

THE ERROR OF POLITICAL ISLAM

A Critical Study of the Political
Interpretation of Islam

MAULANA
WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

THE ERROR OF POLITICAL ISLAM

*A Critical Study of the Political
Interpretation of Islam*

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Translated and Edited by:

Prof. Farida Khanam

Mr. Sajid Anwar

Dr. Rajat Malhotra

Maulana Farhad Ahmad

Goodword Books

First Published 2026

This book is an English translation of
Maulana Wahiduddin Khan's Urdu book,
Tabeer Ki Ghalati (First Published 1963).

This book is copyright free.

Goodword Books

A-21, Sector 4, Noida-201 301, Delhi NCR, India

Mob. +91 8588822672

info@goodwordbooks.com

www.goodwordbooks.com

CPS International

Centre for Peace and Spirituality International

1, Nizamuddin West Market, New Delhi-110 013, India

Mob. +91-9999944119

info@cpsglobal.org

www.cpsglobal.org

Center for Peace and Spirituality USA

391 Totten Pond Road, Suite 402,

Waltham MA 02451, USA

Mob. 617-960-7156

email: info@cpsusa.net

CONTENTS

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION	5
PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION	11
A Word to My Companions	24
DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE	26
First Phase: Informal Conversation	27
Second Phase: Informal Conversation	29
Third Phase: Formal Correspondence	41
Correspondence with Maulana Sadruddin Islahi	43
Correspondence with Maulana Jalil Ahsan Nadwi	59
Correspondence with Maulana Abul Lais Islahi Nadwi	96
Correspondence with Maulana Abu A'la Maududi	176
Appendix	208
UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE	216
THE CONCEPT OF RELIGION	232
Understanding ' <i>Ilah</i> '	251
Understanding ' <i>Rabb</i> ' (ﷻ)	272
The Collective Demand	290
Understanding ' <i>Ibadah</i> '	293
Understanding ' <i>Deen</i> '	307
INTERPRETATION OF THE ISLAMIC MISSION	334
Arguments from the Quran	345
A Doubt	368

CONTENTS

Arguments from Hadith	399
Argument from Islamic Jurisprudence	408
CONSEQUENCES OF MISINTERPRETATION	420
Difference in Perspective	421
Subconscious Act	424
Drifting from the Quran	430
Shaping Religion to One's Mind	431
Shift in Focus	434
Effect on the Audience	441
Political Extremism	445
Misinterpretation of Religious Dominance	447
Faith Without Warmth	449
Missing the Real Task	451
Results Reveal Theoretical Flaw	456
LINGERING DOUBTS	461
CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF RELIGION	489
REQUIREMENTS OF WORSHIP	501
The Essence of Obedience	503
Testimony to the Truth	514
SERVING GOD'S CAUSE (<i>NUSRAT AL-DEEN</i>)	526
A COMPARISON	530
Example of Prayer (<i>Salat</i>)	530
The Task at Hand	549
OBSTACLES TO ACCEPTING THE TRUTH	559
FINAL WORDS	574

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The first edition of the Urdu version of *Tabeer ki Ghalati* (The Error of Political Islam) was published in 1963. It quickly went out of print, and since then, the demand for it has continued. However, due to various reasons, its reprinting was repeatedly postponed. Now, over twenty years later, its second edition is being published. Apart from some minor wording revisions, no changes have been made in this edition. It is being printed almost exactly as it appeared in 1963. In the original format, the “Appendix” was placed at the end of the book; in this new edition, it has been moved to the middle.

The exchanges I had with certain scholars about the concepts under discussion are included here, as in the first edition. However, after the publication of the book, none of these scholars provided any further written responses, remaining entirely silent on the matter. Volume Four of Maulana Abul A‘la Maududi’s

(1903–1979) *Tafheem-ul-Quran* was published after my book. It contains nearly seven pages of commentary under the verse from Chapter *Al-Shura*, “Establish the *Deen*” (42:13), which contains indications that suggest Maulana Maududi might have indirectly responded to *Tabeer ki Ghalati* (The Error of Political Islam). This extensive note not only has a rebuttal tone but also includes allusive phrases such as:

“How could anyone present this as the sole purpose of the Prophetic mission?”

“Above all, the thing with which this misinterpretation most directly comes into conflict is...”

After the publication of *Tafheem-ul-Quran*, Volume Four, I wrote to Maulana Maududi, asking whether his commentary on the verse in Chapter *Al-Shura* was intended as a response to my book. If so, I informed him, I would publish a refutation since, in my view, this entire discussion was irrelevant. In his reply, he denied that he had intended his commentary as a response to my book. I consider this simply an instance of lack of intellectual courage on his part, as he did not acknowledge that he had, indeed, indirectly addressed my objections. Nevertheless, I sent him a copy of my book *Al-Islam* through an informal channel,

and according to a letter dated February 5, 1979, it reached him before his demise.

However, some of his disciples did publish responses. Among them was Mr. Amir Usmani (d. 1975), who, rather than addressing the core intellectual objections of *Tabeer ki Ghalati* (The Error of Political Islam), resorted to mocking its author in his characteristic style to imply that the author was not even worth responding to. Mr. Usmani's lengthy article was published in his magazine *Tajalli* at the beginning of 1965. In response, I wrote an Urdu article titled "Critique or Ridicule?" which first appeared in the monthly *Nizam* (Kanpur) in December 1965 and was later reprinted in other journals. In this article, I systematically demonstrated the baselessness of Mr. Usmani's arguments from an academic standpoint. "Critique or Ridicule?" has been published separately as part of a book collection titled *Ja'izay*.

After the publication of my article, Mr. Usmani became silent on this subject. Though he lived for another decade, he never again directly addressed the arguments presented in *Tabeer ki Ghalati* (The Error of Political Islam), perhaps realizing his error. That is why, in the August 1966 issue of the monthly *Tajalli*, he made up for this through a special issue titled "Crux of Study." This special issue had featured many prominent writers, including Maulana Maududi. But

the first and the most prominent article in this issue was one on myself. Mr. Usmani, while introducing my book *Mazhab Aur Jadeed Challenge (God Arises)*, wrote in glowing terms about me. It would not be incorrect to say that he used his last word of acknowledgement in recognition of this book “*Mazhab Aur Jadeed Challenge (God Arises)*”.

I believe that the case of Maulana Jalil Ahsan Nadwi (d. 1981) was similar. He initially approached *Tabeer Ki Ghalati (The Error of Political Islam)* with a mocking tone, but when my monthly magazine *Al-Risala* began in 1976, he showed great appreciation for it. In fact, *Al-Risala* is based on the same religious perspective presented in *The Error of Political Islam*. Yet, Maulana Jalil Ahsan was not only a regular reader but also a subscriber. He wrote several encouraging letters regarding *Al-Risala*, and I sensed that he had become a silent supporter of my views.

Other individuals in this intellectual circle also attempted to refute *The Error of Political Islam* in various ways. Their method, however, was to avoid directly mentioning the book or citing its original text anywhere in their works. Instead, they created hypothetical objections, responded to those, and assumed they had refuted *The Error of Political Islam*. However, all such writings serve only as self-refutations, not as refutations

of *The Error of Political Islam*. These individuals were aware that quoting the original text of *The Error of Political Islam* would leave them vulnerable to academic scrutiny. So, they constructed objections of their own making and addressed those instead, thinking they had refuted the book. However, in reality, they had only refuted their own assumptions, not the actual *The Error of Political Islam*.

The truth is that the ideas critiqued in *The Error of Political Islam* have been thoroughly defeated in the realm of academic discourse. However, the prejudice of the supporters of these ideas is inhibiting them from admitting this. Exhibiting a defeated mindset, they have resorted to a systematic campaign to discredit me. Unable to succeed in the field of critique, they have descended into slander. If only they realized that this approach weakens their case even further, showing not only their intellectual bankruptcy but also a decline in ethical standards.

The Quran mentions:

“Those who deny the truth say, “Do not listen to this Quran. Drown it out with noise, so that you may gain the upper hand”. (41: 26)

Commenting on the term *Wa'lghaw fihi* (drown it out), Abdullah ibn Abbas interprets it as “a ‘ibuhu” (*Tafsir Ibn*

Kathir, Vol. 4, p. 98), meaning “defame it”—to criticize the Quran and its proclaimer.

Based on Ibn Abbas’s interpretation, there are two ways to express opposition to someone. One is critique, and the other is defamation. Critique involves rejection based on clear proof, whereas defamation entails levelling accusations and indulging in slander. Critique is an Islamic approach that allows everyone the right to analyse someone’s ideas based on evidence. But defamation is entirely an un-Islamic approach, one that the Quran associates with disbelievers. Those engaged in defamation campaigns should reflect to whose footsteps they are following with such behaviour.

—Wahiduddin

October 6, 1986

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

In contemporary times, books are generally believed to serve one of two purposes: either to provide entertainment for the readers or to increase their knowledge. However, this list overlooks one of the most important objectives: the study of truth. The book you now hold in your hands was written with precisely this purpose in mind.

What follows in the next pages is not merely an attempt to highlight an error in the interpretation of Islam; rather, it is an effort to present the correct understanding of Islam. There are two ways to do this: one is to present the correct interpretation in an abstract form, and the other is to clarify it in relation to prevailing interpretations. From a purely academic perspective, the first method may suffice. However, for practical and utilitarian purposes, the second approach is more effective. Therefore, I have adopted the second approach in this book.

If, through reading this book, anyone genuinely reaches a deeper understanding of the truth and attains a correct comprehension of Islam, it would be my greatest fortune, and I sincerely pray to Allah for this outcome.

The interpretation under discussion is not simply a prevailing view within a particular circle that we need to attempt to correct; it goes beyond that to represent a kind of challenge. In a certain sense, this book serves as a response to that challenge.

The literature produced under this interpretation explicitly, and some of its phrases—such as those in the preface to *Quran Ki Chaar Buniyadi Istlahein* (Four Key Concepts of the Quran) (Urdu) by Maulana Maududi—implicitly, suggest that our predecessors (the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, the Followers, the Followers of the Followers, as well as those who nobly followed them) did not understand the religion in its proper form. According to this interpretation, in the fourteen-hundred-year history of Islam, there is not a single movement that accomplished the task of genuine revival and renewal of Islam. Although some intelligent individuals within this circle have attempted to present certain events from Islamic history as evidence of this ideology, these efforts amount to fabricating history rather than genuine historiography.

In this way, such an interpretation amounts, in its entirety, to expressing a kind of lack of confidence in the understanding of Islam held by our predecessors. It implies that they did not serve Islam in the manner it deserved. I am not hesitant to acknowledge that some of our scholars may have misunderstood certain verses or hadiths, or, in other words, may have erred in identifying the specific nature of certain aspects of the faith. Likewise, it is always possible to recognize the shortcomings and failings in their practical actions. However, it is entirely unacceptable to assert that they misunderstood the essence of Islam or that they failed to adopt the correct approach to serving the faith.

For me, nothing in the world is more gratifying than the feeling that this book serves as a defence against such criticisms directed at our predecessors. I have taken it upon myself to defend them to the best of my limited abilities.

This reminds me of an incident from March 7, 1963. During that time, I was intensely engaged in researching the arguments in *Quran Ki Chaar Buniyadi Istlahein* (The Four Basic Quranic Terms). I was in the central reading room of the Darul Musannefin, Shibli Academy, library in Azamgarh, surrounded by shelves filled with works on Quranic exegesis, Hadith, jurisprudence, history,

theology, and language studies. It was one o'clock in the afternoon; the library's main doors were closed, and everyone had left for the midday break. Alone in this quiet room, I stood between books. Due to continuous study, I felt utterly drained, as though every drop of blood had been drained from my body. I picked up a volume of Tafsir Ibn Jarir, intending to put it back on the shelf and fetch another book. But as I stood up, weakness made me dizzy, and I momentarily lost my sense of direction. Though I knew this room well, for a moment, I stood there unable to determine which way to go or which shelf to approach. After a brief pause, I regained my composure and remembered where the relevant shelf was.

After regaining my composure after this experience, it felt as though I had journeyed a great distance in discussing this ideology with the scholars of the past, and I was exhausted from this journey. Yet, despite my exhaustion, I felt satisfaction in knowing that I understood their viewpoint and was now in a position to refute this interpretation with complete confidence. It seemed as though these shelves and the books within them represented the spirits of our predecessors, standing behind me, as I set forth, with my trembling hands and faltering steps, to defend them.

This thought filled me with such joy that my exhaustion

and hunger vanished, and I resumed my study, engrossed until sunset.

Before analyzing the interpretation under discussion, I must clarify a few points. Before my parting ways with the *Jamaat* (*Jamaat-e-Islami* India), some people advised me to avoid engaging in such controversial discussions and instead focus on positively presenting the Islamic understanding I had reached through studying the Quran and Hadith.

I appreciate the sincere intentions behind this advice. Had I followed it, my work would have taken a different form. In fact, to work in this way, I would not have needed to leave the *Jamaat* at all. I could have continued, like other speakers and writers within the *Jamaat*, to add my own voice. But two factors led me to make the decision that ultimately resulted in the book you now hold.

First, I believed that remaining within the *Jamaat* while promoting an interpretation of Islam that diverged from Maulana Maududi's thinking—which serves as the *Jamaat's* foundation—was a matter of dishonesty. Historical circumstances have led to the situation that now Maulana Maududi's literature has been regarded by the *Jamaat* members as the authentic, definitive explanation of the organization's *Jamaat* ideology. Under such circumstances, if one seeks to promote a different interpretation within the *Jamaat*, it would be

dishonest. The Jamaat's platform exists to propagate its own ideology, not those of others.

The only way I could work within the *Jamaat* was if it declared that Maulana Maududi's literature was not the sole authoritative interpretation of its ideology. However, as the correspondence with the Jamaat's leadership will show, I was unsuccessful in this effort. Afterwards, the only honest path for me was to step outside the *Jamaat* to express what I believed to be the truth, as remaining within the *Jamaat* while promoting a divergent view would have been unethical.

Secondly, my years of work through the magazine *Zindagi* in this intellectual circle led me to conclude that mere positive work alone was insufficient, given the particular influence introduced by Maulana Maududi's literature. The flaw of this literature differs from other common errors. It does not mean that he has added to or subtracted from the body of beliefs and practices that constitute the religion. It accepts the entirety of Islam, but the very definitions of these elements have been altered in its explanation. Consequently, followers of this ideology may appear to accept everything, but they do not do so in the manner they truly should.

The Quran and Hadith indicate that the core issue is establishing a relationship with God and fearing the punishment of the Hereafter. This is what we must

adopt ourselves and invite others towards. However, this ideology has reduced the matters of the Hereafter and the relationship with Allah to matters of “training.” In this framework, these realities are treated as if they are only meant to prepare and organize workers, rather than being the core matters for which we should strive. The primary objective has become to bring about a revolution in the world, while accountability in the Hereafter and similar aspects are treated merely as tools to instill dedication and character in those who rise for this worldly revolution, or in those who, after the revolution, assume charge of the world’s system.

This doesn’t mean that members of the *Jamaat* have made worldly success their true goal instead of success in the Hereafter. Their actual goal is undoubtedly success in the Hereafter, but their understanding of what actions are required in the world to achieve that goal has become flawed. For instance, if a person adopts the belief that mastering worldly material powers is a means to success in the Hereafter and, based on this, starts working toward it, it would be correct to say that while he still regards Allah’s approval in the Hereafter as his ultimate goal, his understanding of the means to attain that approval—that is, what we should strive for in this world to draw closer to Allah in the Hereafter—has changed.

As a result of this explanation, matters like closeness

to Allah and the Hereafter, though included in the Jamaat's "program," have not found their rightful place in its members. Such issues remain confined to the subject of "training" and fail to gain their original significance in people's minds. Those influenced by this interpretation resemble a vessel that has been turned in the wrong direction; if you pour water into it, it spills over instead of filling the vessel. And even if some does enter, it is very little.

Thus, I observed that when I speak about the fear of Allah and concern for the Hereafter, those influenced by this perspective do not reject it; they read it and listen to it with interest. However, due to the intellectual framework established by the literature, such matters do not penetrate their minds in the correct way. These discussions merely end up in the "training" category. Since Islam and human nature are in perfect harmony, any deviation in nature prevents Islam from being integrated properly. Therefore, despite listening and reading, the true effect of such a message does not settle in their minds as it should.

This was why I concluded that merely presenting my ideas positively would be unproductive. Instead, it was essential to directly critique the political interpretation under discussion, prove its flaws, and then present the correct interpretation as an alternative. Only then could the actual matter be clarified.

I have no illusions that, following such criticism, all *Jamaat* members will abandon the *Jamaat*'s ideas and adopt a new perspective. History has never witnessed such a thing, nor will it now. The *Jamaat*'s ideology has been around for a quarter of a century. Many have grown old with this ideology since accepting it in their youth, and they are now in old age. Once a person spends such a long time with an ideology, it becomes impossible to abandon it. They grow so accustomed to it that they cannot imagine any truth outside it. The *Jamaat* has now reached a stage where it functions more as a "tradition" than a "movement," one that does not require evidence to uphold it. Often, even when a person is defeated in the field of logic, he continues along the path of tradition as if there were no greater truth. After years of sustained effort, it has secured a place in society and built a widespread network with which many people are associated in various ways. This also poses an obstacle, consciously or subconsciously, for many individuals when it comes to making a new decision.

Here, I would like to give the example of communism. It is an undeniable fact that communism has been completely refuted in the field of logic. The critique against it has been so strong that it no longer stands

on any intellectual basis. When *The New Class* by former Yugoslav Communist Party president and vice president Milovan Djilas (1911–1995), a prominent figure in international communism, was published in London in 1956, it caused a global uproar. At the time, *Reader's Digest* published an introductory article on the book titled:

“The Book That is Shaking the Communist World” (*Reader's Digest*, p. 18)

Yet despite this, the ideology of communism remains alive and continues to grow. When human nature is such, there is no reason to expect that my efforts will lead to a different outcome.

Given this understanding, why did I decide to publish my book? There are several reasons:

1. After being associated with the *Jamaat* for fifteen years, I feel that the *Jamaat* has a right upon me—that I should share with it the best advice I have to offer. Realizing that I could not do this from within the organization, I felt compelled to step outside to fulfil this duty.
2. Any ideology, however, deeply rooted in people's minds, does not affect everyone uniformly. There are always some open-hearted individuals who, when confronted with the truth, can genuinely consider it with an open mind and accept it freely.

Such individuals are present in the *Jamaat*, just as they are in other intellectual circles, and it is these individuals who are the focus of my hopes. In truth, it is for these servants of God that I have undertaken the challenge of producing this difficult work.

3. There are many people surrounding the specific circle of the *Jamaat* who have studied its literature and are interested in it. They sympathize with and support the *Jamaat*, yet they still feel an unresolved issue, a knot in their hearts that has yet to be untied. Despite their interest, they do not feel entirely ready to embrace the *Jamaat*'s ideas fully. They carry within them a subtle inner conflict. For such people, my book, God willing, will serve as the answer to their questions, enabling them to make a more clear-hearted decision about their future stance.
4. Once, when asked about the *Jamaat-e-Islami*, the late Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (1863-1943), a prominent Indian Sunni Muslim scholar, responded, "Although no objection can be raised against it from a religious perspective, my heart does not accept this movement." (*Seerat-e-Ashraf*, p. 546)

Maulana Thanwi's words represent the sentiments of almost all the scholars of Islam in India and Pakistan

who have yet to accept this ideology. When these scholars read Maulana Maududi's literature through the lens of the traditional understanding of Islam—an understanding inherited from their pious predecessors and reinforced through religious institutions and texts—their inherited framework resists this literature, leading them to oppose it. However, this opposition usually stems from a vague feeling; they sense a disconnect between their inherited understanding and this interpretation, which leads them to reject it. Yet, they have not been able to precisely identify the cause of this disconnect.

Some among these scholars have tried to pinpoint the reason for this difference, but they generally have not devoted sufficient time to the issue, which is why they have been unable to identify the root of the error. Historically, the distortions in Islam have usually involved additions or omissions within the religion itself. Our scholars, perhaps unconsciously, assumed that this ideology, which their religious sense resists accepting, was also a similar type of error. However, this deviation is entirely different from previous distortions; the mistake in this ideology does not lie in adding or removing anything from the faith but rather in failing to place the various components of Islam in their correct context. For example, certain obligations of Islam are

required in relation to specific external circumstances, yet this ideology has mistakenly positioned them as core elements of the faith itself (see the example of love in Chapter 4). This is a very subtle and hidden deviation rather than an obvious one. However, our scholars did not recognize this distinction and began searching for the same kind of errors in the line of thought under discussion as had previously been found among deviant sects. Since this was not actually the case, their criticisms were weak and unfounded, making arguments that did not accurately apply to the ideology under discussion. Their situation became like that of a lawyer with a strong case but who failed to effectively advocate his case due to a lack of understanding of the details.

As a result, the writings published by these critics have caused harm on two fronts. On the one side, they have fostered a kind of ideological arrogance among the Jamaat's members. Weak critiques have created the erroneous belief among them that they are certainly in the right and their opponents are necessarily wrong. On the other side, these inadequate critiques have weakened a valid opposition, rendering it ineffective. I feel that God willing, this book will provide new material for reflection for both parties.

5. Finally, even if the above considerations were not present, my sense that "the religion has been harmed" is reason enough for me to attempt to clarify this matter. Clarifying religion is inherently necessary.

A Word to My Companions

At the end of this chapter, I must apologize to my companions with whom I have been associated for the past fifteen years, those who know me and whom I know. Undoubtedly, the publication of this book will cause them distress, but believe me, this is more painful for me. This book is nothing more than an extremely unpleasant duty for me.

I have no personal grievances against any individual. This book is not about any person or group of people, but is solely related to the published literature of Maulana Maududi, which interprets and explains Islam. If other individuals are mentioned, it is only because they defend or represent this literature; they are closely associated with it. If they no longer claim this literature as their own, I would have no need to mention them, and I would withdraw my entire case against them.

In Maulana Maududi's literature, the way Islam is interpreted gives me a strong sense that it misinterprets the true concept of Islam. While its fundamental components are the same as those originally belonging to God's Religion, their rearrangement has so distorted its essence that it appears to be something entirely different. As a result, the true nature of Islam has been severely compromised.

It stands to reason that if someone feels this way about a body of literature, they are obligated to express this feeling to the best of their ability. Seeing Islam compromised and remaining silent is unacceptable for a person of faith. Many people have aligned themselves with this literature, moulded their minds according to it, and are exerting their best efforts to expand and propagate it. Naturally, they, too, fall within the scope of this critique. However, I am completely clear on this matter: my real criticism is not directed at the individuals of *Jamaat-e-Islami* or its organizational structure but a specific body of literature.

In this context, I am publishing certain correspondence, which may cause further resentment. However, doing so is necessary to clearly show readers that I did not arrive at a unilateral decision while sitting in isolation. Rather, after extensive consultation with those directly involved in the matter, I reached the conclusion that publishing this book was the only option left to me. If I did not publish this account, no one could truly understand whether the weight of the argument lies on my side or with those I addressed. This correspondence affirms that I am justified in my belief that ‘the religion has been compromised,’ and it reinforces my decision that publishing this work is the right course of action.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

After being affiliated with *Jamaat-e-Islami* for fifteen years, I resigned at the end of 1962. I submitted my resignation on October 15, 1962, which was officially accepted six months later, as stated in the Jamaat's secretary's letter dated April 25, 1963. This separation was not sudden; rather, it was the result of a long history of both intellectual and external struggles. Regarding the ideological reasons that led me to this important decision, you will find their details in the following pages. Here, I would like to briefly outline the discussions and correspondence that continued for nearly four years before this decision so you can fully understand the background of the matter.

After the partition of India, I was inspired by the *Jamaat-e-Islami* movement in November 1947, and I worked with it with dedication for almost ten years. During this period, like many others in the *Jamaat*, I believed I had discovered the ultimate truth. At that time, I was mostly involved in practical work for the Jamaat and

paid little attention to studying anything other than its specific literature. Later, circumstances allowed me to dedicate time exclusively to study. I spent most of two years reading the Quran and contemplating its meanings. For the first time, I felt my confidence in this ideology wavering. During my study of the Quran, I became deeply aware that the Quran was not endorsing my existing understanding of Islam which I had received from the *Jamaat*, which I had believed to be the most accurate interpretation.

Fortunately, during this period, I was residing at the Jamaat's central office in Rampur, as I was involved in its writing and publishing department. As a member of the central council (*Majlis-e-Shura*), I also had the opportunity to interact with the Jamaat's most distinguished individuals. Consequently, I began discussing my intellectual struggles with senior members and central figures of the movement. However, after a lengthy period of reflection, discussions, and exchanges, I ultimately concluded that none of the arguments they presented verbally or in writing had adequately addressed the questions that had brought me to this state—at least, as far as my own knowledge and understanding allowed.

First Phase: Informal Conversation

To help you understand why these explanations were unsatisfactory for me, I will briefly mention some of them here.

1. My first discussions on this matter began in 1959 with a central figure regarded as one of the highest-ranking members of the *Jamaat* in India. We had prolonged conversations, yet he could not provide me with any conclusive answers. He himself had certain grievances with the *Jamaat* but did not offer any specific guidance to help resolve my intellectual struggles. Once, when we were discussing the Quranic verse about “He may make it prevail over every other religion” (9:33, 48:28, 61:9), I said, “You interpret this as the mission of the Prophet and, by extension, the objective of the Muslim community. If, indeed, this verse specifies the mission for which Allah continued the chain of prophethood and revelation, then why do these words only appear in relation to the final Prophet’s mission in the Quran? Why are such expressions not used for the purpose of the earlier prophets’ missions as well?” His response was, “Perhaps the purpose of prophethood was changed to ‘establishment of religion’ after the final Prophet.” (Or so he said.)
2. Another senior figure, one of the most respected members of the *Jamaat*, engaged in numerous conversations with me over time. However, he continually tried to convince me that there was no

substantial difference between my thoughts and the ideology of the *Jamaat*; both were essentially the same. These discussions took place from June 1960 to September 1961 in Rampur, Delhi, and Azamgarh. In July 1960, when the Majlis-e-Shura nominated me as the editor of the Urdu magazine *Zindagi*, I declined to accept it on the grounds that, given my differing views from the *Jamaat*'s ideology, I did not consider it appropriate to take on editorial responsibilities for the *Jamaat*'s publication. At that time, he again tried to assure me that it was merely my heightened sensitivity making me feel my ideas were different from those of the *Jamaat*, although there was no difference. He advised me to dispel this notion and accept the editorial role for the magazine *Zindagi*.

There were also some individuals who tried to convince me that this is merely a difference in wording and that, in essence, there is no real difference between the two.

Second Phase: Informal Conversation

3. These discussions took place before my work *Tabeer ki Ghalati* (The Error of Political Islam) came into existence. Afterwards, I started putting my thoughts in writing and presented them to others, hoping this would elicit more meaningful feedback. However, I still did not achieve much

success. When I first gave my written work to a senior member of *Jamaat-e-Islami*, he returned it, saying, “I have read it thoroughly, but I will provide my comments after reading it again.” When I insisted, he gave a brief response:

“Broad agreement with the objectives, but considerable disagreement with the discussions.”

“This was on October 21, 1961. Our next discussion took place a month and a half later, on December 12, and six months after that, he shared his views with me in more detail. However, in his later comments, he only provided details of his “disagreement;” he did not share any “agreement” with me.

Here, I must express my impression that among all the individuals in the *Jamaat*, I have interacted with, I hold this person in the highest regard in terms of his understanding of Islam. I am convinced that if he were an ordinary member of the *Jamaat*, his feedback might have been different. But it is natural that when an official expresses views on a matter, his formal position consciously or unconsciously influences his opinion, often leaving little room for alignment with the truth.

4. Another senior figure, a scholar and a member of the *Majlis-e-Shura*, read my writing and said,

“Previously, from our brief conversations, I understood that your objection was that Maulana Maududi exaggerated in his interpretation of Islam, and I agreed with you on that. But after reading your writing, I realized that your objection is that he has fundamentally misinterpreted Islam. Now, I strongly disagree with you.” He added that a detailed discussion would follow. However, despite repeated reminders in subsequent meetings, a detailed discussion never took place, nor did he address any specific point to refute it. My last meeting with him on this matter was on October 17, 1962, in Azamgarh, where he again reviewed my writing in detail. After reading it, when I asked for his comments, he remained silent, only stating, “I disagree with your perspective.”

5. Another senior figure, actively engaged in *Jamaat-e-Islami*'s literary efforts, read my written memo and responded with a written opinion. His complete written response is as follows:

Respected Brother,

Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullahi

After reading your article, two prayers arose in my heart—one for myself and one for you. O Allah, my Lord, if I have not understood the religion, you have sent, correctly, grant

me the true understanding of it, and do not raise me among those on the Day of Judgment who altered even a fraction of your religion or supported any such alteration. Raise me instead among those pious servants who lived and died upholding the religion as presented by your beloved Prophet, Muhammad ﷺ.

O Allah, Lord of all worlds, if your servant Wahiduddin's mind, after grasping the correct understanding of religion, is now veering toward a misinterpretation, then guide him back to the true understanding. Do not raise him among those on the Day of Judgment who misunderstood your religion and restricted it. And one who failed to understand the role of humanity as your representatives on Earth.

After this prayer, I revisited your article but, in totality, found that my limited knowledge and understanding stand opposed to it. What you presented is not something that can be addressed in a few words—it would require at least as many pages as you have written, and a response may ultimately be futile, as you might simply view any answer as the thoughts of others.

In conclusion, I am writing a few words with a spirit of advice and goodwill. Please reflect on them accordingly:

- You are deeply affected by a sense of mistrust toward Maulana Maududi and the entire *Jamaat-e-Islami*, and you have poured onto paper the suspicions that were locked in your mind. Do you believe you will not be held accountable for this? Many of your objections and suspicions are merely products of your assumptions, which have no basis in reality.
- The tone you have adopted in your writing is extremely aggressive, resembling the expressions of a staunch opponent of the *Jamaat*. In this, you have even left behind Maulana Amin Ahsan, to the extent that you have accused (Maulana Maududi) of distorting the religion.
- My advice is to change this aggressive tone; otherwise, your writing will meet the same fate as that of Maulana Amin Ahsan’s works.

A senior figure, a member of the Shura Council—the higher consultative body—reflected at length after reading this work. Part of what he said was: ‘I do not disagree with it much, but neither am I fully satisfied. The truth is, I have not given such matters much thought. Therefore, it is difficult for me to form any definite opinion about it.’”

However, he fully agreed with the chapter on “Consequences,” noting that if my analysis of the ideology is correct, then these outcomes are

inevitable. Practically speaking, these outcomes have already appeared within the *Jamaat*, though others attribute them to different causes. This conversation took place on October 28, 1961, and three months later, on February 6, 1962, I met him again. By then, his views had significantly changed, and he said, "I am now firmly convinced that it is incorrect," though he did not explain the reasons or logic for his saying, 'firmly convinced'. Five months later, on July 5, we had a third conversation. He said, "I am not in a position to provide a researched critique, but after reading your work, I still believe that Maulana Maududi's interpretation is absolutely correct. While there may be an individual paragraph I disagree with, I fundamentally consider his interpretation to be right and yours to be wrong." He provided no reasoning and did not analyse any of my points to explain why he considered my views incorrect. When I repeatedly insisted on an explanation, he became frustrated and said, "Consider me ignorant, if you will."

I encountered individuals who, after reading my work, emphatically asserted that Maulana Maududi's interpretation of Islam is absolutely correct and that my writing is filled with misconceptions and weak arguments. Yet, despite repeated insistence, none of them made the effort to analyze my arguments or

explain why they considered them misconceptions rather than valid points. They failed to refute even a single objection in a scholarly manner, nor did they provide any evidence to support their claims. Nevertheless, they continued to repeat their stance, as if their correctness and my incorrectness were so self-evident that no proof or justification was necessary. You may be surprised to learn that these were not ordinary members but individuals regarded as scholars within the *Jamaat*, holding responsible positions.

Some individuals, however, responded with a sense of restraint, saying that they could not comment on the matter and that those in the *Jamaat* with direct knowledge of religion should examine and respond to it. When I asked one elder if he considered my work to be in the same category as other writings criticizing the *Jamaat*, he replied, "I have regularly read everything written in opposition to the *Jamaat*, but there is no comparison between your writing and those." To him, my work was worth considering, whereas he felt the others were not even worthy of attention.

Among all the members of the *Jamaat* I have met so far, without exception, I have found that none had answers to my points. However, none were willing to admit this openly. There was only one exception, and the account of his response, as recorded in my diary, is as

follows: “I read your article several times with close attention, and I admit that I can only benefit from it and am not able to critique it. He said, ‘I agree with the conclusions and doubts chapters almost entirely but disagree with the theoretical causes you presented. I consider the current objectives of *Jamaat-e-Islami* to be correct, though I don’t have any arguments for it right now. While I could say the same things others have said in response to your writing, I consider them to be pointless and irrelevant—they do not address your objections. I do not think that such responses refute your work.’”

There were a few other individuals who agreed with my views and analysis completely or to a large extent. One respected elder who is also a member of the Shura Council read my work on two occasions but provided no comment. I repeatedly requested feedback, but he neither affirmed nor denied my points. In our last meeting, at one point in the conversation, I remarked, “This is either a great truth or a great deception.” He replied, “It could also be a small truth or a great deception.”

Another elder stated, “You have invalidated our arguments in your writing, but even if an argument is invalid, it does not necessarily mean that the conclusion is wrong.” I replied, “Indeed, you are correct, but if you still believe the original claim to be correct despite

acknowledging the flaws in the existing arguments, then you would only be justified in doing so if you had some other evidence to support it. Otherwise, on what basis do you continue to consider it true?" However, he provided no further arguments and only promised to think about it further. He added that, unlike my systematic analysis, "we did not join the movement through such detailed thought. It was a simple Islamic enthusiasm; Maulana Maududi's words stirred this passion, and we joined in."

One elder remarked, "As far as criticism of the previous ideology and interpretation of verses is concerned, your points are convincing. What you consider to be the primary objective also appears to be correct, even if we have not been able to achieve it practically. However, when considering the entire positive aspect, I fear that the concepts of revolution and reform of the world might become muted." He suggested that the scholars of the *Jamaat* should prepare a comprehensive response. Yet, the same elder, who was a member of the Shura Council that decided to assign a scholar to prepare a detailed response to my work over four months, changed his stance upon reading Maulana Maududi's letter. It was 26th June of 1962 when after the Asr prayer I presented him Maulana Maudidi's letter (dated June 15, 1962) to read. After reviewing

it, he responded, “Maulana Maududi is absolutely right; everything has already been addressed, and there is no need for further discussion.” Hearing this, I was shaken. I thought to myself, “When conformity and personality-cult are at this level, how can anything be understood?”

Another respected figure, a senior official in charge of a *Jamaat* department and a member of the Shura Council commented, “I agree with the spirit, but I disagree with the tone.” I spoke with him for an hour, yet I could not determine whether he agreed or disagreed. He admits that there is a difference between my interpretation and that of Maulana Mawdudi, yet he regards both as correct. Six months later, in a follow-up conversation, he remarked, “Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Maududi, and you are all affected by the same mistake—that after realising some contemporary evils you tried to bring reform in them. But, this attempt at reforming the present situation unconsciously turned into an attempt to reinterpret Islam. What was originally intended as a practical correction has mistakenly assumed the form of a theoretical interpretation, resulting in excesses and imbalances, jettisoning the balance”.

Another senior figure stated, “I completely agree with the chapter on ‘Consequences,’ but the ideological explanation lacks balance.” I asked him to provide

examples to clarify this imbalance, but he was unable to offer any. He said, “This is not a piece to be brushed off lightly; it needs to be read repeatedly and thoroughly, after which a formal commentary can be made.” He mentioned that reading it had such an effect on him that he had been continuously thinking over that; he couldn’t sleep well for a long time that night.

Another senior figure, though not a religious scholar, holds a distinguished position within the *Jamaat* due to his other qualities and has been consistently elected to the Shura Council. He said, “Your writing is very thought-provoking; it contains many truths. However, regarding its scholarly and interpretive sections, I am not in a position to comment. Only scholars can address these areas.” He asked me whether the conclusions came to mind first, leading to the ideas, or whether the interpretations of the verses I presented came first. I replied that the conclusions came much later—the analysis began solely from a theoretical standpoint, and the conclusions followed naturally after the writing was completed.

Another senior figure remarked, “This work gathers many verses and hadiths, which might make it seem well-supported, but anyone knowledgeable in Arabic could gather similar references on any topic. Simply collecting some verses and hadiths does not prove the

argument.” I asked, “Then what is the correct method to convincingly present an argument? Is it this method, or another?” He replied, “Yes, the correct method is to establish it through relevant texts.” I said, “When my writing is formatted in the same way as a genuinely reasoned argument, how can you claim it is only superficially similar and not genuinely so?” Instead of analysing a section of my work to show that a point may seem valid but is unfounded, he merely insisted without evidence that my argument was not proven.

In a conversation with another individual, I explained why I considered *Jamaat-e-Islami*'s interpretation of Islam incorrect. I analysed certain verses often cited to support this interpretation, showing that they do not convey the intended meanings. Rather than answering my objections, he shifted the discussion to, “How does one recognize the truth?” I replied, “When both one's intellect and heart feel assured that something is the truth—in other words when external evidence confirms it and inner conviction accepts it.” He disagreed, saying, “Intellect is highly misleading; it misguides people in various ways. The true guide is the heart. If the heart is assured, that's a sign one has found the truth.” I responded, “That is no principle at all. Both knowledge and the *Shariah* reject such an approach. Taken to its logical conclusion, if a perspective you

favour contradicts clear evidence from the Quran and Hadith, for which you have no answer, you would still cling to your view, claiming that your heart is assured. Just as intellect can be deceiving, so too can the heart often lead people astray.” Yet, he persisted in his belief, insisting that the heart’s assurance is sufficient to confirm one is on the right path.

