worshiped by the people of Noah were worshiped by the Arabs later on...The names, were of righteous men from the people of Noah. When they died, *Shayṭān* whispered to their people, encouraging them to set up statues in the councils where they used to sit and deliberate. But they were not worshipped until after those people had died and knowledge of such was lost.'

I say: This *Ṣaḥīḥ* narration dispels the strong sophism that is held by al-Nabhāni. Those who follow his *minhaj*, like the dwarves claim that the Quraysh used to worship *Aṣṇām* of stone, believing in their power over good and evil. However that is not the case. They actually worshipped the names associated with these *Aṣṇām*, as shown by this narration. The commentary upon this narration by al-

Ḥāfīz in *al-Faṭḥ* explained this in detail. It refuted the claim made by al-Wāqidi when he said '*Wadd*' was in the form of a man, *Suwā*' in the form of a woman; *Yaghuth* that of a lion, *Ya'uq*, a horse and *Nasr*, in the form of a bird.' Thereafter, al-Ḥāfīz said: 'This is *shadth* (anomalous), as it contradicts what is known, that they were in the images of humans, as this is indicated in the aforementioned reports as required in the rationale for their worship, and Allah knows best.' I say: the ruling upon the matter of the *shududth* (pl. of *shadth*) is that it is *munkar*, because al-Wāqidi has had the accusation upon him of lying. With that, his narratives hold no weight. With regards to the *Aṣṇām* of the Quraysh, they included al-Lāt, al-'Uzza, al-Hubal, Asāf and Nā'ila – and these are also the names of righteous men.

Imām Ibn al-Athir said in *al-Nihāya*: 'In the *ḥadith* of Mujāhid regarding where He the Almighty said: *Have you considered al-Lat and al-'Uzza?* He said: 'He was a man kneading the *saweeq* for them.' He wanted to make this with emphasis, 'al-Lat' because the idols bears the name of the one kneading the *saweeq*, which is, he used to apply the *saweeq* upon the idol, hence it was made a name for the idol.' As reported by al-Bukhāri in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* with the *isnād* from Ibn 'Abbās, concerning where He the Almighty said: '*al-Lāt and al-'Uzza*', (he said): 'al-Lāt was a man preparing the *saweeq* for the pilgrims.' al-Ḥāfīz said in *al-Faṭḥ*: 'It is reported by Ibn Abi Ḥātim from the channel of 'Amr ibn Mālik from Abul'Jawza' from Ibn 'Abbās, and his addition to the wording is: he was preparing the *saweeq* upon a rock, none would eat it except that he would become fat, hence they worshipped him.' There is disagreement regarding the name of this man. Al-Fāqihī narrates from the channel of Mujāhid that he said: 'He was a man in *Jāhiliyya*, (preparing) upon a rock at al-Ṭā'if. He had sheep that he would graze. He would obtain the raisins of al-Ṭā'if and cheese, from which he made 'Ḥayis' to feed those who passed by. When he died, he was worshipped.'

Thereafter al-Ḥāfīz said: 'al-Fāqihī cites this from another pathway from Ibn 'Abbās – that when al-Lāt died, 'Amr ibn Luḥay said unto them, that he didn't die, but he entered the rock, so they worshipped him and built a sanctuary over it. It was considered from the virtues of Quraysh, that 'Amr ibn Luḥay was the one who made the Arabs worship the *Aṣṇām*.'

I say, and so it is for the rest of the *Aṣṣnām* that were worshipped besides Allah the Almighty; they were but characteristics and symbols only, but the worship was for their names, as has been narrated by the scribe of this *Ummah*, interpreter of the Qur’ān, Abdullah ibn ‘Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him. Imām Ibn al-Athir, an expert in language, said of the *Aṣṣnām*, ‘The matter of a *Ṣanam* or *Aṣṣnām*, is what is taken as a deity besides Allah the Exalted. It is said that it refers to something that has a body or image; if it doesn’t contain that, then it is considered a *wathn*.’²⁹

Analytical comment

I would hasten to add that the earlier depiction of this individual as a ‘dwarf’ was a response in kind to what he has inflicted on others by calling them dwarves. Secondly, we would say – can you not see the brazen mental corruption caused by the absurd contradictory statements made by the sect of Wahhābism and their total reliance upon mythology and legend? He provides a text from Imām Ibn al-Athir, that the name of the *ṣanam* was given to it because the individual concerned used to rub *saweeq* upon it. So, the people are thus doomed as being *mushrikeen*, worshipping a *wathn*; the man, a custodian of that *wathn* is a *mushrik kāfir*, but the ‘dwarf’ the genius al-Sindi *insists* that this is to do with a ‘righteous man,’ the most blessed of men with honour at the service of an idol that he’s named after?

Perhaps he will have an excuse because he has been deceived by the utterly false narrative of al-Lāt, wholeheartedly believing that it is actually from Ibn ‘Abbās when it isn’t. Given this, al-Sindi has closed his heart, mind and eyes to everything else, becoming blind. But from where did he get the idea that ‘al-‘Uzza, al-Hubal, Asāf and Nā’ila – and these are also the names of righteous men’? al-‘Uzza and Nā’ila are feminine, so they cannot be, as he designates them, ‘the names of righteous men.’ Let us forgive this obvious error, perhaps he meant to imply, the names of ‘righteous men *and* women.’

Originally, there is no Islamic narrative that specifically is in relation to the idol ‘Hubal,’ what it is, where it came from etc. Although there are

²⁹ Al-Sindi, *al-Ḍua’ al-Qurāni ‘ala Kitābah al-Alwai Ḥuwal al-Nabhāni*, [Online version accessible here: <https://al-maktaba.org/book/31616/17978>]. For the translation, the quote has been slightly abbreviated in part to avoid repetition.

inscriptions in the ruins and excavations of Petra, Southern Jordan, that would seem to indicate that it was considered ‘the spouse of Manāt.’ Another claim, is that it was a ‘moon god.’³⁰

As for Asāf and Nā’ila, the fable is that they were lovers who committed adultery in the *Ka’ba* and were then transformed into stone statues. So how can one conceivably argue that they were originally ‘righteous’? Despite such confusion, al-Sindi cannot find an escape from acknowledging something which is nearer to the truth. For example, where he states that ‘so it is for the rest of the *Aṣṣnām* that were worshipped besides Allah the Almighty; they were but characteristics and symbols only, but the worship was for their names.’ Admittedly, the expression is flawed because the *Aṣṣnām* are not solely limited to such characteristics or symbols. They are representative of their ‘names,’ meaning they are associated with what the adherents believed to be divine beings whose names they bear, with a decisive strong connection as mentioned previously. Another example is set out at this juncture to show just how serious and damaging these superstitions have inflicted even upon the minds of the scholars. Cited in the works of Shaykh ‘Abdar-Raḥman ibn Yaḥya al-Mu‘allimī al-Yamāni there is the following:

The fact is that they used to exalt the *Aṣṣnām* as a means of drawing closer to Allah the Mighty and Sublime believing that Allah had commanded their exaltation based on the observation that their ancestors had exalted them as a means of drawing closer to Allah. They claimed that their ancestors had only done so with clear

³⁰ Fahd argues that Hubal was brought to Mecca by ‘Amr ibn Luhay, possibly in the first-half of the third-century CE. While originally it was a baetyl, the personification came later, fashioned as a statue of cornelian with a truncated right arm, which according to al-Azraqi, was later replaced with golden arm. Perhaps originally a stellar deity, after being brought to Mecca its function appears to be that of a cleromantic divinity. See: Fahd, T., ‘Hubal’, in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 25 June 2023 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2918> First published online: 2012. Hard copy reference [Vol. 3, pp. 536/537] circa 1971 edition. There is evidence to show that ‘Hubal’ was a deity worshipped by the Nabateans. ‘Hubalu’ appears in Nabatean tomb inscription as being the an associate of ‘Manawāt’ See: *Corpus Inscriptiones Semit.*, Vol. II: 198; Jaussen and Savignac, *Mission Archéologique en Arabie*, I (1907) p. 169f; and Francisco Del Rio Sanchez (2015), *Nabatu: The Nabataeans Through their Inscriptions* (Publicacions i Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona: Barcelona).

evidence. Alternatively, they may have shown respect to the individuals for whom the *Aṣṇām* were made, believing that by respecting their statues, they were showing respect to them. They believed that by pleasing and drawing closer to the respected individuals, they would please Allah the Mighty and Sublime, as these individuals were known for their righteousness and goodness. And this second possibility is the closest, and Allah knows best. It is the explanation given by the people of knowledge to justify the worship of *Aṣṇām*, as their words are quoted. It remains that in the story, it was the early forefathers who made the *tamātheel* (statues) to remember those deceased individuals, and it was the later generations who worshipped them. So, what did the early forefathers do with those?

I say that in the story, they made those as a means to remember their faith. When they saw the *timthāl* (statue), they would remember its owner and the goodness, righteousness, abundant prayer and worship that it was associated with. This remembrance would inspire them to be active in the worship of Allah the Mighty and Sublime. Similarly, when any of us looks at the lives of our righteous predecessors like Salmān al-Fārisi, Abu Dardā', al-Rabi'ah ibn Khaytham, or Dāwud al-Ṭā'i, it motivates us to do good deeds. It can be argued that in itself, this is a good thing and a means of assistance in doing good, as long as we overlook the aspect of making and possessing images. Especially since they were cautious not to place the *timthāl* towards the *Qibla*. However, the *Shayṭān* does not like goodness and does not support it. His intention was to use this as a means to mislead their later generations, taking them from mere remembrance to seeking blessings and engaging in worship through them.³¹

Within the same work, Shaykh al-Mu'allimī also makes mention of the 'veneration of pious men,' from the era of Nuḥ, peace be upon him.³² Given

³¹ *Athār Shaykh Abdar-Raḥman ibn Yaḥya al-Mu'allimī al-Yamāni* [Vol. 2, p. 444]

³² Ibid. [p. 446] Reading as follows: 'This is related to the belief of the nation of Nuḥ and the essence of it is that they believed that the veneration of the *tamātheel* (statues) of righteous men, is a matter of *Deen* that brings them closer to Allah the Mighty and Sublime. As for their actual practices, I did not find any explicit textual evidence upon this, and Allah knows best.'

the above, we would thus say, firstly – how could they believe that these were in reference to 'righteous men' after the knowledge had been lost or forgotten and they no longer knew the true nature of these *tamātheel* to begin with? Secondly, where did the Shaykh find the wording of 'drawing closer' to Allah in these mythical beliefs? It only came via the statement of Iblees that 'they used to worship them' or 'they were their gods,' or that it 'would bring rain.' There is no mention of Allah the Mighty and Glorious in this manner originally. And to restate with emphasis, none of the narratives mention that.

Yes, a unique narrative was mentioned: 'If we had worshipped these, they would bring us closer to Allah, intercede for us before Him, and they would only increase us in goodness. We only seek that which draws us closer to Him.' We have already commented on this. There is no need to state that such a detailed statement can only be accepted from an eyewitness who is proficient and trustworthy. There is no such reliable witness whose testimony is conveyed with a connected chain of narrators. Nor is there any *wahy*. The purpose here is to consider it as an *ijtihād* based on the effort of Abu Hurayrah, if the *isnād* attributed to him is authentic, in order to compare their motives to the motives of similar Arabs of their time. Evidently al-Mu'allimī didn't come across this narration, otherwise mention would have been made of it. It is also a figment of imagination with wild fantasies and flawed reasoning. Even the false mythical texts have not been read with proper scrutiny. To Allah we belong and unto Him we shall return.

16. Did the Arab *Mushrikeen* accept 'Tawḥeed al-Rububiyyah'?

At this juncture, it is not paramount to prove the error that was made by Imām Ibn Taymiyyah in situating *al-Khālīqiyah* under the divisions of *Tawḥeed al-Rububiyyah*, which is a secondary error in any event. He was mistaken in including matters of *al-Tadbeer* and *al-Taṣṣaraf* under the divisions of *Tawḥeed al-Rububiyyah*. Overall though, the deadly error that he made was in relation to *al-Uluhiyyah* and the catastrophic neglect of *Tawḥeed al-Dhāt*. Allah the Exalted and Majestic said:

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ؛ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا نَذَّهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ

*Allah has never had a child. Nor is there any god beside Him - if there were, each god would have taken his creation aside and tried to overcome the others. May Allah be Exalted above what they describe!*¹

It is a false heinous claim to assert that the Arab *mushrikeen* were, in essence, 'believers' in what he has termed *Tawḥeed al-Rububiyyah*. Yet they did not enter into the fold of Islam with it; were they *really* true believers in what Ibn Taymiyyah and those who followed him called *Tawḥeed al-Rububiyyah*? The truth of the original covenant born of *fiṭrah* (natural disposition) is outlined in the verse:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ

[Prophet], when your Lord took out the offspring from the loins of the Children of Adam and made them bear witness about themselves, He said, 'Am I not

¹ *Qur'ān*, 23: 91

your Lord?' and they replied, 'Yes, we bear witness.' So you cannot say on the Day of Resurrection, 'We were not aware of this.'²

Coupled with the questioning that occurs in the grave, when asked 'who is your Lord?' etc. It suffices to undermine the blatant lie that the disbelievers of the tribe of Quraysh and the Arabs more generally were believers in *Tawḥeed al-Rububiyyah*.³ But such are the people who have considerable misconceptions regarding several verses as mentioned in the book of Allah. They read such verses with distortion in their minds, with limited understanding, because they are among those who read the Qur'ān but it doesn't pass beyond their throat; they undertake ritual acts of worship to be seen by people, seeking to impress others as they are impressed with it themselves. They give hollow call to the book of Allah, yet they are nothing from it whatsoever. Inevitably as a result of their mindset, coupled with the rejection of reflection, thought and proper diligence, except admiration for themselves, is that they kill the people of Islam and leave the people of idolatry, as can be seen plain for all today with the rise of countless violent extremist groups. One should be in no doubt, that he peace and blessings be upon him, instructed that they should be exterminated upon encounter, the one doing so obtaining a reward from Allah on the day of judgement.⁴

It would be good to start by investigating to determine where the false understanding that the disbelievers of Quraysh or the general Arabs at the time were committed to *Tawḥeed al-Rububiyyah*, originated from. From where does such an understanding stem from? Uncovering this niche problem is required. Prudence dictates to begin with one of the verses in

² *Qur'ān*, 7: 172

³ Western academics seem to have very recently caught on to this, albeit without the detailed textual approach which is outlined in this present chapter. For example, Bunzel notes some of these points in his recent work on Wahhābism, he writes: 'The schema of two tawḥīds, which Ibn Taymiyya almost certainly originated, was designed with a polemical purpose in mind.' And, 'A key point that Ibn Taymiyya repeatedly makes in developing his dichotomy of tawḥīd concerns the unbelievers in Arabia at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad. In Ibn Taymiyya's view, these pagan Arabs were not in fact polytheists (*mushrikun*) in the full sense of the word, even though they are described as such in the Qur'ān. Rather, they were monotheists, believers in one God, who failed to worship Him alone. In other words, they confessed tawḥīd al-rububiyya but not tawḥīd al-uluhiyya.' See: Cole Bunzel (2023), *Wahhābism: The History of a Militant Islamic Movement* (Princeton University Press: Princeton) [pp. 146, 148]

⁴ The first portion of sentences are from the Prophetic statements in relation to the descriptive characteristics of the *Khawārij*.

question and consider in full, the *Tafsir* that is provided by Imām al-Ṭabari. The following is set out in his *Tafsir*:

Regarding the interpretation of where He, the Almighty said: ‘*Do not, knowing this, set up rivals to Allah,*’ [2: 22]. Abu Ja’far said: ‘*al-Andād*’ (rivals) is the plural of (the word) *nidd* and *al-nidd*; which means an equal, a like. As has been said by (the poet) Ḥassān ibn Thābit: ‘Do you mock him, yet you are not his *nidd* (equal)?’ That is to say, he says that you have something akin to this. And it is everything which is the like of something else, and similar to it, it is its ‘*nidd*.’ As it (has been) narrated by: Bishr ibn Mu’adhth narrated to us he said Yazeed narrated to us from Sa’eed from Qatādah (regarding the verse) ‘*Do not, knowing this, set up rivals to Allah,*’ (he said): ‘Any equals.’

al-Muthanna narrated to me he said Abu Ḥudhayfa narrated to me he said Shibl narrated to us from Ibn Abi Najih from Mujāhid (regarding the verse) ‘*Do not, knowing this, set up rivals to Allah,*’ (he said): ‘Any equals.’