Third Phase: Formal Correspondence

This is a brief account of my individual discussions with senior members of the *Jamaat* regarding my ideas, which continued for two full years. Eventually, I concluded that such discussions were not going to yield any fruitful outcome. I decided to seek the final and definitive response of the *Jamaat* on this matter. Consequently, I sent a copy of my written work to the Amir (leader) of *Jamaat-e-Islami* Hind, Maulana Abul Lais Nadwi (1913-1990), along with a letter dated April 1, 1962. The content of the letter was as follows:

“With this letter, I am sending a copy of my written work. My purpose in sending it to you is to present to you, as the responsible leader of *Jamaat-e-Islami*, the ideas that have led me to experience severe dissatisfaction with the *Jamaat*. I would like to receive a clear response from you on these matters, so I can make a final decision regarding my association with the *Jamaat*.

I have no suggestion regarding the form of your response. You may respond yourself or consult the Shura Council or scholars of the *Jamaat* and then inform me. In any case, whatever response I receive from you, I will consider it the *Jamaat*'s official reply and, based on it, decide the course of action I should take.”

Two weeks later, the Shura Council's annual meeting began in Delhi. During the meeting, the Amir distributed copies of my written work to the members of the Shura for review. On April 19, they held two sessions throughout the day, devoting several hours to its examination. Since I was asked to step out of these sessions, I do not know what was discussed. However, at the end, the Amir called me into the meeting and informed me, “We all agree that your work needs to be considered with full seriousness, but a response cannot be provided hastily; it will require ample time.” Consequently, Maulana Sadruddin Islahi (1917–1998), a prominent scholarly figure of the *Jamaat* and one of its early members, was appointed to prepare a detailed response, and later, a four-month deadline was set, with Maulana Sadruddin expected to submit his written response by the end of August.

Additionally, the Amir and the Shura members expressed the wish to send a copy of my work to Maulana Abul A'la Maududi and Maulana Jalil Ahsan

Nadwi, to seek their opinions on it. Maulana Maududi's importance lies in the fact that he is the original thinker behind the ideology upon which *Jamaat-e-Islami* was founded. Maulana Jalil Ahsan Nadwi, on the other hand, holds a significant position within the *Jamaat* due to his extensive life dedication to studying the Quran. Even today, as a teacher of the Quran, he devotes his best hours to this noble book, making his opinion on the matter highly valuable.

I will now present the accounts of each of these three individuals separately.

Correspondence with Maulana Sadrudin Islahi

In this matter, Maulana Sadrudin Islahi was the first person appointed specifically by the Amir and the entire Shura Council to prepare a response to my writing. He was instructed that, if necessary, he should take the full four months to write a comprehensive and detailed response. Accordingly, on the morning of April 22, 1962, I handed over a copy of my work to Maulana Sadrudin in Rampur.

On July 29, 1962, at eleven o'clock, I was sitting in the *Jamaat-e-Islami* Hind's central library in Rampur, engrossed in my study, when I heard a voice from behind: "Here is your trust." I looked back and saw Mr. Afzal Hussain Khan (1918–1990), the director of

Darsqah-e-Islami, Rampur, was standing there, holding an envelope out toward me. This was the very envelope I had been eagerly waiting for several months. Inside was Maulana Sadruddin's written response, prepared in accordance with the Shura Council's decision, along with a brief letter from the Amir, Maulana Abul Lais, which read as follows:

“Maulana Sadruddin's article is being sent for your consideration. After reading it, please let us know how much you agree with it in principle. If necessary, I will either come to Rampur myself for a personal discussion, or I may ask you to come to Delhi. May this article bring you satisfaction, and may we continue our journey together in mutual companionship.”

When I opened the envelope, I saw the title of Maulana Sadruddin's response, which read, “A Brief Analysis of *Tabeer ki Ghalati* (The Error of Political Islam).” I felt inclined to start reading immediately, but I remembered a promise I had made to God. I immediately stood up, put the books back on the shelves, locked the room, and went to a nearby mosque, where I performed ablution. I offered two units of prayer, then prayed with flowing tears:

“O God, reveal to me whatever is the truth in Your sight. I seek refuge in You from straying

after my own reasoning. Surely a day will come when Your angels—angels I will have no power to resist—will come to me and take me into Your presence. O God, whatever You will demand of me on that day, make it known to me today. Whatever realities will be unveiled then, let me behold them now.”

I had vowed that when I received Maulana Sadruddin’s review, I would first offer two units of prayer and supplicate to God, and only then begin to study it. After fulfilling this vow, I read the text carefully, finishing it at the first opportunity. I then read it again and again, prepared notes, and checked the references it contained. By the fourth day—August 2—I had concluded that the work (response) was seriously inadequate. My confidence in my own views grew stronger, and I thanked God that, through this review, He had granted me greater clarity of mind and further confirmation of my ideas.

On August 10, I wrote to the Amir *Jamaat* to inform him that Maulana Sadruddin’s response had not changed my original perspective. In reply, I received a letter dated August 13, 1962, which is included in the Amir *Jamaat*’s correspondence. Following this, I sent a summary of my thoughts on Maulana Sadruddin’s response to the Amir, which was also shared with Maulana Sadruddin through Amir *Jamaat*. Despite this,

he (Maulana Sadruddin) remained steadfast in his belief in the validity of his response and continued to view my position as mistaken. Thus, I wished to send him a detailed commentary on his response and asked that he provide the reasons he found my arguments refutable. This way, both of us would have a greater opportunity to consider each other's viewpoints in more detail.

I wrote to the Amir *Jamaat*, suggesting that if Maulana Sadruddin was willing to comment on my response, I would send him a detailed reply regarding his commentary. The Amir *Jamaat* forwarded my request to Maulana Sadruddin, who replied that if my detailed response maintained the same tone as my previous brief comments, he would be unable to respond. (This brief comment is included in the Amir *Jamaat*'s correspondence.)

I was informed of this by the Amir *Jamaat*'s letter dated October 13, 1962. Consequently, I sent a letter to Maulana Sadruddin on October 20, 1962, with reference to this matter, beginning as follows:

Azamgarh—October 20, 1962

Respected Sir,

Greetings.

In response to your letter, in which I mentioned my intention to send a full copy of the second document I prepared, I informed Amir *Jamaat* that I wished that

upon reading it, you would kindly share your feedback with me. The Amir Jamat's reply was as follows:

“I inquired about this from Maulana Sadruddin, and he stated that if he feels that providing commentary on the response would be beneficial after reading it, he would do so, God willing. However, if the response follows the same approach as the brief response Mr. Wahiduddin Khan had previously provided, he will excuse himself from offering commentary on it. This stance is reasonable; whatever decision you make regarding this, please inform him directly.”

I regret that I cannot agree with Amir Jamaat's view that your stance is “reasonable.” What exactly was the tone of the brief letter that led you to consider it unworthy of a response? I have not employed rhetoric but presented factual points that deserve some response. For example, regarding the verse *aqeem-ud-deen* (Establish the Faith), I wrote that “*Al-Deen*” here refers to the core of religion, not the entirety, and there are clear indications in the Quran supporting this, which has been unanimously agreed upon by the commentators. In response, you wrote:

“While the scholars' view on this point is valid the verse's purpose does not entirely

exclude the notion that, following the core tenets of faith, detailed adherence to which particular *Shariah* would also be mandated. By using the specific relative pronoun *al-ladhi* (that which), Allah has pointed to this answer as well. Accordingly, scholars who recognized this aspect also clarified that the command to establish the faith includes the detailed rulings of *Shariah*—entirely and comprehensively.”

You cited two commentators on Jalaalayn as support for your claim that they include the entire *Shariah* in this command of *aqeem-ud-deen*. However, when I reviewed the original sources, I discovered that both references you provided were entirely incorrect. In my response, I included the complete relevant passages from both commentaries and demonstrated that you incorrectly connected the statement made about *al-ladhi auhaina elaik*, that is, ‘that which We revealed to you’ with *aqeem-ud-deen* instead. In the main text of Jalaalayn and in both commentaries, it is clearly stated that generality is not intended in the latter phrase.

You are left with two choices: either admit that you were wrong in your reference or dispute my interpretation of these commentaries. It’s surprising that you haven’t spoken up about such a serious matter. If even these points seem not worth responding to, I don’t see what would be considered deserving of a reply.

My approach in my brief writing was simple: I found

your arguments incorrect based on evidence and communicated this directly. If you find this approach unsuitable, the only option would be for me to accept your statements without reason. But if I could do that, there would have been no need for this discussion in the first place.

I request once again that you reconsider your decision and let me know if you are willing to review my full response and provide your feedback so that I may send you a complete copy.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

Response from Maulana Sadruddin Islahi

Rampur—12 November 1962

Respected Brother,

Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullah,

I received your Post card several days ago, and I apologize for the delay in responding.

Despite your request, I have not been able to change my viewpoint, and I still find what I had written to the Ameer of the *Jamaat* on this matter to be entirely reasonable.

As far as I am concerned, you should acknowledge that I have presented my views and reasoning on the issue under discussion with complete clarity. Any

further debate or counter-argument would not be of any benefit. I remain just as convinced of the validity of my views as I was before. However, if you do not find any significant weight in them, then naturally, the discussion should come to an end. I have already shared the full extent of my knowledge and understanding; if any part of it proves useful to you, that is good—otherwise, you are free to disregard it.

Recently, I was quite disappointed to learn that a letter addressed to me by the Ameer of the *Jamaat*, which I had placed inside an envelope along with your second piece of writing, inadvertently reached you. This likely happened because I forgot to remove that letter while returning your writing.

In this regard, it might not have occurred to you that keeping someone else's letter is inappropriate. Reading it—and then neither returning it to the concerned person nor informing them—would be even more so. In any case, I now request you to return that letter to me kindly.

You had taken back your second brief writing with the promise of revising it and sending it again. I am still waiting for that promise to be fulfilled.

Wassalam,
Sadrudin

Azamgarh—November 15, 1962

Respected Maulana Sadruddin Sahib,

Peace be upon you.

I received your letter dated November 12, 1962. You wrote:

“I have presented my thoughts and arguments on the matter in full clarity, so further debate or rebuttal would be unproductive.”

With regret, I must say that this is not a response to the main issue for which I felt the need to write to you. I was inquiring about a statement you previously conveyed to me through the Amir *Jamaat*, yet instead of addressing this, you shifted your stance and introduced a new point.

The issue at hand was my expectation that you would reconsider my commentary on your work. Instead, I received a letter from the Ameer of the *Jamaat*, dated October 13, informing me that, in your view, the tone and style of my commentary were inappropriate, and therefore, you chose not to respond.

In this context, I sent you a letter dated October 20, where I highlighted a specific section of my commentary as an example and asked you to identify the particular aspect of its tone or style that rendered my work unworthy of your attention.

In response, I had expected you to analyze the referenced part of my commentary and point out any

fault in its tone or style that justified your unwillingness to engage with it. Instead, your reply merely stated, “You have already said all that needed to be said; there is no further need to say anything.”

What is even more surprising is that, while you wrote nothing about the actual issue, you took a legalistic stance regarding Amir Jamaat’s letter, devoting seven lines to this matter. Your objection is akin to a scenario where I accuse someone of behaving inappropriately towards me, which he denies. Later, if a signed document of his on the matter were to come into my possession, I might present it as evidence of my claim. In response, rather than acknowledging his error or addressing the core issue, he would argue, “You had no right to read my private letter.” Such statements usually reveal one’s own weaknesses rather than discredit the other person.

I am genuinely puzzled by your approach: I presented clear, conclusive points in my brief commentary, yet you offered no response and, instead of addressing the core issue, deflected with other unrelated points. Is your conscience truly satisfied that adopting such a stance absolves you before God and humanity? I wish you would consider that this is not a matter you can simply dismiss and assume it is resolved. It will return to confront you eventually; will you remain silent then as well?

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

No reply was received from Maulana Sadrudin to this letter. I then expressed my disappointment in a letter to Mr. Jalaluddin Ansar (resident of Rampur). In response, I received a letter from Mr. Ansar dated December 11, 1962, which contained the following words:

“I conveyed your message to Maulana Sadrudin. He replied that he did not consider your previous letter to require a response, which is why he did not reply. However, he mentioned that he had requested two items from you, which you did not send.”

The two items in question were the letter from Maulana Abul Lais Nadwi to Maulana Sadrudin and my detailed commentary on Maulana Sadrudin’s response. I did not send the latter because Maulana Sadrudin was unwilling to agree to my condition that he would provide his feedback on it after reviewing it.

After this response, I understood that Maulana Sadrudin was unwilling to comment further on my commentary. In other words, the phase of mutual understanding had ended, and I had to decide for myself what course of action to take.

I spent a few days reflecting on this issue and ultimately concluded that I would likely have to publish my

book. Accordingly, I sent Maulana Sadruddin the following letter:

Azamgarh—January 6, 1963

Respected Sir,

Peace be upon you.

It has been some time since I sent you a letter, to which I have not received a response. In any case, I am now considering publishing my work as a book. I intend to include your response and my detailed commentary on it so that readers can see both perspectives and determine the correct view for themselves. The proposed table of contents for the book would be as follows:

- Background
- Error in Interpretation
- Consequences
- Doubts
- The Correct Understanding of Religion
- A Brief Overview of Error in Interpretation by Maulana Sadruddin Islahi
- Commentary on Maulana Sadruddin Islahi's Response
- Obstacles to Accepting the Truth

In this regard, I wish to inform you that my work has changed significantly in terms of structure and reasoning, and your response is based on the earlier

version from April 1962, written ten months ago. If I publish your response along with my revised work, it may seem disjointed and, in many places, insufficient or irrelevant from your perspective. Therefore, I request that you make any necessary revisions to your response to align it with my current work.

I kindly request that you let me know if you agree with this proposal so that I may send my complete work in its current form for you to review and, based on that, you may prepare your response.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

Response from Maulana Sadruddin

Rampur—January 12, 1963

Dear Respected Sir,

Peace be upon you. I received your letter. You have expressed dissatisfaction, claiming that I did not respond to your last letter, while in fact, I have the same complaint against you. In my letter, I clearly responded to your request to comment further on your commentary, stating that it appeared to hold no benefit; therefore, I could not make such a promise. Afterward, I made several requests, but you not only took no action on them, but you also didn't even address them, except to ask why I raised those points with you.

As for your recent suggestion in your latest letter, I must say that if you wish to publish your work, that is your choice; do as you deem appropriate. However, as for my writing, please do not publish it. I wrote it solely for your personal reflection, not for public reading. This is why I only pointed out certain key arguments without elaborating, expecting that you would understand the details yourself. It's clear that one cannot expect the public to grasp it in this way. Therefore, I did not write it with publication in mind, and I request that you do not publish it. When your work is published, the *Jamaat* will decide whether a response should be issued publicly, and action will be taken accordingly.

Sincerely,
Sadrudin

Azamgarh—January 19, 1963

Respected Maulana Sadrudin,

Peace be upon you.

I received your letter dated January 12. In it, you requested that I do not publish your response along with my work. In response, I would like to remind you that in 1951, Maulana Abul Lais, Amir of *Jamaat-e-Islami Hind*, corresponded with the late Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani. Maulana Madani sent a

detailed critique of *Jamaat-e-Islami* in response. Later, this critique was published by Late Maulana E'jaz Ali under the title *Maktub-e-Hidayat*. At the time, Maulana Abul Lais expressed in *Zindagi* magazine his discontent that Maulana Madani's critique was published alone without including his own response (see *Zindagi*, June, July, August 1951, page 88).

Had Maulana Hussain Ahmad's objections and Amir Jamaat's responses been presented together, readers would have found it easier to reach a well-rounded opinion. Consequently, when Maulana Abul Lais's reply was later published in *Zindagi*, Maulana Hussain Ahmad's critique was included alongside it.

I am now trying to follow this same principle with my work, and you are objecting. Why was this approach correct in Maulana Hussain Ahmad's case but wrong in mine?

I ask that you reconsider your position. Regarding your note that important arguments in your response were only hinted at, the best solution is for you to revise and expand your response accordingly. This way, any gaps you perceive in your response can be addressed.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

After waiting for a long time without any response from Maulana Sadruddin, I sent a reminder through Mr. Muhammad Farooq, a resident of Rampur. In reply, I received a letter from Mr. Farooq dated February 16, 1963, which contained the following:

“I conveyed your message to Maulana Sadruddin. He said that his stance remains unchanged from before and that he sees no need to respond further. However, he may write to you directly.”

Exactly one month later, I received the following letter from Maulana Sadruddin:

Rampur—March 16, 1963

Dear Brother,

Peace be upon you.

I have already conveyed to you through Mr. Farooq Ahmed Khan that I remain firm in my previous opinion. However, since you requested a direct reply, I am sending this letter. The reasoning you presented in your letter does not seem applicable to the issue at hand, which is why I remain committed to what I stated in my previous letter. I consider it an appropriate decision.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, you may consult with the central office, as my commentary on your work was not done personally or independently, as you are aware, but rather under the instructions

of the central office and the Shura. Therefore, any procedural decision must also come from them. If you obtain permission from the central office, I will have no grounds for objection. However, it should be clear from the outset that if such permission is granted, you would still have to publish my existing response as it stands. I would not be able to revise it to align with your revised document.

I hope you and your associates are well.

Sincerely,
Sadruddin

This reply, evidently, did not satisfy me, as it neither clarified why my “reasoning” seemed inapplicable to “the issue at hand” nor explained why he was unwilling to revise his response to match my current work. However, I decided it was no longer appropriate to continue writing to him, as his replies made it clear that he was entirely unwilling to engage further on this matter. Hence, I concluded my correspondence with him.

Correspondence with Maulana Jalil Ahsan Nadwi

My interactions with Maulana Jalil Ahsan Nadwi regarding this matter began in February 1962, when

he visited Rampur and stayed with Maulana Abdul Hai (Editor of the monthly *Al-Hasanat* and a member of the Shura Council). That was the first time he saw my writing. Upon learning that Maulana (Jalil Ahsan) had reviewed my work, I went to him to request his feedback. He said that instead of giving an oral response, he preferred to provide his opinion in writing. However, he would need a copy of my document. I agreed, stating that a written review would indeed be more detailed, allowing for a thorough examination and reflection. I immediately promised to provide him with a copy soon.

At that time, Abdul Hai Sahib had lent Maulana my work for review, so he was also very eager to hear Maulana's feedback. He probed quite persistently, but Maulana remained reticent. After much urging, he only commented:

“Reading this piece left me deeply distressed.”

On March 10, 1962, I sent a copy of my work to Maulana Jalil Ahsan Nadwi. After receiving it, Maulana wrote back, saying he had learned that I intended to further refine my work. Therefore, he requested that I send him the completed version once it was ready so he could provide his feedback. Along with his letter, he returned my original document.

Saraimeer—March 26, 1962

Dear Brother,

Peace be upon you.

I am returning your document and am pleased to hear that you are preparing its final draft, as you mentioned. My advice is that once your final draft is complete, show it to Maulana Sadruddin, Maulana Hamid, Maulana Urooj, and other scholars of Arabic and jurisprudence there. “Accept” their critiques and comments openly. Sticking rigidly to an idea once it is set in your mind is not the path of a seeker of truth. After passing through this phase, let me review it. I am a student, so naturally, I will ask questions, seek explanations, and inquire about the basis of your arguments.

It is also evident, as I mentioned both verbally and in writing, that my approach towards this type of writing is through correspondence, not through direct discussion or dialogue.

When I was in Rampur, I spoke with several individuals there, and they unanimously agreed that once you set your mind on something, any possibility of reconsidering it seems entirely out of the question. May God grant that this is not the case, and that my concerns are also unfounded. But if the situation is as I have heard, and as I fear after reading your work, then

this is not the approach of true seekers of truth. You should reflect on this.

Jalil Ahsan

After that, due to the crisis at Madrasatul Islah, the correspondence was put on hold for a while, and Maulana was unable to respond to my letters. In the first week of July 1962, after stepping down from his position at Madrasatul Islah, Maulana Jalil Ahsan came to Rampur for a few days. Here, Maulana Abul Lais spoke with him and persuaded him to respond to my writing. The discussion that followed and its progress are detailed in the correspondence that took place between us during this period.

I wrote to Maulana, mentioning that the Amir *Jamaat* had informed me of his conversation with you and that you were now willing to comment on my work. I requested that he confirm his willingness so I could send the document to him. In response, I received the following letter:

Chitrapur—July 9, 1962

Dear Brother,

Peace be upon you.

1. Maulana Abul Lais spoke to me in the same way you mentioned in your letter.

2. I replied that, as I have already informed you, I would only be able to proceed in the following way: Once the manuscript is finalized and a copy is sent to me, I will read it, and then, as a student, I will ask questions, seek clarification on points, examine the arguments, and request explanations. This process would be conducted entirely through written correspondence, which will take time. In such correspondence, neither you nor I can impose a strict timeline; patience is essential.

Peace,

Jalil Ahsan

In response, on July 21, I sent a copy of the manuscript to Maulana and requested that he kindly write and send his comments by the end of August. Subsequently, I received the following letter:

Chitrapur—July 25, 1962

Respected Brother Wahiduddin Khan,

Peace be upon you.

Please acknowledge my condition: I will ask questions, and also, understand that I can't set a time limit.

Accepting these two conditions is necessary for me to even begin reviewing your work. If you cannot agree to this, I will gladly return your document. I have written

the same from Madrasatul Islah, but you completely overlooked these points and instead wrote that you were sending the document and insisted that I must provide my comments by the end of August. I must inform you that this is impossible. If I could provide such quick commentary, I would not have repeatedly stressed my conditions. Why are you so impatient? Is impatience the first attribute among the traits of a “true believer”?

Jalil Ahsan

In response, I wrote that Maulana could proceed with the review as he deemed appropriate, as I was eager to know his thoughts on my ideas. Following that, I received the following letter:

Chitrapur—August 7, 1962

Respected Brother,

Peace be upon you.

1. I received your document but have not yet read it.
2. I have heard that you are eager to publish this work. Is this information correct?
3. If so, my advice is that you come to Azamgarh and engage in further correspondence with me. It is possible that your misinterpretation will become

clear to you. For someone who is not fully satisfied with Jamaat's views, the best approach is to quietly distance oneself and pursue religious work in one's own preferred way. But if you intend to pick up the pen to publish it, turning the pen into a weapon and unleashing criticism, this is not a favourable path. I sincerely advise you not to take this route; the full loss will be yours. As for those whom you consider to be deaf, dumb, and blind according to your belief, they will continue their path, as Allah says, "You cannot guide whoever you please" (28:56).

Although the path I have pointed out is very difficult, it is so because your own self will constantly urge you—day and night, at every moment. It will whisper: enjoining what is right is obligatory; proclaiming, expressing, and spreading the truth is necessary. It may tell you that if you do not do this if you do not strip away the veil of falsehood, you will be guilty of concealing the truth and betrayal. And then your conscience will strongly remind you of the Hereafter—how will you stand before God on that Day and excuse yourself for concealing the truth? With what words will you defend yourself? Alas! Alas! For this reason, the path I have advised is a hard one. But it is still the path you should take.

If, however, you find this completely unacceptable,

then why are you gathering people's comments? In that case, critiques would only be appropriate after the writings are published.

I eagerly await your reply.

Peace,

Jalil Ahsan

Postscript: Once again, I await your reply. Please confirm if this information is accurate. Also, kindly consider my advice and inform me of your intended course of action. If you choose the other path, you may not be able to keep your heart pure, and future reconciliation might be impossible. This path should remain open!

Rampur—August 13, 1962

Respected Maulana,

Peace be upon you.

I received your letter dated August 7. You wrote, "My advice is that you come to Azamgarh, and further correspondence between us may clarify the error in your interpretation." I accept your advice, and today I am writing to the Amir of *Jamaat* seeking permission to travel from Rampur to Azamgarh. God willing, I will proceed based on his response, and I will inform you accordingly.

Now, I request that you begin your work. Since I have accepted your advice, I feel entitled to ask that, aside from your essential tasks, you devote all your time to me. Life is uncertain; we do not know when the listener's time might end or when the speaker's time will cease.

Please forgive any unintentional offense.

Yours sincerely, Wahiduddin

During this period, Maulana Abdul Hai (Editor of *Al-Hasanat*) independently sent a letter to Maulana Jalil Ahsan. Although I did not see the letter Maulana Abdul Hai sent, he did give me Maulana's reply, which reads as follows:

Letter to Maulana Abdul Hai

Chitrapur, August 18, 1962

Respected and Esteemed,

Peace and blessings be upon you.

1. On August 7, I sent a (post) card to Mr. Wahiduddin at the Al-Hasanat address. First, please take that card from him and read it. He responded on August 13th as follows:

Respected and Esteemed,

Peace be upon you.

I received your letter dated August 7, in which you advised, “Come to Azamgarh, and then further correspondence between us might clarify the error in your interpretation.” I accept your advice and am therefore writing to the Amir of *Jamaat* to seek permission to go to Azamgarh. God willing, once I receive his response, I will act accordingly and inform you as well.

This is Mr. Wahiduddin’s reply. But the only advice in my card was not merely this; another, more significant question was there: I had heard that he is extremely eager to publish his work soon. Not only that, but he wishes to launch a journal, though it seems there is no available funding. Naturally, this information unsettled me. I asked whether this information was correct and inquired about which of the two paths he intended to pursue. I pointed out both paths and suggested which one he should take. So please first read the card and then note that in his response dated August 13, he entirely ignored the most critical question. There is no trace or mention of it in his answer. Why is this? Doesn’t this create reason to question his intentions? If he consciously chose this approach, then it could be called political manoeuvring, something he should avoid, as it contradicts purity of heart. Through you, I request that he address this essential matter—whatever he may have to say, let him say it.

He ended his letter by asking for forgiveness if he caused any unintended offence. In response, I must say that I have always considered it an affront when someone does not answer my questions directly or disregards them, and there is no answer in his answers to my question. If you do not wish to answer a particular question, why not simply state that you will not respond to it? I could then decide what further action to take regarding the matter. But to leave my question unanswered has always struck me as disdainful.

Please convey my greetings to Mr. Wahiduddin Khan and let him know that, if there is any harshness in my card, he should disregard it, as any such harshness was due to his own actions.

Peace be upon you,
Jalil Ahsan

Rampur—September 1, 1962

Respected Maulana Jalil Ahsan,

You have written a letter to Maulana Abdul Hai (dated August 18) and, through his mediation, asked me to respond regarding a particular matter that has been concerning you. You mentioned that you received information suggesting I am eager to publish my essay soon and that I wish to launch a journal but lack the

necessary funding. You stated that hearing this news about me has caused you great discomfort.

As for the publication of the essay, if I am reassured by your response, naturally, there will be no question of publishing it. However, if that is not the case, I doubt that you or anyone else would advise me to withhold a truth that I have, after much search and inquiry, ultimately deemed correct.

As for the second point, “I wish to publish a monthly magazine, but I am hindered by a lack of funding, and therefore I am waiting.”—I can only say that this is entirely false. No one could dare to swear upon the Quran, claiming they have heard such words from my lips. Whoever invented this lie must have had a desire to discredit me, but they certainly did not use sound judgment, for the truth is that if I ever decided to launch a journal, other obstacles might arise, but securing funds would certainly not be one of them, Insha’Allah.

I await your response regarding the original text.

Sincerely, Wahiduddin

In reply, I received the following letter from Maulana Jalil Ahsan:

Chitrapur—September 5, 1962

Respected Brother,

Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah

I received your card dated September 1, in which you wrote, if I could not satisfy you:

“Neither you nor anyone else would likely advise me to withhold something I deem correct after thorough search and inquiry.”

No, it was in precisely that scenario that I advised you to choose the path of silence. When contentment [with the *Jamaat*] ends, quietly separating oneself and working for the faith independently is a better course. This advice would hold no meaning if one has found contentment. I gave you this advice out of sincere concern for you, and I still hold to it. If people’s hearts are already sealed, there would be no reason to offer such advice—please reflect on this.

The matter of the journal was casually mentioned to me in Azamgarh, just overheard in passing. I am convinced that it was not fabricated with any intent to defame you. However, I consider it my duty to inform the source, after verification, that this information is incorrect and should not be repeated, even casually. Please convey this message to Maulana Abdul Hai on my behalf, and due to the mention of this in my letter, whatever heartburn you have felt, please remove that; scratch that from the bottom and never mention the same with anyone.

Brother Abu Zafar [the author of the book], you have attended my classes and observed my situation well; surely you realize that I possess neither vast knowledge nor profound insight. When Maulana Sadruddin and other scholarly members could not satisfy your concerns, what could you hope to gain from a humble person like me?

The truth is that attaining tranquility requires fulfilling many conditions—some depend on the seeker, while others relate to the process of inquiry. Know this about me: I do not possess real knowledge. And if I have any, it is merely enough to teach a few books to students. Consider me a student, treat me accordingly, and pray for me as I pray for you. After all, who knows whose prayer may benefit whom and at what moment?

Ask me why I am certain that Wahid Sahib will face severe consequences in this matter on the Day of Hereafter.

Peace
Jalil Ahsan

After this, I received a list of questions from him as follows:

Chitrapur—September 6, 1962

Respected Brother,

Peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you!

Kindly share your understanding of this verse of the Quran (57:25), so that we may benefit from your insights. The questions are as follows:

1. What does *bayyinah* signify?
2. What is the meaning of *al-kitab* (the book)?
3. What is intended by *mizan* (scale) here?
4. What would be the translation of *Qama-b*?

In *al-Hamasa*, a renowned anthology of early Arabic poetry, there is a verse that reads:

Idhan la qama binasri masharun khushun (Then a hardy group would have risen to my aid)

what does *qiyam bi-nasr* mean here?

5. Does *an-nasr* refer to all people or a specific group?
6. What is the concept of *qist*?
7. What kind of lam is in *li-yaqum*?
8. Why does the verse mention *inzal al-hadid* (iron sent down) next?
9. To what is *wa-li ya'lam* connected?

I have outlined these questions to help you clarify each term and phrase and provide a comprehensive understanding. Additionally, why is the final part included?

The second verse is Chapter *Al-Baqarah*, verse 129. In it, four tasks have been assigned to the Prophet ﷺ. Is it your understanding that there are three tasks or four?

In other words, what do you consider the meaning of reciting verses, teaching the Book, and teaching wisdom? Is purification a separate task, or is it the outcome of the first three tasks? If one were to regard these as the purpose of the Prophet's mission, would you object to this interpretation? If so, how would you present a correct interpretation?

Another question—some translators render *li-takunu shuhada' ala an-nas* as “so that you may be witnesses over the people” or “so that you may bear witness for the people.” My confusion is about what it means to be a “witness over the people.” Either one is a witness for the people or a witness against the people. In the first case, Arabic uses *li-* (for) and, in the second case, *ala* (against), and here it is *ala*. If this is correct, then the translation should be “so that you may be witnesses against the people, and the Messenger may be a witness against you.” This meaning is perplexing—could you clarify this translation?

Peace,
Jalil Ahsan

Rampur—September 11, 1962

Respected Maulana Jalil Ahsan Sahib,

Peace and Blessings

I received your letter dated September 6. I would like

to mention that your questions are extremely brief, and it is possible that you are using these questions or references to these verses to counter my perspective. However, this is not evident in your letter; rather, it only contains a few short, general questions. Had you expressed your complete point of view, I would have had more opportunities for reflection and could have responded in more detail. As it stands, your questions are very concise and unclear concerning the primary issue. Naturally, any answers I provide to these questions may also seem inadequate and unclear to you, as I can only answer based on what you have asked, not on the unexpressed thoughts you may still have.

For future correspondence, I request that you please clarify the relationship between the questions and the primary issue, allowing me to better understand your perspective on the main matter and respond accordingly.

Below, I am addressing your questions:

Chapter *Al-Hadid*, Verse 25

1. By *bayyinat*, I understand the same meaning that Allama Alusi and other commentators have mentioned—namely, clear proofs and miracles.
2. “*Al-kitab*” refers to revelation, as Al-Zamakhshari has noted in his *Al-Kashshaf*.

3. Regarding “*mizan*,” Alauddin al-Khazin describes it in his commentary as *al-‘adl*, meaning “justice,” that is, “We commanded with justice.”
4. The translation of “*liyaqum al-naas bi-al-qist*,” as given by Shah Waliullah, is “so that people may uphold justice,” and as explained in *Tafsir Al-Khazin*, it means “so that they may deal justly with one another” (*liyata’amalu bainahum bil-‘adl*).
5. In the mentioned verse, *qiyam bi-nasr* means reaching to aid during hardship—in other words, defence.
6. *Al-naas* here refers to people in general, as there appears to be no evidence for any specific limitation.
7. *Qist* signifies justice; in Imam Razi’s words: “It is to grant others the same share as you would take for yourself” (*Tafsir al-Razi*, Vol. 8, p. 101).
8. The *lam* in *liyaqum* appears to be one of purpose.
9. The mention of *inzal al-hadid* is understood in light of the words that follow; i.e., it provides strength in times of battle and similarly proves to be a great support to humanity in other needs.
10. In the commentary *al-Jalalayn*, “*wa li-ya ‘lama Allah*” is interpreted as being connected to “*li-yaquma al-nas*”. However, it may also be understood as

coordinated with “*anzalna al-hadid*”. In that case, an implicit clause must be assumed—namely, “so that they may use it, and so that Allah may know...” (see *Tafsir Abu al-Su‘ud*, Vol. 8, p. 212). In my opinion, both interpretations are reasonable.

11. The “final phrase” serves as an expression of divine will, emphasizing that in the struggle between a Prophet and his opponents, the faithful are obliged to support the Prophet against the Prophet’s adversaries.

Chapter *Al-Baqarah*, Verse 129

1. When the Quran employs four distinct words, it most likely implies four distinct tasks.
2. I concur with Allama Alusi’s explanation of these four terms (*Ruh al-Ma’ani*, Vol. 1, pp. 386-387).
3. If one were to consider this the purpose of the Prophet’s mission, I would have no objection to this interpretation.

“*Litakunu shuhadaa ‘ala al-naas*”

The distinction you outlined between *shuhada* with the preposition *li-* (for) and *shuhada* with *‘ala* (against) is accurate in general usage, but it is not absolute. The preposition *‘ala* can also be used in the context of general testimony, whether favorable or unfavorable

(e.g., *shahida fulan 'ala fulan bihaqq*, meaning “so-and-so testified for so-and-so with truth,” *Lisan al-Arab*). Accepting this general meaning of *shuhada 'ala*, the translations provided by Urdu translators are not subject to the objection you mentioned in your letter.

Yours sincerely,
Wahiduddin

After this, I received Maulana’s second questionnaire. This questionnaire, too, consisted merely of questions, without any consideration given to my prior request to clarify the relevance of the questions to the primary issue. A copy of the questionnaire is as follows:

Dear Brother! Peace and Blessings,

I received your letter dated September 9 on the 17th. In my opinion, you did not address my letter of September 6 fairly. At the outset, I requested that you share your understanding of verse 25 of Chapter *Al-Hadid* with me. I then presented my questions and finally noted that these questions were posed for your convenience so you could elaborate clearly on their meaning. However, you treated the questions as primary and provided answers to them rather than writing the commentary of the verse. (It’s rather peculiar that the Maulana is merely content with the questions himself

and is requesting a commentary from me—the Author). Nevertheless, here are some questions that arise from your responses, as well as some additional new ones:

1. By *bayyināt*, do you mean arguments supporting prophethood, monotheism, and resurrection, or something else? From my studies, it seems that the commentators generally interpret *hujaj* (proofs) as referring to these three types of arguments, though I do not have a specific reference in mind.
2. If *hujaj* refers to the part of revelation that contains these three types of arguments, does *kitab* then refer to the remainder of the revelation, such as laws, stories, and so on, or to some specific portion?
3. You understand *mizan* to mean justice, and in explaining its meaning, you wrote *ai amarna bil-‘adl*, which I interpret to mean: “We commanded the messengers to act justly, without wrongdoing.” Is this your intended meaning, or something else?
4. The translation of *liyaqum al-naas bil-qist* as “so that people may uphold justice” is not clear to me. In Arabic, the preposition *‘ala* is generally used when referring to establishing something, not *bi-Qam bil-amr* translates to “undertaking,” and *tawalla* means “to remain firm upon something,” or is it

something else? Please refer to the appropriate lexicons, as I do not have them available here.

5. In connection to Chapter *Al-Baqarah*, verse 129, you mentioned the four tasks per Alusi's commentary. Now that you are in Azamgarh, and Alusi's commentary of the Quran is only available at Shibli Manzil, could you please identify these four tasks in the context of the Quran rather than simply Allusi's interpretation?
6. Regarding *shahid*, I didn't understand the Lisan al-Arab reference, *shahida fulan 'ala fulan bihaqq*. Is there a contextual explanation in that entry? Please explain what this means.
7. In Chapter *Al-Baqarah* (2:143), what does the *waw* in *wa kadhalik* relate to, and what is the referent for *dhalik*?
8. The term *wasat* generally means middle, and *wasatun* signifies the central part of something. How does this term come to mean "best"? Is the central part of your table, for instance, better than the rest? Secondly, if it means "best," why use *wasat* instead of simply using the term *khayr* (goodness)?
9. Is the plural *shuhada* derived from *shaahid* or *shaheed*? How many meanings exist for *shaheed* and *shaahid* in classical Arabic?