Musa ibn Hārūn narrated to me he said ‘Amr narrated to us he said Asbāṭ narrated to us from al-Suddi in the report he mentioned from Abu Mālik and from Abu Ṣālih from Ibn ‘Abbās, and another time from Ibn Mas’ud and from the Companions of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, (regarding the verse) ‘*Do not, knowing this, set up rivals to Allah,*’ he said: ‘Equals among men whom you follow in disobedience to Allah.’

Yunus ibn ‘Abd al-Alā’ narrated to me he said Ibn Wahb reported to us he said Ibn Zayd said regarding the statement of Allah: ‘*Do not, knowing this, set up rivals to Allah,*’ he said - ‘*al-Andād are gods which they make equal to Him, and they attribute to them the like of what they attribute to Him.*’

It is narrated from al-Minjāb he said Bishr narrated to us from Abu Rawq from al-Ḍaḥḥāk from Ibn ‘Abbās in relation to His saying: ‘*Do not, knowing this, set up rivals to Allah,*’ he said: ‘And the like thereof.’

Muḥammad ibn Sinān narrated to me he said Abu Aāsim narrated to us from Shabeeb from ‘Ikrima (regarding the verse) ‘*Do not,*

knowing this, set up rivals to Allah,’ that they say, ‘If it wasn’t for our dog, thieves would enter our properties, if it were not for our dog barking in our properties.’

(al-Ṭabari) So Allah the Almighty forbids them to associate anything with Him, to worship other than Him, or to take equals in obedience to Him.

Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd narrated to us he said Salamah ibn al-Faḍl narrated to us from Muḥammad ibn Ishāq from Muḥammad ibn Abi Muḥammad, *mawla* of Zayd ibn Thābit, from ‘Ikrima from Sa’eed ibn Jubayr from Ibn ‘Abbās, he said: ‘This was sent down concerning both the two groups of *kuffār* and *munāfiqeen*. By ‘*Do not, knowing this, set up rivals to Allah,*’ Allah means – do not associate with Allah any equal who can bring no gain or loss, when you know that you have no Lord who provides for you apart from Him. For you already know that the *Tawḥeed* to which the Messenger calls you is the truth in which there is no doubt.’

Bishr narrated to us he said Yazeed narrated to us from Sa’eed from Qatādah in relation to His saying (in the verse) ‘*knowing this,*’ that is, you know that Allah created you and He created the heavens and the earth, then you make *Andād* to Him.

Among those who mentioned that it was related to the people of the two books (the Torah and Bible): Abu Kureeb narrated to us he said Waki’ narrated to us from Sufyān from a man from Mujāhid (concerning the verse): ‘*Do not, knowing this, set up rivals to Allah,*’ (he said): ‘He is one God in the Torah and the Bible.’

al-Muthanna ibn Ibrāhim narrated to us he said Qabeeṣa narrated to us he said Sufyān narrated to us from Mujāhid similarly.

al-Muthanna narrated to us he said Abu Ḥudhayfa narrated to us he said Shibl narrated to us from Ibn Abi Najih from Mujāhid (regarding the verse): ‘*knowing this,*’ saying: ‘And you know that there is no equal to Him in the Torah and the Bible.’

Abu Ja’far (al-Ṭabari) said: I assume that what prompted Mujāhid to give this interpretation, and to assign it as something addressed to the people of the Torah and the Bible and not anyone else, was his supposition that the Arabs did not know that Allah was their Creator and Provider, because they rejected the oneness of their Lord and

associated partners with Him in worshipping others. But this is only an opinion. Allah however has said about them in His Book that they acknowledged His Oneness despite their associating the partners they associated with Him in worshipping Him. He the Exalted has said: *'If you [Prophet] ask them who created them they are sure to say, 'Allah,' [43: 87]. And He said: 'Say [Prophet], 'Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Who controls hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living, and who governs everything?' They are sure to say, 'Allah.' Then say, 'So why do you not take heed of Him?'* [10: 31].

The opinion more preferable for the interpretation of His saying of: *'knowing this,'* since it was the case that the Arabs acknowledged the Oneness of Allah that He was the Originator of creation, their Creator and Provider, as was the case with the people of the two scriptures, and since there is no indication in the verse that Allah means by His saying *'knowing this,'* either of the two parties, but rather that it is the generality of people, without exception, that are here being addressed, because He meant all the people when He said: *'O people, worship your Lord.'* Then the preferable interpretation is that of Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah, whereby He meant all those obligated by His commandments, who know of the Oneness of Allah, that He has no partner in His creation, yet who associate another with Him in their worship, irrespective of whether these people are Arabs or non-Arabs, literate or illiterate. Nevertheless, it was addressed to the *kuffār* among the people of scripture who were around the land of *hijra* of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, and to the *munāfiqeen* among them, and to those among them who were *mushrik* and had gone over to *nifāq* when the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him arrived there.⁵

Consider carefully what al-Ṭabari wrote in this extensive quote, particularly where he said: 'I assume that what prompted Mujāhid to give this interpretation.'⁶ One needs to review and read this carefully in order to fully appreciate *how the defect* for this matter arose originally. Indeed, the

⁵ *Tafsir* al-Ṭabari, [Vol. 1, pp. 368/373]

⁶ Here, the Arabic edition re-quotes the section again in entirety. For the present translation here, this is omitted for ease of reading.

Quraysh and most of the Adnanite Arab tribes *knew* that Allah was 'a deity,' the central and highest, being their Creator and Provider; the One who manages the most important matters, saviour from the perils of land and sea. Perhaps only because he was described as the 'greatest god,' their 'leader and father.' Likening Him to His creation, in that regard, attributing to Him characteristics borne of deficiency, need, or absurdities and impossibilities that contradict the notion of Him being the Necessarily Existent; the manifest truth, the Eternal and Everlasting; the sole deity without beginning or end. They ascribed offspring to Him, which is one of the ugliest forms of insult, as He is the Almighty, Majestic. They denied His power to resurrect the dead and preside in judgement over them and they believed that there are entities or beings which could escape Him by flight or tamper in His affairs, which they attributed to the demons and *Jinn*. These Arabs made equals unto Him, whether that was in a single aspect or consideration, that alongside the creation of other false deities besides Him which is a denial of His Oneness through this ascription of divinity to others. The result, they associated partners with Him in worship. All of that is an absolute truth, as Allah the Majestic and Sublime has informed us in the text of the Qur'ān. It is further attested to by way of historical account that has been substantiated.

But where did Imām Abu Ja'far al-Ṭabari, may Allah be pleased with him, derive the statement that *'they acknowledged or knew of the Oneness of Allah?'* This is a very serious mistake, particularly given that Allah the Majestic and Sublime has *never* mentioned as much within the text of the Qur'ān. The following though *is* outlined within the text and shall be quoted in full to provide the context too which is paramount. Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted said:

On the Day We gather them all together, We shall say to those who associate partners with Allah, 'Stay in your place, you and your partner-gods.' Then We shall separate them, and their partner-gods will say, 'It was not us you worshipped - Allah is witness enough between us and you - we had no idea that you worshipped us.'

Every soul will realise, then and there, what it did in the past. They will be returned to Allah, their rightful Lord, and their invented [gods] will desert them. Say [Prophet], 'Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Who controls hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the

dead from the living, and who governs everything?’ They are sure to say, ‘Allah.’ Then say, ‘So why do you not take heed of Him?’

That is Allah, your Lord, the Truth. Apart from the Truth, what is there except error? So how is it that you are dissuaded?’ In this way, your Lord’s word about those who defy [the Truth] has been proved— they do not believe. Ask them, ‘Can any of your partner-gods originate creation, then bring it back to life again in the end?’ Say, ‘It is Allah that originates creation, and then brings it back to life, so how can you be misled?’

Say, ‘Can any of your partner-gods show the way to the Truth?’ Say, ‘Allah shows the way to the Truth. Is someone who shows the way to the Truth more worthy to be followed, or someone who cannot find the way unless he himself is shown? What is the matter with you? How do you judge?’ Most of them follow nothing but assumptions, but assumptions can be of no value at all against the Truth: Allah is well aware of what they do.⁷

Note carefully the wording as it appears within the text of the Book: despite their acknowledgment that He provides sustenance from the sky and the earth; that He has hearing, sight, that He brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living, despite *all of this* – they are in rejection, doubt, and hesitation over whether ‘the partners’ they ascribe can originate creation, bring creation back to life, or guide the way to the truth. Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted said:

But, like others before them, they say, ‘What? When we die and turn to dust and bones, shall we really be resurrected? We have heard such promises before, and so did our forefathers.

These are just ancient fables.’ Say [Prophet], ‘Who owns the earth and all who live in it, if you know [so much]?’ and they will reply, ‘Allah.’ Say, ‘Will you not take heed?’ Say, ‘Who is the Lord of the seven heavens? Who is the Lord of the Mighty Throne?’ and they will reply, ‘Allah.’ Say, ‘Will you not be mindful?’ Say, ‘Who holds control of everything in His hand? Who protects, while there is no protection against Him, if you know [so much]?’ and they will reply, ‘Allah.’ Say, ‘Then how can you be so deluded?’

⁷ Qur’ān, 10: 28/36. Given the large block-quoting of verses in this chapter, the Arabic text has been omitted except for single quoted verses.

The fact is, We brought them the truth and they are lying. Allah has never had a child. Nor is there any god beside Him - if there were, each god would have taken his creation aside and tried to over- come the others. May Allah be exalted above what they describe! He knows what is not seen as well as what is seen; He is far above any partner they claim for Him. Say, ‘Lord, if You are going to show me the punishment You have promised them, then Lord, do not include me among the evildoers!’⁸

Notice here how they did not accept the matter of the final return and resurrection. Either they didn’t accept it because the Prophet had informed them of it, or, as the context shows that is more likely, they didn’t accept that this was within the domain of Allah to do so. This is despite the testimonies that come immediately before and after it. With the verse that invalidates the notion that there are any types of deities, especially those that attribute offspring to Him, the Exalted. Those who held such views or at least some of them were attributing offspring to Allah. Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted said:

How many are the creatures who do not store their sustenance? Allah sustains them and you: He alone is the all Hearing, the all Knowing. If you ask the disbelievers who created the heavens and earth and who harnessed the sun and moon, they are sure to say, ‘Allah.’

Then why do they turn away from Him? It is Allah who gives abundantly to whichever of His servants He will, and sparingly to whichever He will: He has full knowledge of everything. If you ask them, ‘Who sends water down from the sky and gives life with it to the earth after it has died?’ they are sure to say, ‘Allah.’ Say, ‘Praise belongs to Allah!’ Truly, most of them do not use their reason.

The life of this world is merely an amusement and a diversion; the true life is in the Hereafter, if only they knew. Whenever they go on board a ship they call on Allah, and dedicate their faith to Him alone, but once He has delivered them safely back to land, see how they ascribe partners to Him! Let them show their ingratitude for what We have given them; let them take their enjoyment – soon they will know. Can they not see that We have made [them] a secure sanctuary though all around them people are snatched

⁸ Qur’ān, 23: 81/93

away? Then how can they believe in what is false and deny Allah's blessing? Who could be more wicked than the person who invents lies about Allah, or denies the truth when it comes to him? Is Hell not the home for the disbelievers? But We shall be sure to guide to Our ways those who strive hard for Our cause: Allah is with those who do good.⁹

Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted said:

If you ask them who created the heavens and earth, they are sure to say, 'Allah.' Say, 'Praise belongs to Allah,' but most of them do not understand. Everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Allah. Allah is self-sufficient and worthy of all praise. If all the trees on earth were pens and all the seas, with seven more seas besides, [were ink,] still Allah's words would not run out: Allah is Almighty and all Wise. Creating and resurrecting all of you is only like creating or resurrecting a single soul: Allah is all hearing and all seeing.

Do you not see that Allah causes the night to merge into day and the day to merge into night; that He has subjected the sun and the moon, each to run its course for a stated term; that He is aware of everything you [people] do? This is because Allah is the Truth, and what they invoke beside Him is false. He is the Most High, Most Great. Do you not see that ships sail through the sea, by the grace of Allah, to show you [people] some of His wonders? Truly there are signs in this for every steadfast, thankful person.

When the waves loom over those on board like giant shadows they call out to Allah, devoting their religion entirely to Him. But, when He has delivered them safely to land, some of them waver - only a treacherous, thankless person refuses to acknowledge Our signs. People, be mindful of your Lord and fear a day when no parent will take the place of their child, nor a child take the place of their parent, in any way. Allah's promise is true, so do not let the present life delude you, nor let the Deceiver delude you about Allah.¹⁰

Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted said:

⁹ Qur'ān, 29: 60/69

¹⁰ Qur'ān, 31: 25/33

Is Allah not enough for His servant? Yet they threaten you [Prophet] with those they worship other than Him. If Allah allows someone to stray he has no one to guide him; if Allah guides someone no one can lead him astray. Is Allah not mighty and capable of retribution? If you [Prophet] ask them, 'Who created the heavens and earth?' they are sure to answer, 'Allah.' so say, 'Consider those you invoke beside Him: if Allah wished to harm me, could they undo that harm? If Allah wished to show me mercy, could they withhold that mercy?' Say, 'Allah is enough for me: all those who trust should put their trust in Him.' Say, 'My people, do whatever is in your power - and so will I. You will find out who will suffer humiliation and on whom a lasting torment will descend.'

We have sent the Scripture down to you [Prophet] with the Truth for people. Whoever follows the guidance does so for his own benefit, whoever strays away from it does so at his own peril: you are not in charge of them. Allah takes the souls of the dead and the souls of the living while they sleep— He keeps hold of those whose death He has ordained and sends the others back until their appointed time— there truly are signs in this for those who reflect. Yet they take intercessors besides Allah! Say, 'Even though these have no power or understanding?' Say, 'All intercession belongs to Allah alone; He holds control of the heavens and the earth; in the end you will all return to Him.'

Whenever Allah is mentioned on His own, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter shrink with aversion, but they rejoice when gods other than Him are mentioned. Say, 'Allah, Creator of the heavens and earth! Knower of all that is hidden and all that is open, You will judge between Your servants regarding their differences.' If the evildoers possessed the earth's assets twice over they would offer them to ransom themselves from the terrible suffering on the Day of Resurrection: Allah will show them something they had not reckoned with, the evil of their deeds will become plain to them, and they will be overwhelmed by that at which they used to laugh.¹¹

Notice here *how* the matter of intercession is treated. They believed that was the preserve of their intercessors. At the very least, it does not require permission, otherwise it wouldn't be owned by them originally. The matter

¹¹ Qur'ān, 39: 36/49

couldn't be otherwise, because Allah the Almighty instructed his Prophet, peace and blessings to be upon him to expressly state: 'Say, 'All intercession belongs to Allah alone; He holds control of the heavens and the earth; in the end you will all return to Him.'¹² Indeed it is of great significance and they sought to try and obfuscate the Prophet by, for example, saying 'Have we denied that Allah is the owner of the heavens and that earth, all intercession belonging to Him?' As for the command of Allah the Exalted to His Prophet, it was to say: 'Yet they take intercessors besides Allah! Say: Even though these have no power or understanding?'¹³ It is intended only to inform them of the reality of intercession by itself in this matter. Their 'intercessors' having no actual existence whatsoever. They were but inanimate *tamātheel* (statuettes) of representation. This is the reality of the matter at hand. It is not the belief of the *mushrikeen* in the matter of *intercession per se* as some would mistakenly think with their warped minds. Such presumed entities can have no real ownership of intercession without a real kind of cosmic ownership, even if that were to a limited specific part of the universe. Or some kind of quality on a par with Allah the Exalted in terms of essence of divine lineage – which we have proved is impossible and absurd. It is only this that can be a figment of their imagination. Perhaps we may notice this here, particularly after a long discussion is made regarding some aspects of His creation, for He said:

Yet they assign some of His own servants to Him as offspring! Man is clearly ungrateful! Has He taken daughters for Himself and favoured you with sons? When one of them is given news of the birth of a daughter, such as he so readily ascribes to the Lord of Mercy, his face grows dark and he is filled with gloom - 'Someone who is brought up amongst trinkets, who cannot put together a clear argument?'

*They consider the angels - Allah's servants - to be female. Did they witness their creation? Their claim will be put on record and they will be questioned about it. They say, 'If the Lord of Mercy had willed it, we would not have worshipped them,' but they do not know that— they are only guessing - or have We perhaps given them a book before this one, to which they hold fast?'*¹⁴

¹² Qur'ān, 39: 44

¹³ Qur'ān, 39: 43

¹⁴ Qur'ān, 43: 15/21

One should note clearly the highlighted portions of the verses within the textual discussion of their ascription of false divine entities within the matter at hand. Those who had attributed a child / offspring to Him necessarily also asserted that He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, *al-Aziz, al-Aleem*. The necessities of the language utilised in the verses are demonstrative of this, the wording is [وَجَعَلُوا] 'and they made, assigned'; it cannot refer to anything that precedes it except that it relates to their pronoun and what they did, also seen in the wording [لَيَقُولُنَّ], 'Then they will say.' It is impossible for the matter to be otherwise. And yet, there is no contradiction within the minds of the *mushrikeen* as far as they are concerned, between attributing a child or offspring to Allah whilst acknowledging Him as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, recognising Him as *al-Aziz, al-Aleem*. Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted said:

Say [Prophet], 'If the Lord of Mercy [truly] had offspring I would be the first to worship [them], but - Exalted be the Lord of the heavens and earth, the Lord of the Throne - He is far above their false descriptions.' Leave them to wade in deeper and play about, until they face the Day they have been promised. It is He who is Allah in heaven and Allah on earth; He is the All Wise, the All Knowing; Exalted is He who has control of the heavens and earth and everything between them; He has knowledge of the Hour; you will all be returned to Him.

*Those 'gods' they invoke besides Him have no power of intercession, unlike those who bore witness to the truth and recognised it. If you [Prophet] ask them who created them they are sure to say, 'Allah,' so why are they so deluded? The Prophet has said, 'My Lord, truly these are people who do not believe,' but turn away from them and say, 'Peace': they will come to know.'*¹⁵

Once again note well the specific wording employed in the verses, that they believe in 'gods' who they assume have power related to intercession, which has been discussed before. There are ten statements, some of which are composed of several sayings in seven different contexts or settings, from six chapters of the Qur'ān which were Meccan in origin. One should also note

¹⁵ Qur'ān, 43: 81/89

that Allah the Exalted mentioned in each of the contexts additional statements about His attributes, acts and what is appropriate for Him, either as a prelude to their statements or as a rebuttal to them or both. All of these statements necessarily outline what their recipients were ignorant of, or uncertain about, or flatly denied, as expressed by the context and magnificent eloquence of the Qur’ān. Note from the first passage of verses in *Surah al-Zukhruf* (verses 10/21) that after providing a detailed outline of their acknowledgment of *some of His creation*, that He may be Exalted said that they assign offspring to Him; that He has ‘taken daughters’ while they favour sons. That when one of them hears news of the birth of daughter he is upset, yet ascribes as such to the Lord of all existence.¹⁶

Those who attributed a child to Him readily acknowledged that He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, *al-Aziz, al-Aleem*. The pronoun ‘they’ in the verb [وَجَعَلُوا], ‘they made, ascribed’ cannot refer to anything else that has come before it. Hence, there is no contradiction in the minds of the *mushrikeen*, between attributing a child to Allah *and* in the same breath acknowledging Him as being the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

They, the *mushrikeen*, or some of them, acknowledge that Allah is the One who created the heavens and the earth, and created them, and is the One who has subjected the sun and the moon. And they, or some of them, are acknowledging that He is the One who sends down rain from the sky and revives the earth after its death. They, the *mushrikeen*, or some of them acknowledge Allah as being the owner of the earth and all its contents, that He is the Lord of the seven heavens, the mighty throne. In His hand lays dominion over all things; His mercy is the highest, most abundant. He is the protector, none can protect bar Him, meaning that He safeguards, supports or may prevent whomever He wishes from whomever He wishes, and no one can protect, support, or prevent anyone from Him if He wishes to destroy or punish them. And they, the *mushrikeen*, or some of them readily acknowledge that He is the one who provides for them from the heavens and the earth, and He has the ownership of hearing and sight. He brings the living out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living. It is impossible for all of them to agree on all aspects of this at the same time, because the Qur’ān

¹⁶ For the translation, this section has been summarised, because the verses previously mentioned are re-quoted here again.

mentions it in different contexts, chapters and debates with varying groups. In fact, some of their statements seem to conflict with each other on occasion. Therefore, it must be that *some of them* acknowledge certain aspects, while others acknowledge something akin or even slightly different. All of this is affirmation and ‘*Imān*’, but it is not necessarily *Tawḥeed* and Islam, because it is an ‘*Imān*’ which is deficient, incomplete and mixed with varying ideas, some contradicting the essence of Islam and the reality of *Tawḥeed*. As Allah the Exalted expressly says:

وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ

*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him.*¹⁷

Indeed, the speech of Allah is manifest truth – who is more truthful than Allah? As Imām al-Ṭabari himself explained in his interpretation, to be quoted shortly. Here though, several analytical points need to be outlined at this juncture. Despite the *mushrikeen* giving acknowledgment that Allah is the one who provides sustenance from the heavens and the earth, this recognition in this specific matter:

1. Does not necessarily mean or exclude that they believe He is *alone* or unique with that. They may believe that there are *other independent providers* besides Him, competing with Him for the sustenance of the servants. And perhaps He is the greatest provider, just as commercial companies compete in markets.
2. It doesn’t mean that they believe He *alone* is uniquely responsible for it, performing it by His inherent ability, independently. It is possible that they believe He is in need of assistance or intermediaries in carrying out that provision, drawing a comparison to earthy kingship and dominion.
3. It doesn’t imply the necessity that they believe His dominion is devoid of some mischievous criminals or rebellious insurgents who defy Him, that can escape him by flight (believing that they are on the same plain of existence to do so), fleeing to the

¹⁷ *Qur’ān*, 12: 106

mountaintops and deep valleys.¹⁸ These individuals are the ones who provide for themselves and their followers, having their own treasures, provisions, and supplies.

4. Even if we were to concede, for the sake of argument, that the verse implies their belief that He alone, with no partner, provides sustenance from the heavens and the earth independently in this specific aspect, it contradicts and opposes the implications of the linguistic context as it exists in the Arabic language with which we were addressed in the Qur’ān. There is no mention in the verse of any other divine attributes or eternal qualities. Therefore, it is possible that they believed He had partners in other matters, such as:

- a) Believing in the existence of *another* deity who creates evil, causes disease and/or infection; undermines the affairs of Allah, and to whom Allah has no power to prevent. This is akin to like the belief of dualistic heretics in the ‘god of evil’ who does not provide, does not possess hearing and sight, does not give life and death, but rather rebels against Allah, disobeying Him and seeking to actively corrupt His affairs. Exalted is Allah above such absurdities. Alternatively, they may believe in mysterious cosmic forces that are beyond the control of Allah, such as other supernatural entities or the like.
- b) Or that there is *another deity* in existence, with its own separate world, existing completely independent from our own. This deity does not intervene in our existence at all. However, by virtue of being a deity, it is worthy of reverence and respect, even though it does not seek anything from us, nor does it bring harm or benefit. It is far removed from our own existence, having its own separate ‘foreign’ dominion or kingdom, that is unconcerned with our affairs and does not interfere in the matters of our own deity’s local’ kingdom. Therefore, Allah must be ‘flattered,’ ‘appeased,’ and one

¹⁸ From among the Qur’ānic verses outlined in chapter 72 dealing with the *Jinn*, verse 12: ‘And we know that we cannot escape from Allah in the earth, nor can we escape by flight.’

must ‘cater to His desires’ and handle interactions with Him diplomatically to avoid war and confrontation.

- c) Or the insidious belief that Allah has offspring, sons and daughters from a divine substance or essence, but they don’t necessarily have agency. They do not provide sustenance, possess ownership, or legislate. However, their status with ‘their father’ is high, and His love for them is immense. They are indulged and pampered, just like the children of tyrant kings and their daughters. The perception being that they intercede on behalf of people before Him with an intercession that cannot be rejected and does not require permission. He delights in their mediation and rewards their worshippers. Exalted is Allah above such absurd notions. This is the greatest calamity that Allah repeatedly warns against in dozens of instances in the Qur’ān, and He severely condemns the adherents to that view. However, Ibn Taymiyyah deliberately omitted discussing it and completely neglected it when discussing the *Shirk* of the Arabs, and the sect of Wahhābism has blindly followed him in this, akin to imitating monkeys.
- d) That they, namely the *mushrikeen*, their kings, nobles, assemblies or Parliaments, have sovereignty and the prerogative of the command. In other words, they have the authority of making legislation binding all to obey them.

Some may argue that this is accepted, in the same manner as acceptance of the verses where He, the Mighty and Sublime said:

قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمَّنْ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَمَنْ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يُدِيرُ الْأَمْرَ فَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ

Say [Prophet], ‘Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Who controls hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living, and who governs everything?’ They are sure to say, ‘Allah.’¹⁹

¹⁹ Qur’ān, 10: 31

They may retort - but, how can it be that the clear wording of the verses states the following, that He the Mighty and Sublime says –

وَلِإِن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ

If you [Prophet] ask them, 'Who created the heavens and earth?' they are sure to answer, 'Allah.'²⁰

وَلِإِن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ

If you [Prophet] ask them who created them they are sure to say, 'Allah.'²¹

Isn't this, at the least *Tawḥeed*? Or at the very least, what Ibn Taymiyyah and the sect of Wahhābism call *Tawḥeed al-Rububiyyah*? In response, we would emphatically say no, it isn't. Affirmation or partial affirmation from some of them that Allah is the one who created them, the heavens and the earth, is not complete. It is an affirmation that is made partially:

1. It does not necessarily mean that they believed that He *alone* is the *exclusive* Creator of all creation and existence. They might well have believed in *another* creator or independent creators, such as is seen with the belief of the dualists and Zoroastrians. They held a belief in a 'god of evil' *who didn't* create the heavens and the earth, nor did that provide sustenance or life, nor did it possess hearing or sight. But that this 'entity' creates evil, causes affliction and disease, over which they held that Allah had no power over. That 'evil entity' actively rebels against Allah, not only disobeying Him but seeking to rebel or even undermine what He does. Or, it may be a 'raw material' of the universe, what some of the ancient Greek philosophers referred to as 'chaos.' Eternal, uncreated, it exists, but there still existed alongside this a god that created the rest of existence.
2. It does not necessarily mean that they believed that He *alone* is uniquely responsible for those matters, being able to undertake them with His own intrinsic ability and will. It is possible that they believed He

²⁰ Qur'ān, 39: 38

²¹ Qur'ān, 43: 87

needed assistance or intermediaries to achieve such ends, based on the analogy of craftsmen among the created beings.