10. In *ja' alnakum*, who does *kum* refer to?

Jalil Ahsan

Azamgarh—October 5, 1962

Respected Maulana Jalil Ahsan Sahib,

Greetings of Peace,

I received your letter dated September 18 (copy). I wish to address an earlier condition you had set regarding sharing your opinion on the topic under discussion, which was that you would “ask questions.” I understood this to mean that you would pose questions about the arguments and conclusions in the paper I sent you, following which you would offer your perspective on the core issue. However, when I received your first questionnaire on September 6, I noticed that it was quite different from what I had anticipated. It contained several of completely general questions, similar to the kind students encounter in exams, and you had not explained their connection to the main discussion. I did not find this style of questioning favourable; nevertheless, as a matter of courtesy, I provided answers to the questions and sent them back to you. This second questionnaire, which I have now received, is essentially of the same nature. I might still have found a way to reconcile with it, considering that although I find this method unsuited or irrelevant to my viewpoint, I would nonetheless

continue responding to whatever you ask. However, after sending my responses to the first questionnaire, I happened to come across a handwritten letter from the Amir *Jamaat*, addressed to a prominent central figure. In this letter, he wrote the following regarding our correspondence:

“Maulana Jalil Ahsan has also initiated correspondence with Khan Sahib (Wahiduddin). However, I hardly expect Khan Sahib to endure Maulana’s style or method of correspondence... In any case, I have informed Jalil Ahsan Sahib to complete whatever he wishes to “teach” as quickly as possible...”

The final sentence of this excerpt was particularly distressing for me. When I look at your “questions” considering this, it seems as though I am indeed being “taught” or “instructed.” With regret, I must request that you please refrain from adopting this instructional tone and instead share your perspective on the core issue along with any relevant arguments you might have. This will allow me to reflect on the primary issue considering this information.

Yours sincerely,
Wahiduddin

Since my letter referenced a letter by Maulana Abul Lais Sahib, Maulana Jalil Ahsan subsequently wrote

to Maulana Abul Lais Sahib to inquire about it. Consequently, I received the following letter from Maulana Abul Lais Sahib:

Delhi—October 2, 1962

Dear Brother, Peace be upon you,

Today I received a letter from Maulana Jalil Ahsan Sahib, indicating that you had referenced my letter in your correspondence with him, requesting that he set aside the instructional tone and directly share his perspective on the issue at hand. While he has not mentioned whether he is willing to do so or not, I suspect that he considers his method of correspondence to be the most productive approach for examining the matter under discussion, and he will likely persist in it. Therefore, if you genuinely wish to benefit from his insights on this issue, it would be advisable for you to continue the correspondence with him. As for the matter of the “instructional” tone, which has somewhat dissuaded you from further correspondence, I trust that my recent letter should have helped to clear up any misunderstanding regarding this term, God willing (this letter is part of the Amir Jamaat’s correspondence).

Maulana Jalil has also mentioned in his letter that the questions he sent to you are certainly not irrelevant—neither the ones in the first questionnaire nor those in the

second. Nevertheless, if their relevance is not apparent, you are welcome to seek clarification from him.

Response to Maulana Abul Lais Sahib

Azamgarh—October 24, 1962

Respected Sir,

Greetings of Peace,

I received your letter dated October 2, 1962. The phrase “teaching and instructing” in connection with Maulana Jalil Ahsan Sahib’s method of correspondence, as mentioned in your letter, is not the primary reason for my reluctance. My actual concern is that he is asking very abstract questions. When I have presented an issue in clear terms, he should focus his questions specifically on that issue. In this regard, you wrote:

“Maulana Jalil Ahsan has mentioned that the questions he had sent to you are by no means irrelevant—neither the first set of questions nor the second. However, if their relevance is not apparent, you may seek clarification from him.”

With respect, his response may be valid from his own perspective. However, all I have before me is his list of questions, and it does not specify how these questions relate to the main issue. My point is not to

claim that his questions may not be relevant in his own mind. My point is simply that he has not explained this connection in his list, and, naturally, I have no way of knowing what is in his mind. If he clarifies the relevance of his questions to the main issue, I will, God willing, continue the correspondence until the end. But questions that may be related to the issue only in his mind, without clarity in the questions themselves, seem unproductive to me. I find myself unable to engage in this type of abstract question-and-answer format.

I am confident that no objective third party could reasonably support Maulana Jalil Ahsan Sahib's stance on this matter. Kindly request him to send questions that clarify their relation to the main issue so that this exchange can continue. This would fulfil his duty to guide and communicate the truth, while also allowing me to consider my situation considering his insights.

Yours sincerely,

Wahiduddin

Meanwhile, I received the following letter from Maulana Jalil Ahsan Sahib:

Chitrapur—September 16, 1962

Dear Brother,

Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah,

1. I had already mentioned that I would be asking questions, and I remain committed to my method of correspondence. With each person, there is a specific way of correspondence, and after reading your writing, I concluded that this was the only way to proceed. A written exchange is most appropriate for a matter presented with such emphasis. Those who attempted to discuss this with you orally did not do well. So when this question came from some of your friends and subsequently from you, I stated that a written dialogue would be most suitable.
2. Whatever Amir *Jamaat* has written, the answer to that is also that only through correspondence any positive result can be expected of this discussion. And he wanted me to finish my answer to you within a few hours. That's why, my method of correspondence, he remarked—now the Madrasa will open; classes will start, and that will take your time. And here is Waheed Sahib who is getting utterly impatient. Then he wrote from Delhi asking how long would you continue to teach? In fact, that was a comment on me, but due to the unawareness of this background these words (of teaching and instructing) become a fitna (it is important to note the difference between the explanation offered here by Maulana Jalil Ahsan

with the one offered by Maulana Abul Lais Sahib)

In summary, I am firm in my way of correspondence. And the method of communication adopted by others is useless and harmful to you. As you know, I have always been involved in teaching and coaching so why should I forsake this method? If this method makes you uncomfortable and hurts your sense of superior knowledge, then it's sad. I have only this way to contemplate and make you think on this issue. Wrongfully, you have termed this method as 'teaching and coaching' and have disliked it. Before, you never felt offended by my 'schooling' before; have you suddenly run out of things to learn now?

Jalil Ahsan

Azamgarh—October 25, 1962

Respected Sir, Salam,

I received your letter dated September 16, 1962. I must say I am somewhat disappointed by your approach, which now resembles those who fail to examine themselves but find every fault in others.

1. The first time you encountered my writing was in the first week of February 1962 in Rampur, through Abdul Hai Sahib. At that time, after reviewing it, you mentioned to Abdul Hai Sahib that reading this

piece left you quite displeased. However, despite my inquiries, you did not elaborate on the reasons for this displeasure.

Then, in the second week of March 1962, I sent another copy of my writing to you at the address of Madrasatul-Islah. Again, you offered no comments, merely returning it with the irrelevant excuse that this was not the “final draft.” Subsequently, on July 21, 1962, I sent the document a third time to you at Chitrapur. Yet, up to this point, I have not received even a single sentence from you regarding the main issue, which I had sought your opinion on so that any errors on my part could be made clear to me.

Thus, nine months have passed without a response from you regarding the core issue, yet I am astonished at the persistent effort you’ve shown in your letters to establish that my approach is not the “path of seekers of truth.” You assert that I am “impatient,” mistakenly believe myself a “true believer,” am “eager” to publish my work, am dominated by my own “self,” engage in “political manoeuvring,” have “doubtful intentions,” have “disrespected” you, and suffer from illusions of “high thinking and great knowledge.” Yet, throughout this period, you have written not a single line on the main issue about which I reached out to you, which could have clarified any errors on my part.

2. You mentioned that, after reading my “lengthy article,” you would ask questions, seek explanations, and discuss arguments. I was entirely open to this; however, when someone explicitly presents an issue, and the other responds with conditions as above, any reasonable person would expect questions relevant to the arguments provided or criticisms clarifying any flaws in the conclusions. When your questionnaire arrived, however, I found it contained mere general questions, with no clear connection, positive or negative, to the main issue. When I pointed out that this correspondence style was irrelevant and inappropriate, I received your letter dated September 16, which seems to imply that you are wholly willing to guide me correctly, but I am unwilling to understand.
3. In your letter to Abdul Hai Sahib, you mentioned that I had “disrespected” you, which is entirely false. Regarding the letter you referred to, I am confident that any third person reading it would not agree with your assessment. On the other hand, the tone of your sarcasm and disdain is such that, if I were to cite its excerpts here, this letter would overflow. Reflect on these sentences of yours:
 “After all, why have you become so impatient? Is impatience the primary attribute of a ‘true believer’?” (Letter dated July 25, 1962)

“You know I am engaged in teaching and writing. Why should I abandon this approach? If this offends your sense of high thinking and great knowledge, then I am regretful.” (Letter dated September 6, 1962)

“Your nafs (not conscience) must be urging you day and night, whispering that enjoining good is obligatory, that proclaiming, expressing, and spreading the truth is necessary. If you do not do so, if you do not expose those who wear the guise of falsehood, then you will be guilty of concealing the truth and betrayal. And then, your nafs (not conscience) reminds you with full intensity about the Hereafter, telling you how on that Day you will justify yourself before God for this crime of concealing the truth, and with what words... alas, alas.”

(Letter dated August 7, 1962)

I urge you to reflect on these matters and ask yourself whether this attitude is becoming of you.

Sincerely
Wahiduddin

Chitrapur – November 7, 1962

Respected Sir,

Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullah,

If all the fault lies with me, then I should ask for

forgiveness. And if it is yours, then you should. But who will determine who among us is at fault? Such judgments do not occur in this world.

Regarding the method, I had outlined that I would begin by asking questions after reading your lengthy writing, and thus I proceeded accordingly. Now that the second set of questions was sent, this situation arose. Once the questions were completed, I would have discussed the remaining two parts. If I had asked you how many hairs are on your head or what the ratio of sand to clay is in the dams of Azamgarh, then certainly, these would be irrelevant to the subject of your writing. However, rest assured that no one besides you, who has read your writing, would consider my questions irrelevant.

In one of my previous notes, my mention of “impatience” was indeed appropriate. Despite my request, you did not fulfil your promise of sending a copy of Maulana Abul Lais Sahib’s letter.

Wassalam

Jalil Ahsan

Azamgarh – November 12, 1962

Respected Sir, Peace be upon you,

I received your letter dated November 7, 1962. I have sent a complete copy of Maulana Abul Lais Sahib’s

letter to him. If you feel the need to review the entire letter, you can write to Delhi to obtain it.

You mentioned that you had already informed me that you would be raising “questions” and are now acting according to that “plan.” However, I regret to say that from what you had previously written, I never understood that you would pose such unusual and strange questions as you have done. The first letter I received from you regarding this matter was dated March 15, 1962, which you had sent from Madrasatul Islah (Sarai Mir). The contents of the letter were as follows:

“One would read such a lengthy article and then ask questions, seek clarification of the argument, and engage in discussions on the evidence.”

I understood these words to mean that, since you disagreed with the matter, I had presented to you and considered it erroneous, you would, through correspondence, attempt to reveal my mistake to me. The approach would involve requesting further clarification on points as necessary, critically analysing my arguments, and raising evaluative questions to highlight any errors in my deductions and conclusions. It was under this assumption that I agreed to this method of commentary. However, when I received your letter

dated September 6, 1962, I found that it differed from the understanding I had derived from your previous words. In this letter, there was no discussion on my arguments or reasoning. Instead, it contained questions of a purely abstract nature, with no indication of their relevance to the core issue, critique of my argument, or the specific point of mine to which they were related and why. Clearly, if I do not consider such questions irrelevant, what else can I call them?

You mention that if I asked how many hairs are on your head or what the ratio of sand to soil is on the embankment at Azamgarh, that would be entirely unrelated to the topic of your writing. I would say that this isn't the only kind of irrelevant question. Another type of irrelevant question is this: for example, if I say that the idea of the Islamic mission presented by *Jamaat-e-Islami* isn't based on the Quran, and that the verses cited in support of it don't, in my view, serve as its foundation. Instead of addressing this claim, you respond with abstract questions like, 'Tell me, what type of *laam* is in *li-yaqoom*, or what is the grammatical attachment of the waaw in wa kazaalik?' In such cases, at least in terms of the wording, these questions are unrelated to the main issue.

Your approach has been deeply surprising to me. For the past nine months, since I brought up this issue

before you, you have remained completely silent on the actual subject matter, engaging instead in irrelevant matters. And this approach is not exclusive to me. As I was informed by Jalaluddin Ansar Sahib and Abdul Hai Sahib in Rampur, they made several attempts to get you to share your thoughts on my writing and discuss my reasoning. Yet, despite their repeated efforts, you refused to respond. I am at a loss to understand what interests or considerations might be driving this approach.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

Chitrapur – November 21, 1962

Respected Sir, Peace be upon you,

I received your letter dated November 12.

1. You had yourself promised that if desired, you could send a complete copy of Maulana Abul Lais Sahib's letter. Where is that promise?
2. When I requested the copy from you, you chose to remain silent in response, with not even a word about it in your card. So, I reminded you again.
3. In reply, you wrote on your card that you had sent the complete copy to Maulana Abul Lais Sahib, and if I feel the need to review it, I could write to Delhi to obtain it. When I term this as "piety," you

get annoyed. People of piety should reflect upon such pious acts.

Brother, the questions, then clarification of the subject, and discussions on evidence were to be in a particular order. Now, if my questions differ from your perspective and understanding, how is that my fault? Am I supposed to formulate my questions after obtaining your approval? Rest assured; my questions are not abstract.

“Without learning and writing, one knows nothing!”

Regards, Jalil Ahsan

Azamgarh—November 24, 1962

Respected Sir,

May peace be upon you,

I received your letter dated November 21. I regret to say that you have now descended to a level where, for me, the only appropriate response is to maintain silence. My final request is to please return my writings in your possession.

Regards, Wahiduddin

In response, I received the following letter from Maulana Jalil Ahsan Sahib, and subsequently, on December 22, I received my writings back.

Chitrapur—December 1, 1962

Dear Brother, may Allah protect you.

May peace and blessings of Allah be upon you.

Your card, dated November 24, reached me on November 29. You wrote quite plainly: “The reply to the ignorant is silence.”

Plainly indeed—yet if anyone were to look for those words in your card, they would not find them! You see, I could never write in such an eloquent style, nor could I aspire to such a “noble and elevated level.”

You spoke harshly, yet I am content—may God pardon you—for you spoke well.

As for the writing whose return you requested, I shall, God willing, send it back to you by registered post on Thursday.

Postscript: It’s quite possible that the series of questionnaires may begin again. After all, it is only a kashf (inspiration)—it can be mistaken.

Correspondence with Maulana Abul Lais Islahi Nadwi

My correspondence with Maulana Abul Lais Sahib includes two parts: the first part relates to obtaining a formal response from *Jamaat-e-Islami* regarding

my writing, which was a formal exchange and not necessary to mention here. The second part began after I received Maulana Sadruddin Sahib's response to my writings. On August 10, 1962, I informed him from Rampur by letter that "despite reading Maulana Sadruddin Sahib's response several times and giving it considerable thought, there has been no change in my original viewpoint. If you wish, I can present my thoughts to you orally or in writing." I then received the following reply:

Delhi – August 13, 1962

Dear Brother,

Peace and blessings of Allah be upon you,

I received your letter. I was disappointed to learn that after reading Maulana Sadruddin Sahib's response, there has been no change in your original viewpoint. Nonetheless, kindly jot down your thoughts briefly and send them, which will make it easier to reflect upon them.

Regards, Abul Lais

In response, I sent the following letter to Maulana Abul Lais Sahib:

Rampur – August 19, 1962

Respected Sir, Peace be upon you,

I received your letter dated August 13, 1962. I had intended that, if you requested my thoughts on Maulana Sadruddin Sahib's writings, I would respond by commenting clearly on each point. However, since you have asked me to summarize my views, I will present a few key points.

Maulana Sadruddin Islahi Sahib first mentioned that I based my critique of *Jamaat-e-Islami's* aims and interpretation of Islam on its literature, while the correct approach would have been to quote the Jamaat's constitutional clause on its objective and critique that directly.

1. I must clarify that my critique is not about "*Jamaat-e-Islami* as a legal structure" but rather on its particular interpretation of Islam, which led to the formation of this structure. These interpretative details are found in its literature rather than in its constitutional provisions. Furthermore, the adjustment in the constitution's phrase regarding the objective does not mean that Jamaat's core concept of Islam has changed. Rather, the revised phrasing, as indicated in the footnote of the amended the Constitution itself, is merely a new expression to encapsulate the previous concept of Islam.

Thus, this debate is a mere extra, that whether the goal of *Jamaat-e-Islami* is establishment of Divine Rule or *Iqamat-e-Deen* (establishing religion). Because whatever terminology is used, the explanation and root of the terminology can be sought in the literature which was and still is the only intellectual asset of the *Jamaat*. (It is worth noting that this I have mentioned as a principle only. Otherwise, it is a fact that I have neither based my comments on the mere word Divine Rule, nor does the word “*Iqamat e Deen*” (establishing religion) prove the stance of Maulana Sadruddin Islahi Sahib).

2. The primary argument supporting the interpretation under discussion comes from the verse on *shahadah* (bearing witness). According to the explanation in the pamphlet *Shahadat-e-Haqq*, the purpose of *shahadah* for which the Prophets were sent was that, alongside verbal preaching, the entire system of Islam should be practically demonstrated in every aspect of life—individual, social, national, and international. Without doing so, the responsibility of *shahadah* and preaching cannot be fully fulfilled, nor can conclusive proof (*itmam al-hujjah*) be established against humankind. This indicates that the revolutionary goal adopted by *Jamaat-e-Islami* is precisely what has been made obligatory upon us according to the verse on *shahadah*.

I objected to this reasoning, arguing that this interpretation of *shahadah* and *itmam al-hujjah* isn't supported by the lives of any Prophet. All the Prophets we know of, and those mentioned in the Quran, fulfilled their *shahadah* through verbal preaching alone. No Prophet ever completed *itmam al-hujjah* by giving a comprehensive, practical demonstration of the entire Islamic way of life. In the Quran, there are dozens—indeed, hundreds—of verses describing the Prophets' efforts to invite others, yet nowhere is there mention of “practical shahadah” or demonstrating the Islamic way of life to complete al-hujjah. Instead, the terms used always relate to “saying” and “conveying.” In response to my argument, Maulana Sadruddin Islahi Sahib:

“They are misled by verses, without fully comprehending their background and the purpose of their revelation, that indicate that the prophets' responsibility was only to deliver the message clearly (such as *fahal-alar-rusulu illal-balaghul mubeen*). However, such verses are not meant to determine the complete duty as God's witness and the duty as a God's messenger, but merely outline the initial stages of *shahada* (witness) and were intended only for those who adamantly refused the message.”

Although this explanation applies only to verses that—in his own words—employ a ‘style of exclusivity’ it

does not address the numerous other verses. But this argument is unnecessary concerning the matter, so I leave it. Instead, I would ask, how was the stubbornness of the rejectors determined—was it divinely revealed, or was it known only after an invitation was extended? After all, what were the acts of making them accept the Truth which established that they were not going to take that? And, that the role of the prophet has ended as far as his responsibility of conveying the message to them was concerned. And they cannot claim on the Day of Resurrection that why are they being punished for the crimes that were not explained to them. In other words, the responsibility that was on the addresser has gone on to the addressee now. So, what was that effort of conveying the message or establishing the truth which made the above situation possible?

It is clear that this was not a practical *shahadah* of any “system of life,” because no such system had yet been established. Instead, it was precisely what Maulana Sadruddin himself characterized elsewhere as ‘missionary efforts.’ Now, if in his view this appears to be “merely an initial *shahadah*,” I have no objection—because, by his own words, this initial *shahadah* was regarded by God Almighty as the “*ultimate shahadah*.” Based on that, it was declared that the proof of *shahadat al-haqq* had been fulfilled against them, and

the Court of the Hereafter was ready to deliver its final judgment.

It seems that the author might have misunderstood my critique of the “practical *shahadah*” idea. He writes:

If we, through open and private proclamation, convey the message of Islam to our audience and present them with arguments for its truth, will the proof against them then be complete? Perhaps this is something that no self-delusion or stubbornness would allow us to claim.

It seems that the author interprets “open and private proclamation” as either making an announcement over a loudspeaker to the entire city or whispering it once into a passerby’s ear, then considering the proof complete as soon as our voice reaches their ears. In reality, the term “open and private proclamation” is used in the Quran regarding the preaching of Prophet Noah who called his people not for a few days, but for hundreds of years. A caller’s invitation isn’t just about making someone hear it once—it’s a deeply wise and patient process, carried out with utmost sincerity over an extended period. The Quran and Hadith clearly outline the conditions for such invitation-based speech. When all these are met, the resulting effort is what is called *shahadah*.

3. Regarding the argument based on the verse *aqeem-*

ud-deen in support of this interpretation, I have stated that it is incorrect, because this verse commands only the establishment of the basic teachings of the religion, whereas you express your goal in terms of establishing a complete and all-encompassing system of life. On this point, Maulana Sadruddin Islahi Sahib writes:

One question shows the author failed to remember such an obvious point—that the command given in the verse contains no limitations or time restrictions. On the contrary, it is clearly a general, comprehensive, and fundamental command, namely, to establish *ad-deen*—the religion of God. The religion of God is not a vague or ambiguous term; it is a well-known reality. Everyone understands what *ad-deen* and what the religion of God means. Therefore, whatever is part of God’s religion—anything to which the term *deen* applies—will necessarily be included in this command to establish it.

I would say that in the two-word phrase *aqeem-ud-deen*, there is no limitation; however, when we look at the entire sentence, there is clearly a restriction. That is, according to the full verse, the command is to establish the religion that was revealed to all the Prophets. And since, according to the Quran, the religion revealed to the Prophets consisted of two parts—one common

to all of them and another in which they differed— then, based on the context, the command to establish here only refers to the first part, while the second part (as far as this verse is concerned) will be considered excluded from it. This is why, based on this reasoning, commentators have unanimously stated this. For a detailed discussion of the commentators, see the chapter in *Interpretation of the Islamic Mission*.

The truth is that merely taking the two words ‘*Aqimu ad-Deen*’ (establish the religion) and claiming they contain no restriction is like saying that any such qualification must reside within the words themselves. If we accept this reasoning, then almost anything could be ‘proven’ using the Quran. For example:

La taqrabu al-salah (4:43)—“Do not go near prayer.”

Laysat al-tawbah (4:18)—“There is no repentance.”

Ma min ilahin (3:62)—“There is no deity.”

One could find hundreds of such phrases that express a truth without any explicit qualification or exception. It is unfortunate that, in defending a mistaken idea, Maulana Sadruddin Islahi sahib has found himself in a position he would never consciously choose to take.

Another similar argument the author presents is

that Imam Raghīb Isfahānī wrote that the meaning of *iqamat ash-shay'* is *tawfiyat haqqihi* (giving it its full due) (Mufradat al-Quran, p. 692). It is clear that giving the religion its full due cannot be achieved without establishing the entire religion. Therefore, according to him, *aqeem-ud-deen* should mean “establish and implement the entire religion.”

However, the meaning he has derived from Imam Raghīb's explanation is not actually found within the explanation itself but has been formed in his own mind. The explanation simply indicates that whatever the word *iqamah* refers to, it means to give that thing its due. Imam Raghīb's explanation appears in the Mufradat under the root *qaf-waw-mim*, which shows that he is explaining the meaning of the word *iqamah*, not defining the scope of *ud-deen*. However, since the author personally interprets *ad-deen* as “the entire *Shariah*,” he has merged his understanding of *ad-deen* with Imam Raghīb's definition of *iqamah* and concluded that the verse means “give the whole religion its due.”

However, if he were to understand *ad-deen* as “the essential religion,” he would see that it means “giving the essential religion” or “the fundamental teachings of the religion” their due. It's like the speaker simply said “four,” but the listener, because of his specific mindset, interpreted it as “four loaves of bread.”

Regarding the verse *aqeem-ud-deen*, I have also gathered the commentators' statements, which indicate that all of them interpret *ad-deen* as the core religion and exclude the detailed *Shariah* from it. To clarify this point, some of the commentators of the Quran have used the following phrase:

And what is meant here are not the laws that serve the interests of nations according to their circumstances, since these differ and vary. (*Al Kashaf* by Al Zamakhshari, Vol. 4, p. 215; *Tafsir Al Qurtubi*, Vol. 16, p. 10).

Taking this phrase, Maulana Saadruddin Sahib says about me that I have, in fact, misunderstood it, and that the intention and meaning of the commentators are certainly not what I have taken it to be. Then, explaining my "misunderstanding," he writes:

The truth of the matter is that when the respected commentators said that 'what is meant here are not the laws,' they did so to remove an apparent difficulty or objection. The difficulty or objection was that the religions of the noble Prophets, in their detailed forms, were not identical; rather, their laws had many differences. Still, in this verse commanding the establishment of religion, it is stated that this is the religion revealed to all the Prophets. So,

how could this command be fulfilled? What would be the way to establish religion in a manner that fulfills the duty of establishing and following the divine guidance given to all the Prophets? That was the difficulty on the minds of the commentators, and to address it, they believed it was necessary to clarify that the laws are not being discussed here.

I do not see how these words disprove my point. The apparent meaning seems to be this: in the verse where the command *aqeem-ud-deen* appears, the wording suggests that if *ad-deen* were taken to mean the entire religion, then an objection would immediately arise. That's why the commentators have said that the laws are not being discussed here. They believe that the "form of complying with this command" is to follow the religion. So, what in this differs from what I am saying? Is my claim that the commentators—without any reason—arbitrarily decided that this command only refers to establishing the core religion? The truth is, Maulana Sadruddin Islahi Sahib words simply offer an explanation of what the commentators believe; they do not refute my supposed "misunderstanding."

In this context, the author has presented a second point—that the commentators used the phrase *lam yurad ash-shara'i'* (the laws are not meant here),

whereas, if my understanding is correct, the wording should have been *lam yurad ash-shariah* or *lam yurad ash-shariah al-Muhammadiyah*.

This point, it seems, was written hastily. Had he reflected, he would have realized that the plural form was used because it was necessary to indicate that the laws of all the Prophets (including the last Prophet) are not what is meant here. The word shara’i‘ automatically includes the Muhammadan *Shariah*; it is not excluded from it. However, if any lexicon stated that shara’i‘ means “laws other than the Muhammadan *Shariah*,” then certainly his argument would be correct.

Now I come to the most astonishing part of his writing. In the discussion on *aqeem-ud-deen*, when refuting my position regarding the references I cited from the scholars of Tafsir, he stated that not all commentators share this view. At this point, he quoted two commentators and asserted that, according to them, “this command to establish the religion also includes, fully and entirely, the detailed injunctions of the *Shariah*.”

But you might be surprised to learn that this “discovery” about the two commentators—specifically, that in their view this command *aqeem-ud-deen* includes all the rulings of the *Shariah* in full detail—is not actually present in

their original statements. Instead, its source is something else: omitting parts of their text and thus presenting a distorted version of the commentators' statement.

The two commentators in question are 'Allamah al-Sawi and Shaykh Sulayman, both of whom wrote commentaries on Jalalayn. In Jalalayn, the explanation of an *aqeem-ud-deen wa la tatafarraqoo feehi* is given in the following words:

Hadha huwa al-mashroo' al-musa bihi wa al-muha ilayhi ila Muhammad ﷺ wa huwa at-tawhid. (*Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, p. 640)

Both commentators agreed with this interpretation and clarified that, in this specific command "*aqeem-ud-deen*," the intended meaning is sincere adherence to monotheism (*tawhid*) and living by it alone.

However, the phrase "*alladhi awhayna ilayka*" (that which We have revealed to you), which appears earlier, has a broader meaning and includes the entire body of revelation given to Muhammad.

The relevant passages from both are as follows:

Shaykh Sulayman explains that the prescribed matter shared by these eminent Messengers, as stated: 'That you establish the religion and do not be divided therein,' refers to affirming the oneness of God, believing in Him, His

Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day. It also includes obeying God’s commands and prohibitions, along with everything that makes a person a Muslim. It does not include laws serving the interests of nations based on their circumstances, as these differ and vary. When he says ‘that you establish the religion,’ it means upholding its pillars, protecting it from deviation, and maintaining it. ‘And do not be divided therein’ signifies unity in the fundamentals of the religion, excluding the different branches that vary according to nations and times, as indicated by God’s saying, the Most High: ‘To every one of you We have ordained a law and a way.’ His statement ‘and it is tawheed’ refers to the shared core of the religion among these Messengers. Regarding the statement, “and that which We have revealed to you” (*wa-alladhi awhayna ilayka*) is broader than that, for what is meant by it is the entirety of the Muhammadan law—both its principles and its branches. (*Al-Futuhāt al-Ilahiyyah* by Shaykh Sulayman al-‘Ujayli, Vol. 7, pp. 46–48.)

Al-‘Allamah al-Sawi: “His saying ‘He has ordained for you’—the address is to the community of

Muhammad ﷺ, and the meaning is: He has clarified for you and made for you a strong and clear religion upon whose truth the Prophets and Messengers of old agreed. The goal of establishing the religion is to uphold its pillars, preserve it, and maintain it. His saying ‘(and it is tawheed)’ explains what is meant by the religion that these Messengers shared. As for His saying ‘and that which We have revealed to you,’ it is more general, referring to the entire *Shariah*, including both fundamentals and branches. The mention of tawheed alone is because it is the head and foundation of the religion.” (*Hashiyat Al-Sawi ‘ala Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, Vol. 6, pp. 150–151)

The above quotations clearly show that the author attributed something to them that they did not say themselves. Both commentators stated that in the phrase *aqeem-ud-deen*, the command is only to establish tawheed and its basic requirements, as mentioned in *Jalalayn*, not the detailed *Shariah*. However, the issue with the second phrase, *alladhi awhayna ilayka*, (which We have revealed to you), is different because its meaning encompasses the entire revelation given to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. But what the commentators of the Quran, al-‘Allamah al-Sawi and Shaykh Sulayman said about *alladhi awhayna ilayka* was linked to the phrase *aqeem-ud-deen* to argue that, according to both

scholars, “this command to establish the religion also fully and completely includes the detailed injunctions of the *Shariah*.”

4. Regarding the verse of *izhar-e-deen* (manifesting the religion), my position is that most commentators interpret the subject (*fa'il*) of *li-yuzhirahu* as referring to God. Furthermore, there are other Quranic verses that indicate this verse describes a plan or decision of God—one that He fulfilled through the Messenger. Therefore, this verse cannot be used to derive the mission of the Messenger, which, as a human being, he was obliged to carry out, and that later generations are required to follow after the finality of Prophethood. The author has refuted my view and provided some arguments for his position. However, what is surprising is that he later contradicts his own statement, saying:

Granted that in the verse of *izhar-e-deen*, the manifestation of the religion has not been explicitly declared to be the Messenger’s mission.

I wish that, after making this admission, the author had refrained from trying to prove from this verse that the Messenger’s official mission was *izhar-e-deen*. For an argument that has been conceded to be “not explicit” cannot be enough to establish an issue as important as that of a prophetic mission.

In the sentence above, Maulana Sadruddin Sahib

admits that the verse *li-yuzhirahu 'ala ad-deen kullihi* is not clear proof that *izhar-e-deen* was the Messenger's main goal. However, he still maintains that *izhar-e-deen* is essentially the goal of Prophethood. He argues that there are other texts that are even more obvious on this point. I am including this entire section below to fully present his position.

The mention of the religion being made dominant is not limited to this one verse alone; it appears, with variations in wording and expression, in other verses—and in some hadith as well. For example, the verse *wa qatiloohum hatta la takoon fitnah wa yakoon ad-deen kulluhu lillah* (Quran, 8:39), meaning, fight them until there is no more fitna, and religion belongs wholly to God. And the hadith *umirtu an uqatil an-naas hatta yaqooloo la ilaha illallah* (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 392). That is, I have been commanded to fight the people until they say: 'There is no god but Allah. While the verse of *izhar-e-deen* does not explicitly state that the mission of the Messenger is to establish the religion, can the same be said about these texts? Clearly not, because these statements make it unmistakably clear that the Messenger was

tasked with this mission, and that it is the duty of his followers to continue fighting until people recognize Islam, and the religion is entirely for God—in other words, until a purely Islamic state is established. It is easy to understand that fighting the disbelievers and polytheists until they declare *la ilaha illallah*, or until *fitnah* is eradicated and the religion is wholly for God, and striving for the Islamic system or state are simply two ways of expressing the same goal.

I would submit that the objections to regarding the verse of *izhar-e-deen* (manifesting the religion) as “the mission of the Messenger” are far fewer than the objections that arise if one tries to derive the Messenger’s mission from the verse and hadith cited by the author. The hadith states that people should be fought until they declare *la ilaha illallah* with their tongues and commit themselves to prayer and zakat. Was this really the mission of the Messenger? Was he sent merely to compel people at swordpoint to recite the declaration of faith? The author seems to have overlooked the fact that declaring this hadith to define the Messenger’s “mission” not only clashes with the Quranic principle *la ikraha fi ad-deen* (there is no compulsion in religion) but also makes the mission of the final Messenger fundamentally different from that

of all previous prophets—since it cannot be shown for any other prophet that he was commanded to force people into Islam at swordpoint.

The same issue remains with the verse in question. This verse appears—with slight variations in wording—in two chapters of the Quran (2:193 and 8:39). In both cases, God commands: “Fight them until there is no more *fitnah*, and the religion is entirely for Allah, and they desist (*yantahu*).” Three words here merit close attention: *fitnah*, *deen*, and *intiha*’.

According to the nearly unanimous explanation by commentators such as Ibn ‘Abbas, Qatadah, al-Suddi, al-Hasan, Abu al-‘Aliyah, Mujahid, al-Rabi‘, Muqatil, Zayd ibn Aslam, and others, *fitnah* here refers to shirk (polytheism), *deen* means tawhid (monotheism), and *intiha*’ means stopping from shirk. In this interpretation, the verse means: “Fight them until they abandon their religion and give up shirk, embracing tawhid instead.”

Clearly, if this verse is interpreted as defining the Messenger’s mission, the same objection applies as with the hadith above: it would mean that God sent the Messenger to fight until people recited the declaration of faith.

Maulana Sadrudin Sahib has given this rather unusual explanation for the objection, stating: “To keep fighting

until people say ‘*La ilaha illallah*’ is, in other words, equivalent to establishing a purely Islamic state.”

This justification is not supported by history or the wording of the command. Clearly, making people declare *La ilaha illallah* means converting them to Islam, whereas establishing an Islamic state does not mean all its subjects have embraced Islam. If people accept political authority and the laws of the land, no Islamic state has the right to require that they recite the creed or attend mosques for prayer. In short, I cannot understand this explanation at all—though perhaps the Institute of Islamic Culture or the Institute of Islamic Enlightenment might understand it, since they have a certain expertise in creating such interpretations.

One of my objections to interpreting the Prophet’s mission based on the *Izhar-e-deen* verse was that the Quran does not contain similar wording for any other prophet. Since we believe that every messenger was sent for the same fundamental purpose, this verse cannot be considered as defining the official mission of the final messenger.

In response, the author writes:

The mission of the final messenger was not different from that of the other prophets, but it was certainly broader in scope. Other prophets were sent only to their own people,

who already followed a particular faith. The Prophet Muhammad’s message, however, was universal—addressed to every group, every nation, and every religion. Therefore, Quranic words such as ‘It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of Truth, so that He may make it prevail [ideologically] over every other religion’ (Quran, 9:33) could only be used for him, not for anyone else.

Reading these lines, one might think the author is only explaining the use of the word “all” (*kull*) in the verse. But that was never the real issue.

The actual question was this: if the core of every prophet’s mission was *Izhar-e-deen* (making the religion prevail), then the Quran should have used similar language for each of them. The difference in how broad or narrow a prophet’s audience is does not change the fundamental nature of the mission itself. That difference simply means that, for other prophets, it would be said they were sent to make the religion prevail over a specific nation, while the final messenger was sent to do so over all nations and peoples. The distinction the author makes between the last Prophet and the others is therefore only about scope—how wide or narrow the sphere of address was—whereas,

to support his argument, he needed to demonstrate a difference in the very nature of their missions.

Regards,
Wahiduddin

After sending this letter, I received another one from Maulana Abu al-Lais Sahib, dated August 27, containing the following words:

The envelope has been received through Abul Hayy Sahib. I am considering sending your response to Maulana Sadruddin Sahib via him as well, so he can review it and, if he chooses, write to you about it.

After reviewing my response, Maulana Sadruddin Sahib stated he could not provide further comment, and the details are recorded in his correspondence.

Until now, the entire discussion and debate had taken place while I was still part of the *Jamaat-e-Islami's* Department of Publications. However, considering how far the discussion had now progressed, I felt it was necessary to resign from the Department. Therefore, I sent the following note to the Amir of the *Jamaat*.

Rampur—1st September 1962

Respected Maulana Abul Lais Sahib, Leader of *Jamaat-e-Islami* Hind, Peace be upon you,

I received your letter dated August 27. You mentioned that:

“Maulana Jalil Ahsan Sahib’s reply has arrived. He does not consider it necessary for you to leave Rampur and go home (Azamgarh) for the sake of correspondence, and it seems that his correspondence with you has already begun. Therefore, would it not be better for you to remain in Rampur and carry on the correspondence from there?”

In response, I would like to state that I previously informed you that, after receiving Maulana Sadruddin Sahib’s response, I hoped to reach a final decision by September 1. However, I have not yet been able to reach such a decision. This is because Maulana Jalil Ahsan Sahib has recently sent some advisory letters, suggesting that I exercise patience and continue corresponding with him, as there is a possibility that he may help me realize the flaws in my current thinking. That’s why I feel it necessary to wait for his commentary.

On the one hand, this is the situation. On the other hand, given my current state of mind, it does not seem appropriate for me to remain connected to a department of the *Jamaat* responsible for intellectual work. So, it seems reasonable that I withdraw from my current role in the Research and Publication

Department and, living either in Rampur or Azamgarh, engage in discussions with Maulana Jalil Ahsan Sahib and other knowledgeable colleagues in an effort to reach a decision. Whatever outcome results from these efforts, I will either return to service in the *Jamaat* as it currently operates or act independently in whatever way seems appropriate.

Although the idea of parting ways with the Department of Publications on account of intellectual differences is not new—you may recall that for the past two years I have repeatedly raised this request—the nature of the situation has now shifted considerably. It has therefore become necessary for me to insist upon separation, rather than merely request it. Previously, whenever I spoke to you about this, your response was always that there was, in fact, no difference between my views and those of the *Jamaat*—that it was only my over-sensitivity that made me feel otherwise. You also stated unambiguously that whatever I sought was, in essence, also what the *Jamaat* desired. In this way, I could pursue my work in accordance with my own understanding, without being unduly burdened by mental disquiet.

Previously, your responses provided a basis for my continued association with the Department of Research and Publications, but the situation has since changed. This is because the twenty-two-page review of my

work, "Error of Political Islam," by Maulana Sadruddin Sahib, which was conveyed to me on your behalf, does not accept this clarification. Instead, it entirely rejects my views. It presents my thinking as being different from that of the *Jamaat*, leading to a rejection of my position and an affirmation of the *Jamaat's* position. This implicitly, if not explicitly, retracts your prior support. Therefore, it is now imperative that you grant the request I had previously made for separation from the Department of Publications and formally relieve me of this responsibility.

Furthermore, after this departure, I will have no official connection with the local *Jamaat* where I reside. I will instead devote myself solely to study, discussions, and correspondence with external scholars concerning my current intellectual concerns. Beyond this, I will have no responsibilities from a *Jamaat*-related standpoint during this period.

Yours sincerely,

Wahiduddin

Rampur, September 5, 1962

Dear Brother, Peace be upon you,

I received your esteemed letter dated September 1, 1962. I am saddened to learn that our efforts to reassure you about the *Jamaat's* objectives and stance

have not succeeded, and your intellectual disagreement persists. However, I find some comfort in knowing that you still feel the need to study more and consult knowledgeable figures like Maulana Jalil Ahsan Sahib. May Allah grant that these efforts ease your intellectual dissatisfaction and enable your abilities to once again contribute to the movement as they have in the past.

In the present situation, your desire to temporarily sever your connection with the Department of Publications seems entirely appropriate so that you can devote yourself more fully to study and research. However, I cannot entirely agree with your wish that, following your departure from the Department, you should have no connection with the local *Jamaat* where you reside and that you should have no *Jamaat* responsibilities during this period apart from study and research. You understand as a member, adherence to the *Jamaat's* organizational structure is essential. However, given your specific circumstances, the maximum accommodation I can offer is that you will not be assigned any formal outreach duties, but your attendance at weekly gatherings will still be necessary. If even this is omitted, it would undermine the meaning of membership and could raise various questions in people's minds.

In my view, an important part of staying connected to the organizational structure is that while you do so, you should avoid publicizing or sharing your unique perspectives, both inside and outside the *Jamaat*. At most, you may discuss these ideas with the scholars of the *Jamaat*, and if you need to discuss them with an external scholar, you should approach it purely academically, rather than implying any personal disagreement with the *Jamaat*'s perspective.

I hope you agree with my suggestions, and I look forward to your response.

Regards,
Abul Lais

After my resignation from the Department of Research and Publications was accepted, I left Rampur and returned to my hometown, Azamgarh. Correspondence continued for a few days, and finally, I sent the following letter:

Azamgarh, October 15, 1962

Respected Maulana Abul Lais Sahib, Peace be upon you, I received your letter dated October 9. After careful consideration, I concluded that if I continue with such detailed discussions, they may never end. Therefore, it

seems more appropriate to present the conclusions I have reached after all my reflections.

It has now become clear that I have a fundamental disagreement with the ideological perspective of *Jamaat-e-Islami*. This means that the bond of ideological unity between the *Jamaat* and me has weakened. However, two potential reasons could have allowed me to consider remaining with *Jamaat-e-Islami*, but unfortunately, even these reasons no longer apply.

First, I had assumed that my ideological disagreement was mainly with Maulana Maududi's literature and that, as far as the current leadership is concerned, they would largely agree with my viewpoint. However, when Maulana Sadruddin Sahib completely refuted my views, contrary to my expectation, I mentioned to a colleague in Rampur that he responded not in his capacity as "Sadruddin Islahi" but as a representative of *Jamaat-e-Islami*. A prominent example of this is that, previously, in his commentary, *Taysir-ul-Quran*, he disagreed with Maulana Maududi's interpretation of *qatilu hum hatta la takuna fitna* (fight them until there is no fitnah) and expressed the same point I raised in my writing. Yet now, when responding to my critique, he fully endorsed Maulana Maududi's interpretation. (For reference, please compare the footnotes on verse 193 of Chapter *Al-Baqarah* in *Tafheem-ul-Quran* by Maulana

Maududi and *Taysir-ul-Quran* by Maulana Sadruddin Islahi)

However, it is clear that this is merely my personal feeling. In principle, I must accept the stance you have adopted in your reply as your actual position. When I reflect on the matter in this light, I realize there is no longer any room for me to remain associated with *Jamaat-e-Islami* Hind; I cannot justify staying on the assumption that the current leadership is closer to my point of view while I remain in disagreement with Maulana Maududi's literature. The response from Sadruddin Sahib, conveyed on your behalf, has completely dispelled this impression—whether it was a hopeful assumption or a total misunderstanding.

Secondly, there's the practical aspect. Often, even with differences in intellect and ideology, two people can sincerely work together toward a common goal. I would have been open to considering this approach. However, I now believe that the atmosphere of mutual sincerity that encourages such cooperation is no longer present between us. In the past, I had heard verbal reports about this, which I ignored. But now, I have received written communication that cannot be overlooked. This letter is one you wrote to Maulana Sadruddin Sahib when forwarding my response, dated August 28, 1962. It was found in the envelope

containing my manuscript which was returned to me by Maulana Sadruddin Sahib.

This letter was written in pencil by you. The relevant excerpt from your handwritten note reads as follows:

I am sending you Waheeduddin Khan Sahib's latest writing. After reading it, please let me know if there is still an opportunity to talk to him, or if we should simply write to him saying that we've done everything we could, and now he can make whatever decision he wishes. As far as I am concerned, I am almost completely disheartened about him now.

Maulana Jalil Ahsan Sahib has also started corresponding with him. But, first, I don't think Khan Sahib will be able to tolerate his style or approach; second, Khan Sahib has now reached a point where maybe no one's words will make any difference. Of course, if he later changes his mind, that will be another matter.

In any case, I have written to Jalil Ahsan Sahib to complete any reading and writing he needs to do with him as soon as possible, and to Waheeduddin Sahib that there is no need to go to Azamgarh for correspondence. It would be better for him to stay in Rampur and handle

the exchange of letters from there. Let's see what he replies. Once I receive your response, I will then write to Waheed Sahib accordingly.
(Excerpt from letter dated August 28, 1962)

I cannot express how deeply painful your letter has been for me. This letter has shattered all the positive assumptions I had maintained about you despite our ideological differences. (Maulana Syed Jalaluddin) Ansar Sahib and other colleagues with whom I shared a close connection in Rampur can testify to my high regard for you. However, I regret that your writing has confirmed all those things that I had long been hearing, but which my heart was unwilling to believe.

It is astonishing that during this lengthy debate period, you did not demonstrate the openness or goodwill to try to convince me, either verbally or in writing. Even when I reminded you of the promise you made in your letter dated January 29, 1962—where you had said, “If you want to know my personal opinion, then after reading your writing, I will share it freely”—you remained silent. Despite my repeated requests for your commentary on the responses I wrote to Sadrudin Sahib’s writings, where I presented clear and undeniable truths, you offered no remarks. Instead, you directed Jalil Ahsan Sahib to begin “educating” me. And yet, you wrote those words about me that appear

at the beginning of this letter. Then there is this line, “Though if he changes his stance later, that would be another matter.” This line is so harsh that reading it felt as if you had slaughtered me. This statement implies that you do not consider me capable of recognizing and accepting the truth should it come before me, yet you anticipate the humiliating act from me of flip-flopping on my stance for “convenience,” accepting in the future, without reason, the very things I now critique, for the sake of some ulterior motive. How I wish I had not lived to see this letter, how I wish I had died before reading it.

The more I reflect on your letter, the stronger these feelings grow. This letter expresses neither a commitment to truth nor a genuine concern for a fellow companion. It shows no sense of responsibility toward the *Jamaat*, nor any devotion to Islam. Further, when I consider how the tone of your letters and conversations with me differs entirely from what appears in your letter to Sadruddin Sahib, it only deepens my regret. After all, a two-faced approach is inappropriate even from a basic human perspective.

Based on the reasons mentioned above, I no longer see any justification for remaining a member of *Jamaat-e-Islami Hind*. It appears that the final point of stability that may have kept me connected has also been removed. Therefore, I ask that my name be taken off the membership list of *Jamaat-e-Islami*.

In the current climate of ideological divergence and mistrust, remaining in the *Jamaat* is no longer an option for me.

Wahiduddin

Delhi, October 10, 1962

Dear Brother, Peace be upon you,

I received your letter. If you have ultimately decided to resign from the *Jamaat* membership because of your intellectual disagreements, there is nothing we can do but reluctantly accept it. However, I believe that your earlier decision was more suitable, when you left the Department of Publications and planned to spend more time studying and researching, engaging in discussions with knowledgeable people both inside and outside the *Jamaat*. Who knows, through such discussions, a point of agreement might emerge between the *Jamaat*'s and your perspectives. Even the conversation with Maulana Sadruddin Sahib has not yet ended, and as I mentioned before, he is willing to respond to your comments if they are expressed constructively. Also, from what I understand, your correspondence with Maulana Jalil Ahsan Sahib is ongoing. So, why not be patient and wait for the results? The door to separation is always open, and we don't want to prevent anyone from leaving

unnecessarily. However, any member's departure is not something we welcome, and your leaving would cause us sadness and, personally, it would be very upsetting for me. Therefore, I want to do everything I can to address your concerns. If, sadly, we cannot reach an agreement, then we will have no choice.

Regarding your concern that the atmosphere of mutual sincerity needed for genuine cooperation has faded between us, I don't fully understand why you raised this at this point in our discussion. The issue of cooperation or lack thereof isn't even relevant yet. After all, you are still a *Jamaat* member, and the ongoing discussions and correspondence are not about cooperation but about deciding whether you can continue with the *Jamaat* in the future. I don't see how this directly relates to membership or the atmosphere of mutual sincerity, so I don't understand why you chose to reverse your previous decision and abruptly end your membership. Secondly, I am quite surprised that you interpreted my letter to Maulana Sadruddin Sahib—written alongside your commentary—as proof of the lack of sincere cooperation. I wrote that letter in haste because someone was leaving for Rampur at that very moment. After reading it closely again, I still find nothing that could be interpreted as evidence of a lack of sincerity. Does it imply a lack of cooperation if, despite my

near-complete disappointment after reading your commentary, I did not suggest to Maulana Sadruddin Sahib to end the discussions but instead asked him if he thought there was room for further conversation? And based on his response, I expressed willingness to respond to you. Nor did I tell Maulana Jalil Ahsan Sahib that further discussion with you was pointless; I merely advised him to try to bring the correspondence to a quick close, and even that was only because I thought you might find it challenging to endure his lengthy letters.

In any case, my understanding is that my letter aims to foster cooperation, not end it. However, I have no solution if, based on a certain impression, you misunderstood some of my words in a way that my words or intentions did not support.

It seems you misunderstood the word “educate” as if I, God forbid, see you as a beginner, which is why I contacted Maulana Jalil Ahsan to “start teaching you the basics.” I used that phrase casually, considering his unique manner of correspondence. As you mentioned, he prefers not to critique your work directly; instead, he engages in dialogue by asking questions about your writing, to which you can reply, hoping this question-and-answer method might lead to a conclusion. If I used the phrase “teach and educate” in my private

letter to Maulana Sadruddin Sahib to describe this, was it really such a serious mistake that it deserved such a harsh reaction and led to your immediate membership termination? Especially since you probably won't deny that Maulana Jalil Ahsan Sahib is your teacher, there shouldn't be anything wrong if the term "educate" suggests some level of instruction.

Regarding the "changing stance" comment, I am genuinely sorry for any pain it caused you, but please forgive me; I do not see myself as responsible. It was your interpretation that led to this pain. You have no idea how much respect I hold for you, nor the positive words I have used to describe you to others. It is unthinkable to me that you would ever forsake what you believe to be the truth for convenience or compromise your principles for personal gain. However, my perception of your nature has always been that you are over-sensitive, once you consider something to be true, you are not easily persuaded otherwise, and I have shared this with you before. Yes, it's also a fact that if later your mistake is proven to you, then you don't hesitate to accept the same and reconcile with your original view. It's possible you feel my perception is wrong, but that's the essence of what I intended when I wrote those words. The choice is yours to accept my words or not.

You also accused me of duplicity. I acknowledge my faults, but when it comes to duplicity or hypocrisy, I've always tried to avoid them completely. I carefully read your accusation and even reviewed my letters to you and our past conversations to make sure I hadn't inadvertently done so. Still, neither my letters nor my memory of our discussions support this accusation. I feel you may have made this charge impulsively, without fully checking its truth. However, if you can point to any letter or conversation that contradicts the tone and intent of my letter to Maulana Sadruddin Sahib, please do so, and I will greatly appreciate it.

You also mentioned that my letter to Maulana Sadruddin confirmed the negative things you've heard about me for a long time, even though your heart didn't want to believe them. I think it would have been helpful if you had shared these remarks with me earlier, which could have given you a better chance to verify their truth. Now that you're convinced of them, it would be useful if you could at least clarify what these issues are. This would allow me to address any faults and make corrections if necessary.

You also noted that I never tried to satisfy your concerns verbally or in writing despite having promised to do so. You know well that Maulana

Sadrudin Sahib was specifically assigned the task of commenting on your writings, as we considered him most suited for the job. Maulana Jalil Ahsan Sahib was also requested to correspond with you to help clarify the Jamaat's perspective. And as you know, throughout this period, I have reviewed everything exchanged between you and Maulana Sadrudin Sahib. Despite this, I want to state clearly that I had decided some time ago to personally discuss this matter with you if efforts to satisfy you were unsuccessful. I even mentioned this to some colleagues. However, I'm uncertain if this opportunity remains after reading your letter.

In any case, I desire that considering the points I have shared here, you reconsider your decision and, at the very least, postpone your resignation until you reach full clarity through personal study, research, and dialogue with scholars regarding your beliefs. Perhaps a point of agreement might emerge between us, which we sincerely hope for. However, if you insist on your decision, do inform me, and we will, albeit reluctantly, respect your choice.

Yours sincerely,
Abul Lais

Azamgarh

Dear Sir,

Assalamu Alaykum,

I received your letter dated [it should be October 10 if we go by the date mentioned in the above letter], 1962. In your seven-page letter, you attempted to demonstrate that whatever I wrote was simply due to my misunderstanding and that there was no mistake on your part. Following this, you wrote:

“It is up to you whether you choose to accept what I am saying or not.”

I certainly cannot accuse you of deliberately misrepresenting the facts. I must accept that what you are saying is correct. However, it is unfortunate that your words in the above letter do not fully support your previous statement.

For example, you wrote in the above-mentioned letter:

“I want to make it clear to you today that I had decided long ago—and I even expressed this to some colleagues—that, God forbid, if efforts to satisfy you prove unsuccessful, I will discuss this matter with you myself. But I am uncertain if your recent writings have left room for this.”

On the other hand, in your letter to Maulana Sadrudin dated August 28, you wrote:

“I am sending Wahiduddin Khan’s latest writing. After reading it, please inform me if there is still any room to persuade him, or if it should be conveyed to him that we have done everything we could. He may now decide as he pleases.”

There is a clear contradiction between these two statements. In your letter to Maulana Sadruddin, you suggest that you view his opinion as final, and if he were to indicate that there is no further room for discussion with me, you would then tell me that all efforts have been exhausted, leaving the decision to me. However, in the excerpt from your current letter above, you say that you decided not to leave the matter entirely in Maulana Sadruddin’s hands, but that you would personally have a final discussion with me.

In any case, despite all of this, I am always willing and, indeed, desirous of discussing matters with you. The way Mr. Jalil Ahsan wishes to “educate” me seems, in my opinion, futile. During this period, I received two questionnaires from him, both of which contained purely abstract questions, much like examination questions posed to students. He did not clarify the connection of these questions to the real issue. Naturally, I am not interested in engaging in such irrelevant discussions. However, if we set this approach aside and someone wishes to engage with me

in a genuine dialogue on the core issue, I am certainly prepared, insha'Allah, to converse on that. But if there is no willingness on the other person's part, one cannot forcibly extract a response.

Yours sincerely,
Wahiduddin

Delhi, October 27, 1962

Dear Brother,

Assalamu Alaykum,

I received your letter. One of the main reasons I wrote such a detailed response was to clarify the original intent of the two phrases that seemed to have caused you distress due to a misunderstanding. I wanted to ensure that any discomfort on your part could be relieved. However, from your reply, it's not clear how successful I was in this. It seems you might be misinterpreting my entire statement, as you believe that a phrase from this letter contradicts one from the letter I sent to Maulana Sadruddin. Even if such a contradiction exists, it concerns a completely different matter. Therefore, based on this alone, you should not have fully ignored my clarification about these two phrases. If your heart is not open to accepting this, then there is nothing more I can do.

However, I feel it's necessary to clarify that the contradiction you mentioned does not actually exist. Here is a brief explanation: you already know that Maulana Sadruddin was officially assigned to respond to your writings. Therefore, if I had written to you what I previously asked him in my letter as a question, it would have simply indicated that the official discussion with you had ended. However, the end of that official discussion did not mean that I could not pursue my goal of having a final conversation with you myself. The official discussion was a separate matter, and my chance to talk with you personally would only come after it was over.

Thus, it was entirely possible that, after consulting with Maulana Sadruddin, I could have notified you about the conclusion of the official discussion while simultaneously, or even a few days later, inviting you to engage in further dialogue. In any case, there is no contradiction between these two statements. I kindly request that you reconsider them considering this letter; Insha'Allah, this will resolve any misunderstanding.

There is, however, another point I would like to raise. Even if it were true that there's some contradiction between these two statements, is it necessary for you to interpret it as intentional misrepresentation and draw such harsh conclusions? First, it seems quite unusual that a private note—which you shouldn't

have read in the first place, and was written hastily—would be taken so seriously that you feel no hesitation in making the severest accusations based on it. Second, it appears as if you consider any positive interpretation unacceptable for yourself, since you don't even consider it. Otherwise, you could easily have assumed that, when I wrote to Maulana Sadruddin Sahib, this point may simply not have been present in my mind—that I might later have further discussions with you. Or, even if it was present, I may have changed my view immediately after reading your article and decided otherwise. At most, such an interpretation might suggest I overlooked something or changed my mind. Although perhaps it was necessary for your satisfaction to go further, for instance, by accusing me of deliberate falsehood, etc.

As for a final conversation with you, I am still prepared. However, I need to know first whether you have concluded all discussions and exchanges with the individuals you were in contact with regarding this matter. Once I have this information, I will try to arrange an appropriate time for a conversation, Insha'Allah. I have previously informed you that Maulana Sadruddin is willing to comment on your views, provided that the tone of your writing is not the same as it was in the previous one. I also conveyed

to you Maulana Jalil Ahsan's opinion that the questions he asked were not irrelevant. Therefore, I suggested that, if this was not clear to you, you might consider discussing it with him.

Your letter did not clarify what decision you have made regarding my request to postpone your decision to separate from the *Jamaat* until you have reached full clarity in your thoughts and beliefs.

Wassalam,
Abul Lais

Azamgarh: November 8, 1962

Respected Maulana Abul Lais Sahib,
Amir of *Jamaat-e-Islami* Hind,
Assalamu Alaykum,

I received your letter dated October 27. I must regretfully say that the approach you used in this letter, as well as the previous one on October 19, is entirely legalistic and overly rational. Such an approach is not appropriate for someone truly trying to resolve an issue. The only result of such a method of reasoning is that a person convinces himself that he has proved one egg to be two in his imagination. But clearly, arguments of this kind cannot alter reality.

I want to clearly restate the main issue before you and ask that you give a clear response on this key matter.

The issue began when I had intellectual disagreements with *Jamaat-e-Islami*. I clearly documented my thoughts and submitted them to you. According to your words, “Maulana Sadruddin was formally appointed to provide a detailed commentary on my writing, as he was considered the most suitable person for this task by the *Jamaat*.” When I received this commentary, I found no convincing arguments against my position. As a result, I wrote to you on August 10, stating that, despite reviewing the commentary multiple times, my core perspective remained unchanged.

Following your directive, I sent a summary of my impressions on this matter on August 19. I was even prepared to conduct a detailed analysis of Maulana Sadruddin’s writing, explaining why it was unacceptable to me, allowing him to try once more to satisfy me. However, you people didn’t agree to further dialogue on this matter. You wrote, “Maulana Sadruddin is prepared to respond to your impressions, provided that the tone of your writing is different from before.” But I consider this condition a refusal because my approach simply involves presenting intellectual reasons that prevent me from accepting his views. I cannot abandon this approach and accept his

perspective without reason. Therefore, this condition will likely never be met, and he may never respond.

Therefore, no effort was made to answer my questions. Instead, it was said about me, “Maulana Sadruddin has given complete answers to everything, but he insists on his view. Who can make such a person understand? What’s the point of further discussion in this situation?”

I acknowledge that some errors were pointed out in the brief commentary I submitted to you, but those “errors” are so trivial that I am surprised they were even mentioned. For example, you may recall when you visited Rampur on September 6, 1962, and we discussed my issue in the office of the head of the institution. Besides yourself, Maulana Sadruddin, Afzal Hussain Khan, Abdul Hai, Urooj Qadri, and Jalaluddin Ansar Sahib. were also present. I insisted on receiving feedback on my response, yet neither you nor Maulana Sadruddin engaged with it until the end. However, during the discussion, Maulana Sadruddin remarked, “You’ve made such a major referencing error in your response that...” Hearing this, I felt alarmed, thinking I had made a significant error. But despite my inquiries, he did not clarify, nor did anyone feel the need to ask him to explain. A few days later, when I visited his office and asked about that, I discovered that the referencing error was merely that I had omitted the

phrase “of this nature” in quoting a passage from his text. Firstly, the absence of these words did not affect the main argument. Moreover, this oversight was more his responsibility than mine, since he had crossed out the phrase with two bold lines and then placed a small mark indicating “correct” (✓ ✓)—a symbol commonly used in Urdu—beside it in fine pen. I had missed noticing this mark during my reading, and thus, that was left in my quotation.

After hearing such a minor critique, I thought to myself, “If only Maulana Sadruddin hadn’t brought this up, it would have been better for him to keep quiet.”

Next, let’s consider Maulana Jalil Ahsan, who, according to you, was requested “to correspond with me to understand my thoughts and explain the Jamaat’s perspective.” However, he adopted a peculiar approach which, regardless of any other merit it may have, cannot be called “explaining the *Jamaat-e-Islami*’s perspective.” My issue has been before them for the past nine months, yet to this day they have not written a single word addressing the real issue. Instead, he focused on various unrelated issues, one of which was his “condition” that he would read my “lengthy article,” ask questions, seek clarification, and discuss the evidence presented. I agreed to this condition, but when I received his questionnaire, I found that it

contained no questions related to the main text, no requests for clarification of my arguments, and no discussions on my evidence. Instead, it consisted of vague questions with no indication of their relevance to the issue. When a second questionnaire arrived, it was identical in nature. Honestly, if I hadn't been corresponding with Maulana Jalil Ahsan and had received these questions unexpectedly, I would have returned them, assuming they were an exam paper sent by mistake.

When I pointed out the unsuitability of this correspondence style, his reply was as follows:

“I am committed to my style of communication, and the approach others have taken is unhelpful for you and ineffective for them. You know I practice ‘teaching and learning.’ Why should I abandon my teaching style? If it troubles you in your high level of knowledge and scholarship, I apologize. This is the only method available for examining the matter at hand, which you call ‘teaching and learning.’”

Maulana Jalil Ahsan's response had taunt and objection but contained no rationale as to why his preferred method of correspondence was suitable for “explaining the *Jamaat-e-Islami's* perspective.” When someone claims that *Jamaat-e-Islami's* ideology

is incorrect and provides specific arguments for this claim, then you should raise questions about that claim and its evidence. Instead, if you begin asking isolated questions without any preamble—such as, “Tell me, what is the antecedent of wali’alam in such-and-such verse?” or “What is the referent of dhalika in such-and-such verse?”—then these questions appear random and unrelated to the main issue. Maulana Jalil Ahsan’s questionnaires were full of such questions. You are welcome to review them whenever you like.

Regarding my complaints about you, they are as follows:

I feel strongly that, in this discussion, you have not demonstrated genuine righteousness and pursuit of truth. Instead, it seems like you see this as just a matter of responding to or dismissing an objection. If the situation were such that you had convincing answers to the questions I raised, and after careful study and consideration, you were completely sure that I was wrong, then such an approach might be appropriate. However, according to your own admission, this is not the case. Whenever I asked for your opinion on these issues, your response was always that “I have not had the time to sufficiently prepare to give an opinion on this, nor do my current commitments allow me to do so.”

In such situations, I believe your stance after reading my response was not appropriate. The commentary I sent you on August 19 regarding Maulana Sadrudin's writing, I am confident, included points that deserved your careful consideration. You should have consulted Maulana Sadrudin about his response to those points. However, the tone of the letter you wrote to Sadrudin Sahib regarding my work is such that it appears as though nothing had happened at all. Even now, Sadrudin Sahib's words seem to you to be just as conclusively established as they were before. I am most surprised by your letter dated August 28 (addressed to Maulana Sadrudin), which is the first letter you wrote after reading my response. Yet, it is astonishing that you made no mention of my significant criticisms, such as the misattribution to two commentators on the interpretation of the verse "*aqeem-ud-deen*."

A person genuinely seeking truth would immediately ask, "What is going on here?" when faced with such a situation. The verse on which *Jamaat-e-Islami's* revolutionary ideology is based is being argued by one individual to have a different interpretation according to scholars. These scholars supposedly agree that the term "*deen*" in the verse does not imply the entire *Shariah* but rather the fundamental teachings of *deen*, and therefore, no revolutionary objective can be derived from this

verse. In response, a well-respected scholar of *Jamaat* conducts extensive research for several months, finds two references, and asserts that the claim is incorrect because there exist interpreters who believe that the command for establishing *deen* includes all the detailed laws of *Shariah*—in their entirety.

Now, the claimant returns and points out that these attributions are completely wrong. He provides the full quotations from those scholars, clearly showing that what was said about the Quranic phrase ‘*alladhi awhayna ilayk*’ (42:13)—that is, which We have revealed to you—was wrongly connected to the phrase *aqeem-ud-deen*. The interpreters explicitly clarified that no general application was intended for the latter phrase under discussion. I fail to understand, despite such clear criticisms, how your silence and your letter to Maulana Sadruddin, as if, in your view, nothing has changed, is correct. This approach suggests that the main issue here is not a pursuit of truth but simply to counter my perspective. Instead of examining the arguments and facts, it seems you are only concerned with addressing the critique in any way possible.

The approach you have taken has leaned more toward advocating for *Jamaat-e-Islami* rather than seeking the truth. As I previously mentioned, a clear example of this is Maulana Sadruddin’s writing on the verse *qatiloohum*

hatta la takoon fitnah (2:193)—that is, fight them until there is no more fitna—in his commentary, *Tayseer al-Quran*, where he expressed the same viewpoint, I am presenting. However, in responding to my writing, he took an opposing stance because doing so was necessary to uphold *Jamaat-e-Islami*'s position. Although my criticism is directed at Maulana Sadruddin, since his writing was presented to me with your endorsement, you, too, share responsibility for it until you explicitly disassociate yourself from it.

My second grievance is that your attitude has not demonstrated goodwill toward me. Your letter to Maulana Sadruddin, dated August 28, is a clear example of this, which, despite your explanations, remains deeply objectionable to me. Your indirect admission of this is evident in your acknowledgment that “this was a private note that you should not have read.” Your comment in your letter dated October 27 reveals more about your own psychological state, implying that you view this note as something I should not have seen. A psychologist could interpret this comment as nothing other than a reflection of your own underlying feelings on the matter.

From the points I have outlined above, the following conclusions emerge:

1. The intellectual disagreements I've developed with *Jamaat-e-Islami* have not been satisfactorily

addressed by your side. While you initially responded to my questions, when those responses failed to convince me and I raised further questions, you refused to provide additional answers, claiming that my way of questioning makes them unanswerable. Maulana Jalil Ahsan is still willing to respond, but what he calls a “response” is merely a pointless line of questioning that has no real connection to the main issue.

2. If intellectual disagreements with the literature could not be resolved, the only alternative for me to remain associated with the *Jamaat* would have been for you to state unequivocally that “Maulana Maududi’s writings are not the authoritative interpretation of *Jamaat-e-Islami’s* thought”. I presented this proposal during the discussion in Rampur on September 6, 1962, but this suggestion was not accepted and was outrightly rejected.
3. Instead of genuinely trying to resolve my intellectual disagreements, rumors have spread widely that I am stubborn and attached to my views, and that if I don’t change my stance on my own, explaining things to me is pointless.

This is the reality of the situation. Now tell me, under such circumstances, what other choice do I have but to resign from *Jamaat-e-Islami*?

Sincerely, Wahiduddin

Following this, I received a card from the Amir of *Jamaat* that stated:

“I have requested your writings from Rampur, and I expect to receive them in two or three days. After that, Insha 'Allah, I will be able to write something to you.”

In reply, I mentioned that the writings held by Maulana Sadruddin in Rampur are very incomplete and lack clarity. If you'd like to see a clearer version of my thoughts and receive commentary, I would be happy to send you a copy of my full writing from here.

Your feedback is very meaningful to me, and it would truly bring me joy to share my writing for this purpose. Subsequently, I received another request from the Secretary of *Jamaat* for my writing, to which I responded.

Azamgarh, September 5, 1962

Respected Sir,

Assalamu Alaykum,

I received two letters signed by the Secretary of *Jamaat-e-Islami*, Mr. Muhammad Yusuf, dated November 27 and December 3, 1962. Before this, on November 24, I had already sent a letter addressed to you, which serves as an early response to these letters. In it, I stated, “If

you intend to comment on my views, I would be happy to send my complete writing in its current form to you.”

However, I have not received any response about this. I want to emphasize that if you clearly state your intention to review my thoughts without any conditions, I will gladly send all my writings to you, Insha’Allah. But without this promise, I don’t see the point in sending my work.

As for replying to my letter dated 8 November, there is no need for any written request in this matter. The same information on the basis of which you accepted my resignation from the Department of Research and Publication is enough to reply to this letter. Just as on 5 September you were in a position to accept my request to leave the Department because of ideological differences, in exactly the same way you are now in a position to respond to my letter mentioned above. If your decision of 5 September was a considered one, then surely today you should have no difficulty in replying to my letter.

I am eagerly awaiting your reply to my letter dated November 8. Please send it at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

After approximately a month and a half since my letter dated November 8, I received the following response:

Delhi, December 19, 1962

Dear Brother,

Assalamu Alaykum,

I apologize for the delay in replying to your letter dated November 8. The main reason for this delay, as I mentioned earlier, was that I wanted to review your comments before responding. Despite waiting and asking several times, I was not given access to them. Additionally, I needed to consult with Maulana Sadruddin and others, which I have now done.

I don't find your impression correct that we are neither willing nor prepared to satisfy your concerns. After all, Maulana Sadruddin wrote a lengthy document with precisely this intent. He was also willing and could have been further encouraged, if necessary, to respond to your commentary on his work. Similarly, as I mentioned earlier, Maulana Jalil Ahsan's questions, in his view, are entirely relevant to the matter at hand. However, given that you have unfortunately concluded that Maulana Sadruddin's condition for engaging with your commentary implies he wants you to accept his views without reasoning and that Maulana Jalil Ahsan's correspondence is just irrelevant questioning with no

relation to the main issue, it does seem that continuing this dialogue would not be fruitful. Therefore, it is best to conclude this matter here.

As for your resignation, if you have now reached complete clarity on your stance, I kindly request that you state it explicitly so that we can proceed accordingly. As for myself, I have not fully understood your fundamental point of disagreement regarding the *Jamaat's* objectives. However, it is not feasible for me currently to engage in a detailed discussion on the arguments and contents of your lengthy article, nor do I expect any significant benefit from such a discussion. Nevertheless, I do wish to discuss certain aspects with you, particularly to understand positively what, in your view, Muslims should be focusing on. I would like to know the detailed plan you have in mind so that I may assess how it differs from our approach and whether, despite these differences, any degree of cooperation and collaboration is possible between us. There is no urgency for this discussion. Should you decide to part ways with the *Jamaat*, such a conversation could still take place. I also plan to visit Azamgarh around mid-January, so if you are agreeable, we could meet and discuss then.

Wassalam,

Abul Lais

Response:

Azamgarh – December 27, 1962

Respected Maulana Abul Lais Sahib,

Assalamu Alaykum,

I received your letter dated December 19. I regret that each time, instead of addressing the main issue, you write things that, while legally covering your response, still leave the core problem unresolved.

I called Maulana Sadruddin's condition a refusal because he has not explained precisely what flaw in my approach prevents him from responding to my commentary. I even wrote to him asking for clarification, but his reply addressed other matters without explaining the supposed flaw in my approach. When I tried to determine it myself, I concluded that my comments likely refuted his points based on reasoning. If this constitutes a flaw in my approach, it's clear I cannot abandon it. If it's something else, then he should clarify it.

Regarding the questions from Maulana Jalil Ahsan, you wrote in your letter dated October 20:

“Maulana Jalil Ahsan Sahib has written that the questions he sent to you are not irrelevant. However, if their relevance is unclear to you, you may inquire about this from him.”

This suggests that, in your view, it's not enough for these questions to be relevant only in Maulana Jalil Ahsan's mind. It's also essential that I understand how they relate to my issue. Despite my insistence, Maulana Jalil Ahsan has not clarified this. Nevertheless, in your latest letter, you write as though the questions' relevance in Maulana Jalil Ahsan's mind is sufficient, regardless of whether I understand their relevance.

In such a situation, I respectfully state that if you truly address my concerns, I will certainly consider them. However, if your response remains as it has been, I echo your own words: "In such a case, it truly seems that prolonging this conversation serves no purpose. Therefore, it would be best to end this matter here."

Considering this, it would be better if you accept my resignation and release me from this entanglement.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

Following this, I received the following letter from Maulana Abul Lais Sahib:

Delhi – January 7, 1963

Dear Brother,

Assalamu Alaykum,

I have received your letter. Insha'Allah, I will reply

within a day or two. If I do not get the chance, I will be coming to Azamgarh soon, Insha'Allah, and we can talk in person then.

I hope this message finds you in good health.

Wassalam,

Abul Lais

Following Maulana Abul Lais Sahib's letter dated January 7, 1963, I met him in Azamgarh on January 22. This meeting took place in two sessions: one before Asr prayer and the other after. Abdul Aleem Islahi, Amir of the *Jamaat-e-Islami*, Banaras, attended the first session, and in the second session, he, along with Hamidullah Sahib M.A., Amir the *Jamaat* Azamgarh, and Dr. Ikram Ahmed Khan (Azamgarh), were also present.

I began by stating that my primary issue is the status of Maulana Maududi's literature. Other concerns I have raised about the members, structure, and policies of the *Jamaat-e-Islami* are incidental and not fundamental. I conveyed this same point to you in the local Shura meeting before departing from Rampur, but it was not accepted then. However, the matter could be resolved if you acknowledge this point now. Maulana Abul Lais responded that this would mean we completely reject

and abandon the literature. I clarified that I did not mean to suggest it is entirely incorrect, nor do I object to its presence in the library or archives. My concern is its status, as I believe that within the *Jamaat-e-Islami*, this literature has been elevated as if it truly represents the Jamaat's ideology.

He replied that they do not ascribe such a status to the literature. Hamidullah Sahib added, "None of us believes that Maulana Maududi's literature is the sole source of *Jamaat-e-Islami's* ideology." Maulana Abul Lais and others present endorsed this statement. At that moment, the tone of the conversation indicated that I was making an entirely unfounded claim and accusing the *Jamaat-e-Islami* of something no one within its ranks believed.

I then asked Maulana Abul Lais to put Hamidullah Sahib's statement in writing, given his role as the senior responsible leader. He had said that "Maulana Maududi's literature is not the sole source of *Jamaat-e-Islami's* ideology," so I requested that he write these exact words on plain paper and sign it. However, he was unwilling to do so. I repeatedly asked him to write Hamidullah Sahib's words on paper and sign it, assuring him that I would accept it, but he did not comply. All the participants in this session are witnesses, as are the walls, furniture, and the large room on the second

floor of House No. 9 in Mohalla Badrqa, and I have not altered any details in this account.

I mentioned that if you are unwilling to put it in writing, your verbal assurances alone cannot ease my concerns. Finally, as per Abdul Aleem Sahib Islahi's suggestion, it was agreed that I would briefly summarise my point on a paper and hand it to Maulana Abul Lais Sahib, who would respond in writing. Accordingly, I wrote and submitted the following statement to him.

Azamgarh—January 23, 1963

Respected Maulana Abul Lais Sahib, Amir of *Jamaat-e-Islami* Hind,

Assalamu Alaykum,

You may recall that on December 6, 1962, in the office of the Principal at Rampur, in the presence of Maulana Sadruddin Sahib, Afzal Hussain Sahib, Abdul Hai Sahib, Urooj Qadri Sahib, and Jalaluddin Ansar Sahib, I stated that if you confirm that “Maulana Maududi's literature is not the authoritative interpretation of *Jamaat-e-Islami's* ideology,” then I would withdraw my objections and continue my work within the *Jamaat* as before. This remains my primary concern today, and I wish to receive a clear response from you.