3. Even if we assume, for the sake of argument, that the verse affirms their acknowledgment that He is the one who created the heavens, the earth, and everything within them, including all creatures, with their good and evil aspects, uniquely and alone without any partners in this *specific matter*, starting from sheer nothingness by His independent ability, there is no mention in it of *any other* divine names, attributes, or actions. It is thus possible for them to believe that He has partners in other matters, such as:
 - a) Believing that there is another 'god' which exists, with another universe completely independent from our own. This 'god' does not intervene in our universe, however, by virtue of being 'a god,' he deserves to be revered and respected, even though nothing is sought from him, and no harm or benefit derives from him, because he is distant from our universe. He has his own independent 'foreign kingdom' that is not concerned with our affairs and does not interfere in the matters of our 'local god's kingdom.' Therefore, such 'a god' must be appeased, flattered, and catered to, taking into account his 'mood.'
 - b) Not being alone in the exclusive responsibility for creation, or originating matters into existence. The notion that he could become 'weary,' 'tired,' or even reticent thereafter. The latter, held by some former sceptics in Christianity, that He has 'turned his back on the world,' no longer caring about it. The management, administration, sustenance, command, prohibition, and other actions are *delegated to others*. They carry this function out independently according to their own judgment, signing off on them with their own effort. This, for example, is the belief of some Hindus regarding 'the chief deity,' Brahma, who they allege only created and then sank into deep slumber, leaving the care, protection, sustenance, and resurrection to the 'other chief deity,' Vishnu. Death and destruction is assigned to Shiva, as per their system. Some worshippers of their false goddess 'Durga' also believe in a myth explaining her origin: that the Almighty - Brahman, who has no form, no known reality, and cannot be understood, first created the goddess Durga and then entrusted her

with the creation of the world – note here that ‘Brahman’ is a separate entity, not to be confused with Brahma.

- c) The attribution of sons and daughters to Allah, be that from divine essence or substance. Such supposed entities having no ‘direct authority,’ per se, meaning that they don’t create, sustain, possess or legislate, but have the implied high status. Being indulged, pampered or even held in esteem, much like the offspring of despotic kings. Their function, which isn’t an uncommon belief in many pagan cultures and civilisations, is that they intercede with the ‘father,’ that intercession isn’t rejected either, and it is encouraged. Far is Allah above such evil trivialities. Here I would submit, that this is one of the greatest falsehoods that was held and one that Allah consistently refutes within the text of the Qur’ān. He strongly condemns this, especially as noted earlier in *Surah al-Zukhruf*.
- d) That the *mushrikeen*, or their kings, dignitaries, councils, Parliaments and the like, have sovereignty and *Hākimiyyah*, that is the right of legislation, the prerogative of command to which all must yield to.

Critically, we also notice from some of the Qur’ānic verses already mentioned previously, that they respond to those who denied the matter of resurrection and the Day of Judgement, which was due to their belief that the power of Allah didn’t extend to that realm. So this is wider than a narrow debate about *Tawḥeed* in the sense of believing in more than one divine being or entity. Rather, they may fall within the realm of *Tawḥeed al-Asmā’ wal-Ṣifāt*.

Evidently, holding beliefs in any of the aforementioned points is definitively contrary to the beliefs held by the people of Islam. For example regarding creation, Islam holds that Allah is the Creator of all things, by His own inherent power; completely independent and without any need for assistance or partner. No distinction is made between the heavens and the earth, life and death, good and evil, and all of this originates by Allah from non-existence. Anything that may be attributed to someone else in terms of creation, formation, shaping, or representation is only by the contingent created power bestowed by Allah, with His divine decree. It is enabled

through His preordained permission, not through independent initiation or autonomy.

It is inconceivable, in fact impossible, that *anything* in the universe could occur *without* the permission and preordained decree of Allah. All units of measure, all cause-and-effect relationships are by His decree, according to His will, choice and nothing within that is necessitating or compelling Him to act. He is always in a state of absolute perfection, majesty, and beauty, before and after creation. His dominion does not increase or decrease, and He is not affected by weakness, fatigue, or boredom. Not to mention the acknowledgment of the people of Islam regarding His other attributes of perfection, beauty, Majesty, His Exalted sovereignty, and absolute authority, meaning His unquestionable right to issue legislation having the total prerogative of command. He states:

وَلَا يُشْرِكُ فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا

*He does not allow anyone to share His rule.*²²

Given this, where do these superficial or limited assertions made by the *mushrikeen* actually stand? How can their fallacious contradictory beliefs be deemed as coming within scope of being called *Tawḥeed*? Any intelligent reader will not find difficulty in recognising this point. Be that from these outlined, or others, that this doesn’t constitute pure ‘*Imān*’ or correct *Tawḥeed*, not even a part of it. Moreover, it is also the case even if false arguments are accepted hypothetically, with impossible assumptions, assuming that all such beliefs are associated with the ten points mentioned in the Qur’ān with the seven different contexts, as mentioned previously. Even with that scenario, it is not pure ‘*Imān*’ or correct *Tawḥeed*, not even a portion of it. Instead, it might even involve various forms of *Shirk*, especially if the following is present:

1. Holding the belief that Allah somehow has offspring: sons and daughters from a divine essence or substance. Such entities do not create, do not provide sustenance, do not possess anything, and do not legislate. However, their status with their father is high, and His love

²² Qur’ān, 18: 26

for them is immense. They are indulged and pampered, just like the sons and daughters of despotic kings. They intercede for people before Him, and their intercession is not in need of permission; it is a definite intercession that is never rejected. Allah rejoices in their intercession and rewards their devotees. Exalted is Allah above such evil claims. This was we mentioned before and here to reiterate it again, as it is the greatest falsehood that Allah strongly condemns in numerous instances in the Qur’ān, and yet its adherents persisted in their belief. Ibn Taymiyyah completely bypassed this point and ignored it when discussing the *Shirk* of the Arabs. In a similar manner, his followers the sect of Wahhabism have also blindly followed him in disregarding it.

2. Believing that Allah the Almighty is *not* free from flaws or imperfections, that He is not *al-Quddus* and *al-Salām*. That His power is somehow limited, for example, by not being capable of resurrecting the dead for the Day of Judgement, or being unable to repel *Jinn* or demons. Ancillary to such evil claims are that His knowledge and / or perception are curtailed or limited, not being able to decipher the thoughts of souls or see through the immense darkness.
3. The belief that someone or something else has the right to share or partner with Him with regards to this *Hukm*, or prerogative of command. In other words, to acknowledge Him as creator of all but not to recognise His authority in this area. That would be manifestly at odds with where He the Mighty and Sublime says: *‘He created the sun, moon, and stars to be subservient to His command; all creation and command belong to Him.’*²³
4. The claim, assertion or believe that there is ‘another divine being’ having its own separate realm of knowledge that is independent from our plain of existence. Be that relating to a supposed ‘underworld’ or ‘netherworld.’

The Shaykh’s addendum

Further to this, there is an important point that was made to me by Shaykh Yusuf ibn Marwān, may Allah reward him, which is that some verses utilise

²³ Qur’ān, 7: 54

the phrase [لَيَقُولُنَّ], ‘Then they will say,’ to indicate a definitive statement regarding their current belief and position at the time when questioned. Whereas the other phrase used, [فَسَيَقُولُونَ] ‘They would most certainly say,’ suggests a potential future response. This implies that they may say that after being presented with arguments and evidence, or after detailed reflection.²⁴

I have though set aside such nuance, dealing with all statements being made as definite expressions of their established beliefs, being unwavering, and closing the door to debate with those who are intellectually backward and do not surpass the surface level of understanding the Qur’ān. Those sects who are enamoured with themselves and their own opinions; who find pleasure in impressing others with their superficial knowledge while looking down upon the prayers and fasts of others. The inevitable result of their rejection of contemplation and intellectual pursuit, and their arrogance and self-glorification, is that they: ‘Call to the book of Allah, but they have nothing to do with it’; ‘They will abandon the Deen just as an arrow goes through the body of game of its target, the tip, shaft and quivers revealing nothing, for the arrow has been too fast even for the blood and excretions to smear,’ and ‘They kill the people of Islam, leaving the idol worshippers alone.’²⁵ We have witnessed this clearly in our present era via the actions of a criminal enterprise calling itself *Da’esh*, ‘ISIS.’ Hence it is no wonder that the sincere compassionate advisor, may peace and blessings be upon him and his family, statement that such people need to be executed wherever found, and partaking in that results in a reward on the Day of Judgement.

Someone may retort to argue that the previous discussion outlined *only* reveals that the well-known phrasing of the verses ‘*la-yaqūlunna*,’ [لَيَقُولُنَّ] and ‘*fa-sa-yaqūlūna*,’ [فَسَيَقُولُونَ], do not definitively prove that the Arabs believed in *Shirk* related to *al-Rububiyyah*. Instead, they present several possibilities. Therefore, why did you not strongly refute Imām Ibn Taymiyyah and his followers? Here I would argue that no excuse can be given for Imām Ibn Taymiyyah in this regard. And it is necessary that the

²⁴ Generally, this subtle and nuanced point, often doesn’t get clearly reflected in English translations. Here we have departed from Professor Abdel Haleem’s translation and utilised that by Ahmad Shakir, who does seem to make this subtle distinction within his translation.

²⁵ Taken from the Prophetic statements which aptly describe the traits of the Kharijites, ancient or modern.

underlying arguments he made must be decisively opposed and refused, for the following reasons:

Firstly, because he extracted verses from their critical context, even to the extent of truncating some parts, which is appalling. Indeed, if he had presented the Qur'ānic verses in their complete context, it would have become quite evident to anyone studious that they, or some of them held beliefs of *Shirk* that related to the divine nature. This is particularly so in their attribution of offspring to Allah, which is one of the ugliest forms of *Shirk* and *kufr*. They also had *Shirk* in matters that related to creation, as they doubted Allah being the *sole* originator of creation. Ibn Taymiyyah bundled this aspect of creation *within al-Rububiyyah*, so according to his very own doctrine and expression, they did have *Shirk* in *al-Rububiyyah*. Moreover, they had *Shirk* in *al-Rububiyyah* by considering 'their partners' as being intercessors. Ibn Taymiyyah arrogantly dismissed requiring any further knowledge or understanding related to the nature of the pre-Islamic Arabs *Shirk*, implying that 'he knew it all,' when clearly he didn't.

Second, Ibn Taymiyyah claimed a complete understanding of the Qur'ān, which is tantamount to outright falsehood. This is evident from a careful examination of the verses utilising the phrasing, as previous mentioned

'*la-yaqūlunna,*' [لَيَقُولُنَّ] and '*fa-sa-yaqūlūna,*' [فَسَيَقُولُونَ], within their context of the verses, but also other verses in this regard. Indeed, He the most truthful, the Mighty and Sublime has expressly said:

Say [Prophet], 'Praise be to Allah and peace on the servants He has chosen. Who is better: Allah, or those they set up as partners with Him? Who created the heavens and earth? Who sends down water from the sky for you - with which We cause gardens of delight to grow: you have no power to make the trees grow in them - is it another god beside Allah? No! But they are people who take others to be equal with Allah.'

Who is it that made the earth a stable place to live? Who made rivers flow through it? Who set immovable mountains on it and created a barrier between the fresh and salt water? Is it another god beside Allah? No! But most of them do not know.

Who is it that answers the distressed when they call upon Him? Who removes their suffering? Who makes you successors in the earth? Is it another god

*beside Allah? Little notice you take! Who is it that guides you through the darkness on land and sea? Who sends the winds as heralds of good news before His mercy? Is it another god beside Allah? Allah is far above the partners they put beside him! Who is it that creates life and reproduces it? Who is it that gives you provision from the heavens and earth? Is it another god beside Allah?' Say, 'Show me your evidence then, if what you say is true.'*²⁶

Read the verses carefully, free from phantasms. They contain explicit proof that the true God is indeed capable of creation, notably the creation of the heavens and the earth. He sends down rain from the sky producing lush greenery. Each of the verses continue enumerating the attributes of Allah that qualify Him to be worshipped as the sole deity in a detailed manner: creating the earth with its mountains and rivers, making it a stable dwelling place suitable for life; responding to the distressed when they call upon Him, removing harm; appointing humans as successors on the earth; providing guidance in the darkness of the land and sea; sending the winds with rain; initiating creation and bringing it back, and so on and so forth. Essentially there is no meaning in their demand for evidence of these attributes in their false supposed deities, as Allah expressly states: '*Is it another god beside Allah? Say, 'Show me your evidence then, if what you say is true.'*' If those originally addressed by the verses, or some of them, truly believed in their 'deities' possessing *all* these attributes, or at least some of them, they would have responded with a clear answer: 'We never claimed any such thing, why do you ask us for evidence?' Allah forbid that there should be someone in existence to dare seek to silence or challenge Allah. Without a doubt, they committed *Shirk* either in the aspect of *al-Khāliqiyah* (creation) or *al-Rububiyyah* or both.

Here we can reiterate a similar argument, word for word, that was mentioned in the context of the verse of *al-Fasād*, as covered earlier in this volume. The verse in its complete context is as follows:

We did not create the heavens and the earth and everything between them playfully. If We had wished for a pastime, We could have found it within Us— if We had wished for any such thing. No! We hurl the truth against falsehood,

²⁶ Qur'ān, 27: 59/64

and truth obliterates it— see how falsehood vanishes away! Woe to you [people] for the way you describe Allah! Everyone in the heavens and earth belongs to Him, and those that are with Him are never too proud to worship Him, nor do they grow weary; they glorify Him tirelessly night and day.

Have they chosen any gods from the earth who can give life to the dead? If there had been in the heavens or earth any gods but Him, both heavens and earth would be in ruins: Allah, Lord of the Throne, is far above the things they say: He cannot be called to account for anything He does, whereas they will be called to account. Have they chosen to take other gods instead of Him? Say, 'Bring your proof. This is the Scripture for those who are with me and the Scripture for those who went before me.' But most of them do not recognize the truth, so they pay no heed.

We never sent any messenger before you [Muḥammad] without revealing to him: 'There is no god but Me, so serve Me.' And they say, 'The Lord of Mercy has taken offspring for Himself.' May He be Exalted! No! They are only His honoured servants: they do not speak before He speaks and they act by His command. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot intercede without His permission —indeed they themselves stand in awe of Him. If any of them were to claim, 'I am a god beside Him,' We would reward them with Hell: this is how We reward evildoers.²⁷

There is no meaning here either to demand them originally to prove the existence of these attributes of their alleged gods by saying: 'Have they chosen to take other gods instead of Him? Say, 'Bring your proof.' If those addressed by the verse, or some of them, truly did believe in their deities possessing all these attributes or some of them, they would have responded – 'We never claimed such a thing, why do you ask for evidence?' Allah forbid that any in existence should try and challenge Allah with such a statement. The Qur'ān then swiftly nullifies the notion of Allah having offspring, Exalted and Sanctified is He far above such claims. This is a refutation of any attempt to escape by claiming that their supposed 'deities' are merely the offspring of Allah, yet having no control or authority of creation and management, as per the previous discussion. Such people, without a doubt, committed *Shirk* either in the aspect of *al-Khālīqiyah* or *al-*

²⁷ Qur'ān, 21: 16/29

Rububiyyah or both. Here we can reiterate a similar argument, word for word, as that set out in the verses where He the Mighty and Sublime says:

Your Lord creates what He pleases and chooses those He will - they have no choice - so glory be to Allah, and may He be exalted above the partners they ascribe to Him! Your Lord knows what their hearts conceal and what they reveal. He is Allah; there is no god but Him; all praise belongs to Him in this world and the next; His is the Judgement; and to Him you shall be returned. Say [Prophet], 'Just think, if Allah were to cast perpetual night over you until the Day of Resurrection, what god other than He could bring you light? Do you not listen?' Say, 'Just think, if Allah were to cast perpetual day over you until the Day of Resurrection, what god other than He could give you night in which to rest? Do you not see?

In His mercy He has given you night and day, so that you may rest and seek His bounty and be grateful.' The Day will come when He will call out to them, saying, 'Where are the partners you claimed for Me?' We shall call a witness from every community, and say, 'Produce your evidence,' and then they will know that truth belongs to Allah alone; the gods they invented will forsake them.²⁸

There is no meaning here either for asking them to prove the existence of these attributes in their alleged gods if those originally being addressed, or at least some of them, did not believe that their gods had all of these attributes, or at least some of them. Otherwise, the people, or some of them, would have answered with the same charred mute answer, Allah forbid. Without a doubt, they have *Shirk* either in the aspect of *al-Khālīqiyah* or *al-Rububiyyah* or both.

But for those who believe and do righteous deeds, there will be Gardens of bliss where they will stay: that is Allah's true promise, and He is the Almighty, the All Wise. He created the heavens without any visible support, and He placed firm mountains on the earth—in case it should shake under you—and He spread all kinds of animals around it. We sent down water from the sky, with which We made every kind of good plant grow on earth: all this is Allah's

²⁸ Qur'ān, 28: 68/75

*creation. Now, show Me what your other gods have created. No, the disbelievers are clearly astray.*²⁹

Note the verse says: ‘Now, show Me what your other gods have created’ – if the addressees do not believe that some creatures are the creation of some of ‘their gods,’ and not the creation of Allah; otherwise, the people, or some of them, would have answered with the same charred mute answer, Allah forbid. None are able to marshal an argument or substantive proof against Allah. So the people definitely have *Shirk* in *al-Khāliqiyah* or *al-Rububiyyah* or both.

Regarding the beliefs held by the *mushrikeen*, without a shadow of doubt, the truthfulness lies with the statement of Allah, the Exalted and Majestic where He emphatically says:

وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ

*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him.*³⁰

Hence, applying labels to limited claims in specific considerations as being ‘*Tawḥeed*,’ whether we categorise it as *Tawḥeed al-Rububiyyah* or any other term, is a manifest error. It is also a fabrication. Any adopting this belief, such as the sect of Wahhābism has done, is undoubtedly falling prey to an evil *bid’ah*, a heinous crime; it is a grave offence against Islam and *Tawḥeed*, an affront against the true adherents and its people.

A response to doubts by fabrication

Here are some of the ugly examples of this fabrication that has been made. To begin, as cited in the work by MIAW which is entitled *Kashf al-Shubuhāt*, the following are of particular note:

Allah therefore sent Muḥammad peace and blessings be upon him to revive their old *Deen*, the *Deen* of Ibrahim peace be upon him, and to inform them that this act of trying to come closer to Allah, and this belief (that they needed an intermediary) was a right that is due only

²⁹ *Qur’ān*, 31: 8/11

³⁰ *Qur’ān*, 12: 106

to Allah. It is not proper to direct any of these acts to any other being, whether it be a noble angel, or a sent Prophet, much less to anyone of lesser status than them. Otherwise these *mushrikeen*, used to testify that Allah is the sole Creator, alone, (that) He has no partner, and that none provides *rizq* bar Him; none grants life or death except Him. None controls the affairs of creation except for Him, and that the seven-heavens and the earth and all in between, are subjected to His control and power.³¹

And it is this *Tawḥeed* that is the meaning of your statement, ‘there is no ‘*Ilāh* except Allah.’ For the meaning of the word ‘*Ilāh*’ is the one that is turned to for all these matters of supernatural help, whether the object turned to is an angel, a Prophet, (the) *awliyā*’, a tree, a grave, or a *Jinn*. They did not intend by the word ‘*Ilāh*’ that it is meant to mean the *al-Khāliq* (the Creator), *al-Rāziq* (the Sustainer), *al-Mudbir* (the Controller) of the creation, because they fully realised and knew for certain that these matters are only attributed to Allah, and the proofs for this have already been given. Rather, the *mushrikeen* meant by the word ‘*Ilāh*’ the same as the *mushrikeen* of our own times mean by the word *sayyid* (master). The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him was sent to them to call them to the testimony of *Tawḥeed*, which is: ‘there is no god except Allah.’ What is required from this testimony is the actual meaning and beliefs in its implications, not merely its verbalisation. The ignorant *kuffār* know that the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him meant by this statement to single out Allah alone, and rejection of what is worshipped besides Him, coupled with disavowal towards that. When it is said to them ‘there is no ‘*Ilāh* except Allah,’ they said:

³¹ Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahab, *Kashf al-Shubuhāt*, [p.1]. The citation also appears in several other works of this sect, such as: *al-Durrar al-Saniyyah fil’Ajwaba al-Najdiyyah* [Vol. 1, p. 68], *Majmu’ al-Fatāwa’ wa Rasa’il Ibn Uthaymeen* [Vol. 9, p. 7], amongst others. For the English reader, a full translation is available: Abu Ammar Yasir Qadhi (2003), *An Explanation of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s Kashf al-Shubuhāt: A critical analysis of Shirk*, (Al-Hidayah Publishing: Birmingham)

*'How can he claim that all the gods are but one God? What an astonishing thing [to claim]!'*³²

So when you realise that those ignorant *kuffār* knew the precise meaning of this phrase, then it is indeed amazing that there are those that claim to be Muslim in our times and yet do not understand from this phrase what the ignorant *kuffār* understood. Rather, they think it is just utterly the letters mentioned without seriously believing any of its meanings.³³

If you wish to know the proof that those who Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him fought, used to testify to all of this, then read what He the Almighty says: *'Say [Prophet], 'Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Who controls hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living, and who governs everything?' They are sure to say, 'Allah.' Then say, 'So why do you not take heed of Him?' And He says: 'Say [Prophet], 'Who owns the earth and all who live in it, if you know [so much]?' and they will reply, 'Allah.' Say, 'Will you not take heed?' Say, 'Who is the Lord of the seven heavens? Who is the Lord of the Mighty Throne?' and they will reply, 'Allah.' Say, 'Will you not be mindful?' Say, 'Who holds control of everything in His hand? Who protects, while there is no protection against Him, if you know [so much]?' And they will reply, 'Allah.' Say, 'Then how can you be so deluded?' And other than those verses.*

If you have confirmed that they believed and admitted in all of this, and yet this belief did not enter them into the *Tawḥeed* that the Prophets called them to, and specifically what the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him called them to, then you will realise that the *Tawḥeed* that they rejected as the *Tawḥeed al-'Ibādah*, which is called by the *mushrikeen* of our time *al-'Itiqād*. They called upon

³² *Qur'ān*, 38: 5. For greater context, but also to see how out of step the statement from MIAW is, the wider reading of the verses from this chapter, 4/8 are as follows: *'The disbelievers think it strange that a Prophet of their own people has come to warn them: they say, 'He is just a lying sorcerer. How can he claim that all the gods are but one God? What an astonishing thing [to claim]!' Their leaders depart, saying, 'Walk away! Stay faithful to your gods! That is what you must do. We did not hear any such claim in the last religion: it is all an invention. Was the message sent only to him out of all of us?' In fact they doubt My warning; in fact they have not tasted My punishment yet.'*

³³ Op Cit, pp. 5/6

Allah the Glorious and Almighty night and day, but some of them called out to the angels along with Allah due to the fact that these angels are pious, and that they are close to Allah, so that these angels can intercede on their behalf in front of Allah to grant their requests. Or they called along with Allah upon a righteous man like al-Lāt, or a Prophet, like Jesus. And you must understand that the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him fought them because of this *Shirk*, and called them to make their worship sincere for Allah alone, for Allah the Almighty says: *'So do not pray to anyone other than Allah.'*

And He said: *'The only true prayer is to Him.'* It is imperative you recognise that the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him fought them so that *duā'* be made only to Allah, and sacrifice be made only in His Name, and vows be enacted only by His Name, and supernatural help be sought only from Him – in fact, all types of worship be performed only to Him and for Him. So if you understand that their belief in *Tawḥeed al-Rububiyyah* did not enter them into Islam, and that their turning to the angels, or Prophets, or the *awliyā'* in order to obtain their intercession or to come closer to Allah through them, that it was this fact that made their life and property permissible. Then and only then will you realise the exact meaning of the *Tawḥeed* that the Prophets called them to, yet the *mushrikeen* arrogantly rejected.³⁴

Here I would say, have you noted the strong endorsement made in the text, the lavish praise for the *mushrikeen* as compared to the severe condemnation of those who they term '*al-quburi'een*' – the 'worshippers of graves'? And I would also say that MIAW, the deviant '*azraqi*' has indeed lied by the claims:

1. By Allah, besides whom there is no other 'god', he did not permit their blood to be spilt or wealth to be appropriated except in terms of war and aggression.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 3. In order of mention, the *Qur'ānic* verses cited are: [10: 31], [23: 84/89], [72: 18 and 13: 14]. We have opted for a more literal translation of the wording as expressed by MIAW. For a more interpretative translation one can consult Abu Ammar Yasir Qadhi (2003), Op Cit. [pp. 81, 90/92, 98]

2. By Allah, besides whom there is no other ‘god’, they never acknowledged the concept of *Tawḥeed al-Rububiyyah*, regardless of how it was or is defined.

At this juncture, it is appropriate to consider what is outlined in the *Tafsir* of al-Ṭabari, which is incredibly important in understanding the interpretation of where He the Almighty said: ‘*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him.*’³⁵

Abu Ja’far (al-Ṭabari) said: Regarding where He the Exalted in His remembrance said, and most of those who He the Mighty and Sublime said of when saying – ‘*And there are many signs in the heavens and the earth that they pass by and give no heed to,*’ [12: 105]. While they may claim that Allah is the Creator and provider of sustenance, Creator of everything ‘*except that they are mushrikeen,*’ in relation to their worship of *Awthān* and *Asnām* and taking other lords besides Him, claiming that He has a son. Far is Allah the Exalted above what they claim. This is similar to what we have mentioned before, as the people of interpretation have said. Those who mentioned that are as follows:

Ibn Waki’ narrated to us he said ‘Imrān ibn Uyaynah narrated to us from Aṭā’ ibn al-Sa’ib from Sa’eed ibn Jubayr from Ibn ‘Abbās (regarding the verse) ‘*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him,*’ he said: ‘From their faith, when it is said to them – who created the sky? Who created the earth? Who created the mountains? They replied: Allah. While also being *mushrikeen.*’

Hannād narrated to us he said Abul’Aḥwaṣ narrated to us from Simmāk from ‘Ikrima in relation to where He says ‘*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him,*’ he said: ‘You ask of them – who created them? Who created the heavens and the earth, and they reply, Allah. This is their ‘*Imān* in Allah, while also worshipping others besides Him.’

Abu Kureeb narrated to us he said Waki’ narrated to us from Isrā’il from Jābir from ‘Aāmīr and ‘Ikrima (regarding the verse)

³⁵ *Qur’ān*, 12: 106

‘*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him,*’ they said: ‘They know that He is their Lord and that He created them, and they associate partners with Him.’

Ibn Waki’ narrated to us he said my father narrated to us from Isrā’il from Jābir from ‘Aāmīr from ‘Ikrima, similarly.

He said: Ibn Numayr narrated to us from Naḍr from ‘Ikrima (concerning the verse) ‘*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him,*’ he said: ‘From their beliefs, when they are asked: ‘Who created the heavens?’ They reply, ‘Allah.’ And when they are asked: ‘Who created them (other beings)?’ They also say, ‘Allah.’ Yet, they associate partners with Him afterwards.’

He said – Abu Nu’aym narrated to us from al-Faḍl ibn Yazeed al-Thamali from ‘Ikrimah, he said: ‘It is the speech of Allah ‘*If you ask them who created the heavens and earth, they are sure to say, Allah,*’ [31: 35]. If they are asked about Allah and His attributes, they describe Him without His attributes, and they ascribe to Him a son, and associate partners with Him.

Al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad narrated to us he said Shabāba narrated to us he said Waraqā’ narrated to us from Ibn Abi Najeeḥ from Mujāhid, (concerning where) He says ‘*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him,*’ he said: ‘Their faith is their saying: Allah is our Creator, He provides for us and causes us to die.’

Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr narrated to me he said Abu Aāṣim narrated to us he said Esa narrated to us from Ibn Abi Najeeḥ from Mujāhid (regarding the verse) ‘*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him,*’ he said: ‘Their faith is their saying: God is our Creator, He provides for us, and He causes us to die.’

al-Muthanna narrated to me he said Ḥudhayfa reported to us he said Shibl narrated to us from Ibn Abi Najeeḥ from Mujāhid (regarding the verse) ‘*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him,*’ he said: ‘Their ‘*Imān* is (from) their saying, Allah is our Creator, He sustains us and He causes us to die. This is ‘*Imān* with *Shirk* and their worship of other than Him.’