My concern is that Maulana Maududi's literature, currently published by *Jamaat-e-Islami's* publishing house, does not present the faith in its true light. For

some reason, it has become predominantly political in tone. Additionally, I feel that members of *Jamaat-e-Islami* regard this literature as the sole authoritative source of the Jamaat's ideology. Given my understanding, this status of the literature has become a matter of conscience for me. The concept of *deen* that I find in the Quran and Hadith—and which I have expressed in my writings in *Monthly Zindagi* (Rampur) over the past years—seems distinct from the specific tone of this literature.

Since *Jamaat-e-Islami's* authentic ideology should align with what its members generally understand it to be, and, in my view, this is almost entirely what Maulana Maududi has presented, working within the *Jamaat* with a differing approach feels inconsistent with my sense of integrity.

My concern could be addressed if you provide a written statement affirming that Maulana Maududi's literature does not hold the status of an authoritative interpretation of *Jamaat-e-Islami's* ideology.

Please respond in the most explicit possible terms.

Wahiduddin

At that moment, Abdul Aleem Sahib Islahi (Amir of *Jamaat-e-Islami*, Banaras) was present with Maulana Abul Lais and showed particular interest in this matter.

I suggested that he review the statement if he wished. After reading it, he commented that it was a bit lengthy and recommended making it more concise. Following his advice, I prepared a shorter version as follows:

Azamgarh—January 23, 1963

Respected Maulana Abul Lais Sahib,

Assalamu Alaykum,

I wish to inform you that I have developed an ideological concern regarding the *Jamaat-e-Islami*. In this regard, on September 6, 1962, in the Principal's office at Rampur, in the presence of Maulana Sadruddin Sahib, Afzal Hussain Sahib, Abdul Hai Sahib, Urooj Qadri Sahib, and Jalaluddin Ansar Sahib, I stated that if it were confirmed that "Maulana Maududi's literature is not the definitive interpretation of *Jamaat-e-Islami's* ideology," my concern would be alleviated. I am now formally making the same request in writing. Kindly provide me with a statement to resolve my problems, allowing me to continue working with *Jamaat-e-Islami* as before.

Please ensure your response is in the clearest terms, without any ambiguity.

Yours Sincerely,

Wahiduddin

After preparing both versions, I handed them to

Maulana Abul Lais Sahib. He agreed to choose one of these to consider when drafting his response, which he would send to me. He then returned to Delhi via Rampur, and after consulting with other associates, he sent the following response:

Delhi—January 29, 1963

Dear Brother,

Assalamu Alaykum,

In response to your letter dated January 23, I want to clarify the following: The main source for defining *Jamaat-e-Islami*'s ideology is its Dastoor (Constitution), and all members are essentially bound by it. One of its clauses clearly states, "The Quran and Sunnah shall be the basis of the Jamaat's framework, and all other materials will be considered secondary, only to the extent that they are permissible according to the Quran and Sunnah."

Regarding Jamaat's literature, it is not limited to the writings of any single author; instead, it includes works by multiple authors that explain different aspects of *deen*. Collectively, this literature provides an accurate interpretation of the Jamaat's objectives. However, as I have stated before in my writings on several occasions, this literature is created by human effort and intellect, and like all human works, it may contain errors. I am willing to admit that I believe some parts of our literature are not entirely aligned with the objectives

and interpretations outlined in our Constitution.

Since we regularly clarify our objectives and provide explanations in alignment with the Constitution, we are confident that our members will consider the Constitution and its explanations as the primary source for understanding our goals rather than any statement that may not fully align with it. Therefore, such inconsistencies in our literature do not cause us any particular concern. Furthermore, I sense that all members of the *Jamaat* have consciously adopted the objective and ideological explanation stated in the Constitution. Hence they would not accept any writing that diverges from it. Conversely, any writing that aligns with it, regardless of the author, would represent the *Jamaat's* ideology.

I am unsure whether this clarification will thoroughly address your concerns. We certainly hope you continue your work within the *Jamaat*. However, you know that accepting the *Jamaat's* objective is a fundamental requirement for membership. Therefore, it is insufficient for our reassurance that your concerns regarding the literature alone are alleviated and that you would retract your objections and continue working within the *Jamaat*. You would also need to confirm that you accept the *Jamaat's* objectives. This need for reassurance is particularly relevant because your previous discussions have been closely tied to the *Jamaat's* objectives. Even when I inquired about this

directly during our conversation in Azamgarh, you did not provide a clear response as to whether you still consider the objective stated in our Constitution and its explanation valid. Your recent letter also remains silent on this matter.

I look forward to your response to this clarification. May Allah grant both of us the guidance to follow the straight path.

Wassalam,
Abul Lais

Azamgarh—February 7, 1963

Respected Maulana Abul Lais Sahib,
Assalamu Alaykum,

I received your letter dated [should be January 29 as per the above letter]. You wrote, “the primary source for determining *Jamaat-e-Islami*’s ideology is its Constitution.” However, I must clarify that this does not answer my question. In my letter dated January 23, I did not inquire about the source used to define the *Jamaat*’s ideology. Instead, my question concerned the explanation of this ideology; specifically, I asked about the status of Maulana Maududi’s literature to *Jamaat-e-Islami*’s ideological interpretation. As for the Constitution, I know it merely provides a

legal expression of a group's ideology and is not an explanatory document. Therefore, your response is extraneous to the main question and unrelated to it.

Similarly, your statement, "As for the Jamaat's literature, it is not confined to the works of a single author but includes writings from multiple authors," is also irrelevant to the main question. This response would only be relevant if I asked whether the collection called "Jamaati Literature" consists entirely of a single author's works or includes writings from multiple authors. Instead, I specifically asked about the status of Maulana Maududi's literature in relation to *Jamaat-e-Islami's* ideological interpretation.

After noting your response, you wrote in your letter, "I am unsure whether this clarification will fully address your concerns." Reading these words, I sensed that while writing the above response, you may have realized that you were not addressing my core question. And, if the writer is not confident, the reader will hardly find satisfaction.

However, after carefully reviewing your letter, I concluded that, despite my repeated verbal and written requests, you have not directly answered my question for reasons unknown. However, indirectly, you indicated what your response would be. I am specifically referring to the following sentence from your letter:

“This literature, overall, accurately reflects Jamaat’s objectives.”

To me, this sentence suggests that you treat this literature as an authoritative interpretation of the Jamaat’s ideology. Your clarification that “it is, however, a product of human intellect and, like all human works, may contain errors” is unnecessary because, when I say that members of *Jamaat-e-Islami* see Maulana Maududi’s literature as an authoritative interpretation of Jamaat’s ideology, I do not mean they consider it infallible like divine scripture, free from all errors. The “certain issues” you acknowledged within the literature are an inherent feature of human discourse; a few lines or paragraphs in any human writing may have such inconsistencies. No human text is completely free of them. The issue here isn’t minor, accidental oversights but the overall interpretation that runs throughout the literature’s pages. And as you pointed out, you see this interpretation as an accurate representation of *Jamaat-e-Islami*’s ideology.

Therefore, I have again concluded that remaining within *Jamaat-e-Islami* is not my option. As I have clearly stated, I disagree with Maulana Maududi’s approach to explaining *deen*. Since this interpretation is, in your view and that of the Jamaat’s members, an accurate reflection of the Jamaat’s ideology, the correct course for me is to separate from it.

This concludes my response regarding the main issue raised in your letter. However, you raised an additional point, stating:

“It is insufficient for our reassurance that your concerns regarding the literature alone are resolved, allowing you to retract your objections and continue your work within the *Jamaat*. You must also confirm that you accept the *Jamaat*’s objectives.”

I am uncertain which senior advised you to demand an oath of loyalty from me concerning the objective (in other words, the Constitution). Your letter dated October 19, 1962, mentioned that “you are, at this time, still a member of *Jamaat*.” In such circumstances, if I were to respond, you would have no answer, for, as you stated, “*Jamaat* members are essentially bound only by the Constitution.” Therefore, for a person you still recognise as a member, you would need to specify the legal grounds under which you are making this demand before requiring such a commitment. You are aware that some individuals within the *Jamaat* hold that the statement of objective in the constitution was altered and that this change modified the *Jamaat*’s true objective. Did you require an oath on the current constitution from these members? And are they allowed to remain within the *Jamaat* without such compliance? In truth, you have not fully considered the nature and

consequences of your demand; otherwise, you would not have written this. You should remember that the legal framework of the Constitution you created serves as a protective wall for you, just as it can serve as a protective wall for other members. Some members' experiences in Banaras indicate that this wall is so protective in their favour that, even if you wish to dismantle it, you cannot.

However, rest assured, I have no interest in engaging in any such legal games. I understand the condition I put forth regarding the status of Maulana Maududi's literature and my willingness to withdraw my objections afterwards was not an ideal solution from a purely principled perspective. However, it was you who encouraged me to adopt this stance. For a long time, you and many others repeatedly suggested that regardless of my critiques, the points I raised fundamentally resonated with *Jamaat* members as if they were speaking from their hearts. There was no significant difference between what I said and *Jamaat*'s current ideology. Therefore, I should abandon the debate and continue working with the *Jamaat*. Recently, Maulana Abdul Aleem Islahi and other *Jamaat* members pressed this point, and you also reiterated it in your letter dated December 19, 1962, with the following words:

“As far as I am concerned, I still do not understand your fundamental disagreement with the *Jamaat*'s objective.”

However, I am unsure what new apprehension has led you to make this demand of me. Regardless, I concluded long ago that it would no longer be possible for me to remain within *Jamaat-e-Islami*. Yet, given your remarks above and the delicacy of the matter, I chose to compromise on principle by agreeing to stay if my concerns regarding the literature's status were addressed. This was merely an accommodation, which could only be realised if you had accepted my request regarding the status of the literature, as I had verbally stated in Rampur and subsequently presented in writing. However, given your recent response, even this last possibility has been eliminated.

Therefore, I kindly ask that you notify me once my resignation is accepted, which would relieve me of this obligation.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

Delhi – February 21, 1963

Dear Brother, *Assalamu Alaykum*,

I received your letter several days ago. During Ramadan, my heart isn't inclined towards debates and discussions. For some reason, I repeatedly feel that if we were to have an open and sincere conversation, perhaps neither of us would wish to part ways so

easily. As I have mentioned before, I wanted to have a direct conversation with you in the end, so instead of addressing the contents of your letter, I suggest we meet once more for a face-to-face discussion before making any final decision. A significant reason for the distance and disagreement between us may be that we have never had an open, in-person dialogue. Furthermore, it seems that after your move to Azamgarh, a few misunderstandings have also crept in, contributing to the increasing gap and discord. Therefore, before making a final decision, we must take the opportunity to have a frank and straightforward conversation.

During our last meeting in Azamgarh, I had intended to discuss some of these matters. However, this did not take place because you confined the discussion solely to the literature, and I, too, had hoped that our disagreement might be resolved on that basis. Unfortunately, this hope proved unfounded. Nevertheless, I am not yet disheartened and believe that if we clear our misunderstandings and have an open discussion on the points of contention, we will not only better understand each other's perspectives on the literature but, Insha'Allah, we may even resolve all differences.

I currently don't have a chance to visit Azamgarh. After Ramadan, I plan to go on a tour of South India and expect to return in early April, right before the

Shura's meeting schedule begins. Ideally, you could attend the Shura meeting, and we could discuss things then. However, if you want to settle this matter sooner, you're welcome to come in early April. I hope you also see the need for this conversation.

I will be going to Aligarh on March 3, and the board meeting might be held before March 8; otherwise, this interim period would be more suitable for our discussion.

Wassalam,
Abul Lais

Response:

Azamgarh – February 26, 1963

Respected Maulana Abul Lais Sahib,

Assalamu Alaykum,

I received your letter dated February 21. In it, you mentioned the necessity of a conversation and suggested that we could discuss matters there if I attended the Shura meeting in Delhi. However, in the current situation, attending the Shura meeting holds no significance for me. Therefore, I have decided that even if I receive an invitation from your side, I will not participate at this time. Consequently, a meeting in Delhi will not be possible. However, I noted from

your letter that you plan to visit Aligarh in March for the Board of Islamic Publications meeting. I have started writing a book titled *Ilm-e-Jadeed ka Challenge* (English title: God Arises) and plan to stay in Aligarh for two years to work on it. If you visit Aligarh after I arrive, Insha'Allah, we may have the opportunity to meet there.

I'm unsure, however, what this conversation would be about. We've already discussed it in Azamgarh. Since then, I've conveyed everything I needed to in writing. So, I don't understand what remaining issues we would discuss.

You wrote, "Let's clear any misunderstandings we have about each other and have an open discussion on the contentious issues." However, I have no personal grievances or misunderstandings with you that need clearing. My main concern is about the ideological interpretation presented in Maulana Maududi's literature. You or the *Jamaat* only become involved because you have adopted this interpretation and are defending it. When I brought up this topic during the conversation in Azamgarh, it was not to "limit" the discussion, as you have written, but to focus on the main issue, as Maulana Maududi's literature is indeed my primary concern.

I strongly believe that Maulana Maududi's interpretation of *deen* is not accurate. This conviction is not limited

to any single book or a few paragraphs of any book but applies to his entire body of dawah literature. I believe Maulana Maududi's error is not a minor one but a fundamental mistake in establishing the overall understanding of *deen*, causing a shift in the relative significance of each component of *deen* in his mind. Consequently, all his interpretations of *deen* have been affected by this.

On the other hand, you and the other members of *Jamaat-e-Islami* see this literature as the genuine representation of the Jamaat's ideology and, as a result, the most accurate interpretation of *deen*. Given this, I cannot understand how I could stay within *Jamaat-e-Islami*. My beliefs about the literature naturally lead me to try and challenge or correct it. But whenever I do this while remaining inside *Jamaat*, I feel it goes against integrity. Because, as one *Jamaat* member said, this is like "sabotaiging" the *Jamaat* from within. Someone with such views should work from outside the *Jamaat* rather than from inside.

I will certainly comply with your request if you wish to proceed with a conversation. However, given that this process has continued for two and a half years without yielding any results, I do not hold much hope for the future. You may recall that our discussions began in June 1960. Since then, we have had numerous opportunities for dialogue, including detailed written exchanges

through Maulana Sadruddin. Yet the core issue remains the same place it was two and a half years ago.

Therefore, I ask that you resolve this issue instead of unnecessarily extending it, so that, as you mentioned, you may be relieved from the “debates and discussions,” and I can proceed with my work focused.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

In response to my above letter, I received a letter from Maulana Abul Lais Sahib on February 28th, in which I was again invited to attend the Majlis e Shura meeting in Delhi.

In response, I wrote that I would not be able to come to Delhi and requested that you send me your thoughts in writing. I assured you that I would consider your words with full sincerity and give you a thoughtful response.

Subsequently, I received his letter dated April 10, in which it was again urged that I participate in the Shura meeting so that we could have a conversation there. Otherwise we meet in Azamgarh, as he plans to visit Azamgarh, his hometown, before Eid al-Adha. The letter stated:

“However, if, God forbid, you are unwilling to wait that long, then what else can I say? You should proceed with your plans, assuming that your affiliation with the *Jamaat* has already been severed. I am waiting to know if you will be coming or if you prefer to delay the matter until my visit. Or, if, unfortunately, you wish to conclude the matter immediately without a final discussion.”

When Maulana Abul Lais Sahib’s letter arrived, I was not present in Azamgarh. After my return, I wrote this response to him.

Azamgarh – April 26, 1963

Respected Sir,
Assalamu Alaykum,

I was away for two weeks, so I only received your letter dated April 10 last night after Maghrib. In response, I want to say that if you wish to have a “final conversation” with me, I am willing to do so. If you had written down the points you wanted to discuss in your letter, this matter could have been resolved by now. Nonetheless, since you plan to visit Azamgarh before Eid al-Adha, we can talk here.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

Since I was delayed in writing this response due to my travels, Maulana mistakenly thought I was unwilling to have the conversation and wanted a decision without a final discussion. As a result, the very next day, I received the following letter, signed by the Secretary of *Jamaat*:

Delhi – April 25, 1963

Respected Brother,
Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullah,

The honourable Amir *Jamaat*'s letter dated April 10, 1963, has yet to receive a response, nor have you arrived here. It appears that you have chosen the last of the three options mentioned in that letter. Therefore, with great reluctance, we inform you that your name has been struck off the membership list.

Wassalamu Alaykum wa ala man ladaykum (Peace be upon you, and upon all those with you).

Your Brother,
Muhammad Yusuf

Correspondence with Maulana Abu A'la Maududi

Now, let's turn to Maulana Maududi. Initially, in December 1961, I tried to send him a copy of my writing, but due to a misunderstanding on the part of the bearer, it never reached him and was returned to me a few months later from Calcutta. Afterwards, on May 10, 1962 (5th of Dhul-Hijjah, 1381 AH), I sent another copy to Lahore in person. However, by coincidence, Maulana was travelling to Saudia Arabia for Hajj, so he practically received my writing on June 8, 1962. Along with my writing, I sent him the following letter:

“Please review this and inform me of your detailed response, so that I may reflect further on this issue considering your feedback.

About fifteen years ago, in 1947, I was deeply influenced by your writings, and shortly afterwards, I joined *Jamaat-e-Islami Hind* as a member and began working for the movement in Azamgarh. Nearly ten years passed in this manner. Then, in October 1955, I was called to Rampur to assist the local Jamaat's department of research and publication. After coming here, I needed to study the Quran systematically to accomplish the writing tasks assigned to me, something I hadn't had the opportunity to do earlier in my life. When I started reading the Quran anew, I found myself

experiencing a fresh realisation. I felt that the Quran was not confirming my existing views. The vision of Islam I saw in the Quran appeared different from what I had encountered in *Jamaat-e-Islami's* literature. This realisation plunged me into a prolonged intellectual struggle that grew more intense each day. Initially, I tried to discuss this with the responsible individuals in our *Jamaat*, but they could not change my perception. Finally, I decided to document my thoughts thoroughly. This is a brief account of the intellectual journey that began five years ago and culminated in this letter.

Since this document was not originally written with the intention of being sent to you, but that decision was made only later, you may find it lacking in certain areas or appearing more like an article than a letter.

However, I ask that you overlook these aspects and share your clear commentary on its main points.

I eagerly waited for Maulana Maududi's response, expecting him, the founder of this ideological approach, to provide the most thorough critique. One day, I received an envelope in the mail with his reply:

Lahore – June 15, 1962

Respected and Honourable,

Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullah

I received your card dated May 29 after I returned from Hajj. However, the written work you mentioned

hadn't reached me until then, so I was waiting to respond until I received it. Just a few days ago, a young man from Rampur delivered your writing to me, and I am now informing you that I have received it.

Your writing is substantial and resembles a well-prepared book containing detailed objections. Given my current commitments, reading it thoroughly and providing a comprehensive response is quite difficult. Additionally, after reading your introductory remarks and discussion under the title *Shahadat-e-Haq* (Testimony of Truth), I felt that the issue isn't simply a matter of objections. Instead, it seems that your study has led you in a completely different direction than the one my study has taken.

In such a situation, it seems somewhat pointless for us to get involved in a debate. I have clearly stated my perspective in my books and articles. If, after reading them, you decide that I haven't understood religion correctly, you are welcome to disassociate yourself from my viewpoint and start promoting what you believe is correct. However, if you only want to point out errors in my interpretation, I won't stop you either. You are free to publish your own book.

Yours humbly,
Abul A'la

Of course, this letter was not enough to satisfy me. Therefore, I sent the following letter on June 25 in response:

“Dear Sir, I received your letter dated June 15, 1962, in Rampur on June 23. Regrettably, contrary to my expectations, you acknowledged receipt of my writing and declined to respond to it. Once again, I implore you, for the sake of God, to kindly assist me. With God as my witness, I say in all sincerity that my intention is not to stir up controversy in the name of religion. Instead, after careful and unbiased study, I have reached a conclusion with complete honesty. Considering my current understanding, my reason and conscience compel me to believe that the interpretation of religion I have adhered to for the past fifteen years is incorrect. In contrast, the alternate interpretation, which appears correct to me, I have clearly explained in my writing. Please read it and share your opinion with specific arguments. I assure you I will consider it seriously, and if my understanding confirms that your view aligns more closely with the Quran and Sunnah, God willing, I will have no hesitation in accepting it. Although you have expressed your views thoroughly in your books and articles, no written work can fully address all questions that might arise later. Your books reflect your perspective, not direct answers to my questions. If someone points out a flaw in the arguments supporting your view, you should clarify your position again in relation to the identified flaw.

You don't need to go into much detail for this. Before, you've read a critic's writing, identified the main points, and responded only to those, ignoring the rest. You can do the same with my writing.

You have repeatedly stated that if anyone believes your perspective does not align with the Quran and Sunnah, they should clarify it to you through the Quran and Sunnah and that you will indeed consider it. You have also asserted that if you ever realize that you have deviated even slightly from the Quran and Sunnah, you will immediately return to the truth. Therefore, when someone attempts to draw your attention to your mistakes in light of the Quran and Sunnah, how can it be appropriate to neither accept nor refute their arguments, nor even make an effort to read them in full, and simply dismiss them without justification?

Let me also clarify that this issue is not limited to myself alone. All the colleagues to whom I have shown this writing—including individuals from all levels—are also awaiting your response. Although they have not agreed with my ideas, they believe you need to provide a reasoned refutation of the objections raised in my writing to retain their confidence in the previous perspective. In such a situation, it would be a great injustice not only to me but to all these people if you remained silent. Additionally, I doubt you can indeed

remain silent on this issue indefinitely. So, why not say now whatever you would eventually say in the future? This would be an attempt on your part to resolve this issue through private conversation, avoiding public debate and conflict, just as I sent you my writing before considering it for publication with the same intention. In conclusion, if your knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah indicates that I am not on the right path and you have solid arguments for this, then it is your duty to correct me with those arguments. If you remain silent despite having evidence and tell me to continue promoting what you believe to be misguidance, I cannot understand how you will justify this before God.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

Meanwhile, I kept waiting for Maulana Maududi's response. But, two weeks went by, and during that time, I received a letter from Mr. Shams Peerzada, a member of the Central Advisory Council of *Jamaat-e-Islami* Hind and the leader of the Bombay branch of *Jamaat-e-Islami*. His letter mentioned an additional matter. Because of this, I sent a third letter to Maulana.

Rampur – July 9, 1962

Respected Maulana Syed Abul A'la Maududi,
Assalamu Alaykum,

In response to your letter dated June 15, 1962, I sent a letter on June 25 and am still waiting for a reply. Meanwhile, I received a letter from Mr. Shams Peerzada, who met you in Makkah during Hajj and mentioned my article to you. According to him, you responded:

“Tell Mr. Wahiduddin Khan to write down his objections and send them to me. God willing, I will respond to them.”

Now I can't understand how the objections you addressed a month ago have now become “futile” in your view after a month. As for your letter of June 15, the reason you gave for not replying is unclear. You wrote that “your writing contains detailed objections” and that “after reading your argument, I felt that the issue is not just a few objections. Rather, your study has led you in a different direction than mine.” Then, you said you couldn't respond by stating, “In this situation, it feels somewhat futile for us to get involved in a debate.”

I don't see the logical link between these statements. It appears the second is a result of the first. But how does labeling an objection as “detailed” and fundamentally “opposite” to your view mean you shouldn't reply? Are only objections that aren't detailed and don't

challenge your main point worth responding to? I can't understand the meaning of your reply.

Once again, I must say that by choosing silence on this issue, you have placed yourself in a position of great responsibility. If you feel that my path and yours are going in "opposite directions," surely you are on the correct path, or I am. Now, if you do not accept my path, you consider yourself on the right path. I cannot understand how silence could be permissible for you. If you believe you are in the right and have strong arguments to support it, then it is your duty to try to clear up my misunderstanding. If you choose not to do so, you risk the serious possibility that, in the Hereafter, you will be questioned about why you did not clarify the mistake of someone you knew was wrong and who personally asked you for clarification.

If someone possesses the truth, it is a gift from God. The most deserving person of this trust is the one who has been deprived of it. So, won't you try to deliver this trust to the rightful recipient?

If these few lines of mine are able to influence you and you decide to write a response, it will be my good fortune. If not, I must request that you return my writing to me.

Yours sincerely,

Wahiduddin

Later, on July 20, 1962, I received back the writing I had sent to Maulana Maududi. Two days afterward, on July 23, 1962, I received an envelope with the following letter.

Lahore – July 14, 1962

Respected and honourable,

Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullah

I received your letter dated July 9, but I have not yet received your June 25 letter. What I told Mr. Shams Peerzada was because I was not fully aware of your views at that time. In my previous letter, I offered a brief apology based on a preliminary impression I formed after a quick look at your article. Later, when I reviewed the entire article, I realized how much you have accomplished.

In my opinion, your study is seriously lacking. You have drawn incorrect conclusions and have not fully understood my position—in fact, you have misinterpreted it. What's more concerning is that in this article, you write from a very high pedestal, as if anyone who does not share your view is both ignorant and misguided, as well as a source of misinformation. My challenge now is that I am not used to addressing someone who, despite lacking knowledge, is deeply deluded.

You have only two options: First, to present your perspective positively based on your understanding and

avoid feeling obligated to refute others unnecessarily. If you choose this path, others will feel no need to confront you. The second is to start your work by refuting me, considering it your duty. If you choose this route, I will counter your arguments if necessary to protect people from the misunderstandings you create. You have reached the point where attempts to explain things to you are no longer effective. However, the public deserves protection from misunderstanding, and if others in India and Pakistan handle this matter, I will not need to speak. Otherwise, I will be forced to take on this unpleasant task.

I'm returning your article with this letter.

Yours humbly,

Abul A'la

After reading Maulana Maududi's response, my initial impression was that, although he accused me of being self-assured, his letter showed that same trait with noticeable intensity. However, putting these issues aside, I sent him the following letter on July 25.

Rampur – July 25, 1962

Respected Sir,

Assalamu Alaykum

I received your letter dated July 14. I regret that you have

formed the opinion that I have “passed the point where efforts to explain things could be beneficial.” If only you knew that I am solely in pursuit of the truth. Perhaps you came to this conclusion based on the current detailed form of my writing. However, the reason for its detailed form is not because I am unwilling to listen; rather, it is because, in my quest for a complete explanation of the matter, I reached this level of detail. You would agree that an event cannot be fully understood with only a partial study. Every incident has many aspects and is connected to a larger whole. Therefore, understanding any event in its entirety requires looking at it within its full context. This alone is the reason for the current shape of my writing.

I am disappointed that you dismissed my writing as merely a product of my “incomplete study and lack of knowledge.” It would have been more helpful if you had analyzed my objections and identified the weaknesses in my reasoning. That way, the main issue could have been addressed, and my lack of knowledge would have become evident. However, instead, you relied only on assertions. If you couldn’t provide a thorough opinion on the entire article right now, you could have selected one or two sections as examples and explained the mistakes in my reasoning. If you had done so, it would have been more useful to me than your letter, which only expresses indignation without addressing the main points.

The final comment in your letter has put me in a tough spot. I went through the trouble of writing this long article—or “book,” as you called it—and sending it to you because I wanted to know beforehand if I was wrong so I could avoid the mistake of publishing it unnecessarily. However, you have made it clear that you only want to comment after it has been published and made public. If I had been eager to publish it, I would have done so quite a while ago. I’ve been talking about this with various people for some time. But when I found no help from others, I turned to you. If that was a mistake on my part, I regret that it wasn’t just my error; many other members of the *Jamaat*, who still trust your thinking and hold it in high regard, also share this mistake directly. They advised and even insisted that I send my writing to you for your comments.

If only you would agree to respond to my questions! As far as I am concerned, I am ready to sincerely consider it, objectively, in whatever manner and language you find appropriate. However, if, unfortunately, that does not happen, I am also fully prepared that if circumstances lead me to publish it, and after publication, I find through your comments for “the public” that I was indeed mistaken, then, God willing, nothing will stop me from retracting at any stage. Still, you will definitely bear the responsibility for not

trying to correct me and for pre-emptively concluding that I am not open to guidance.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

Lahore – August 5, 1962

Respected and Honourable

Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullah

I received your letter dated July 25. After years of writing and interacting with many people, I have developed enough ability to gauge a person's mental state by reading their work. After reading your article, the impression I get is that, on the one hand, you have built a strong sense of self-confidence and pride. On the other hand, you also seem to have a significant aversion to the perspective you intend to challenge.

You have even gone so far as to harshly criticize the person presenting this view. After reaching this point, you now turn to me. Do you expect me to engage in a debate with you? Please review your article critically, considering the standpoint from which you are speaking and the assumptions you have made about me from start to finish. If you still have any capacity for self-reflection, I hope that, after critically examining your own article, you will understand why

I have taken this stance. No other course of action would have been appropriate.

Afterwards, if you are willing to step down from the elevated position from which you have spoken and recognize that the person you have repeatedly critiqued is at least not a novice, then there may be an opportunity for me to engage in discussion on the issues you have raised in your article. If not, the only options before you are those I have previously mentioned.

Please do not mistake my candor for anger. I have no intention of leaving you with any misunderstandings. That's why I spoke plainly before, and I am doing so again now.

Humbly,
Abul Ala

After that, I sent the following letter to Maulana Maududi.

Rampur – August 14, 1963

Your letter, dated August 5th, has been received. I thought you had become so displeased with me that this correspondence might not continue in the future. However, upon reading your latest letter, I am hopeful that there is still a 'possibility' that you may engage with me on the issues I raised in my article.

Respected Maulana, if I know myself—and perhaps the greatest reality a person can know in this world is his own self—then I would say that your perception of me is completely opposite to the facts. It is far from the truth to think that I am caught up in ‘arrogant pride’ and have such a strong aversion to the viewpoint I criticized that I have sunk to ‘debating for the sake of argument,’ to the point that my ability for ‘self-critique’ might now be questionable. While I am not shocked by your disagreement with my perspective, your remarks are surprising because, upon self-reflection, I find my inner state to be completely opposite to what, unfortunately, you have assumed. This is something I can state with the utmost certainty about myself.

I remember very well that four months ago, when it was decided in Delhi that I should send a copy of my writing to you for comments, several of my colleagues advised me against sending the entire text. They suggested that I only send the portions containing the theoretical and scholarly discussions, or even, as Maulana Abu’l Lais proposed, that I prepare a separate questionnaire with my questions in a purely inquisitive tone regarding the relevant verses, and send that instead. They believed that since Maulana Maududi is not personally familiar with you, he might misunderstand your intentions when reading the whole text. However, I did not

follow their advice. I thought it was better to send the entire document to give the full context, so you could respond more clearly. Regarding the risk of misunderstanding, I said that I know Maududi Sahib to be a man of considerable openness. He is also one of those who can perceive a person's intent through their writing. Therefore, he would not form a negative opinion of me simply because of a few words or a particular style. But perhaps it is a universal truth that nothing is without exceptions.

I recognize that my writing style might seem harsh. However, if you looked beyond my words, you would see only a broken heart, a deeply concerned soul, and a strong sense of humility. You say that if I step down from the 'elevated position' I imagine myself in, a conversation could happen. But, in reality, there is no question of 'descending;' I see myself very much in a low position. My inner state and true feelings are so different from your view that I am repeatedly amazed that such a misjudgement could occur in this world.

The reality of this situation has made me realize that if someone can make such a major mistake in understanding another human being, then it is even more likely that they could misunderstand God's religion.

Please consider this: if I were motivated by a sense of self-pride, would I be so eager to learn your opinion?

For the past two years, I have been engaged in ongoing discussions on these issues with the top leaders here (in *Jamaat-e-Islami*). I have been putting my thoughts into writing and sharing them with others, preparing copies of such a long article and sending them to knowledgeable colleagues for their review. Is this the behavior of someone suffering from conceit?

If I were driven by false pride, I would have done this instead: as soon as my article was finished, I would send it to one of the many journals that seem eager to publish pieces like this. But I honestly say that the very idea disgusts me—that I should be published in rival journals and engage in shallow publicity against the *Jamaat-e-Islami* that so many people have been participating in for quite some time.

Honestly, my only focus is to understand what true Islam really is. Now that you've given me hope, with certain conditions, that you might comment on my thoughts, I am willing to accept all your conditions without hesitation. I assure you that I am completely free from any fear of 'winning or losing.' I see it as a victory if I discover the truth, whether it matches my viewpoint or someone else's.

Lastly, let me clarify my main concern. The main difficulty I face is that, in your various writings and speeches, the concept of the Islamic goal or the

mission of the prophets—as you have described it to be clear, the issue is the idea of considering politics as the mission of Islam, not the claim that politics or government has no place in Islam—is something I have not found in any verse or hadith. So far, none of the arguments I’ve seen seem to support the core issue at hand.

It is specifically this doubt that I seek your response to. The other points you mentioned in my writing are not my main concern. Instead, all these elements came up as I tried to understand the core issue. You are free to respond to them or not. If the meaning of the verses becomes clear, the other issues will sort themselves out.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

Lahore – August 25, 1962

Respected and Honourable,

Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah,

I received your kind letter. At this point, it’s pointless to debate the motives you now attribute to your writing and those that seem clear in the lines of that writing. I may have misunderstood, or perhaps you unintentionally misrepresented your true thoughts in

this article. In any case, I see no reason to doubt the intentions you've now expressed. Please resend your article, and if you don't mind including a blank sheet between each page, it would be more convenient. I will briefly note my response on the corresponding page. It's not necessary that my responses will fully satisfy you. You still have the right to believe that I have misunderstood the religion. However, I will do my best to help you understand.

With regards,
Humbly,
Abul Ala

Following this, I wrote to Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maududi:

'I am very pleased to read your letter. It genuinely reflects your respected character and aligns with the high regard I have always had for you.'

Furthermore, I asked what form I should use to send my questions. In response, I received the following letter from Maulana's special assistant:

Lahore – September 12, 1962

Respected and Honourable,

Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah,

I have received your letter. If you wish, you can also compile and send your questions so that the respected Maulana can quickly get a clear understanding of the specific issues you want researched, as well as the particular Quranic verses and Hadiths that have influenced your thinking toward a certain point of view. Along with this questionnaire, it would be helpful if you could also send your original writing (*Tabeer Ki Ghalati*), so the Maulana can review the matter in full detail. Although he is currently very busy, he will, to address your concerns, make any effort he can.

Humbly,

Ghulam Ali

Personal Aide to Maulana Abul Ala Maududi

After receiving this letter, I sent a copy of part of my writing by post office, along with the following letter:

Rampur – September 25, 1962

Respected Sir,

Greetings of peace,

I'm glad you reconsidered your earlier decision and agreed to comment on my thoughts and address my concerns about your ideas. May Allah, the Almighty, be our Helper and guide us toward what is closest to the truth in His sight.

At this point, I believe it's best to send you a brief overview of my thoughts instead of a detailed write-up. The attached document clearly outlines my initial concerns. Please keep this in mind as you prepare your reply. As instructed, I've included blank sheets between the pages of my writing to help you add your comments. Please confirm once you've received this document and let me know an approximate time when I can expect your reply. After I receive your response, I will share my reflections.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

I sent this writing to Maulana in two instalments: the first on September 25 and the second on November 26. Along with the second instalment, I sent the following letter:

Azamgarh – November 26, 1962

Respected Sir,

Greetings of peace,

I want to inform you that the document I prepared has two parts. One part presents a theoretical discussion of your line of thought, while the other covers the practical results of this idea.

My main concern is with your interpretation of the Islamic mission, or, in other words, the relationship you describe between the *Shariah* and the person it is meant to serve. This relationship does not seem to be supported by the Quran. Therefore, in my view, only the first part is fundamentally important. The significance of the second part, which involves practical outcomes, relies on the accuracy of the first. If the first part is proven wrong, then these outcomes—assuming they are accepted as facts—lack validity as conclusions based on a flawed theory.

For now, I want to present only the first part of my theory. After reviewing the materials sent, you will see why I believe your interpretation is not based on the Quran. I have also included an article titled “The Correct Understanding of Religion,” where I try to explain, according to my understanding, what I think are the true requirements of religion.

After reviewing all these writings, you will gain a complete understanding of my stance from a theoretical point of view. I hope that, after considering them, you will reply with a clear and detailed response.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

A few days later, I sent the following letter as well:

Azamgarh – December 8, 1962

Respected Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maududi,

Greetings of peace,

Given your increasing commitments, you might feel that I am unnecessarily involving you in this issue. Yet, as you know, each person naturally regards the issue closest to their heart as the most important and worthy of attention. It is for this reason alone that I have ventured to interrupt your busy schedule.

I hope that overlooking my impertinences, you will find the time to consider my issue and will soon send a detailed response to my questions.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

After this, I received the following letter from Maulana Maududi:

Lahore – December 8, 1962

Respected and Honourable,

Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah,

I have received your second article as well. Since October 20, I have been on continuous tours, and now I am headed to Saudi Arabia, so I haven't had a chance

to read your articles yet. Once I find some time, I will review them and share my thoughts with you.

With regards,
Humbly,
Abul Ala

After that, I received a letter dated January 17, 1963, from the respected Maulana's personal aide, Mr. Ghulam Ali, in which—while referring to the articles already received—he requested that I send the remaining parts of my writing as well, “so that all the articles may be before us at the same time. Then, Insha'Allah, the Maulana will share his thoughts on them.”

In response, I wrote:

Azamgarh, January 30, 1963

Respected Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maududi,

Greetings of peace,

I received your kind letter dated January 17. The articles I sent you include three papers with the following titles:

1. Interpretation of the Islamic Mission
2. Commentary on *Quran Ki Chaar Buniyadi Istlahein*
3. The Correct Understanding of Religion

In these three articles, I have shared my thoughts both

positively and negatively from a theoretical perspective, and these form the basis of my intellectual concerns. Besides these, I have also discussed the ‘Outcomes’—that is, in my view, the errors in interpreting religion have led to certain practical consequences that could be expected from this mindset. However, these results are not the core of my concern. Even if they are accepted as facts, they carry weight only when the underlying way of thinking is first shown to be mistaken. Otherwise, they could result from other causes and would be addressed differently.