He said - Isḥāq narrated to us he said Abdullah narrated to us from Waraqā’ from Ibn Abi Najeeḥ from Mujāhid (regarding the verse) –

‘Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him,’ he said: ‘Their *‘Imān* is (from) their saying, Allah is our Creator and Sustainer and He causes our death.’

Ibn Waki’ narrated to us he said Hāni’ ibn Sa’eed and Abu Mu’āwiya from Ḥajjāj from al-Qāsim from Mujāhid, he said ‘They say – Allah is our Lord and He is our Sustainer – and yet they associate partners with Him after.’

al-Qāsim narrated to us he said al-Ḥussein narrated to us he said Ḥajjāj narrated to me from Ibn Jurayj from Mujāhid, he said: ‘Their faith as per their saying – Allah is our Creator and Our sustainer, and He causes us to die.’

He said - al-Ḥussein narrated to us he said Abu Tamila narrated to us from Abu Ḥamza from Jabir from ‘Ikrimah, Mujāhid and ‘Aāmir, that they said in relation to the verse – ‘*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him,*’ he said: ‘None except that he knows that Allah created him and created the heavens and the earth, so this is their faith, and they disbelieve in anything other than that.’

Bishr narrated to us he said Yazeed narrated to us he said Sa’eed narrated to us from Qatādah (in relation to) His saying: ‘*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him,*’ he said: ‘In this belief of their, you don’t meet any of them except that he informs you that Allah is his Lord, and it is He who created and provided for him, and he is a *mushrik* in his worship.’

Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Alā’ narrated to us he said Muḥammad ibn Thawr narrated to us from Ma’mar from Qatādah (regarding the verse) ‘*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him,*’ he said ‘Ask one from among the *mushrikeen*, who is your Lord – except that he says my Lord is Allah. And he makes *Shirk* in that.’

Muḥammad ibn Sa’d narrated to me he said my father narrated to me he said my uncle narrated to me he said my father narrated to me from his father, from Ibn ‘Abbās (regarding where) He says ‘*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him,*’ (he said), ‘that is to say, the Christians, saying : *If you [Prophet] ask them, ‘Who created the heavens and earth?’ they are sure to answer,*

‘*God.*’ (And) *If you [Prophet] ask them who created them they are sure to say, ‘God.’* If you were to ask them who provides sustenance from the heavens and the earth? They say, ‘Allah.’ And they associate partners with Him, worshipping others, and prostrate to rivals besides Him.

al-Muthanna narrated to us he said ‘Amr ibn ‘Awn narrated to us he said Hushaym reported to us from Juwaybir from al-Ḍaḥḥāk, he said: ‘They used to associate partners with Him in their *talbiyah.*’

Ibn Waki’ narrated to us he said Ibn Numayr narrated to us from ‘Abd al-Malik from Aṭā’ (regarding the verse) *Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him,* he said: ‘They know that Allah is their Lord, and they still associate partners with Him thereafter.’

al-Muthanna narrated to us he said ‘Amr ibn ‘Awn narrated to us he said Hushaym reported to us from ‘Abd al-Malik from Aṭā’ in relation to His saying ‘*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him,*’ he said: ‘They know that Allah is their Creator and Sustainer, and they (still) associate partners with Him.’

Yunus narrated to me he said Ibn Wahb reported to us he said I asked Ibn Zayd (regarding the verse where) He says ‘*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him,*’ he said: ‘None worships with Allah other than Him except that he believes in Allah, and knows that Allah is his Lord, and that Allah is his Creator and Sustainer, and he associates partners with Him. Look to see how Ibrāhim said: ‘*Those idols you have worshipped, you and your forefathers, are my enemies; not so the Lord of the Worlds.*’ He knew that they worship the Lord of the worlds along with what they worship.’ He said: None associates anything with Him except that he believes in him. Don’t you see how the Arabs used to respond, they said: *At Your service, O Allah, at Your service! At Your service, You have no partner except a partner who is Yours, You own him and what he own.* The *mushrikeen* said this.³⁶

³⁶ *Tafsir al-Ṭabari* [Vol. 16, pp. 286/288]

One can observe from the lengthy citation that al-Ṭabari only mentioned in his outline a single interpretation that was based on the *Ijmā'* of the *Salaf*, with one intended meaning: that the *mushrikeen* had some acknowledgement and belief, but despite that, they remained as *mushrikeen*. From among the *Salaf*, some chose to use the generic term of *mushrikun* without further elaboration; others provided a tad more detail, often in a limited manner. For example, they said: 'This is their belief - meaning their knowledge that Allah created them and the heavens and the earth - but they disbelieve in anything beyond that.' Or they said: 'When they were asked about Allah and His attributes, they described Him with attributes other than His own attributes and even associated partners with Him, such as by attributing offspring to Him.' Even with regards to when they said 'And they worship others,' or 'associating partners in their worship other than Him,' or 'He is a *mushrik* in his worship,' or 'they associate partners with Him, worship others, prostrating to rivals besides Him,' and similar statements.

Here it is necessary to bear in mind that what we will establish in the remainder volumes of this present work what the precise correct meaning and nature of *'Ibādah* – worship actually is. Namely, that it relates to acts and/or statements which are based in turn on a specific belief, and that belief is about divinity or the nature of the divine, which includes from that a belief in lordship besides Allah or rivals to Allah. It is not as the sect of Wahhabism would have us believe, and which they represent in the most grotesque form, as a set of *acts intrinsic to themselves*, including: standing, sitting, bowing, prostrating, sacrificing, circumambulation or the like.

One should also take note that none from among the *Salaf* ever said that this collection of people were upon *Tawḥeed*, or that they held beliefs which were akin to *Tawḥeed*. By greater reasoning, none of their statements should be tainted with the slightest hint of the latter tripartite division of *Tawḥeed al-Rububiyyah*, *Tawḥeed al-Uluhiyyah*, *Tawḥeed al-Asmā' wal-Ṣifāt*, or even worse, read into the statements when it is patently not there. To reiterate here, Allah the Blessed and Almighty protected the generation of the *Salaf*, namely the three-earliest generations, from utilising the terms of *Tawḥeed* or *'Infirād*' (separately) or the expression of *'Wa'da'hu, la Shareeka lahu,*' in this present context. None of them slipped into these linguistic errors, not even the slip which was made by al-Ṭabari which might have been the first occurrence from him. Such immunity with regards to the

early *Salaf* of the original three-generations is by the mercy and blessing of Allah upon Islam and its people. Moreover, it provides a stern rebuke to the sect of Wahhābism, providing yet another refutation to the growing armoury against their false claims, a stern slap in the face to their leaders who would maintain the insidious status quo.

We have, undertaken our best strenuous effort, made possible by the will of Allah, to remain strict in the interpretation of the verses, as mandated by *Sharī'ah* and principles of reason, to ensure that they are according to the apparent meanings, generality and their unrestricted use as per the prerequisites of the Arabic language. Other areas from the Qur'ān, the *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunnah* and continuously recurrent reported history. Some of the *mufasssireen* from the early *Salaf*, as well as others, were at pains to understand some of the verses as mentioned. This was because they had assumed notions, preconceived ideas or outline of approach, which perhaps tarred the understanding of verses mentioning the *mushrikeen* with their own proclivities, be that from themselves or from the scholars of Islam, in all the intricacies and detail that would necessarily follow. Naturally, this is grave error. Often dubbed as being a deception of insight, this requires one to have great diligence, constant review, self-examination and indeed a struggle with the inner self to ensure that one doesn't succumb to it.

Some found a way to resolve such problems by attributing the given statements, or some of them, to the People of the Book, the *Ahl ul-Kitāb*. The esteemed *Tābi'* Imām, Mujāhid ibn Jabr did so, and this isn't a bad approach per se. Imām al-Ṭabari's response contained the regrettable slip where he stated 'the Arabs acknowledged the Oneness of Allah,' as mentioned earlier. If only Imām al-Ṭabari, may Allah have mercy upon him, adhered to what he had stated elsewhere in his own *Tafsir* as extensively quoted earlier, regarding the interpretation of where He the Almighty says: '*Most of them will only believe in Allah while also joining others with Him.*' He who does not forget, since: '*Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him.*'³⁷ As agreed upon by the *Salaf* regarding the *Tafsir* of this, as mentioned previously, it guides to the straight path. However, every horse stumbles, every whip cracks and even the vigilant can slip, and:

³⁷ Qur'ān, 2: 255

عَلِمَ الْغَيْبُ لَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْهُ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا أَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرَ

*By Him who knows the unseen! Not even the weight of a speck of dust in the heavens or earth escapes His knowledge, nor anything smaller or greater.*³⁸

Glory be unto Him, all praise is due to Him, in justice and truth, for ever, eternally.

Arguments from disposition to submission

Another line of argument that is utilised is to try and link verses to the *mithāq al-fiṭrah* – the original covenant with mankind borne of natural disposition. These relate to where He the Almighty and Sanctified says:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ

*[Prophet], when your Lord took out the offspring from the loins of the Children of Adam and made them bear witness about themselves, He said, 'Am I not your Lord?' and they replied, 'Yes, we bear witness.' So you cannot say on the Day of Resurrection, 'We were not aware of this.'*³⁹

Or via the matter concerning submission to which mankind ultimately has to yield to:

أَفَعَبَّرَ دِينَ اللَّهِ يَبْغُونَ وَلَهُ أَسْلَمَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعاً وَكَرْهاً وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ

*Do they seek anything other than submission to Allah? Everyone in the heavens and earth submits to Him, willingly or unwillingly; they will all be returned to Him.*⁴⁰

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعاً وَكَرْهاً وَظِلَالُهُمْ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ

*All that are in heaven and earth submit to Allah alone, willingly or unwillingly, as do their shadows in the mornings and in the evenings.*⁴¹

³⁸ *Qur'ān*, 37: 3

³⁹ *Qur'ān*, 7: 172

⁴⁰ *Qur'ān*, 3: 83

⁴¹ *Qur'ān*, 13: 15

It is outlined for example, in the *Tafsir* of al-Thawri: Sufyān from Ibn Jurayj and other than him from Mujāhid, (regarding where) He says: *Everyone in the heavens and earth submits to Him, willingly or unwillingly*, he said: It is as He (also) says – *'If you ask them who created them they are sure to say, 'Allah.'*⁴² The assumption made is quite farfetched, so there needn't be time expended dwelling upon it. Imām al-Qurṭubī offered up a differing way at an attempt of being more reasonable to seek an escape from this presumed dilemma, an illusionary impasse. Accordingly, his *Tafsir* is that these verses provide for specific rhetorical purposes, with their underlying meaning being: 'If they are just, they would admit and say, Allah. Then when they admit to that, they will be challenged, revealing their contradictions which will become manifest. But if they are not just, they will be opposed with other evidence and arguments. Broadly, it is something akin to that, if the reading of his text is correct as presented in the *Tafsir*:

He the Almighty says: *'Say [Prophet], 'Who provides for you from the sky and the earth?'* [10: 31]. The intended meaning of this discourse is to respond to the *mushrikeen* and establish proof upon them. Regarding those among them who acknowledge the truth, the proof becomes manifest upon them. However, for those who do not acknowledge it, the argument asserts that the heavens and earth must have a Creator, and any reasonable person cannot deny this fact. This is close to being a truth by necessity.

'From the sky,' which is the rain, *'and the earth,'* by vegetation. *'Who controls hearing and sight?'* That is, He who made them and created them for you. *'Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living,'* by vegetation from the earth. Mankind is from seminal fluid, the shoot from the seed, the bird from the egg, the *mu'min* from the *kāfir*. *And who governs everything,* by His determination and settlement of affairs. *'They are sure to say, 'Allah.'* They used to believe that Allah is the Creator, or they would say He is Allah if they contemplated and had justice. So say unto them O Muḥammad, *'So why do you not take heed of Him? Do you*

⁴² *Tafsir* al-Thawri [p. 78, *Shamela* edition]

not fear his punishment and wrath, either in this temporal world or in the hereafter?⁴³

Overall this is a good discourse with merit. Particularly in relation to the verse that uses the phrase – ‘*la-yaqūlunna,*’ [لَيَقُولُنَّ]. Coupled with subtlety and layers of additional meaning in the verses that expound the other phrase used,

‘*fa-sa-yaqūlūna,*’ [فَسَيَقُولُونَ]. In any event, our discourse is the more appropriate, there being no problem or difficulty except for those who do not consider all texts in the round, diligently reviewing each evidence and proof. Moving away from the assumption that the *mushrikeen* in general and the pre-Islamic Arab *mushrikeen* in particular, were somehow people of logical thought, with philosophical insight, organising conclusions based on defined premises. In reality, they were like cattle, often more misguided. We believe that we have expounded considerable effort here and achieved as much is possible in this regard, with the blessing, help and mercy of Allah, all praises be unto Him.

Calamities

The greatest calamity, one which breaks the back resulting in perpetual disaster is indeed what the *later generations* got entangled in. Led by the Imām, Abu al-‘Abbās Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyyah, the entanglement stemmed from advancing the claim that the Arab *mushrikeen* knew what he had termed as being *Tawḥeed al-Rububiyah* in a concise sentence. Some of the successors to this following the call of the Wahhābi movement took the matter to the extreme, by holding that the Arab *mushrikeen* had a definite or defined understanding or belief in what they dubbed *Tawḥeed al-Rububiyah*. Moreover, they asserted that those referred to as ‘*quburieen*’ – the visitors (or latterly worshippers) of graves among the Muslims are guilty of the most severe form of *Shirk*, committing *kufr* that was on par or even greater than that of the *mushrikeen* from the Quraysh. Cited earlier in the chapter determining the reality of ‘al-Lāt,’ here again the example is shown from the direct statement of MIAW, where he said:

⁴³ *Tafsir* al-Qurtubi [Vol. 8, p. 335]

The *kuffār* acknowledge all of this to Allah alone, who has no partner, and that they only believed in their gods to seek intercession and draw closer to Allah..If this becomes clear to you and you understand it well, the *mushrikeen* have another argument, which is that they say it is truth, but the *kuffār* believe in *al-Aṣṅām*. (In response) the definitive answer is thus: to be told that the *kuffār* in his time, peace and blessings be upon him, there were among them those who believed in idols. (Yet) some of them believed in the grave of a righteous man, like al-Lāt.

If you discern the truth that He the Almighty, the Blessed, mentioned in His Book that they believed in the *Ṣāliḥeen* and that they only wanted to gain intercession with Allah by drawing near to Him, believing in those *Ṣāliḥeen*, and you discerned the truth that Muḥammad peace and blessings be upon him, he did not differentiate between those who believed in *al-Aṣṅām* and those who believed in the *Ṣāliḥeen*, rather he fought all of them, judging them as *kuffār*.⁴⁴

Without a doubt, these are shallow, misleading and baseless statements. The like of which are a great enormity, nay, a calamity, borne of fallacy leading to everlasting disgrace. As already mentioned, for too long this mindset and its fallacious underpinnings have dominated discourse, warping countless minds. Each of the claims must be ground to dust, refuted, shown as being demonstrably false from its very root. Quite apart from what has already been outlined upon this matter, regarding dismantling the myth of al-Lāt, which by itself we deem sufficient, comprehensive, by the will of Allah the Almighty. Perhaps at this juncture it may even suffice to pause and ask the those deceived (often in fact deranged) by this mentality: haven’t you made the claim that *Tawḥeed* is a tripartite division? That of *Tawḥeed al-Rububiyah*, *Tawḥeed al-Uluhiyyah*, *Tawḥeed al-Asmā’ wal-Ṣiḡāt*?

So where is *Tawḥeed al-Asmā’ wal-Ṣiḡāt* when we closely examine the state of the Arab *mushrikeen*? Why is it that you don’t mention this, not a single letter on this occasion? From the plethora of your books, writings, including *legal responsa*, they are littered with mention of ‘*Tawḥeed al-Asmā’ wal-Ṣiḡāt*.’ Or is it only deployed as a tool of intellectual terrorism

⁴⁴ *Mu’walifat al-Shaykh al-Imām Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb* [Vol. 5, p. 146]. As this is a repetition from the earlier chapter on al-Lāt, it is abbreviated here for the re-quoting.

against the people of Islam down the ages? They have been readily acknowledged as being within the people of Islam, whether they be from the *Ashā'ira*, *Māturidi*, *Mu'tazila*, *al-Ibāḍiyah*, *al-Shia* and other than them. Many others from the people of Islam have understood *Tawḥeed* far better than your new sect, serving Islam, Muslims and the world better, with far greater devotion. None of them have engaged *en masse* in *Takfeer* against the people of Islam, or unsheathing the swords upon them as you have done. As for the Arab *mushrikeen*, they accepted your invasion and warfare. Is it that the Arab *mushrikeen* had no *Shirk* in matters of *al-Asmā' wal-Ṣifāt*, just as you claim they didn't have as such in matters of *al-Rububiyyah*?

Confusion

Another example here illustrates a dangerous confusion, but one different from the delusions of Wahhābism in understanding the verses we have covered. This is to be found in the work entitled *Anmouzaj Jalil fi As'ila wa Ajuba 'an Gharā'ib ay al-Tanzeel* by Zayn al-Deen Abu Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr ibn Abdul Qādir al-Ḥanafī al-Rāzi, he writes:

If it is stated (concerning where) He the Almighty says: '*Say [Prophet], 'Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and earth?'*' [34: 24] (that) it indicates they acknowledge that Allah is their Creator, Provider and Sustainer, (indeed) of all. So how do they recognise this and thereafter worship the *Aṣṇām*? We say, in their worship of the *Aṣṇām*, they used to interpret it as the worship of Allah, a group among them said: 'We do not qualify to worship Allah the Almighty without (the presence of) an intermediary, given His Greatness and Majesty, and with our shortcomings and despicableness.' Hence, they made the *Aṣṇām* as intermediaries, as they had said: '*We only worship them because they bring us nearer to Allah,*' [39: 3].

A group said that they take the *Aṣṇām* in the depiction of the angels, worshipping them, so that those angels would intercede with Allah. Another group are those who said: 'The *Aṣṇām* are our *qiblah* to which we worship Allah.' The *Ka'ba* also being a *qiblah* of worship. (Yet) the majority group were saying that each *ṣanam* had a *Shayṭān* entrusted to it by Allah the Almighty. Whoever worships

the *Aṣṇām* doing so by right, *Shayṭān* caters for his needs, as per what is needed, by the command of Allah. (Similarly) whoever fell short in the worship of the *Aṣṇām*, *Shayṭān* would be afflicted by the command of Allah. So all the groups who worshipped *Aṣṇām*, they were worshipping them as a means to draw close to Allah, but via different pathways.⁴⁵

To respond to this, we note here yet again that there is the statement that somehow the Arab *mushrikeen* knew, recognised and acknowledged Allah as being the Creator, Provider and Sustainer of all. But this is to lead with an interpretation of the verses by one's own inclination or belief. It is not applying strict principles of adherence to the explicit actual meaning of the text as it stands. Hence, he reads into the verses what he imagines, not considering them as they are in essence. The approach is deceptive since it makes the writer believe that the text is fitting his pre-arranged notion, instead of submitting outright to the guidance of the infallible revealed *wahy*. Such a flawed approach has been outlined before; no wonder therefore that issues can remain clouded in confusion, the pathway to the correct path obscured.

As for his comment regarding the first group, who sought to make the *Aṣṇām* as intermediaries, as claimed, it is but an illusion, without a substantive basis in reality. This is because the *Aṣṇām* are nothing more than *tamātheel* (statuettes) or objects that are believed to represent or have a strong connection to a divine being or entity of some sort. It serves as a form of delegation, association or representation being one of five-types – union, permanent inclusion, temporary inclusion, body-member and conduit. Hence the discussion is more pertinent to hone in on what is considered as that *divine being* or entity, which as mentioned, is considered to stem from an angelic form. The justification for having this as an intermediary is:

1. Intimately tied to the belief that the entity / intermediary is *born from the offspring* of Allah, making it of divine nature or essence. Given this, the view is that it was worthy of worship in its own right, given

⁴⁵ Zayn al-Deen al-Ḥanafī al-Rāzi, *Anmouzaj Jalil fi As'ila wa Ajuba 'an Gharā'ib ay al-Tanzeel*, [p. 186]. Zayn al-Deen al-Ḥanafī al-Rāzi, [d. 666AH]. Often the title of the work is rendered into English as: '*A Revered Model in the Questions and Answers to the Complexities (or Unusualness) of Revelation.*'

the divine lineage or nature, which is raised, elevated. Moreover, it was stemming from the view that this was ‘beloved to the father,’ bringing joy, satisfaction to the parent through the pleading of intercession by the child. That was the *core idea* underpinning the statement made by some of the Arab *mushrikeen* who said: ‘*We only worship them because they bring us nearer to Allah.*’⁴⁶

2. They had the view that Allah was not all-knowing, therefore meaning He would be unaware of the conditions related to those worshipping Him, requiring something to intercede on their behalf to convey the needs on. Placing the idea of deficiency in this realm related to knowledge flatly contradicts the perfection of *Uluhiyyah* (divinity). However, the *mushrikeen* may have falsely and deceitfully made this claim that it was as a result of Allah’s Majesty, Exaltedness, with the humble worshipper but an insignificance, proceeding from unworthiness, to transcend the matter of corruption. Alternatively, those regarded as intellectuals among them might have well argued that having direct knowledge of the details of individuals’ circumstances requires direct involvement in their affairs, which, according to their corrupted beliefs, is not befitting for Allah. Consequently, they imagined Allah as an unconscious and deaf force, not aware of anything else. This view is held by those who adhere to the ‘concept of intellects’ or ‘the seven or ten celestial souls,’ along with many philosophers!
3. They had claimed that Allah was deficient in power, that He was in need of assistants and ministers. Such a view is most likely held by the majority of the common simple-minded *mushrikeen*, be they Arab or otherwise.
4. Another group suggested that regardless of whether Allah be all-knowing/powerful, creation is done aimlessly, upon a whim, then He has turned away from creation, neglecting it entirely. They hold the perception that this is arrogant, aloof, and thus reaching this divine being can only be undertaken by way of an intermediary. Yet such intermediaries can’t be a part of creation, since Allah transcends that, they would have no significance. Thus, the intermediaries *must be* from divine origin or essence, necessary beings containing no flaw, allowing them to approach Allah within the same divine realm.

⁴⁶ *Qur’ān*, 39: 3

Others may have found or provided differing justifications regarding the matter of appointing intermediaries, yet all of which may necessarily imply that there is a multiplicity or plurality of divine beings or entities. They may seek to attribute or apportion qualities related to incapacity, dependency or even deficiency to Allah, the central and supreme deity, if such beliefs were held by some. Alternatively, they may ascribe notions of acting upon a whim, indifference, or a lack of care to Him. Even if the *mushrikeen* attempted to justify this through falsehoods such as alluding to the Majesty and Greatness of Allah, or their own inadequacies, or even by claims that it is related to seeking closeness, the number of excuses, justifications or the like, all stem from a clear lack of belief in a single divine entity.

Others may have deliberated upon the differing justifications or rationale to the matter of taking intercessors or intermediaries, all of which necessitate the viewpoint of multiple divine entities. Or, the attribution of deficiency and inadequacy to Allah, if He is present within the beliefs of the people. They may also have attributed the notions of indifference, negligence or even being frivolous towards Him. Even though the *mushrikeen* attempted to justify this with falsehoods, like expressing ‘our worthlessness and insignificance before the full Majesty and Greatness of Allah,’ or even with the falsehood they uttered which the verse informs us of, ‘*We only worship them because they bring us nearer to Allah.*’⁴⁷ Or, whether the attribution is made to gods in plurality, or the notion of divinity in general among those who didn’t necessarily believe in a central higher deity.

With regards to the second group, it is but an offshoot of the first. Within this context, we have already outlined definitive evidence to the level of certitude, that the belief held by the Arab *mushrikeen* regarding the angels was that they were believed to be ‘the daughters of Allah.’ The majority of the *Aṣṅām* being nothing more than depictions of statues supposedly representing this.

In relation to the third group, with the claim, the *Aṣṅām* being a *qiblah* for them in the worship of Allah – I do not believe that such a belief actually existed among the Arabs. It seems to be a view held by some later *mushrikeen*, when they were challenged by the followers of Islam. Overall,

⁴⁷ *Qur’ān*, 39: 3

the claim appears as a fabrication with no substantive basis aimed at justifying the multiplicity of *Aṣṇām* with varying names or attributes. If the *Aṣṇām* were really the means or *qiblah* for approaching one Allah, then surely all of them, whether that be from among the common folk or the political elites, would have agreed that the statues represented but one God. Yet this is clearly not the case. The question remains, it is rational to attribute the eternal perfect and beautiful essence of one God, Allah, to a mere statue? What would be the justification for the multiplicity of statues with varying forms and names? Why would they be made as a *qiblah* instead of facing the North Pole for example? Did any *wahy* come from Allah to support such a practice? It is not acceptable for them to admit that this is borne of their own invention, a new legislation they inaugurated. By such an admission they would be declaring themselves, their forebears, priests as being rival legislative authorities besides Allah, hence they do not acknowledge the *Hākimiyyah* of Allah. Perhaps some of them will be of the people who declare innocence when confronted with the bleak reality. As noted in the text clearly:

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَيْنَ شُرَكَائُكُمْ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ثُمَّ لَمْ تَكُنْ فِتْنَتُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا: وَاللَّهِ رَبَّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ انظُرْ كَيْفَ كَذَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ

When We gather them all together and say to the polytheists, 'Where are those you claimed were partners with Allah?' in their utter dismay - they will only say, 'By Allah, our Lord, we were not of the mushrikeen!' See how they lie against themselves and how those they invented have deserted them.⁴⁸

Regarding the fourth group, the ones that claim that in every *ṣanam* there is a *Shayṭān* appointed by Allah the Almighty, and that *Shayṭān* fulfils their desires. I don't believe that such a belief actually exists or existed in this temporary world. It seems to be borne of the imagination of the Shaykh Zayn al-Deen al-Ḥanafī al-Rāzi, being influenced by the narratives that mention 'with every *ṣanam* is a *Shayṭān*,' 'a *Shayṭān* speaking to them,' and the like. Here though he went to the extreme it seems with this concocted notion. Yet it is absurd, contradictory and very difficult to imagine being formulated by a sound mind. It is impossible, nay completely inconceivable

⁴⁸ Qur'ān, 6: 22/24

for those *Shayṭāteen* to be sent by Allah, acting upon His command. It would be the work of their head, Iblees, the chief of the *Shayṭāteen* and not Allah. Even if the statement were modified to read 'with every *ṣanam* is an angel,' it cannot resolve the dilemma, since it would stand in contradiction to the well-established historical accounts. Concerning his comment of 'Whoever worships the *Aṣṇām* doing so by right,' needs greater clarity. If what is meant by this is limited to a set of actions (bowing, prostrating, standing, sitting in front of it, offering sacrifices / offerings to it, presenting incense, burning candles etc.) then this notion is unprecedented in attributing any form of divinity or lordship to anything other than Allah or considering it as an intermediary to reach Allah. Even if it is considered in a symbolic sense, it still does not qualify as worshipping a statue originally. Rather, it can be described as:

- a) It is by the command of Allah, with worship directed solely to Allah, akin to the prostration of the angels to Adam, it was an act of obedience to Allah, the one true God. If that was the meaning intended by Shaykh Zayn al-Deen al-Ḥanafī al-Rāzi, then the people are not *mushrikeen*, and it is a direct contradiction to the Qur'ān.
- b) If it is by the command of other than Allah, be that the ancestors, priests or rulers, then it amounts to taking them as rivals in legislative authority besides Allah, which is an act of *Shirk* in *Hākimiyyah*.

Lastly, if the intended meaning behind the statement, 'Whoever worships the *Aṣṇām* doing so by right,' is that the worship is true, in the sense of knowing it fully and correctly, then this implies that Allah commanded them to believe that there is some form of divinity in the *Aṣṇām*, while, in reality, they are nothing but created entities. They possess nothing except what Allah grants in this temporary domain, they can do nothing except by Allah's decree. They cannot act or do anything except by His cosmic permission. In other words, there is absolutely no divinity in them. This notion is impossible and inconceivable for Allah, the true and clear King, because it involves deception, falsehood, and reporting contrary to reality. Such attributes belong to the *Shayṭān* and not to *al-Raḥman*.