Additionally, this piece regarding ‘Outcomes’ was primarily written with the individuals in India in mind. For these reasons, I do not find it necessary to send the remaining part of my writing to you currently. For now, please respond to my concerns from a theoretical perspective. After that, we can proceed as needed.¹

This is my view, but if you insist, I have no objection to sending the remaining parts.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

1. When I first sent my writing to Maulana Maududi in May 1962, I included the entire document, covering both theoretical ideas and outcomes. Later, I realized it would be better to request feedback only on the theoretical part. Therefore, on the second occasion, I sent only that section.

I sent one part of my writing at the end of September 1962 and the second part at the end of November 1962. Several months have passed since then, and during this time, I have sent multiple reminder letters. Finally, after a long wait, I received a package on March 26, 1963. My address was written on the top, and the lines below noted the following:

Sender: Malik Ghulam Ali

Personal Aide to Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maududi

Ichhra, Lahore

The package indicated that it was the same document I had been eagerly waiting for over the past six months. However, when I opened it, I found my document had been returned to me exactly as I had sent it. All the pages I had placed between for responses were completely blank, with no annotations, except that it seemed something had been written in pencil at one spot but was erased. As a result, I wrote the following letter:

Azamgarh – March 26, 1963

Respected Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maududi,

Greetings of peace,

In today's mail, I received the article I had sent back. As you asked, I included blank sheets between each page for your reply. However, contrary to what we agreed

on, all those sheets are completely blank, and there is no letter from you either. I cannot understand this.

For context, when I first sent my writing to Maulana Maududi in May 1962, I included the entire work along with its ideas and conclusions. Later, however, I decided it was better to request his comments only on the theoretical section. Therefore, on the second occasion, I sent just that part.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

After several days went by without any response from Maulana, I sent a second letter with these words:

Azamgarh – April 16, 1963

Respected Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maududi,
Greetings of peace,

The articles I sent you were returned to me in the mail on March 26 without any response from you or any accompanying letter explaining why they were returned unopened.

I had initially sent these articles to you in May 1962. While in Makkah, you had assured Mr Shams Peerzada that ‘I will respond to them.’ However, despite this promise, you returned them without a reply in July.

Following further correspondence, you requested my articles again and, in your letter dated August 25, 1962, promised, 'I will certainly try to help you understand within my capacity.' Thus, I sent the articles to you once more.

I was now fully expecting that you would comment on my writings, hoping your response would offer a chance for deeper reflection on the matter. This issue concerns you directly, and no one else could clarify it as well as you can. During this time, we exchanged letters in which you repeatedly assured me you would address this concern. Your special assistant, Mr. Ghulam Ali, mentioned in his letter dated September 12, 1962, that 'Maulana will spare no effort to address your concerns.' Later, I received a letter dated December 8, 1962, signed by you, stating, 'After reading your articles, I will inform you of my thoughts.' Then, in a letter dated January 17, 1963, Mr. Ghulam Ali wrote, 'Maulana will share his thoughts on your articles.'

Despite all these assurances, the quiet return of my articles is surprising. I am unsure how to interpret this. Immediately after receiving the returned articles, I sent you a letter on March 26, but I haven't received a response yet. I am writing again now. Please let me know the reason for this. If the articles were returned due to a misunderstanding, I am willing to send them a third time.

I await your response on this matter with anticipation.

Sincerely,
Wahiduddin

Later, I found out that Maulana Maududi had sent me a letter along with the returned articles. However, I did not receive it on time. I received this letter in the third week of April. Here is a copy of that letter:

Lahore – March 21, 1963

Respected and Honourable,

Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah,

After sending your articles, you repeatedly asked in multiple letters for my comments. After a brief review, I initially told you that you've reached such a high and distant level that any discussion with you has become impossible and pointless. However, you refused to accept my suggestion and kept insisting.

I have once again studied your writings carefully, and I am compelled to reaffirm that engaging in a written debate with you is neither possible nor suitable for me. Currently, I have before me a more appropriate use for my limited strength and time. Therefore, I respectfully withdraw from this matter and hope that you will refrain from further correspondence, as it would only waste both your time and mine.

Your articles are being returned to you; you may use them as you see fit.

Humbly,
Abul Ala

Azamgarh – April 20, 1963

Respected Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maududi,

Greetings of peace,

I received your letter dated March 21. I am surprised that, despite your promise, you declined to respond to my questions. If you were unable to provide a detailed reply, you could have offered a general comment on my concerns. If even that was not feasible, you could have selected a single point from the entire discussion, analysed it, and demonstrated to me how my reasoning is weak and lacks scholarly depth.

In my previous letters, I presented all these options to you. Yet rather than choosing any of these approaches, you directed sarcastic remarks toward me. If you had words for sarcasm, you certainly could have had words for a response, but you chose the former and left the latter.

I must say that by doing so, you have chosen a very precarious path for yourself. First, when a person approaches you with his thoughts, and you are aware of the flaws in his reasoning, yet you do not offer a

single word in response and return the writing without comment, then, to the extent that you recognize his error, you bear some responsibility for his mistake. Think about how serious this is.

Secondly, you know that the conclusions I have reached through my studies have led me to believe that “religion has been compromised.” If this sentiment persists in me, I will be obligated to express and declare it to the best of my ability. If your knowledge and understanding deem my perception incorrect, it was incumbent upon you to attempt to change this sentiment, thereby preventing me from taking such an action. Then, if I persisted in my actions, the responsibility would have rested on me. However, by not responding to stop me, the responsibility for my actions now shifts directly onto you.

For the past eleven months, I have remained in contact with you to obtain your response to this issue, and this correspondence will undoubtedly testify that today I stand as a victim. Perhaps you know that casting oneself as an oppressor while placing another in the position of the oppressed deprives one of divine support and entitles the other to it. Divine support is always granted to the oppressed, not the oppressor.

Sincerely,

Wahiduddin

I did not receive any response to this letter from Maulana Maududi. It is difficult for me to understand why he adopted this stance regarding my questions. But those who know are aware that this is a great tragedy for me. Since these thoughts entered my mind, I have been deeply distressed. On the one hand, my feeling that “religion has been compromised” urges me to express and declare this sentiment. On the other hand, I am unwilling to criticize those who are working in the name of religion. I had shared with several of my companions that I would be most relieved if Maulana Maududi’s response could change my perspective and spare me this turmoil. I even mentioned that if Maulana Maududi could not respond to my entire writing but merely pointed out a single error in it, it would at least cause me to doubt myself. A visible error in one part might lead me to question if the remaining parts could also be flawed, providing me with a reasonable excuse not to publish my work.

But unfortunately, these hopes were not fulfilled. Now, I am proceeding to publish this work with the same reluctance as a reluctant witness in a sensitive case who wishes not to speak in court but, despite all efforts, finds himself compelled to testify.

Today, this work is being published against my will. However, perhaps I am justified in saying that the

responsibility for its publication no longer rests on me but on Maulana Maududi.

Appendix

Maulana Maududi's letter dated March 21, 1963, clearly showed that he was no longer eager to reply to me. In that letter, he simply stated:

“I offer you my final apology in this matter, and I hope you will not waste your time or mine in any further correspondence.”

Therefore, my only remaining option was to compile my writing into a book and proceed with its publication. However, I also felt it was necessary to share my saddened feelings with Maulana, so I sent him a letter dated April 20, 1963. I assumed that Maulana would not want to “waste” his time replying to this letter. Yet, two months later, I received another letter from Maulana Maududi on June 21, revealing an additional matter. Since the printing plates had already been prepared by that time,² this letter could not be included in the original sequence. However, without this letter, the story would be incomplete, so it is included here separately in an appendix.

2. This refers to the time when the first edition of the book was published, in 1963.

Lahore—June 12, 1963

Respected and Honourable,

Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah,

Your kind letter reached me during my pilgrimage to Hajj. Due to my absence, I could not respond promptly.

By nature, I have little interest in debates and disputes and always try to avoid them. When I reviewed your article, '*Tabeer Ki Ghalti* (Error of Interpretation),' I sensed that your disagreement with me was no longer purely academic; instead, a sense of stubbornness and resentment had developed within you toward me. You left no stone unturned in finding fault with even my straightforward statements and, at various points, launched harsh criticisms against me. Additionally, I noticed a strong sense of confidence in your writing, leading me to believe that nothing but my "admission of error" would satisfy you, as you seem firmly convinced that your understanding is entirely correct, leaving no room for the possibility that my perspective might be valid. Therefore, it appears that the only acceptable course for me would be to admit my mistake before you. These aspects of your writing were so obvious that even a less perceptive person could not fail to notice them. For this reason, I expressed my inability to engage in debate with you, as under these circumstances, if anyone could guide you, it would have to be someone other than myself. Engaging in a debate with you would be unproductive.

Subsequently, when you persisted, I reluctantly agreed to respond to your core questions. However, in the meantime, certain individuals who had previously engaged in discussions with you in India advised me not to invest my time in this debate. I do not think it appropriate to detail their experiences, as that would only open the door to further unnecessary debate. Suffice it to say their accounts reassured me that my initial stance was correct. If you wish to consider this as a form of oppression on my part toward you, you are free to do so; however, in my sincere opinion, I am perhaps the least suited person to attempt to explain things to you. Therefore, my request is that you kindly accept my apology in this matter.

My sincere advice remains that if, through your deep and extensive study of religion, you have reached a particular understanding, then present it confidently and invite others to consider it. Why must the start of your invitation focus on refuting or invalidating someone else's perspective? Still, if you feel it necessary to initiate your invitation this way, I have no right to prevent you. My list of critics is already quite long, and your addition will make little difference.

Humbly,
Abul Ala

With Maulana Maududi's letter dated March 21, 1963, the correspondence I started last year through Shams Peerzada during Hajj, with Maulana's promise of a reply, has now ended with his refusal to answer after his return from Hajj the following year. Despite verbal and written promises, Maulana never responded to my criticisms of his views. The reasons he listed in his letters are as follows:

1. Your writing has many objections, and with my current commitments, it's very hard for me to read it and give a detailed response.
2. Your study has taken you in a direction completely opposite to where my study has led me, so it's pointless for us to argue.
3. Your understanding is lacking, and to make matters worse, you consider yourself to be at a very high level. My difficulty is that I am not used to addressing someone who lacks knowledge yet thinks highly of himself.
4. You've passed the point where trying to explain things to you would help. Therefore, no response will be given. However, if you publish your book, a rebuttal will be issued to protect the public from the misconceptions you've presented.
5. Because your writing is polemical in nature, you should not expect me to engage in a back-and-

forth question-and-answer exchange or to enter into a debate with you.

6. If you would lower yourself from your high stance and recognize that the person you're criticizing is not a beginner, then maybe we could have a discussion.
7. You have reached such a high and distant level that further conversation with you is impossible and unproductive. Currently, I have more worthwhile uses for my limited strength and time, so I find it neither feasible nor appropriate to engage in a written debate with you.
8. Certain individuals from India who have debated with you advised me not to waste my time on this discussion.
9. If you want to publish your book, go ahead. My list of critics is already pretty long, and your addition won't make much of a difference.

Readers can judge for themselves how much these reasons justify his refusal to respond to my concerns. As for myself, I cannot understand how any of the reasons above could justify Maulana's complete refusal to address my questions. If an objection is "extensive," one could choose to give a brief answer due to lack of time, but the length of an objection is not a valid reason to avoid responding entirely. Similarly, if a particular

thought diverges from your own, that is grounds to refute it thoroughly, not to refuse a response.

Similarly, if the respondent believes the questioner's understanding is lacking or considers the questioner's self-assessment to be exaggerated, these are simply claims made by the respondent; presenting well-reasoned evidence is always better than just making assertions. Additionally, deciding in advance—before offering a reply—that the questioner has already passed the point where explanation could be of any benefit is indeed a claim to possessing a special kind of insight, but it does not establish that the respondent is justified in declaring the question unanswerable. Furthermore, the claim that the questioner does not fully respect the person he is addressing is merely the respondent's own intuition, and instead of expressing such intuition, it is more important for him to present his view on the actual issue. Finally, even after promising to respond, refusing to do so because certain people in India advised against it is hardly a valid reason. If someone genuinely advised Maulana in this way, then, fairly speaking, Maulana should have asked about what I discussed with those people, and I would have explained what those discussions involved. Now, he can see the full record of the exchange in the letters published with this book, which show how those debating with me mainly focused on minor issues rather than the main topic, and how, unfortunately, they influenced Maulana to adopt a similarly unscientific and illogical approach.

The most astonishing thing, however, is that Maulana has called my correspondence on the issues I raised “written polemics.” To me, this is like someone making a legitimate request in reasonable words only to be dismissed with an insult. I had written to Maulana explaining that my main concern was that his interpretation of Islam’s mission didn’t seem to be supported by the Quran and Hadith. I analyzed the verses and Hadith usually cited in this context and explained why I felt they didn’t back the interpretation he proposed. Is this what Maulana calls polemics? If so, what kind of critique can ever avoid being labeled as polemics?

I am astonished that Maulana made multiple efforts to bring up irrelevant points about me, yet he remained completely silent on the main issue I approached him about. He went out of his way to point out other mistakes and weaknesses of mine, even seeming to think it was okay to rely on hearsay in this matter. But on the very issue where my views were clearly presented in writing, and where I specifically asked for his response, he said nothing. Regarding the position that—based on the information I provided—he was fully capable of judging, he avoided the discussion entirely, despite my repeated requests and insistence. Yet on another matter, about which he had no more than baseless rumors and indirect reports, he expressed his opinion

with complete certainty. Perhaps, by offering some soothing words to justify this illogical behavior, he might fool the easily convinced public. But I don't see how he will answer to God on the Day of Judgment.

UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE

Among the sciences developed to interpret and explain Islam is a field called *Hikmat al-Deen* (Wisdom of Religion) or *Asrar al-Shari'ah* (Secrets of the *Shariah*). This discipline focuses on understanding the wisdom of religious teachings and recognizing the underlying rationale behind them. For example, when someone explains the obligations and rites of Hajj and how Hajj should be performed, that is Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence). But when someone describes the benefits of Hajj and says, "Hajj creates a global brotherhood of believers centered on the worship of God," that is called *Hikmat al-Deen*.

Just as other sciences began in the early Islamic period and later developed technical details, *Hikmat al-Deen* has also been a topic of discussion among Muslims from the beginning. Ample information on this subject is scattered throughout the vast Islamic literature. However, dedicated books on this subject are rare. In other Islamic sciences, one can cite dozens or even

hundreds of works on a single discipline, but only a few dedicated books have been written on *Hikmat al-Deen*. Among these, the most prominent and renowned is *Hujjatullah al-Baligha* by Shah Waliullah Dehlawi.

This describes one aspect of *Hikmat al-Deen*. When the matter is viewed from another angle, it becomes evident that systematic, focused scholarly work on this subject is even more limited. One understanding of *Hikmat al-Deen* is to explore the specific rationale of various parts of religion, such as the wisdom behind Salah (prayer), fasting, and Jihad. So far, most scholarly work on the wisdom of religion has focused on this aspect, examining different elements of religion under separate headings and explaining the particular wisdom behind each of them. Another aspect of *Hikmat al-Deen*, however, is to discern the collective wisdom of all religious elements, presenting a unified explanation that connects different facets of Islam and reveals the overarching wisdom through which Allah has integrated various elements of the faith.

In my view, the best description of Maulana Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi's work is that he attempted to address this second aspect of *Hikmat al-Deen*. He sought an interpretation in which Islam appears as an interrelated whole, and to his ability, he was able to discover an interpretation in which the *deen* appeared

as an interrelated whole. Outwardly, Maulana Maududi's work is a call to Islam, while academically, it is an insightful interpretation of religion. Indeed, it is this later characteristic of his work that has attracted many in the modern era, drawing them to embrace his ideas eagerly.

However, it is important to recognize that not every collection is necessarily authentic. The mere organization of disparate parts into a coherent whole may suggest they were part of a unified reality, yet there remains the possibility that the assembled structure may not reflect the truth. Each part may indeed be genuine, yet the form in which they are arranged could simply be a construct of someone's imagination.

For instance, if fossilized bones of ancient animals are discovered in an area, it is quite possible for one to gather some bones from that heap and arrange them to resemble a specific creature. In this way, an apparent order emerges. Those who have studied the theory of evolution know that similar hypothetical arrangements have led many proponents of evolution to elevate this theory from a hypothesis to a fact. Yet, repeated experimentation has shown that such constructs are not necessarily factual. Often, a person uses his imagination to piece together unrelated fragments into a specific shape, though this shape has no connection

to reality. For example, in the case of the Piltdown Man, scientists around the world were convinced for nearly half a century that this was the oldest prehistoric human skeleton known to us, but subsequent research revealed it to be a mere forgery, bearing no relation to the truth.

The fundamental error in the thought under discussion is that while it used all the components that, in some sense, are part of the religion, it arranged them into a structure under an overall concept that was incorrect. It is akin to dismantling a building and using its bricks and mortar to create a differently structured house. As a result, though its components are religious, its overall form does not align with the religion. Despite seeming to encompass the entirety of religion, its unique arrangement is at odds with the true essence of the faith.

The premise was that Islam is a comprehensive and detailed system of life, where all its elements interrelate accordingly. In the words of one proponent of this thought: Islam is a way of life that brings together all individual, social, and metaphysical dimensions of life into a single coherent framework and resolves them in harmony with reason and human nature.

There is nothing wrong in itself in describing religion as

a system. But when the concept of a system is treated as the sole unifying factor that brings its different elements together into a whole, it becomes clearly mistaken—and this is the central error of this line of thought. This approach studies religion mainly as a “system” of life. In its view, the overall framework through which the entire religion can be understood is its being a system. In reality, the essential nature of religion is that it defines the relationship between God and the human being. Religion is not merely a legal system like other systems; rather, it represents the inner bond between a human being and God. Once religion is put into practice, it does include all those elements which together may be described as a “system of life.” However, being a system is only one outcome of religion in practice. It is a secondary feature, not the essence of religion.

Studying religion under the theme of a “system” involves the same kind of error as that made by those who proposed, for the study of the human being, the theory that man is a social animal. It is true that, once practical details are taken into account, a human being does become, in one sense, a social or civil creature. However, the social or civil aspect is not the essential nature of the human being; it is only a manifestation of that essential nature. The true essence

of the human being lies in being a living and willing being, and all other aspects—whether social, civil, or otherwise—emerge from this essence through different forms of relation.

To say that “the human being is a civil or social being” is, in other words, to say that the comprehensive idea through which we can understand the various aspects of the human being is his being civilized. As a natural result of this interpretation, all aspects of human existence would be derived from the social aspect and regarded as its components. This interpretation would imply that all other aspects of the human being are included only because his social nature requires them.

For example, being a social being would require that the human being exist in the form of body and soul; therefore, he possesses a body and a soul. It would require that human beings have politics; therefore, they develop a political structure. It would require that they explain their relationship with the universe; therefore, a philosophy comes into existence, and so on.

In this view, all of human life seems to be included, making it seem like a complete explanation of human being. However, upon reflection, it becomes clear that it contains several errors.

1. According to this interpretation, the social or civil

aspect of the human being is treated as his essential nature, and all other aspects are given a place within him only through this supposed essence. In reality, however, the essential nature of the human being lies in his being a spiritual being, and all other aspects are manifestations of that spirit, or arise as its demands and consequences.

2. Once the frame of reference changes, the ultimate goal of human life also changes. Things that are desirable from the standpoint of civilization come to be regarded as the primary objectives, whereas in reality the primary objective should be what is desirable in relation to the human being's spiritual existence.
3. Moreover, from a practical perspective, this interpretation misses all truly important aspects. The soul is the source of all human actions and expressions. Therefore, any meaningful result in human life can only come from its roots in the soul. A conception that takes an external aspect of the human being as his true reality and plants its seed in that understanding cannot be expected to produce any real or lasting results.

These same flaws appear in the interpretation of Islam mentioned above, where the concept of "system" is considered the overarching interpretive

framework of religion. As a result, this “system” was placed at the center of Islam, with all other aspects understood through this perspective. Consequently, even though all components of religion are part of this unifying explanation, they are moved away from their true positions.

Now, every aspect of religion is valued solely as a part of the system. Beliefs and tenets of faith are included because they form the “intellectual foundation” of this way of life. Worship practices are seen as components because they serve as “training courses” to prepare the followers or adherents of this system. The teachings related to interpersonal conduct are regarded as the “moral code” for those involved with this system. Punishments and legal boundaries are considered the “social foundations” of this system. Leadership and governance, viewed as components, provide the means for this system to become a dominant institution, enforcing itself through power, and so on.

The natural outcome of this interpretation was a shift in the core objective. Religion, when viewed as a “system,” gained prominence, but its devotional aspect weakened. The inner essence of religion was pushed into the background, and its external, systemic aspect took precedence. Just as, in the earlier interpretation of “human being,” the transformation of social conditions

is seen as the primary task, not the transformation of the mind and soul, this interpretation of religion also identified systemic revolution as the ultimate goal of religious struggle. Whereas, in this world, the ultimate goal of a believer and the final purpose of his actions is to cultivate a heartfelt and spiritual connection with their Lord, which the Quran describes with terms like remembrance and gratitude (ذكر وشكر), reverence and humility (خشيت وتضرع), submission and devotion (خشوع وخضوع), tranquillity and repentance (اخبات وانابت).

Because of the lack of harmony between the nature created by God within human beings and this ideology, the theory failed badly in its very first experiment. The so-called “complete vision” of religion resulted only in “incomplete” followers. By not planting the seed in its proper place, no part of the tree grew correctly. The relationship between God and the servant—a deeply exalted and subtle connection—was reduced in this view to a kind of political relationship.

This is why this theory neither aligns with the verses of the Quran nor does the lives of the righteous in the *Ummah* match its “standard.” The specific model of religion that this school of thought regards as the most accurate is not supported by a single explicit verse in the Quran. According to this view, religion is a comprehensive system of human life, and the

struggle to implement this entire system is the mission entrusted to the faithful. However, there is not a single explicit statement in God's Book from which this viewpoint can genuinely be derived. The verses typically presented as evidence will be analyzed in detail later.

This was the fundamental flaw of this argument. In practice, too, no person throughout the entire history of the *Ummah* launched a "comprehensive revolutionary movement" in this way. Muslims have spread across many regions worldwide and been engaged in spreading the call to Islam, which in many places later led to the establishment of Islamic governance. However, they never started their efforts with the goal of creating an "Islamic revolution" or establishing a "Divine government." Attempts to cite historical examples to support this are simply fabrications, not accurate history. If someone claims that all these efforts were incomplete or that these individuals lacked full understanding of the religion, such explanations only admit to their own errors. It is better to acknowledge the limits of one person's ideas than to consider the entire history of Islamic *dawah* incomplete.

The gap in this thought I mentioned earlier is so clear that any fair-minded person who engages directly with the Quran and Sunnah cannot help but see the

disconnect between this idea and the explicit Islamic view. I can't speak specifically about Maulana Maududi himself, but it is definitely true that those in India who inherited this ideology feel a certain dissatisfaction. Since the leadership of *Jamaat-e-Islami* Hind took control after the partition, their unease has shown itself in various ways: revision of literature, changes in the goal statement in the Constitution, focusing more on internal policy, and so on—these are signs that support my point.

But my impression is that the leaders of *Jamaat-e-Islami* in India, despite sensing the confusion in current thought, do not possess a clear and defined understanding of it. They have not yet fully analyzed it, which is why they haven't devised a precise solution. Their perception can be summarized as follows: In the overall picture of this ideology, it has been observed that the spiritual aspect of Islam has been overshadowed, while its political aspect has emerged. But, they see this as a coincidence caused by external circumstances. In other words, when the proponents of this idea started presenting their views, the political environment was chaotic, with active political movements in the country, leading to a focus on politics in their writings. According to them, the solution lies in reviving the suppressed aspects in speeches and writings. A balanced understanding of

religion should be presented so that the other facets of Islam, alongside politics and governance, also receive their due place.

This response was given by various members of the *Jamaat* at different levels in reaction to my critique. I suggested to them that the interpretation they attribute to Maulana Maududi's literature does not match the essence of his work. However, if they insist, they could have Maulana Maududi write a statement confirming that his portrayal of religion was not meant as an absolute interpretation but was influenced by temporary circumstances that led him to highlight certain aspects. Yet, none of them were willing to get such a confirmation from Maulana Maududi to back their claim. The truth is that people often make statements just as a response to criticism, without truly believing in them.

The reality is that this is a very flawed assessment of the situation. They see an interpretation that, in fact, defines religion as just a temporary impression shaped by circumstances. As a result, they suggest temporary fixes to solve it. They aim to correct a general distortion with minor adjustments. This is like a child mistaking a jigsaw puzzle meant to show a horse for a camel and putting it together incorrectly. Then, if someone says that just shortening the neck

will make it look like a horse, it's clear that this isn't a real solution. The structure of a jigsaw puzzle relies on an overall concept. If someone mistakenly thinks the puzzle pieces of a horse are actually for a camel and builds an image based on that, the mistake isn't just about the length of the neck; the whole structure will be assembled wrongly. Therefore, merely bowing the neck will not make the picture align with reality. Rather, the entire structure must be broken down and reformed according to the actual event. Every single part of it must be placed back in its correct position.

The true conception of religion, under which its various elements can be better understood, and which seamlessly links the entirety of Islamic history, is that the essence of religion is to establish a relationship of fear, love, guardianship, and trust with God. The necessary manifestation of this relationship is what, in the terminology of *Shariah*, is called "worship." When a person makes God his deity and ultimate desire, and becomes His worshipper, the natural consequence is that he starts considering God's preference in all his matters and obeys His commands. He submits his will to God's will. Moreover, being a true worshipper and obedient to God inevitably means dedicating his life to the best work that God wants to be done in this world. In this sense, spreading the truth and supporting God's religion gradually become central to his life.

Religion is, at its core, a divine commandment. We are bound to follow its injunctions simply because the Almighty has made us responsible for them. However, religion possesses another dimension: its profound connection to human nature. It is not merely an external legal code imposed upon us; rather, it is the answer to the soul's inner longing. It is the manifestation of human nature itself. Our study of religion can only be truly complete when we keep this second dimension in view.

Therefore, the core wisdom of religion lies in the relationship with God, with all other aspects arising from—or serving as expressions of—this inner reality. It is not, as the view under discussion claims, the concept of a “system,” which it regards as the unifying wisdom. In that interpretation, all intellectual and practical elements of religion are tied to the system.

Religious teachings, then, are not merely a uniform ‘list,’ as the concept of “system” suggests. Instead, there is an essential reality to religion, and the remaining aspects are expressions that emerge within it under various relationships. In other words, some elements of religion are fundamentally desired, while others are desired in relation to specific contexts. The essential requirement refers to the internal and personal experience of connecting with God and

becoming His true worshipper. The supplementary requirements refer to the laws given for external life, which guide the behavior of believers in various situations and contexts. The fundamental requirement is always desired from every person in every situation and remains unaffected by time or circumstances. This is the core and most significant achievement for a person in this world, and attaining it is the highest form of success. In contrast, secondary requirements are desired based on circumstances, and the degree of responsibility for them varies with one's sphere of influence. If the contextual relationship exists, then that requirement will also be necessarily sought, like the fundamental requirement. However, if the context does not exist, then believers bear no responsibility regarding that command. Therefore, the difference between the essential and supplementary aspects is simply a distinction in the type of command—i.e., when a particular command is needed. Once something becomes obligatory, there is no difference in terms of fulfilling the requirement.

The conceptual shift I've described above fundamentally alters how one perceives a religious 'mission.' The element that serves as the unifying principle of a whole holds the position that if it comes into existence, it is as though everything else has also come into existence.

Conversely, if it does not come into being, nothing else can truly come into existence. Naturally, whatever a person identifies as this core catalyst, they will exert their utmost effort to bring it into being, believing that the existence of everything else depends entirely on it. In the school of thought under discussion, the overwhelming emphasis on establishing a system directly stems from this mindset.

In contrast, throughout Islamic history, we observe that the great leaders of the *Ummah* consistently focused their efforts on instilling the realities of God and the Hereafter in people's minds. This was because, according to their understanding of religion, they believed that the manifestation of all other religious truths depended entirely on awakening this core consciousness.

THE CONCEPT OF RELIGION

The concept of religion, as presented by Maulana Maududi, is most clearly and comprehensively laid out in his book *Quran Ki Char Bunyadi Istilahain*. (Four Key Concepts of the Quran). This book holds a significant place in the literature generated under this school of thought because it is the only text in which an intellectual effort has been made to substantiate this thought. It is the scholarly foundation of this ideology. In the *Tarjuman al-Quran*, Special No. *Mansab-e-Risalat* (September 1961), this book was introduced with the following words:

“Truly, it is the key to understanding the Quran. Read this book and then read the Quran; the doors of understanding will open.”

To understand Maulana Maududi’s concept of religion, *Quran Ki Chaar Buniyadi Istlahein* (Four Key Concepts of the Quran) is the most suitable and credible source among all his works. Therefore, I have selected this book as the basis for the discussion in this chapter.

This book provides an explanation of the four fundamental Quranic terms—*Ilah* (God), *Rabb* (Lord), *Ibadah* (worship), and *Deen* (religion). It is argued that within these four words lies the essence of the revolutionary message presented in this interpretation. However, for a long time, the comprehensive meaning of these terms has remained unclear in the public mind; as a result, the broad and revolutionary vision of Islam remains largely misunderstood.

“When the Quran was brought to Arabia, everyone understood what *Ilah* meant and whom *Rabb* referred to, because these terms were already common in their daily language. They knew the extent to which these words applied. So, when they were told that Allah alone is the *Ilah* and *Rabb*, with no partners in divinity and lordship, they understood the message fully. They were clear, without any confusion, about what was being rejected for others and what was being affirmed for Allah alone. Those who opposed did so, understanding the consequences of denying other deities’ divinity and lordship, while those who accepted did so, aware of what they would have to give up and what they would gain by this belief. Similarly, the terms *Ibadah* and *Deen* were also commonly used in their language. They understood what

it meant to be a servant, what state defined servitude, what behavior worship implied, and the meaning of *Deen*. Therefore, when they were told to abandon worship of all others and worship Allah alone, and to leave all other religions to follow Allah's *Deen*, they understood clearly the kind of change the Quran was calling for in their lives.

However, over the following centuries, the original meanings of these terms as understood at the time of the Quran's revelation gradually changed. Each term became more narrowly defined and, in many cases, unclear. One reason for this was a lack of a clear understanding of Arabic, and another was that people born within Islamic society no longer held the same meanings for *Ilah*, *Rabb*, *Deen*, and *Ibadah* that existed in non-Muslim societies at the time of revelation. As a result, later lexicons and commentaries increasingly defined Quranic terms based on the interpretations of subsequent Muslims rather than their original linguistic meanings. For example:

- *Ilah* became almost synonymous with idols and deities,
- *Rabb* was equated with one who nurtures and sustains or simply a guardian,

- *Ibadah* was defined as worship or reverence,
- *Deen* became synonymous with Dharma, religion, or even just a term equivalent to “Religion” in English.
- Taghut began to be translated as idol or devil.

As a result, understanding the Quran’s original intent became difficult for people.

Therefore, the truth is that because the meanings of these four fundamental terms are unclear, more than three-fourths of the Quran’s teachings, including its true essence, have remained hidden. The shortcomings in people’s beliefs and actions, even after accepting Islam, mainly come from this. Therefore, to clarify the core teachings of the Quran and its true message, it is essential to fully explain the meanings of these terms.” (*Quran Ki Char Bunyadi Istilahen*, foreword)

Following this introduction, the book lays out the “complete meanings of these four terms.” However, as per my study, this very introduction itself casts doubt over the credibility of the rest of the book. Because when it is admitted that a particular meaning of the Quranic verses was derived for the first time in the

present century after the earliest period, and that for most of the intervening time the written legacy of the *Ummah* is devoid of it, this can only be taken as evidence of its own flaw rather than its perfection. The lexicons and commentaries compiled “in later centuries” are not just the intellectual efforts of later generations; they also serve as a record of early interpretations, offering continuity through which the ideas of early generations were passed down to later ones. If the early generations truly understood these terms the way modern scholars now interpret them, the subsequent generations, who carefully preserved the sayings and actions of the first, would have likely recorded this crucial understanding as well. If this interpretation does not appear in that written record, it suggests that this understanding might not have been theirs. In such a case, this claim of historical continuity is not an assertion of historical reality; rather, it is a psychological device to resolve an inner unease—namely: “If this is the correct understanding of the Quranic verses, why didn’t previous scholars understand them this way?”

Before entering into a detailed discussion, I would like to make a brief general comment on this book to make clear the common nature of the error committed in

the explanation of the four terms. These errors usually fall into three categories:

1. Treating the core meaning and its implications as identical.
2. Taking an implication to be the core meaning, and then deriving other matters from it.
3. Finally, presenting this very construct as the original call of the Quran.

According to the interpretation in this book, the message of the Quran is:

“Allah alone is the only Lord and God. There is no other god or lord, nor does anyone share in His divinity or lordship. Therefore, accept Him as your only *Ilah* and *Rabb*, reject the divinity and lordship of all others, worship Him alone and do not worship anyone else, and purify your religion solely for Him, rejecting all other religions.”

This is essentially an invitation to live in a system where every aspect of individual and community life, from beliefs and worship to political and social matters, is organized according to a specific model. And if this is taken to be the Quran’s message, then even today the only way to work for it would be to strive to make this detailed blueprint prevail in the world.

The wide-ranging and all-encompassing meanings of these four terms have been justified by collecting various Quranic verses that utilize these terms in different senses (e.g., *Ilah* in five senses, *Rabb* in five, *Ibadah* in three, *Deen* in four). From this collection, it is inferred that each term encapsulates multiple meanings.

Dividing a concept into multiple parts isn't inherently wrong; however, it becomes problematic if the importance of these parts isn't properly distinguished. For example, if someone states that "an egg consists of three components: yolk, white, and a shell," this technical explanation is accurate. However, if the nutritional value of an egg was then defined based on this composition, in other words, if this description is used to define the relationship between an egg and a human being, it would be incorrect, as the yolk and white are nutritionally significant, while the shell merely serves as a container.

According to the author under review, the combination of all these meanings forms what is called divinity (*Ilahiyat*), lordship (*Rabbubiyat*), worship (*Ibadah*), and religion (*Deen*). However, collecting various uses of a term from different contexts and creating a single, comprehensive meaning to portray the whole picture of *Deen* is like putting together scenes from a love story (e.g., Zaid's love for Bakr, their embrace at the

station, Zaid inviting Bakr into his home). Combining these excerpts into a single paragraph to define love as “embracing, inviting, and heartfelt affection” may seem comprehensive. In reality, however, a serious mistake has been made. The true essence of love and its outward expressions have been placed on exactly the same level. It is as though love becomes genuine only when a person gathers all three of these elements within himself. Yet it is much possible that, in a given case, only the last element—heartfelt affection—is present, while the other two are neither found in that person nor consciously pursued, and even then the love may still be complete in the fullest sense.

The difference between reality and a requisite is that reality is, as the direct demand of the essential thing, absolutely necessary, while a requisite is not required in such an absolute sense. Instead, it is needed through another means: if the relation to that means exists, then it becomes necessary; if not, it does not. For example, when it is said that “the requisite of faith is that a person should give truthful testimony,” this does not mean that every believer must, in some way, appear in court and give truthful testimony—and that without this, their faith is incomplete. It simply means that when called to testify, he should not lie but tell the truth about what he knows.

This is why, when the author considers a single term to

cover various meanings, aside from certain exceptions, each meaning may indeed appear separately, but no single verse states the comprehensive meaning that is collectively presented from different references. In other words, it's like finding in different places phrases such as: "Zaid has heartfelt love for Bakr," "When Bakr met him, Zaid embraced him out of love," and "When Bakr came to Zaid's village, he gave Bakr a sincere invitation." Yet nowhere in the entire book is there a sentence saying: "Love consists of three things—loving from the heartfelt love, embracing, and offering hospitality." The verses cited to establish the comprehensive meaning will be examined in detail, word by word, in the following pages.

The error goes even further. Alongside it, another common mistake appears, to a greater or lesser extent, in all four terms under discussion. When the mind failed to find satisfaction in placing the essence and its requirements on the same level, it turned the entire matter upside down. What should have remained merely a requirement was elevated to the status of the essence itself, while the true essence was reduced and made subordinate to it. This is akin to someone who favours hosting over genuine affection, he won't be satisfied by giving equal weightage to hosting amongst the three aspects of love. Instead, he would like to keep it above the other two. They would say, "The essence

of love is hosting”. And, as there is a meeting during hosting, a friend is also embraced. And over time in hosting and embracement, love also gets developed during this course.³

To clarify this error, I will cite the example of *Ibadah*. Worship essentially describes a particular state that arises in a believer’s heart because of extreme fear of and love for God. When this state emerges, it leads the person to devotion, obedience, and submission to God’s will in all matters. However, the mindset under discussion did not find this picture of worship appealing. This was because, in it, acknowledging supreme authority and establishing a system of obedience under that authority were treated merely as external requirements of the core meaning. As a result, it turned the very concept of worship upside down. In the discussion of worship, after undertaking a lexical analysis of the term, the writer goes on to write:

“This explanation clarifies that the core meaning of the root ‘*abd* is to recognize someone’s

3. The example of love presented in this analysis should not be understood as implying that the demands discussed in the book—regarding the four terminologies—are necessarily of the same level or importance. It is simply an illustration meant to clarify the nature of the issue. In reality, it is well known that such demands are not all equally important; they vary significantly in their relative significance.

dominance and superiority, to relinquish one's freedom and independence in comparison, to abandon defiance and resistance, and to submit to him. This embodies the true nature of servitude and slavery. Thus, the first thing an Arab would likely think of from this word is servitude and slavery. Then, because the primary duty of a slave is to obey and follow his master's commands, the idea of obedience naturally accompanies it. The example of love that I mentioned earlier does not mean that the requirements listed in the book for the four terms are necessarily requirements of the same level. It is simply an example I used to illustrate the nature of the issue, as it is well known that requirements are not all of equal importance.