Phantasmagoria

The foregoing discussion shows the invalidity of what has been mentioned in the work entitled *Ma'ārij al-Qabul bi Sharḥ Sullim al-Wuṣṣul*:

Those worshipping the *Awthān* acknowledge that what they are invoking besides Allah the Mighty and Sublime, are but created entities, having no control over themselves or their worshippers. They neither cause harm nor benefit, or experience life, death or resurrection. They can't hear, see, nor avail themselves in any manner. They also admit that Allah is unique in creating, providing sustenance; causing benefit and harm, in decree and all forms of taking care of affairs. No such attributes belongs to them or their *Awthān*. Rather, it is (Allah) who is the Creator, everything else being the creation. And He is the Lord, all else subject to His dominion.⁴⁹

In response to this line of reasoning, I would argue that it is littered with a series of allegations and false assertions. The opening statement of the quote is ludicrous. Given this supposed acknowledgement, they still worship them, in other words, glorifying them, seeking benefits from them including protection from harm. Indeed, this is something that doesn't even form in the minds of the insane. It can only appear in the deranged mindset of the adherents to Wahhābism, a sect whose beliefs are so corrupt, it is beyond repair. They are incapable of distinguishing between the *reality* of idols, as it is known through Allah's knowledge, which He has informed us about in His revelation, and the beliefs of those worshipping the *Awthān / Aṣnām*. This is again a matter of 'insight deception.' The second half regarding the *mushrikeen* acknowledging that Allah is the ultimate deity with perfect attributes, is a pure lie. It stems from a distorted, even truncated reading of the well-known verses in this regard, as previous iterated. Underpinning this too, is a shocking ignorance regarding the actual reality pertaining to the *Shirk* among the Arabs. Despite this, the author of the work proceeded to build a series of arguments, a house of cards built upon false premises. He wrote:

They associated partners with Him in relation to His creation, attributing to these partners to be worshipped alongside Him. (This)

⁴⁹ Ḥāfiz Ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥakami, *Ma'ārij al-Qabul bi Sharḥ Sullim al-Wuṣṣul* [Vol. 2, p. 401]

while denying His exclusive right to be worshipped. When invited to the (testimony) 'There is no god except Allah,' they said to them 'How can he claim that all the gods are but one God?' [38: 5]. Allah the Almighty obligated them to act upon the requirements of *al-Rububiyyah*, which they acknowledged, thus abiding by the essentiality of *Tawḥeed*, disavowing what they had taken besides Him. Just as they acknowledged their powerlessness with their lack of any attribute deserving worship, they must reject those entities entirely and treat them as unworthy of worship. In fact, those entities are even weaker, lower, more insignificant, and more powerless than to create a mere fly or rescue anything from it if it takes it away.⁵⁰

Even worse follows, with more fantastical phantasms, he says:

Whoever ponders over these verses which we have mentioned, truly comprehending the meaning, will know with certitude that the worshippers of the *Awthān* acknowledge the matter of *Tawḥeed al-Rububiyyah*, and they bore witness to the uniqueness of Allah concerning that. They associated partners with Allah the Almighty in matters of the divine in that they worshipped others alongside Him. This is the *dhāhir* (apparent) and otherwise the divisions of *Tawḥeed* are interconnected. Whomsoever associated anything with Allah in such aspects, then they have associated something (to) other than Him, as will be outlined, by the will of Allah, regarding the exposition about *Shirk*. An example that illustrates this, is the *ḥadīth* of 'Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him said to his father prior to his Islam, 'How many deities do you worship?' He replied: 'Seven. Six in the earth, and one above the heavens.'

He, peace and blessings be upon him said: 'Which of them do you take account of regarding your hopes and your fears?' He replied: 'That in the heavens.' Moreover, in this verse it is also evident that their association of partners with Allah was only during times of ease and prosperity. In those times of hardship or adversity, they would sincerely turn to worship Allah alone. This is because they knew that

⁵⁰ Ibid.

no one else could alleviate their situation except Him. They were aware that their gods neither could harm nor benefit them, not having power over anything. As He the Almighty says: ‘Whenever they go on board a ship they call on Allah, and dedicate their faith to Him alone,’ [29: 55/56]. And what is in the meaning of these verse, there are other indications aside from what we mentioned, and not mentioned. The central point is that *al-Rububiyyah* and *al-Ilāhiyyah* are interconnected, one type cannot be separated from the other. And that *Tawhīd al-Rububiyyah* was not denied by anyone except for the arrogant, like the Pharaoh and Nimrud, while the dualists who believe in two-creators for existence; Allah the Almighty is far above what the wrongdoers lay claim to.⁵¹

How does one respond to the comments borne of phantasmagoria or the deranged? Perhaps a more prudent approach is to outline substantive comment on the well-known phantasms, lies arising from their *taqleed*. In relation to where he states that the association of partners was only in times of ease, and in times of difficulty they would turn sincerely to Allah, I would ask the genius author to outline what is it that they are turning to, worshipping following arrival on land after adversity at sea? The allusion is there, with mention of the ‘worshippers of *Awthān*.’ But there isn’t a recognition that this worship entails veneration, seeking benefit from them or seeking protection from harm. That very notion doesn’t enter the minds of adherents to Wahhābism. Hence, they are incapable of making any distinguishing outline as to the true nature of the *Aṣnām*, as Allah has informed us of in his *wahy*, and as His Messengers, peace be upon them all, have outlined in their confrontative arguments with the *mushrikeen*. How therefore are we to understand the cited verse from *Surah al-Anka’but*, as well as the tradition mentioned by way of ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn and what his father said?

One should realise that the matter is abundantly clear as the sun. Allah the Almighty and Sublime is viewed to them as being the only central highest deity. In their minds, He is not the one and only God as it rests within their set of beliefs. He is reserved for times of acute distress, and/or major events generally. As the verse indicates, set within the minds and beliefs of the

⁵¹ *Ma’ārij al-Qabul bi Sharḥ Sullim al-Wuṣṣul*, [pp. 215/216]

Arabs, or some of the Arabs, as the context here addresses the Quraysh, the people of the sacred precincts, Allah is viewed as being specifically associated with the sea. He is the God of the sea *in their belief*, with no partner in this domain. Just as He is the God of the sky, unique in that respect. The verse serves as evidence of their *Shirk* in matters of managing and controlled affairs, not the opposite as this fool would assume. Similarly, the tradition he cited from ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn about his father’s comments meticulously outline that.⁵² Thus, based on the previous discussion, it should become clear what has been advanced in the *Sharḥ al-Taḥāwīyyah* is manifestly invalid, namely:

They did not believe about their *Aṣnām* (idols) that they participated with Allah in the creation of the world. Their beliefs were the same as those of the other *mushrikeen* of the world, the Indians, Turks, Berbers and others. Sometimes they believed that their *Aṣnām* represented some pious men, Prophets or saints who would intercede for them with Allah and bring them closer to Allah. This was the root of the *Shirk* of the Arabs. In talking about the people of Noah, Allah states: ‘They said: Do not renounce your gods! And do not renounce *Wadd*, *Suwā*, *Yaghuth*, *Ya’uq*, or *Nasr*!’

It is confirmed in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhāri, the book of Qur’ānic commentary, narratives of the Prophets and elsewhere, from Ibn ‘Abbās and other Elders, that those were the names of some pious people among the people of Noah. When they died, the people gathered over their graves, then put up their statues and after a period of time they began to worship them. And these particular *Aṣnām* were passed on to the Arab tribes. And Ibn ‘Abbās may Allah be pleased with him mentions where they went to, tribe by tribe.⁵³

Yet again, the crimes of adherence to the sect of Wahhābism are shown. With the outright rejection of reasoned thought, and the construction of

⁵² The double-quoting which appears in the Arabic edition has been omitted here for the present translation.

⁵³ Here, we have utilised a standard English translation of this text, slightly modified in part against the original Arabic text. See: Ibn Abi al-‘Izz (2000) *Commentary on the Creed of al-Tahawi: Sharḥ al-‘Aqeedah al-Taḥāwīyyah*, Translated by Muhammad Abdul-Haq Ansari (al-Imam Muhammad ibn Sa’ud Islamic University: Riyadh), [p. 5]

beliefs that are based upon myth and superstition. All the while, blatant disregard is made for authentic evidence stemming from *wahy*, as outlined earlier regarding the historic reality of *Shirk* among the Arabs. However, the present author of this *Sharḥ al-Ṭaḥāwiyyah* falls into the worst of contradictions. He writes:

Since *Shirk* in *al-Rububiyyah* is impossible, according to all peoples, that is, the confirmation of two creators similar in attributes and actions, some of the *mushrikeen* advanced the claim that there is another creator that created part of this world. This is what the dualists say concerning ‘darkness’; what the Qadariyyah say about the actions of animals and what the naturalist philosophers say about the movement of the planets, souls and physical bodies. All of them posit events that are not brought into existence by Allah, and associate partners with Him in the act of creation. They are *mushrikeen* in some aspects of *al-Rububiyyah*. In fact, many of the Arab *mushrikeen* and others thought that their gods could bring about some good or cause some harm even if Allah did not bring such good or harm into existence.⁵⁴

In response, I would submit several responses to the author of the *Sharḥ al-Ṭaḥāwiyyah*. Firstly, the statement made relating to the rejection of confirmation of ‘two creators similar in attributes and action’ is indeed correct. However, this isn’t the *only form of Shirk* that can occur concerning ‘*al-Rububiyyah*.’ Not by your definition, neither according to the definition of your scholar and totem Ibn Taymiyyah, despite his insistence. Secondly, with regards to the matters of benefit/harm, these are actions which necessarily require an agent. This agent, if a created being, must have a Creator. The text shows that the author already alluded to their belief in these deities ‘without Allah creating that.’ So in this case, those supposed deities must be created entities, thus they must have a Creator. If they are *not* created beings, then what are they? They must be perceived as being divine creators. Regardless of how the matter is viewed, this is undermining your own claim that the Arabs did not commit *Shirk* in the matter of ‘*al-Rububiyyah*.’ In fact, this is precisely what the present author, together with

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 11

the vast majority of adherents to the sect of Wahhābism have stubbornly, even arrogantly clung to.

In truth, with certitude the reality is, that all the famous verses, those which state ‘*la-yaqūlunna*,’ [لَيَقُولُنَّ] and ‘*fa-sa-yaqūlūna*,’ [فَسَيَقُولُونَ], as mentioned earlier, are a compelling rational argument at beautifully expressed. They have been presented to demonstrate the contradictions of the *mushrikeen*, the absurdity of their mentality. Despite acknowledging Allah through the statements mentioned, by decisive belief with assent, at one and the same time, they associate others with Him in some divine attributes and in matters of lordship, ‘*al-Rububiyyah*.’ Consequently, they associate partners with Allah, worshipping those false deities based upon corrupt *kufir* and *Shirk* set of beliefs. Hence their ‘*Iman* (faith) is utterly flawed, it is incomplete, rendered invalid. One who held such a belief was not led from *kufir* to Islam, nor would it provide any salvation in the hereafter, because it is mixed with *Shirk* in the roots of belief. The absence of this erroneous belief is preferable to its presence, because it is riddled with contradictions.

Regardless of the definition that one may adhere to or seek to put forth, fundamentally within these Qur’ānic verses there is no affirmation of ‘*Tawḥeed al-Rububiyyah*,’ nor that of *Tawḥeed al-Khāliqiyah*, nor ‘*Tawḥeed al-Uluhiyyah*.’ Neither is there affirmation of *Tawḥeed al-Dhāt*, nor that of *al-Asmā’ wal-Ṣifāt*. And definitely, it does not extend to *Tawḥeed al-Ḥākimiyyah*, nor any form of *Tawḥeed*. Such a matter shouldn’t be obscured from anyone, provided they engage in a deep thoughtful reading, enlightened by the texts of the Qur’ān and the *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunnah*, together with the well-established definitive historical facts, transmitted by continuously recurrent narratives. Indeed, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir ibn ‘Aāshur al-Tunisi was correct and proficient in what he said in *al-Taḥrīr wal’Tanweer*:

Considering that what they found their forefathers upon was that of making *Shirk* with Allah in divinity, if someone were to ask them, ‘Who created the heavens and the earth?’ They would say, ‘Allah created them.’ That is the absurdity in their reasoning – in which they simultaneously acknowledge Allah as the Creator while holding a belief in the divinity of others besides Him. The intended meaning of

‘the heavens and the earth’ encompasses all that is created therein, including the stones of the *Aṣnām*. The use of (the phrase) [لَا يَعْلَمُونَ] ‘they do not know,’ here and that of [لَا يَعْقِلُونَ] ‘they do not reason,’ as in *Surah al-Anka*’but, indicates a skilful expression of the discrepancy between the two stories while maintaining a unified meaning.⁵⁵

A brief comment to act as an addendum to this is required, as per the final sentence which is mentioned. Strictly speaking it is not correct, given that where it is expressed as ‘they do not know,’ as per the verse in *Surah Luqmān*, it is meant to highlight their acknowledge is but superficial, and they only provide acknowledgement to a part of what the statement, ‘He created the heavens and the earth’ entails, without having complete knowledge of all its details or implications. It does not indicate a definite belief in its entirety or in part. True knowledge is a firm conviction that corresponds to reality. Hence, they have a profound lack of understanding and ignorance of the complete meaning of the statement, ‘Allah created the heavens and the earth,’ which is the reason for why they are described as ‘they do not know.’ As for what is detailed in *Surah al-Anka*’but, Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted said:

If you ask the disbelievers who created the heavens and earth and who harnessed the sun and moon, they are sure to say, ‘Allah.’ Then why do they turn away from Him? It is Allah who gives abundantly to whichever of His servants He will, and sparingly to whichever He will: He has full knowledge of everything.

If you ask them, ‘Who sends water down from the sky and gives life with it to the earth after it has died?’ they are sure to say, ‘Allah.’ Say, ‘Praise belongs to Allah!’ Truly, most of them do not use their reason. The life of this world is merely an amusement and a diversion; the true life is in the Hereafter, if only they knew. Whenever they go on board a ship they call on Allah, and dedicate their faith to Him alone, but once He has delivered them safely back to land, see how they ascribe partners to Him! Let them show

⁵⁵ Ibn ‘Aāshur *al-Tahrir wal-Tanweer* [Vol. 21, p. 179]. The quotation is slightly abbreviated to its most relevant portions. The opening mention of the verses [31: 25] and [31: 21] are omitted.

*their ingratitude for what We have given them; let them take their enjoyment – soon they will know.*⁵⁶

The texts contain different statements that if rationalised correctly by linking them together, starting from rational necessities combined with sensory data, would produce complete pure knowledge and *Tawḥeed*. However, as the verses show, the people are not using their intellect.



⁵⁶ *Qur’ān*, 29: 61/66. The Arabic edition quotes the remaining verses up to the end of the *Surah*, omitted here for brevity.