When a slave, in his servitude and obedience to his master, not only fully surrenders himself but also, in belief, acknowledges his superiority, admits his greatness, and is filled with gratitude for his kindnesses, he then goes to great lengths in showing him honour and reverence. He expresses acknowledgment of favours in various ways and performs acts of service and devotion in many forms. This is called worship, and this concept becomes part

of the meaning of ‘ubudiyah only when the slave’s heart is bowed before his master as well as his head.” (*Quran ki Char Bunyadi Istelahien*, Second Edition, pp. 71–72)

Thus, the book ends up reversing the definitions of these four key terms. The other ‘aspects’ of *Ilah* (God) and *Rabb* (Lord) are derived from the notion of “authority,” whereas, in fact, it is the sense of human need and divine providence that constitutes the common denominator between all their facets. In discussing *Ibadah* (worship), acknowledging supremacy and then adopting obedience in response is considered the foundation of its other “components,” even though the essence of worship is the servant’s humble and passionate relationship with God. From this, other aspects arise as its demands or consequences. Similarly, the concept of “system” is deemed the unifying cause of other elements within *Deen* (religion), even though in its essence, *Deen* is a state of inner submission and subjugation, from which other aspects manifest.

This difference in the interpretation of the four terms is not merely a matter of wordplay. It distorts the fundamental essence of *Deen*. Despite defining a comprehensive meaning for Quranic terms, the true and highest purpose of the Quran is obscured.

It is indeed true that the greatest benefit a believer

receives after accepting the Quran is *ta'alluq billah* (connection with God). This is the greatest gain of a believer in this world. This connection with God does not imply a belief in God as merely the intellectual basis of a specific “code of life.” Instead, it refers to a profound attachment that forms on a vital psychological level between God and the servant. It signifies the psychological state of a servant who has developed an intense love for God (*hubb-e-shadeed*, as referenced in the Quran, 2:165); who begins to experience closeness to God through the prayer of “prostration of nearness” (*Sajda-e-Qurb*)(Quran, 96:19); who calls upon God with both “fear and hope” (Quran, 7:56); and upon whom descends such a state of presence (of God), described in Hadith as the semblance of seeing. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 50)

However, in this book’s portrayal of the Quran’s intended purpose, this most important aspect seems lost. It no longer remains intact in its true form. This is similar to photographing someone from the back instead of the front; while the photo may appear complete, the face—the true representation of a person—remains hidden.

According to this interpretation, *Ilah* refers to a type of relationship where a person regards God as the possessor of “supreme authority”: first, as the sovereign ruler over the heavens and the earth; second,

as the ultimate authority over political and social life. Similarly, faith in *Rabbubiyah* (Lordship) means believing that “He alone is your supernatural lord and also the moral, social, and political lord” (p. 64). The purpose of *Ibadah* is seen as following God’s commands in everyday life and performing acts of worship solely for Him. *Deen* is understood as the detailed structure of life on earth, covering “intellectual and ideological, moral and educational, social and cultural, as well as economic and political dimensions.”

I acknowledge that the aspects discussed in the interpretation of the four terms are indeed included to some extent. However, the overall picture presented is such that the original and main essence is obscured, or if it remains, it appears faint and unclear.

However, it is known that the Quran is a book whose most notable quality is: “falsehood shall not reach from before or from behind.” (41:42)

No falsehood can enter the Quran from either the front or the back. Any statement that does not fully align with the core of this book simply cannot be attached to it. The Quran will reject every interpretation that does not resonate with its inherent truth, much like a person with a refined sense of taste will reject unsuitable food and discard it. Therefore, the various interpretations offered in defining the four terms—

although mostly correct in some respects—cannot be aligned with Quranic verses in the way intended by the interpretation. The Quran, it appears, completely denies accepting this perspective.

For example, one might say that “Islam has provided guidelines for economic matters,” and this claim would surely be supported by Islamic sources. However, if someone claims that the Prophet was sent specifically to establish a specific economic system based on divine economics, this claim does not hold—even though Islam addresses economic issues. Framing it as the purpose of prophethood is unfounded, and the Quran and Hadith will clearly reject this idea.

In the book, one of the five meanings of *Rabb* (Lord) is interpreted as “the center of gathering” (p. 63), or “the central entity around which people gather” (p. 29), the “central authority whose sovereignty serves as the foundation for the unity of all citizens of a state” (p.40), and “the central personality that forms the basis of a land’s civilization and unity” (p. 51). Accordingly, the interpretation of God as *Rabb* would mean:

“His allegiance is the natural foundation on which we rightly build the structure of our collective life. Association with His central personality creates a bond of unity among the scattered individuals and groups, forming a single community” (p. 68).

In other words, God being *Rabb* implies that He is the centre of our social and civil life, around whom our collective life is constructed—like how in a democratic society, the nation or homeland is the common point that unites people within a territory into a single nation, preparing them for a shared state institution. In this sense, referring to God as *Rabb* suggests that He is the foundation of our collective formation, organizing us as a *Ummah* (community).

Fundamentally, I do not disagree that belief in the One God provides Muslims with a shared identity as a community and binds them in a common relationship. However, presenting this type of social and cultural view as the “third meaning” of *Rabb* is entirely un-Quranic. Consequently, the references provided to support this interpretation are completely irrelevant to the primary issue; none of them substantiate this “third meaning.”

The references include five verses, the first of which is:

“He is your Lord, and to Him you will be returned.” (11:34)

This is a verse from Chapter *Hud*, and the return towards God mentioned in this is for the life Hereafter and not for this world. The entire passage is as below:

“Noah,’ they replied, ‘you have argued with us,

and argued to excess. Now bring down upon us what you threaten us with, if you speak the truth. He said, It is God who will bring it down upon you if He wishes, and you will not be able to escape. And my advice will not benefit you, no matter how sincerely I want to advise you, if God lets you go astray. He is your Lord, and you will all return to Him.’ (11:32-34)

The essence of this verse is that Prophet Noah continued his mission of preaching for a long period, yet his people rejected his message. Finally, when they had enough, they challenged him by demanding the punishment he warned of. In response, the Prophet clarified that it is Allah alone who brings punishment, and a time will come when they will all be seized and returned to Him, forced to endure whatever consequences are decided for them. This return to Allah is unrelated to any concept of “civil and social lordship.”

The second verse states: *Thumma ila rabbikum marji’ukum*, (39:7) “then, to your Lord is your return.” This verse also pertains to the Hereafter. The entire passage is as follows:

“If you are ungrateful, remember that God has no need of you. He is not pleased by ingratitude in His servants; if you are grateful, He is pleased [to see] it in you. No soul shall bear another’s

burden. You will return to your Lord in the end, and He will declare to you what you have done: He knows well what is in the hearts of men.” (39:7)

Clearly, the “return” mentioned in this verse relates to the Hereafter. It indicates that if, during worldly life, you serve with gratitude, Allah will be pleased with you. But if you choose disbelief, you cannot avoid the consequences. Ultimately, all people will return to God, Who is fully aware of even the innermost thoughts, and He will reward everyone accordingly. What, then, is the connection of this “return” and this being “called to account” for one’s deeds with the social organization of this world?

The third verse is:

“Say, ‘Our Lord will gather us together.’”
(34:26)

This verse also refers to the gathering in the Hereafter. The entire passage is as follows:

“Ask them, ‘Who provides you with sustenance from the heavens and the earth?’ Say, ‘It is God’; either you or we are rightly guided or in manifest error.’ Say to them, ‘You will not be called to account for our sins, and we shall not be called to account for what you do.’ Tell them,

‘Our Lord will gather us together; then He will judge between us with truth and justice. He is the Just Decider, the All Knowing.’ (Quran, 34:24-26)

In this passage, the Prophet addresses his people, emphasizing that both cannot simultaneously be on the right path. Either one of them is on the path of truth, or in profound misguidance. Each person is accountable for their own deeds, and no one will share in the reward or punishment of another’s actions. A day will soon come when both of us will be gathered before God. On that day, God, Who knows the condition of both you and me, will deliver a just and precise judgment. What connection does this have with social and communal order under divine guardianship?

The fourth verse is:

“Then they will all be gathered to their Lord.”
(6:38)

This verse also does not pertain to the gathering in societal or civil terms. The complete verse reads:

“there is not an animal that moves about on the earth, nor a bird that flies on its two wings, but are creatures like you. We have left out nothing in the Book – they shall all be gathered before their Lord.” (6:38)

The “gathering” referenced here indicates that both humans and all living beings will face a gathering, often interpreted by commentators as either death or the Day of Judgment. In both cases, it implies that all creatures will ultimately return to God. However, the “gathering” referenced is that which occurs after death. There is no mention here of any form of gathering before death.

The fifth verse is:

“And the Trumpet will be blown, and at once, they will rise up from their graves, and hasten to their Lord.” (36:51)

This verse, too, evidently pertains to the Hereafter. It references the gathering when people are resurrected and, rising from their graves, assemble before God. Attempting to derive a concept for a social collective center from the Great Gathering on the Day of Judgment is much like when the proponents of the ‘Quranic System of *Rububiyyah*’ cite verses about life in Paradise (such as 20:118-119) to justify the principle of state ownership of farms and factories.

Following this preamble, each of the four terms will be examined individually.

Understanding ‘*Ilah*’

The very first word is ‘*Ilah*’ (إله).

The root *A-L-H* (أ ل ه) in the Arabic language is used

for a state in which there is wonder combined with eagerness and longing.

“*‘Aliha ya‘lahu idha tahayyara*” means he became bewildered or astonished. (*Lisan al-‘Arab* by Ibn Mazur, Vol. 13, p. 467)

“*‘Alahahu: ‘Ajarahu, wa-‘amanahu*” means He granted him refuge and provided him with security. (*Al-Qamus al-Muheet* by al-Firuzabadi, p. 1242)

“*‘Aliha al-fasilu idha wuli ‘a bi-ummih*i” means the young camel becomes passionately attached to its mother. (*Tafsir al-Baydawi*, Vol. 1, p. 26)

Thus, *‘ilah*’ is someone who is seen as entirely different from oneself, with a sense of awe, and who is sought for protection. It also refers to the one toward whom a person feels a strong desire. This term essentially expresses the deep feelings that a humble servant should have for their Creator and Master. When the distinctive feelings of a humble and earnest human being come to be centered on a particular being—when he begins to place his trust in that being and attaches all his hopes to it—such a person is said to have made that being his God “*ilah*.”

This concept of “*uluhiyyah*” (divinity) necessarily requires that the entity considered an “*ilah*” possess power, because an entity without power cannot serve as a refuge or provider. The Quran’s rejection of the

divinity of idols and spirits is specifically based on the argument that they lack the powers needed to qualify as “*ilah*.” The first aspect thus relates to the original meaning of “*ilah*,” and the second relates to what this meaning logically entails.

In the book under discussion, while the original meaning of “*ilah*” is acknowledged linguistically (p. 10), the distinction between its core meaning and its logical entailments is subsequently overlooked. Instead, a list of various “meanings” is provided, blending both the original meaning and its entailments:

“It becomes clear that the term ‘ilah’ refers to a deity based on several ideas: the ability to provide relief, offer protection, bring peace, and demonstrate superiority and authority, along with owning powers that inspire trust in the deity’s ability to meet needs and offer refuge. Additionally, there is a sense of mystery surrounding its nature or its secrecy from the public, as well as a feeling of longing toward it.” (p. 11)

In this explanation, the ideas of superiority and authority, placed in the middle, are requirements for true divinity but are not part of the literal meaning of “*ilah*.” That is, the linguistic meaning of “*ilah*” does not imply power. Instead, it is only an entity endowed

with power that can be rightly regarded as worthy of divinity. Since the perspective under discussion could not accept viewing power as a matter of this kind of “requirement,” it ignored the distinction between the essence and its requirements and placed everything together in a single list, assigning them all equal status. Even this, however, did not fully satisfy the author’s desire. The mere inclusion of power and authority among the meanings of “*ilah*” was insufficient. True satisfaction could only be achieved if this meaning were established as the foundational concept. Thus, the entire interpretation was reversed: power was made the fundamental meaning of “*ilah*,” with all other connotations flowing from this central concept. However, the true essence of “*ilah*” is yearning and seeking refuge, with power being an additional quality that legitimizes this sense of yearning. To comprehend this distinction, consider the following passage in the book under the heading “The Core Concept in the Realm of Divinity”:

“All the connotations of ‘*ilah*’ discussed above are logically interconnected. Whoever, in a supernatural sense, regards an entity as a supporter, problem-solver, responder to prayers, and a source of benefit or harm, does so because they attribute some level of control

over the universe to that entity. Similarly, if someone holds reverence and fear toward an entity, believing that its displeasure could bring harm and its pleasure could bring benefit, then this belief stems from a perception of the entity's power. Furthermore, when someone approaches beings other than the Supreme Lord to fulfil their needs, despite having believed in God Almighty, it is because they consider those beings as sharing some aspect of divine power. ... Thus, the true essence of divinity is power.” (p. 17)

Here, however, the matter has been completely reversed. The essence of divinity was initially described as a sense of yearning and the desire for protection; the concept of power was included only as a quality, possessed by that being, justifying this yearning. However, in the above explanation, the essence of divinity has shifted to power itself, with all other meanings stemming from it. In other words, the logical connection among the various connotations of “*ilah*” has been established based on the notion of power, even though this is merely a requirement of the original meaning rather than the core meaning itself.

On the basis of this “logical connection,” the author under discussion cites more than a dozen verses from the Quran as evidence, and then goes on to write:

“In all these verses, from beginning to end, a single central idea is present: that divinity and power are mutually inclusive and, in essence and meaning, the same thing.” (p. 23)

However, in all these verses, power and authority are mentioned alongside divinity as proof that God is the true “*ilah*” (deity), not as a claim that “divinity and power are identical in essence and meaning.” I will quote just one verse:

“People, remember God’s favour to you. Is there any creator other than God who provides for you from the heavens and the earth? There is no God save Him. How, then, are you turned away from the truth?” (Quran, 35:3)

Clearly, in such verses, the mention of power alongside divinity does not imply that “divinity and power are inherently the same in essence and meaning.” Rather, all such verses mention power as evidence that Allah alone is the true deity. The verse does not assert that “*ilah*” means “possessor of power,” nor does it question “Why would you call a being without power by the name ‘*ilah*’?” Instead, the argument is framed as follows: Only a being with command over the universe can fulfil the expectations people have of a deity. Since such power belongs solely to God, He alone is worthy of being called “*ilah*.” In other words, this discussion revolves around need, not power.

But even then the argument did not hold. This was because the primary concern of the perspective under discussion is political authority, whereas—even after this shift in the “logical connection”—what was established was only supernatural authority. All the matters connected with the divine being on the basis of which the concept of authority was included in its direct sense are matters that have no relation whatsoever to legal or political authority. The reasons linking the concept of power with divinity have no connection to legal or political authority—things like hearing prayers, fulfilling needs, helping in times of difficulty, and bringing benefit or harm are all actions requiring dominion over the cosmos, necessitating a power that governs the natural order. Clearly, this authority exists in a supernatural sense. However, authority of a purely supernatural kind could not serve the purpose of the political revolutionary mindset under discussion.

At this point, another adjustment was made. Taking advantage of the semantic overlap of the word “power,” the author under discussion introduced the notion of political and civil authority alongside supernatural power. Arguing that anyone who designates a being as *ilah* (deity) in a supernatural sense must also attribute power and authority to it, the author under discussion writes:

“Similarly, if a person views someone’s

command as law and considers their orders binding on themselves, they are also recognizing that being as the supreme authority. Therefore, the core of divinity is power, whether that power is seen as supernatural authority over the cosmic order or as binding authority in worldly life, making the commands of that being inherently obligatory.” (p. 17)

In this argument, there is nothing beyond a play on words. Obedience to God’s commands in political and social life is indeed a necessary outcome of the belief in divinity but defining it as the direct meaning of “*ilah*” and asserting that “political and civil divinity” is an equivalent definition is incorrect.

To understand how such a confident claim about this secondary definition of divinity was made, consider the following excerpt:

“The oneness of supreme authority necessitates that all forms of sovereignty and rulership should be centralized in the single Supreme Authority, with no aspect of this authority transferred to anyone else. Since He is the Creator and none share in His creation, He alone is the Sustainer with none sharing in His sustenance, and He alone administers and manages the entire

cosmos, with no partner in His governance—therefore, He alone must also be the Sovereign, Commander, and Lawgiver. There should be no partner even in this domain of authority, just as it is incorrect to regard anyone but Him as a refuge, provider, or protector within His dominion. Similarly, considering anyone else as an independent ruler, self-governing sovereign, or autonomous lawmaker is equally erroneous. Creation, provision of sustenance, giving life and death, subjugation of the sun and moon, the cycle of night and day, decree and destiny, command and kingship, regulation and legislation—all are different facets of one complete authority and sovereignty. This authority is indivisible. If anyone considers a command binding without the endorsement of Allah, they are engaging in the same kind of polytheism as someone who seeks aid from other than Allah. Similarly, if someone claims the title of ‘Sovereign of the Realm’ or ‘Supreme Authority’ in a political sense, this claim to divinity is just as erroneous as one claiming to be a provider or protector. Therefore, where the Quran negates any partnership in God’s creation, sustenance, and governance, it also states that He is the command,

He is the dominion, and He has no partner in sovereignty. This clearly indicates that rulership and governance are part of the concept of divinity. Thus, monotheism in divinity requires that even in this aspect, no partner be accepted alongside Allah.” (pp. 24-25)

This excerpt claims that “sovereignty and authority are indivisible; therefore, it is essential that the One who has authority over the universe should also hold authority over human social and political life.” However, this interpretation does not match the verses cited to support it. The Quran indeed stresses the indivisibility of sovereignty, such as in the verse quoted in the book. “If there were other deities in the heavens and on the earth besides God, both the heavens and the earth would be destroyed. God, Lord of the Throne, is far above what they ascribe to Him.” (Quran, 21:22).

In verses like this, the concept of indivisibility pertains to the governance of the universe or, in other words, to the metaphysical dimension, not in the sense that the God who holds ultimate sovereignty over the universe should also be the ultimate authority in political domains. These verses refer to the factual reality that a single God exercises authority over every part and

every element of the universe. They do not state that the same God whose sovereignty is established in the realm of creation also exercises sovereignty in the realm of legislation. Although it is indeed proper for humans to submit to God in their political and legal life, this is not directly mentioned in this verse.

The second basis for the reasoning in the passage comes from phrases like “*lahu al-hukm*” (for Him is the judgment), “*lahu al-mulk*” (for Him is the kingdom), and “*wa lam yakun lahu sharik fi al-mulk*” (and He has no partner in sovereignty), found in verses about God. However, interpreting these words in a political context involves inferring meanings that are not directly present in the verses themselves. Although these words mean “judgment” and “sovereignty” in a linguistic sense, their context in these verses does not suggest political or social sovereignty but rather refers to the same metaphysical sovereignty mentioned earlier.

Three verses from the Quran are cited in the book in this context. The first is from Chapter *Al-Qasas*, where the phrase “*lahu al-hukm*” appears, translated in the book as “Master of Judgment and Sovereignty” (p. 19). To understand this verse, it is essential to examine the entire relevant passage. In verses 68-70 of chapter 28, which describes the Day of Judgment

when all people will be gathered, those who associate partners with God will find no helper. The verse states:

“Your Lord creates whatever He wills and chooses whomever He pleases. They have no choice. Praise be to God—exalted is He above anything they associate with Him! Your Lord knows what they hide in their hearts and what they reveal. He is God: there is no deity but Him. All praise is due to Him in this world and the hereafter. His is the judgment, and to Him you shall return.” (Quran, 28:68-70)

The entire context here indicates that there is no reference to social or political authority. The truth is that the word “*hukm*” (حُكْم) here appears in the sense of judgment or decree. It either refers to the judgment that is supernaturally enforced upon all things in this world or the judgment that will be enforced between people in the Hereafter. Scholars have considered both interpretations, though the majority lean towards the latter. A few opinions are as follows:

“*Wa lahu al-hukmu*” (وَالَهُ الْحُكْمُ)

He says: “And to Him belongs the judgment”—meaning: “And to Him belongs the decree among His creation.” (*Tafsir Al-Tabari*, Vol. 19, p. 612)

- “*Ayy al-qada‘u bayna ‘ibadihi wa’l-faslu*” (أَيُّ الْقَضَاءِ بَيْنَ عِبَادِهِ وَالْفَصْلُ)

(*Tafsir Al-Bahr al-Muheet*, Vol. 8, p. 321)

That is, the decree between His servants and the judgment.

- “*Al-qada‘u bayna ‘ibadihi*” (الْقَضَاءُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِهِ)

(*Al-Kashshaf by al-Zamakhshari*, Vol. 3, p. 428)

The decree between His servants.

- “*Yahkumu li-ahl ta‘atihi bi’l-maghfirah, wa-li-ahl ma‘siyatihi bi’l-shaqawah*” (يَحْكُمُ لِأَهْلِ طَاعَتِهِ بِالْمَغْفِرَةِ، وَلِأَهْلِ الْمَعْصِيَةِ بِالشَّقَاوَةِ)

(*Tafsir al-Khazin*, Vol. 3, p. 370)

He judges for the people of obedience with forgiveness, and for the people of disobedience with wretchedness.

- “*Al-qada‘u bayna ‘ibadihi*” (الْقَضَاءُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِهِ)

(*Madarik al-Tanzil*, Vol. 2, p. 655)

The decree between His servants.

- “*Ayy al-qada‘u al-nafidh fi kulli shay‘in min ghayri musharakah fihi li-ghayrihi ta‘ala*” (أَيُّ الْقَضَاءِ النَّافِذُ فِي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مِنْ غَيْرِ مُشَارَكَةٍ فِيهِ لِغَيْرِهِ تَعَالَى)

(*Ruh al-Ma‘ani by al-Alusi*, Vol. 10, p. 313)

That is, the absolute decree in everything,

without any sharing in it by anyone other than Him, Most High.

- “*Al-qada‘u al-nafidh fi kulli shay*” (الْقَضَاءُ النَّافِذُ فِي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ)

(*Tafsir al-Baydawi*, Vol. 4, p. 184)

The absolute decree in everything.

The view that “*lahu al-Hukmu*” refers to judgment in the Hereafter is preferred because it is reported from the famous Companion and exegetist ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas (RA): “*Wa ‘an Ibn ‘Abbas: ayy lahu al-hukmu bayna ‘ibadihi ta ‘ala, fa-yahkumu li-ahl ta ‘atihi bi’l-maghfirah wa’l-fadl, wa-li-ahl ma ‘siyatih bi’l-shaqa’i wa’l-wayl.*” Meaning, from Ibn ‘Abbas (RA): That is, to Him belongs the judgment between His servants. He judges for the people of obedience with forgiveness and bounty, and for the people of disobedience with misery and woe. (*Ruh al-Ma‘ani*, Vol. 10, p. 313)

Another verse in Chapter *Al-Zumar* uses the phrase “to Him belongs sovereignty” (له الملك), which in the book is translated as “governing power.” At the start of the Chapter, there is criticism of the worship of certain “guardians” (*awliya*) whom the polytheists worshipped, believing they would bring them closer to Allah. This is followed by a rejection of the belief that Allah has offspring who share in the heavens and earth. Then the verse states:

“He created the heavens and the earth for a true purpose; He causes the night to succeed the day and the day to succeed the night; He has subjected the sun and moon so that they run their courses for an appointed time; He is truly the Mighty, the Forgiving. He created you from a single soul, then produced its spouse from it, and He has provided for you eight heads of cattle in pairs. He creates you stage by stage in your mothers’ wombs in a threefold darkness. Such is God, your Lord. Sovereignty is His. There is no god but Him. So, what has made you turn away? (Quran, 39:5-6)

These words suggest that the “sovereignty” (ملك) mentioned here refers to the power over the motion of the sun and moon, the mastery of creation and control, not social or political authority. The commentators have interpreted it this way as well. I will cite the words of the commentator, al-Razi:

Then Allah (Exalted) said, “To Him belongs sovereignty” (له الملك), which signifies exclusivity—meaning that sovereignty belongs solely to Him and no one else. Once it is established that sovereignty belongs only to Allah, it naturally follows to say, “There is no

deity except Him” (لا اله الا هو). This is because, if there were another deity, that deity would either possess sovereignty or not. Therefore, if more than one center of power existed in the universe, conflict between them would be unavoidable, as stated in the Quran, “Had there been in them [the heavens and the earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined” (Quran, 21:22). This is impossible. If the second deity lacked sovereignty, it would be incomplete and thus unworthy of being called a deity. Therefore, the evidence proves that only God possesses sovereignty, making it necessary to declare there is only one God and deity for all creation. There is no other God or deity besides Him. (*Tafsir al-Kabir*, Vol. 26, p. 425)

In the third verse, from Chapter *Al-Furqan*, the words “He has no partner in sovereignty” (لم يكن له شريك في الملك) appear. In the book, this is translated as, “In governance, He has no partner.” However, there is no reference here to social or political rule. The relevant portion of the verse is as follows:

Blessed be He who has revealed the book of criterion to His servant that he may warn the nations. Sovereign of the heavens and the earth, who has begotten no children and who

has no partner in His sovereignty, it is He who has created all things and measured them out precisely. Yet they have taken, besides Him, deities who create nothing and are themselves created, and who have no power to harm, or benefit themselves and who control neither death, nor life, nor resurrection. (25:1-3)

This context clearly shows that the meaning of “dominion” (ملك) attributed to God here does not relate to social or political rule but rather to creation, control over benefit and harm, decision-making, and authority over life and death. As a result, this is how the commentators have understood it. One reference states:

“To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth” (له ملك السموات والارض): the dominion of both realms is His, indicating that He exercises authority over them and all within them. Thus both kingdom and dominion are His alone without any other partner or entity having any share in it. (لم يكن له شريك في الملك) reinforces the previous statement (له ملك السموات والارض) and rebuts those who ascribe partners to Allah. (*Al-Bahr al-Muheet*, Vol. 6, p. 480)

In addition to these three verses, four more verses are referenced at the conclusion of this discussion, where

the author under review suggests more explicitly that the concept of “sovereignty” or “rulership” is included within the meaning of divinity (*Uluhiyyat*) itself.

The first verse is as follows:

“Say, ‘Lord, sovereign of all sovereignty, You bestow sovereignty on whom You will and take away from whom You please; You exalt whoever You will. All that is good lies in Your hands. You have the power to will anything.’—
(Quran, 3:26)

I accept that in this verse the word “mulk” (sovereignty) is also used to refer to worldly authority. But is the mere occurrence of the phrase “worldly authority” in a sentence sufficient to prove the concept under discussion? The message from this verse is straightforward: Allah, through His supreme authority, grants worldly dominion to whom He wills and takes it away from whom He wills. He has power over everything—this is a core belief for every Muslim. What this verse establishes is that worldly power is a divine gift, not that gaining worldly authority is the goal of the Muslim community.

The second verse is:

“Then, exalted be God, the true King. There is no deity except Him, the Lord of the Glorious Throne.” (Quran, 23:116)

This verse, too, establishes Allah's transcendental divinity. The concluding part of the verse makes it clear that what is referenced here is His lordship over the Majestic Throne, not a political throne. The matter of political rule is an entirely separate issue and is not addressed in this verse.

The term "sovereign" (ملك) appears in the first part of the verse, typically meaning "king." However, the surrounding context suggests that this term does not refer to a "political king" but rather to the Sovereign or Ruler of the Universe. Two references clarify this:

In this verse, the term "Sovereign" (ملك) signifies ownership and authority over all things, a power and dominion that never diminishes or fades. (*Tafsir al-Razi*, Vol. 23, p. 300)

The meaning of "*The True Sovereign*" is that only Allah is entitled to absolute ownership. He alone grants existence and brings it to an end, initiates creation and repeats it, gives life and death, and can alone reward and punish. Everything besides Him is subjugated and under His supreme authority. (*Ruh al-Ma'ani*, Vol. 9, p. 269)

It is evidently clear that these attributes are supernatural and transcendental in nature, rather than political or social. Consequently, this verse cannot be used to argue that the term "God" (الله) refers to a political or social ruler.

The third verse is:

“Say, ‘I seek refuge in the Lord of people, the King of people, the God of people, from the mischief of every sneaking whisper, who whispers into the hearts of people, from jinn and men.’” (Quran, 114:1-6)

This chapter is a prayer for protection (*ta'awudh*). It seeks Allah's refuge from the hidden whispers and harmful influences of both jinn and human beings who instil doubts and detrimental suggestions in people's hearts. Clearly, protection from such whisperings is unrelated to “political or social governance.” Instead, this matter pertains to a Supreme Being with supernatural control over both jinn and humans, possessing access even to the innermost thoughts. In this Chapter, we are taught to seek refuge in such a Being, with no indication of any supposed political aspect of divinity.

Ibn Kathir, in his explanation of these verses, writes:

The attributes of lordship, sovereignty, and divinity are essential qualities of Allah. He is the Lord, Sovereign, and God of everything. All things are His creation, His property, and His servants. Thus, it is commanded to seek refuge from Satan in the One characterized by these attributes, as every human has a *qarin* (companion) who attempts to beautify evil in

their sight and lead them to destruction. Only those whom Allah protects are safe. (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 8, p. 539)

The fourth verse, which the author under review considers the clearest of all, is:

“The day when they shall rise up [from their graves, and nothing about them will be hidden from God. ‘To whom shall the kingdom belong that Day?’ It shall belong to God, the One, the All-Powerful.” (Quran, 40:16)

This verse does not directly mention “political or social governance.” Its meaning simply is that, compared to Allah, everyone is helpless and powerless. While everything may be hidden in this world, it will all be revealed in the Hereafter. Commenting on this, commentator Alusi writes:

Sovereignty is attributed to Allah because only He possesses the power to reward or punish each individual for their deeds, and His justice is complete, free from any injustice. He is in full control, undistracted by multiple responsibilities, and quick to settle accounts. (*Ruh al-Ma’ani*, Vol. 12, p. 312)

From the analysis above it is evident that the term “God” (الله) essentially refers to the Being who is the centre of human longing and need. This concept indeed requires that the true God must be one of

ultimate power. However, this power is fundamentally supernatural, as fulfilling the expectations that lead a person to worship necessitates supernatural control, not legal or political authority. Nevertheless, as will be further elaborated, there are numerous implications for recognizing someone as divine (الله), which may vary based on the circumstances of the believers. This necessarily includes the expectation that those who believe in God align their collective affairs with His will and do not adopt an attitude of rebellion in any of their matters.

Understanding ‘*Rabb*’ (رب)

Secondly, there is the term “Lord” (*Rabb*). While the literal meaning of (*Rabb*) is accurately explained in this text, the interpretation seems to go awry when it attempts to define the Quranic concept of Lord. It becomes apparent that there is an effort to mould the concept into a particular framework. Since the original Quranic understanding does not accommodate this interpretation, a similar deviation occurs as noted above in the discussion of the term “*Ilah*” (الله).

The discussion begins with the following lines:

“The root of this word is ر ب ب, primarily meaning ‘nurturing.’ From this root, ideas of control, supervision, managing affairs, and

achieving completion and perfection also arose. Based on this, concepts of superiority, leadership, ownership, and lordship also developed within it.”

Up to this point, the explanation is entirely accurate, as the basic meaning of “*Rabb*” (رب) is indeed “nurturing.” This is why “*Rabb*” is translated as “Sustainer” or “Provider.” However, like any word, various meanings evolve naturally from its core meaning. Similarly, the term “*Rabb*” has incorporated all the aspects it inherently suggests. While it has one essential meaning, it has come to embody multiple contextual meanings.⁴

However, this interpretation of the term *Rabb* did not serve his purpose. Under this reading, the notions of supremacy and governance appear only as indirect implications—derivatives that are not part of the term’s original meaning. Yet his objective was to present the concept under discussion as the term’s direct and primary meaning. As a result, a shift appears a page later: what was earlier described as the

⁴ “*Rabb*” is a root frequently found in Semitic languages. In Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic, it means to nurture or sustain. Since a teacher, instructor, or master also acts as a nurturer in some way, the word began to be used in those senses as well. Therefore, in Hebrew and Aramaic, the words ‘*Rabbi*’ and ‘*Rabbah*’ carried all three meanings: nurturer, teacher, and master.” (*Tarjuman al-Quran* by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Vol. 1, p. 69)

“essential meaning” of *Rabb* is reduced to merely one of its meanings. He writes:

“By mistake, the meaning of *Rabb* has been confined merely to ‘Provider’ or ‘Nurturer’. Consequently, in defining *Rububiyyah* (Lordship), the following expression has become common: *huwa insha‘u al-shay‘i halan fa-halan ila haddi al-tamam*—meaning: to gradually bring something, stage by stage, until it reaches perfection.”

However, this is only one of the word’s broad meanings. Examining its full scope reveals that it encompasses the following concepts:

1. Nurturer, provider of needs, the one who fosters growth and development.
2. Guardian, overseer, responsible for care and improvement of affairs.
3. The central figure, one upon whom various individuals converge.
4. Respected leader, authoritative figure, one whose commands are followed, whose superiority and dominance are accepted, and who has the power to exercise control.
5. Owner, master.

— (pp. 28-29)

This passage illustrates an example of the initial deviation in the interpretation of “*Rabb*” (رب) within this book, where it is argued that the political meaning of “*Rabb*” is not merely an implied aspect but is in fact one of its direct meanings, holding the same status as any other interpretation of the term.

The book then provides an in-depth examination of the misguidance of various nations mentioned in the Quran, and after analysing each one, the author summarises the findings under the title “The Call of the Quran” as follows:

“The investigation into the misconceptions of misguided nations, as outlined in previous pages, fully reveals that from ancient times until the period of the Quran’s revelation, none of the nations described in the Quran as tyrannical, corrupt in belief, and wayward denied the existence of God. Nor did any of them reject Allah’s absolute lordship (*rububiyyah*) and divinity (*uluhiyyah*). Their fundamental and common misguidance lay in the division of the five aspects of *rububiyyah* which we initially identified through linguistic and Quranic evidence into two separate categories.

“This aspect of *Rabb*—that He is supernatural, nurturing, provides, fulfils needs, and oversees

creation—was, in their view, an entirely different matter. While they acknowledged Allah as the Supreme Lord in this sense, they simultaneously associated angels, deities, jinn, unseen forces, stars and planets, prophets, saints, and spiritual leaders with Him in this aspect of *Rububiyyah*.

And the aspect of *Rabb*—that He is the authority for command and prohibition, the possessor of supreme power, source of guidance and legislation, the head of the state, and the centre of society—was, in their eyes, a completely separate concept. In this sense, they either acknowledged humans as their lords instead of Allah or, despite recognizing Allah theoretically, practically bowed in submission to human moral, social, and political authority. This was the very misguidance that prophets have come to correct since the beginning, and it was ultimately for this purpose that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was sent. The message of all prophets was that *Rabb*, in every sense is one, and that is Allah, the Exalted. *Rububiyyah* is indivisible; no part of it, in any sense, belongs to anyone else. The universe operates as a unified, central system, created by one God, governed

by one God, and entirely controlled by one God alone. No one else has a role in creating this system, no one else shares in its administration, and no one else has a stake in His rule. Being the central authority, that one God alone is your supernatural Lord as well as your moral, social, and political Lord. He is your deity, the one deserving of your prostrations and bowing. He is the refuge and shelter of your prayers, the support upon which you rely, and the provider of all your needs. Equally, He is the king, the Owner of all dominion, the Lawgiver, and the one with the authority to command and prohibit. These two aspects of *rububiyyah*, which ignorance has led you to separate, are, in reality, the necessary attributes of divinity and the essence of God's Godhood. They cannot be detached from each other, nor can anyone be associated with God in any capacity within these domains." (pp. 63-64)

The statement here regarding the indivisibility of *Rububiyyah* (Divine Lordship) is correct. However, there is an error in its explanation, similar to what we observed earlier in our discussion on *Ilahiyyah* (Divine Godhood). In the Quran, the indivisibility of *Rububiyyah* is primarily presented in the context that the Creator

and Sustainer of the universe is one, and there is no partner in this act of sustenance. This indivisibility does not imply that “*supernatural Rububiyyah*” and “social and political *Rububiyyah*” are inseparable parts of a unified concept that cannot be divided.

For example, let us consider an ayah cited in this book under this subject (Page 66):

“And God has created you from dust,
He makes the night pass into the
 day and He makes the day pass into the night.
 He has subjected the sun and the moon, each
 running for an appointed term, such is God,
 your Lord: His is the kingdom. Those whom
 you invoke besides Him do not own so much
 as the skin of a date stone. If you invoke them,
 they do not hear your call; and even if they
 could hear, they would not respond to you. And
 on the Day of Resurrection, they will disown
 you...” (Quran, 35:11-14).

The point made in this ayah is that the deities you call upon besides Allah possess not the slightest power; they cannot even hear your “call.” Therefore, make your Lord the One whose might and majestic mastery are constantly demonstrated in the cycle of night and day. These words indicate that the indivisibility of *Rububiyyah* being referred to here is supernatural

Rububiyyah. This is a declaration of Allah's true Lordship over those entities that people, believing them to have control over the world of cause and effect, turn to in their needs. It is clear, then, that the kind of *Rububiyyah* affirmed here is the same kind of *Rububiyyah* that is negated in relation to others.

I will quote two references from commentaries to further clarify this point:

“Those whom you invoke besides Him do not own so much as the skin of a date stone.” (Quran, 35:13)

According to the commentator, ‘this phrase confirms the previous statement about Allah’s uniqueness in divinity (*uluhiyyah*) and lordship (*rububiyyah*), serving as proof. Its central point is that all authority and control, from beginning to end, belong exclusively to God, and that no one else has any share in them. (*Ruh al-Ma’ani*, Vol. 11, p. 354)

The phrase “ذالكم” (That) refers to the performer of these acts, who is Allah, the Most Exalted. In this expression, “ذالكم” serves as the subject, while its predicate is “الله ربكم الله الملك” (Allah, your Lord, to Him belongs the dominion). This implies that this Being, who has created all things, is the Creator, the Determiner, the Mighty, the Absolute Controller, the Owner of the world, and the One exercising authority

over everything. Another possible interpretation is that “له الملك” (to Him belongs the dominion) stands as an independent sentence contrasting with the statement “والذين تدعون من دونه ما يملكون من قضمير” (and those you invoke besides Him do not even possess a membrane of a date seed). In this situation, the meaning is that those beings, other than Allah, whom you call upon, hold no power over any creation or its management. (Al-Shawkani, *Fath al-Qadir*, Vol. 4, pp. 393-394)

In the lengthy excerpt from the book under discussion, it is noted that from the earliest times until the revelation of the Quran, there has been a “fundamental and common misguidance” among misguided nations. To substantiate this, a thorough examination is presented under the title “Misguided Notions of *Rububiyyah* among Past Nations.” It is asserted that all these nations succumbed to two types of misguidances regarding *Rububiyyah* mentioned above: first, associating others in supernatural *Rububiyyah*; second, entrusting moral, social, and political *Rububiyyah* to others. However, despite the extensive discussion, only the first concept of *Rububiyyah* is proven. No ayah (verse) supports the second concept of *Rububiyyah*.

A surprising aspect is that most of the ayahs used as evidence do not even include the word “*Rabb*” (Lord). For instance, in the context of the people of Noah, this verse is cited:

“Indeed, I am a trustworthy Messenger to you.
So fear Allah and obey me” (Quran, 26:107-108).

According to the interpretation of the book, this verse signifies that in all matters of ethics, social relations, civilization, politics, and every aspect of life, Allah should be recognized as the *Rabb* (Lord), i.e., the ultimate ruler and supreme authority. However, aside from the fact that this is not explicitly mentioned here, how can any concept of *Rububiyyah* (Lordship) be derived from a phrase in which the word *Rabb* is not even present?

Regarding certain nations, verses have been presented that contain the word *Rabb*. However, these verses do not support the intended meaning of the author under review, in them, the word *Rabb* does not refer to “political and social *Rububiyyah*.” For example, the following verse is cited regarding the misguidance of the people of ‘Ad:

“And that was ‘Ad; they denied the signs of their Lord” (Quran, 11:59).

After this verse, the following phrase appears:

“And they disobeyed His Messengers and heeded the commands of every stubborn tyrant.” (Quran, 11:59).

In this phrase, following the tyrants does not imply that they “obeyed them in political and social matters.” Rather, it suggests that despite the divine signs confirming the Messenger’s prophethood, they did not seek guidance from these signs. Instead, they aligned themselves with the rebellious leaders of the time who were denying the Messenger’s prophethood.

In the book, *Quran Ki Chaar Buniyadi Istlahein*, this phrase is translated as: “And this is ‘Ad, who refused to accept the commands of their Lord” (p. 35). While the word ayah can also mean “command,” its primary meaning is “sign,” which is the intended meaning here. This implies that the signs given to them for recognizing the Messenger were not heeded, and they denied him. There is no mention of “political and social *Rububiyyah*” here.

“They denied the signs”—That is, they disbelieved in the signs of their Lord with which He supported His Messenger, the one calling to Him, and through which He indicated his truthfulness. They denied them, saying: ‘O Hud, you have not brought us any clear proof.’ (*Tafsir Ruh al-Ma‘ani*, Vol. 6, p. 284)

However, this was still not sufficient to satisfy the author under review, because he wanted to present power and governance not as merely one meaning among several, but as the primary and definitive meaning itself. Consequently, as the discussion was nearing its final

conclusion, it took yet another turn. Toward the end of the discussion, after citing many Quranic verses under the heading “The Call of the Quran,” he finally writes:

“It is evident from this sequence of verses that the Quran views *Rububiyyah* (Lordship) as entirely synonymous with sovereignty and authority, presenting the concept of *Rabb* (Lord) as the absolute, unrivalled ruler and owner of the universe... In this capacity, He is the nurturer and sustainer of us and all worlds, our provider and fulfiller of needs. In this capacity, He is our guarantor, caretaker, and the one upon whom we rely. In this capacity, loyalty to Him forms the natural foundation upon which the structure of our collective life is properly built, and connection to His central authority creates the bond of a single community among scattered individuals and groups. In this capacity, He alone is deserving of our worship, obedience, and servitude, and in this capacity, He is our Lord, master, and sovereign.” (p. 68-69)

Initially it seems that, the word *Rabb* originally conveyed the concept of “nurturing”, but as nurturing necessitates certain requirements, additional meanings emerged.

Nurturing requires possessing superior authority,

as the control essential for nurturing in the heavens and on the earth, cannot be attained without it. Furthermore, for one who is nurtured, it is vital to obey the nurturer, as failing to do so constitutes an act of extreme ingratitude and betrayal. However, according to the final interpretation, the word *Rabb* has come to be synonymous with ruler and sovereign. The implications of sovereignty and authority suggest that He alone should be the nurturer, the sole authority, the one to whom loyalty is owed, and the only one worthy of worship, regarded as our Lord and master. This completely alters the initial meaning. While other meanings emerged under the requirements of nurturing, in the final interpretation, all meanings now arise under the demands of authority.

To equate the term *Rabb* solely with sovereignty and authority, the book presents sixteen verses (pp. 68-69). Some of these verses are also cited in relation to other terminologies, which we have discussed previously. Here, I will examine a few specific verses among them to clarify that these references do not establish the particular revolutionary meaning that the author under review intends to prove.

The first verse cited in this context is:

“Your Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in six Days [periods] and then settled

Himself firmly on the Throne. He throws the veil of night over the day, each seeking the other in rapid succession. It was He who created the sun, the moon and the stars, and made them subservient to His will. His is the creation, His the command, Blessed be God, Lord of the universe.” (Quran, 7:54)

The phrase “His is the creation, His the command” appears to have been interpreted here as referring to “political *Rububiyyah*”—suggesting that since creation belongs to Him, then legal and political sovereignty should likewise be exercised over people solely by Him.

While I do not doubt the independent necessity of this principle, this phrase does not convey that. Upon closer examination of the entire verse, it becomes evident that the segment “His is the creation, His the command” reiterates what was already mentioned in the preceding words. The verses first mention creation in the words “He created the heavens and the earth,” and then refer to command in the phrase “subjected by His command.” This point is then clearly restricted to God alone in the subsequent statement: “Indeed, to Him belong creation and command.” In other words, God alone has created the heavens, the earth, and everything within them, and He alone exercises direct control over all that exists. Therefore, fear and hope

should be placed in Him alone, and supplication should be directed only to Him. (Quran, 7:55-56)

This interpretation is shared by commentators, one of whose references I will include here:

“And the sun, the moon, and the stars are all subject to His command,” meaning He created them in such a way that His decision alone governs them, and He alone causes them to revolve. “The creation is His, and the command is also His,” for He alone brought everything into existence and has absolute control over all. (*Tafsir Abi al-Su’ud*, Vol. 3, p. 232)

Another verse is:

“Praise, then, be to God, Lord of the heavens, and Lord of the earth, the Lord of all the worlds. All greatness belongs to Him in the heavens and earth. He is the Almighty, the All Wise.” (Quran, 45:36,37)

It appears that from the phrase “Lord of the heavens and the earth,” the meaning of both types of *Rububiyyah* (Lordship) has been inferred—that is, it is understood to imply that He holds supernatural authority over the heavens and legal and political authority over the earth. However, this interpretation lacks evidence, as there is no contextual indication to support this meaning, and

simply from the word “majesty” (*kibriya*), one cannot infer the concept of political authority without a clear indication. *Kibriya* signifies greatness and grandeur, and words like these in the Quran are used to describe Allah’s supernatural authority and supremacy over the heavens and the earth, which is the intended meaning here as well.

Hafiz Ibn Kathir writes:

“So, to Allah belongs all praise—Lord of the heavens and the earth,” meaning He is the owner of both and everything within them... “and to Him belongs all majesty in the heavens and the earth.” Mujahid explains this as meaning that only His is the sovereignty—that He is the Great and the Magnificent, before whom everything is humble and dependent. (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 7, p. 273)

Ali Shawkani writes:

“And to Him belongs all majesty in the heavens and the earth,” signifying that grandeur, greatness, and authority are His alone. The heavens and the earth are specifically mentioned as His attributes are evident within them. “And He is the Almighty, the Wise,” indicating that His authority is supreme, and none can prevail against Him. He is wise in all His actions, words

and judgments. (*Fath al-Qadir* by Al-Shawkani, Vol. 5, p. 14)

Another verse is:

In reality, this community of yours is one single community, and I am your Lord; therefore, worship Me alone. But people have divided among themselves the matter of *Rububiyyah* (Lordship) and *'ibadah* (Worship). Yet, in the end, all of them must return to Us. (Quran, 21:92-93)

The translation I provided above is the one presented in the book under discussion, and within this translation lies the reasoning for how this verse has, in the the author under review, become a source for the political interpretation of *Rububiyyah* (Divine Lordship). The phrase “they have divided His task of *Rububiyyah* among themselves” suggests that the interpretation of “تقطعوا أمرهم بينهم” (they divided their matter among themselves) may imply that *Rububiyyah* (Lordship), with all its supernatural as well as political and social dimensions, was exclusive to God. Yet people assigned part of it to God and divided the rest among themselves.

However, this notion is not mentioned here. The phrase “تقطعوا أمرهم بينهم” is more accurately translated as “they have divided their matter among themselves.” The use

of “*Ummah Wahidah*” (one community) suggests that the division referred to is within the concept of “*Ummah Wahidah*” itself, rather than in any other notion.

Before this verse, the reference is made to “Men of Revelation” (Quran, 21:92), and in this context, over a dozen prophets are mentioned, characterised as forming one “single community”—a group fundamentally united in promoting and upholding one faith. Nevertheless, their followers did not sustain this unity. Allah had bestowed upon everyone a singular foundational faith, but individuals themselves introduced discord, fragmented it, and created separate religious sects, battling against one another and forsaking the original faith.

Al-Shawkani writes:

“Indeed, this community of yours is one single community.” Here, the word *Ummah* (community) refers to religion, as if to say, “This religion of yours is one religion; there is no difference in Tawheed (monotheism) among the different nations.” “And I am your Lord, so worship Me alone,” meaning, make your worship sincere and exclusive for Me, and do not worship anything else.

The phrase “they have divided their matter among themselves” means that they split religion into factions

to the point it became fragmented. *Al-Akhfash* states that they disagreed within it, which supports the earlier statement. (*Fath al-Qadir* by Al-Shawkani, Vol. 3, p. 502)

In this context, the word *Ummah* means religion. Therefore, it is as if Allah is saying that your religion is one single religion, and there is no disagreement among different nations regarding *Tawheed* (monotheism). The phrase “I am your Lord, so worship Me alone” implies that you should make your worship pure and directed solely to Me, not to anything else. The phrase “they divided their matter among themselves” indicates that they created divisions within the faith to the point that it became fragmented. *Al-Akhfash* states that they differed within the religion, which aligns with the initial interpretation.

The Collective Demand

The type of unscholarly reasoning you observed in the previous discussion of *Ilah* and *Rabb* was only necessary for the author under review because he aimed to establish the social aspect of Islam as an essential, foundational concept in the understanding of *Ilah* and *Rabb*. And since this was not actually the case, he had to rely on weak arguments. Nevertheless, it is not as if social issues bear no connection to Islamic beliefs. While “political divinity” or “political lordship” are

not intrinsic to the meanings of *Ilah* and *Rabb*, and are therefore inappropriate extensions of these terms, it remains a fact that acknowledging God as God necessarily entails recognizing Him as the ultimate guide and authority over one's life. Anyone who acknowledges God as the *Ilah* and *Rabb* of the heavens and the earth is insincere in that acknowledgement if they adopt a rebellious attitude towards God in their practical life. The essential requirement of accepting God as one's Deity and Sustainer is complete surrender before Him—placing one's entire will and one's whole life under His pleasure. However, there is a profound difference between establishing this surrender as the inherent meaning of the terms *Ilah* (Deity) and *Rabb* (Lord), and treating it merely as a practical consequence that follows from those meanings.

What constitutes the original and direct meaning of a word is required absolutely in all circumstances; there is no escape from it in any situation. A requirement, by contrast, is demanded only in relation to a particular intermediary. Therefore, it is not obligatory in every case. If the intermediary is present, the requirement will certainly apply; otherwise, the person bears no responsibility for it at all.

This difference can be better understood with a practical example. When a person believes in God and accepts

Him as their *Ilah* and *Rabb*, they must recognize God as the sole *Ilah* and *Rabb* in a supernatural sense, place all trust in Him, acknowledge His greatness, feel gratitude for His blessings, and make Him the centre of all their highest feelings. Following this, in social and political spheres, their faith will demand only as much as relates to those actual social and political circumstances. If they are alone on an isolated island, they will have no such responsibility. If they are within a community, their responsibility will only extend as far as they are legally obligated by the *Shariah* (Islamic Jurisprudence) in their circumstances. Meanwhile, the essential and primary meanings of divinity and lordship are always binding upon them and can never be removed.

If one fails to maintain the distinction between the primary meaning and its attendant demand, and instead interprets Islam in a manner that either elevates the demand to primacy or treats the two as equivalent, both will inevitably be dislocated from their rightful place in one's understanding. The result is that the political demand associated with divinity and lordship will assume an exaggerated importance, while the true, fundamental meaning will be diminished in stature.

Indeed, if this approach is influenced—consciously or unconsciously—by a political atmosphere or mindset, it is quite possible that the latter aspect will dominate the mind rendering the former aspect merely a

nominal idea, like a lifeless phrase added to complete a preferred verse.

Understanding ‘*Ibadah*’

The third Quranic term discussed in this book is *Ibadah* (worship). This discussion begins with the following words:

“In the Arabic language, *Ubudah*, *Ubudiyyah*, and *Abdiyyah* primarily mean humility and submission—that is, becoming submissive or compliant.”

In the above passage, the “primary meaning” of *Ibadah* (worship) is defined as humility and submission, which is indeed accurate. However, in the subsequent explanation “i.e.,” the focus shifts in a different direction. “Becoming submissive” is not the primary meaning of humility and submission but rather its demand and outcome. Humility and submission, from a human perspective, refer to an inner inclination and a heartfelt sense of helplessness. This is the essence of *Ibadah*. Acts of worship or rituals of servitude are the necessary expressions of this true essence of *Ibadah*, which have been defined by the deity Himself. When this state arises within a person, the natural result is that they become obedient to their deity, leading to adherence and submission.

In a Hadith, it is said, “Supplication (*du’a*) is *Ibadah*.” (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 3527) This does not imply that worship is entirely confined to supplication, or that after supplication, the worshipper need do nothing else. This prophetic statement truly reflects the essence of *Ibadah*, suggesting that the true essence of worship lies in a servant’s yearning for God, in calling upon Him, in turning to Him utterly helpless, and in being wholeheartedly inclined toward Allah. This is the spirit and true essence of *Ibadah*. However, just as every reality has various aspects shaped by the different roles, relationships, and circumstances in a person’s life, the essence of *Ibadah* also has numerous outwardly manifestations, encompassing the entire realm of obedience. The natural demand of worshipping God is that, in all matters that believers encounter, they should practice obedience to Him. The relationship of worship with God necessarily manifests as an obedient relationship with Him. Worship that encompasses rebellion and defiance in practical matters is not genuine worship.

In the words of Allama Alusi:

“It is clear that true devotion to Allah cannot be realized without also dedicating obedience to Him. If His Majesty is not the exclusive recipient of obedience, then true worship cannot be solely dedicated to Him either.” (*Ruh al-Ma’ani*, Vol. 5, pp. 276)

However, this concept of worship did not align well with the framework of the interpretation under discussion, as this interpretation views religion as a “system” intended to be implemented across all areas of life. Defining humility and submission as the essential meaning of worship renders it a personal matter, focused primarily on the heart’s inclination and inner devotion. Systematic expressions of worship are not explicitly included; rather they integrate into worship according to its demands and circumstances. Consequently, within this interpretation, the concept of worship was turned upside down: what was once its very essence was reduced to a mere demand, while what was originally only a demand came to be regarded as the core. After listing five meanings of worship from the dictionary, the Author (Maulana Maududi Sahib) writes:

“This explanation makes it clear that the foundational meaning of the root word ‘abd’ is to acknowledge someone’s dominance and superiority, thereby surrendering one’s freedom and independence, abandoning any defiance or resistance, and becoming submissive to them. This encapsulates the essence of servitude and slavery. Thus, the primary concept that an Arab mind envisions

from this word is that of servitude and slavery. Since a servant's primary duty is to obey and follow their master, the concept of obedience naturally arises alongside it. When a servant, in their devotion and obedience, not only submits completely to their master but also believes in their superiority, acknowledges their greatness, and is filled with gratitude and appreciation for their kindness, they demonstrate reverence and respect, express gratitude in various ways, and perform acts of devotion. This concept is known as worship, and it becomes integral to the notion of servitude only when a servant's heart, rather than merely their head, is bowed before their master. The other two ideas are, in fact, secondary facets of servitude, not primary or fundamental ones."

It is evident from this three-part list that both the core meaning of worship and its demands are present, but their order has been completely reversed. Servitude or obedience, which is an outward manifestation of servitude, has been designated the primary meaning in this interpretation, while humility and reverence, which are the original and direct meanings of worship, have merely been presented as a third-level demand.

The same point is expressed elsewhere in these words:

“The term *Ibadah* (worship) is derived from *abd* (servant/slave). The meaning of *abd* can refer to either a servant or a slave, thus, the meaning of *Ibadah* is servitude and slavery.” (*Khutbat* by Abul A’la Maududi, Lahore, 2012, p. 104)

In reality, the word *Ibadah* is not derived from *abd*; rather, it is the opposite—the word *abd* is derived from *Ibadah*. *Abd* (meaning servant or slave) merely, reflects the essence of worship rather than defining it. However, the interpretation under discussion placed greater emphasis on the outward manifestation, which is why it regards *abd* as the primary concept and based the explanation of worship upon it.

In this way, not only was the original order completely reversed, but despite trying to make it comprehensive, the true spirit of worship and its inherent demands were both lost. This is because a demand always arises once the essential reality is established. If the essence itself is displaced, then where will the result come from? Putting a demand in place of the essence is like planting a tree upside down. Naturally, if the branches are buried in the ground and the roots are pointing upward, neither will survive—the branches will lose their life, and so will the roots.

In the book, five meanings of *Ibadah* are given based on the famous Arabic dictionary *Lisan al-Arab*, of which the author considers three to be “primary and

fundamental” (p. 72). I do not know how this number of three or five was determined, as the uses of this root in *Lisan al-Arab* are so numerous that they could easily extend to fifteen rather than five. Nevertheless, that is not my concern here; I merely wish to highlight that the manner in which these “three primary and fundamental” meanings of ‘*Ibadah*’ have been substantiated through the Quran rests on exceedingly weak reasoning and is riddled with gaps. Here, I will analyze two references.

Under the heading “Worship in the Sense of Obedience,” the following verses are cited (p. 74):

When the Day of Resurrection arrives, Allah will command, “Gather all the wrongdoers, their companions, and the false gods they worshiped besides Allah, and show them the way to Hell.” Then they will begin to argue with each other. The worshipers will say, “You are the ones who used to guide us from the right path.” Their deities will reply, “In reality, you were unwilling to believe. We had no power over you; you were a rebellious people by your own choice.” (Quran, 37: 22-30)

The translation of the verses I provided above is the one given in the book under discussion. After these verses, the following note is included:

“By reflecting on the exchange between the worshipers and the worshiped in this verse, it becomes clear that the ‘worshiped’ here does not refer to idols or deities that were worshiped. Instead, it refers to leaders and guides who misguided people by posing as benevolent seekers of good. These are those who appeared cloaked in sanctity, wearing prayer beads, cloaks, and robes, deceiving the servants of God into becoming their followers. By claiming to be reformers and well-wishers, they spread evil and corruption. Here, blind adherence to such people and unquestioning obedience to their commands is what is described as worship.”
(pp. 74-75)

The reason this explanation interprets ‘*ibadah* as social obedience lies in the mistake of the author under review, who assumes that the dialogue mentioned in the verse is between the worshippers and the worshipped. In reality, this dialogue is between two groups of worshipers, not between the worshipers and the worshiped. Due to this misunderstanding, the author under review translated “قالوا بل لم تكونوا مومنين” as “Their deities will respond...” However, in this phrase, قالوا does not refer to the worshiped but rather to الذين ظلموا (the wrongdoers). In fact, there are not just two groups mentioned here, but three distinct groups.

In these verses, a scene of the Day of Judgment is presented, when three groups will be gathered together:

1. الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا

al-ladhina zalamu

This describes leaders or prominent figures of that era who themselves went astray and caused others to go off course.

2. أَزْوَاجٍ

azwaj

This refers to the followers of the mentioned false leaders and their associates. (The original meaning of “*zawj*” is a counterpart, such as an associate or partner.)

3. مَا كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

ma kanu ya 'buduna min duni Allah

This refers to those who were worshipped besides Allah, specifically the idols.

In these verses, a scene of the Day of Judgment is depicted, where all three groups will be gathered together. At that time, a debate will take place between the first and second groups. The second group will say, “Through your influence, you led us to worship false deities.” The first group will respond, “No, rather

you are responsible for your own misguidance.” The following verses clarify this further, where one group says, “Just as we led you astray, we too were astray”—meaning that they themselves were also involved in worshiping false deities and led others into the same.

Afterward, the first group, which the Quran describes as oppressive, criminal, and arrogant because of their leadership in misguidance, is quoted responding to the Prophet’s call as follows:

“Shall we give up our gods for a mad poet?”
(37:36)

This verse clearly shows that those described as deities in the explanation above were not actual deities, but instead also worshiped other gods.

All commentators have understood this meaning (*Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 4, pp. 4-5; *Ruh al-Ma’ani*, Vol. 23, pp. 73-74).

Similarly, the following verse is cited to support “worship in the sense of slavery and obedience”⁵ :

O believers! If you worship Allah, then eat from the pure things that We have provided you and be grateful to Allah. (Quran, 2:172)

In the explanation of this verse, the following words are noted:

“The context of this verse is that, before

5. In reality, the primary meanings of *abd* are not slavery or obedience. However, this term is also used figuratively for these meanings.

Islam, the Arabs followed various restrictions regarding food based on the commands of their religious leaders and the superstitions of their ancestors. When they accepted Islam, Allah commanded that if they truly worship Him, they should abandon all these restrictions and freely consume what He has made lawful. This clearly means that if you are not the servants of your religious leaders and elders, but of Allah, and if you have truly given up their obedience in favor of Allah's, then in matters of lawful and prohibited, and permissible and impermissible, you must follow the regulations set by Allah instead of theirs. Therefore, here too, the word *Ibadah* is used in the sense of servitude and obedience.” (p. 73)

The words in the verse, “If you worship Allah, then...” themselves indicate that what is being asked for here is not the direct meaning or the “primary and fundamental concept” of *Ibadah*, but rather a requirement of *Ibadah*. In the initial sentences of the explanation above, this distinction is present. However, as the discussion continues, it shifts, and it is claimed that “...here, the word *Ibadah* is used in the sense of servitude and obedience.”

At the end of the discussion, verses are provided which,

according to the author under review, encompass all three meanings of *Ibadah*, presenting the complete concept of worship that requires one to make Allah their deity in the sense of “servitude, obedience, and reverence.” However, none of these verses actually demonstrate the comprehensive and complete concept of worship that the author intends. Here, I will discuss a few verses.

“Say, ‘O people, if you are in doubt about my religion, then know that I do not worship those you worship besides Allah, but I worship Allah, who takes your souls, and I have been commanded to be of the believers.’” (Quran, 10:104)

In this context, the following phrase appears later in the explanation: “And do not call upon besides Allah what can neither benefit you nor harm you.” (Quran, 10:106). This shows that here *Ibadah min dun Allah* refers to the act directed toward those beings whom people call upon, thinking they can bring benefit or harm. In this context, *Ibadah* refers to reverence, and the deities besides Allah refer to idols.

The phrase “I do not worship those you worship besides Allah” means “I do not worship idols.” (*Tafsir al-Qurtubi*, Vol. 8, p. 387)

One of the verses states: The true realities of the heavens and the earth are hidden from the servants. Only Allah has knowledge of them, and all matters are presented before Him. Therefore, worship Him alone and trust in Him. (Quran, 11:123)

In this verse, the phrase “to Him all matters are returned” appears before the command to worship, and “rely upon Him” follows it. This indicates that the command to worship implies that the same Allah who is the caretaker of all creation is the One you should depend on and seek refuge in.

“So worship Him and rely upon Him” means: make Him your refuge and place your trust in Him. (*Tafsir Al-Qurtubi*, Vol. 9, p. 117)

One of the verses is:

“You do not worship besides Him except [mere] names you have named, you and your forefathers, for which Allah has sent down no authority. Sovereignty belongs only to Allah. He has commanded that you worship none but Him. That is the correct religion.”
(Quran, 12:40)

The phrase “names you have named” in this verse suggests that it cannot serve as the basis for any “comprehensive” interpretation as outlined in the book

under discussion. “Your deities are merely names that you have devised” emphasizes that *Ibadah* (worship) here refers to an act associated with deities who, in reality, do not exist but are imaginary entities created by the worshipers themselves. Clearly, such a deity is an idol, not a political ruler. In other words, what is being rejected here is the act of calling upon and worshiping imaginary beings other than God, perceiving them as having the power to benefit or harm.

Therefore, what is being demanded here is essentially the same: to worship Him alone and to recognize only Him as having the power to benefit or harm.

The commentators have understood the meaning of this verse. Al-Qurtubi, explaining that the term “*arbaab mutafarriqoon*” (various lords) refers to “*idols*,” interprets the following phrases with these words:

The phrase “You do not worship besides Allah except [mere] names” emphasizes the weakness and powerlessness of the idols, explaining that those you worship besides Allah are simply names with no true reality. You yourself have given them these names. Some scholars have said that “names” refer to the entities themselves, meaning that those you worship are just idols without any divine nature, as they are inanimate objects. (*Tafsir al-Qurtubi*, Vol. 9, p. 192)

The final and perhaps most prominent verse in this context is:

“So whoever hopes to meet their Lord, let them do righteous work and not associate anyone in the worship of their Lord.” (Quran, 18:110)

In the book, the last phrase of this verse is translated as: “and not associate the worship of anyone else with the worship of their Lord,” from which it is concluded that “the Quran is presenting its complete message here” (p. 84), meaning that in every aspect, from worship to social and political life, one should follow divine commands.

However, both this translation and its interpretation are incorrect. The correct translation of the verse is not, “and not associate the worship of anyone else with the worship of their Lord,” but rather, “and not associate anyone with their Lord in worship.” This conveys that the verse does not command you to divide the complete and detailed system of worship into separate parts. Instead, it emphasizes that in the worship of God which you perform, there should be no intention of pleasing anyone else; your worship must be directed solely to Allah. This interpretation is further supported by narrations and the explanations of scholars of Quran. I will quote just one example:

Al-Mawardi and all commentators state that “not

associate anyone with their Lord in worship” means avoiding acts for show, specifically having no intention of ostentation in one’s actions. (*Tafsir al-Qurtubi*, Vol. 11, p. 70)

Understanding ‘Deen’

The fourth and final term in this context is “*Deen*” (religion). The book identifies four different meanings of this word from classical Arabic usage. Then, under the heading “The Use of the Word *Deen* in the Quran,” the following lines are provided:

“These details clarify that the foundation of the word *Deen* consists of four concepts, or in other words, this word represents four core ideas in the Arabic mind.”

1. Dominance and control exercised by one who possesses authority.
2. Obedience, servitude, and submission from those who yield to authority.
3. Rules, regulations, and methods that are followed.
4. Accountability, judgment, and the awarding of rewards or punishments.

The Arabs sometimes used this word to refer to different ideas. However, because their understanding of these four aspects was neither fully clear nor very

advanced, the use of this term lacked precision, and it did not evolve into a technical term representing a unified system of thought. When the Quran came, it recognized this word as suitable for its purpose and used it for very specific and clear meanings, establishing it as a distinct term. In the Quranic language, the word “*Deen*” signifies an entire system made up of four components.

1. Sovereignty and supreme authority.
2. Submission and obedience in response to this authority.
3. The intellectual and practical system established under this authority.
4. Reward and punishment given by the supreme authority as recompense for loyalty and obedience to or rebellion against this system.

In the Quran, sometimes the word *Deen* is applied to the first and second meanings, sometimes to the third, sometimes to the fourth, and at times, when referring to *ad-Deen*, it implies this entire system with all four of its elements. (pp. 87-88)

After presenting separate Quranic verses for each of these four meanings, the author under review writes under the heading “*Deen* as a Comprehensive Term”:

“Up to this point, the Quran uses this word in nearly the same meanings in which it was

commonly used in Arab language. But then we see that the Quran employs the word *Deen* as a comprehensive term, and by it, it means a complete system of life in which a person accepts the supreme authority of someone, pledges obedience and submission to them, and lives under the rules, boundaries, and laws established by them.

Such a person seeks honor, progress, and reward through obedience and fears humiliation, disgrace, and punishment for disobedience. It seems that no term in any language worldwide fully captures this entire concept. The modern term ‘State’ comes close, but it still needs further expansion to encompass the full scope of *Deen*.” (pp. 92-93)

This passage explains that the ultimate understanding of *Deen* is as a complete way of life or in terms of a state. In one sense, *Deen* can be seen as a State or a system. However, if you try to describe the full and holistic idea of *Deen* using only the words “state” or “system,” it becomes very limited and incomplete. This is because, no matter how broad or comprehensive a state or system is, it remains just a legal framework or set of rules with no real connection to human emotions and feelings. It does not come from within a

person but is imposed from outside. In contrast, *Deen* is about forming a connection with God. It suggests that the bond between the servant and God is natural and real. The actions that appear in life are external signs of this connection, which the servant integrates into their life based on God's guidance. A state or system is merely an external structure, while *Deen* is the outward expression of an inner reality. That is why true and lasting benefits in life can only come through *Deen*. The concepts of 'system' and 'state' provide only an initial surge of enthusiasm; afterward, life and the system drift apart, leaving no genuine connection between them.

It is true that *Deen* can also manifest in forms that resemble what is called a state or system. However, the essence of God's *Deen* is the highest quality that appears as supplication and sincerity (Quran, 40:65) and in worship and devotion (Quran, 39:17). The greatest blessing a person receives in this world upon becoming religious is this relationship with their Lord. For a believer, the highest reality of *Deen* in a personal sense is that the servant calls upon their Lord with intense longing, full of fear and hope, dedicating all emotions and feelings to Him alone. They become completely devoted and a true worshiper of God, directing their entire attention toward Him. This is the

highest personal reality of *Deen*, the greatest attainment of a devout person, which they carry with them to their Lord. Whoever receives this gift of connection with Allah through their *Deen* has truly found *Deen*, while anyone who lacks such a relationship remains deprived of *Deen*, despite all else they may possess.

Moreover, political religiosity can only truly develop in someone who has genuine religious devotion. A person lacking real religious devotion will be equally lacking in political religiosity.

When we realize that the greatest reality of religion—indeed, its very essence and core—is absent from this so-called “comprehensive” picture of faith, we are compelled to acknowledge that the “incomplete” image of religion cherished by the *Ummah* for centuries was, in fact, the correct one. This new portrayal of religion, despite its claim to comprehensiveness, is not its true image. In this portrayal of religion, attaining a worldly outcome is treated as the primary objective, whereas attaining a personal outcome, in the sense of individual responsibility, is the true purpose of religion. Here, I am reminded of the words of a respected senior figure, spoken in response to a similar objection of mine.

He said that, in our view, what the Muslim *Ummah*, as a collective, seeks to attain is certainly the establishment of a life in which no other *Deen* or system of thought

and action prevails besides Allah's. However, this is the objective of the community, not of the individual. As for the individual's true goal, it is solely to attain Allah's pleasure and success in the Hereafter. This pleasure and success can only be achieved if the individual fully fulfills their personal responsibilities. If they have fulfilled their individual responsibilities, then they die having completed their religious duty. However, the goal of the community or *Ummah* is different. In this regard, there is no final time limit for the struggle, nor is it the community's responsibility to fully achieve it. As long as the Muslim *Ummah* exists on this earth, the struggle for this objective—the establishment of a complete Islamic system—will continue. In the elder's words, the first aspect is the individual goal, and the second aspect is the “collective goal of the community.” Despite this dual focus of objectives, the core issue remains the same. In both cases, the goal is clear: to establish a complete Islamic system worldwide. The only difference is that an individual does their duty to the best of their ability, while the community is responsible for continuing this effort from generation to generation until the complete Islamic system is achieved globally.

However, this division does not impact the main issue. It only shows that an individual is responsible as long as

they are alive, and the community is responsible as long as it exists. But where does it show that the establishment of a “complete Islamic system” is the main mission given by the prophets and entrusted to us?

To support the specific idea of a collective goal, the author under review presents a historical example, which he explains as follows:

“Prophet Jesus came to seek the lost sheep of the Children of Israel. His mission was to help the Children of Israel fully embrace Islamic life again. However, regarding his own direct efforts, only twelve individuals became his companions. Yet, even after him, the call to goodness continued. After a long period, a time came when the followers of Jesus prevailed, and the deniers were defeated. The reality he aimed to bring into existence came into being; in other words, the mission he started was fulfilled. The Quran, in the last part of Chapter *Al-Saff*, describes this long and multi-stage story in a way that clearly shows it is, in fact, the history of a single movement and a single mission. However, the founder of this movement and the original bearer of the mission had long departed from this world.”

I want to clarify that this reference is not accurate. The history of Christians does not support the idea

that after the death of Jesus (peace be upon him), his followers continued the efforts mentioned above and ultimately established a complete and comprehensive Islamic system. The verse from Chapter *Al-Saff* that is cited uses the term “ظاهرين” (those who prevail, Quran, 61:14), which simply means “dominance” rather than establishing any full or complete system. According to the wording of the verse, this dominance was not of one religion over another but rather of the followers of Jesus over his enemies.

In interpreting this verse, three opinions from ancient commentators are cited. The first suggests that dominance is achieved through proof and evidence. The second states that at the time of Jesus’ “ascension,” his twelve companions became divided; some believed he was God, others said he was the Son of God, and some insisted he was merely a servant and messenger of God. This led to disputes among them, resulting in conflicts where those who spoke the truth ultimately prevailed. The third opinion holds that the dominance mentioned in this verse refers to the one that occurred during the time of the final messenger. However, Allama Alusi has written regarding this that “وهو خلاف الظاهر,” meaning this interpretation does not conform to the apparent meaning of the words. (*Ruh al-Ma’ani*, Vol. 14, p. 286)

Personally, I tend to agree more with some later scholars

who interpret the verse in Chapter *Al-Saff* as referring to the dominance of Christians over Jews (as a nation). According to this interpretation, the phrase “الذين آمنوا” does not refer to believers in the full sense, but rather to those who acknowledge the prophethood of Jesus (Christians). The dominance of Christians over Jews is not about establishing any kind of “system,” but rather it is simply a general dominance imposed as a worldly punishment for rejecting the prophethood of Jesus and attempting to kill him, based on their intentions.

The word “*Deen*” in Arabic has multiple meanings, but the core meaning for which Islam is called *Deen* is humility and submission:

Ad-dinu: adh-dhull (*Lisan al-‘Arab* by Ibn Manzur, Vol. 13, p. 170), that is, *Al-Din* means humility or submissiveness. This signifies humility and lowliness.

Danahu dinan, ay adhallahu wa-ista‘badahu (*al-Sihah* by al-Jawhari, Vol. 5, p. 2118) means he subdued him, which means he humbled and enslaved him.

In a hadith, it is stated: *Al-kayyisu man dana nafsahu wa-‘amila lima ba‘da al-mawt* (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 2459), which means, “The wise person is the one who controls his soul and works for what comes after death.”

Becoming religious is fundamentally not a political or civil event but is instead a deeply personal experience. It means that an individual submits themselves before God, overcomes their own desires for Him, and fully dedicates all their feelings and emotions to Him. In this sense, Prophet Ibrahim was a complete Muslim, even though he never established a comprehensive system during his life. Similarly, the declaration of the last Messenger's *Deen* as religious in Makkah occurred even though, at that time, neither a state was established nor communal laws were revealed:

“Say, ‘I worship Allah alone, dedicating my religion to Him. So worship whatever you will besides Him.’” (Quran, 39:14-15)

In this context, the establishment of prayer and the giving of zakat are referred to as the *Al-Deen Al-Qayyim* (upright religion). However, it is evident that this is not the entirety of *Deen*. (Quran, 98: 5)

When this state of religious devotion develops within a person, it naturally influences their practical life. In the situations they face, they abandon other methods and adopt those preferred by God. Their external life becomes a reflection of their internal submission. It becomes unthinkable for them to act in ways that go against God's preferences. In this sense, politics and civilization are all part of *Deen*.

The first aspect is the fundamental reality of *Deen*, and the second is the demand of this reality placed on the faithful in relation to their circumstances. The first aspect is required from everyone at all times; without it, no one's religiosity can be considered valid. In this regard, all prophets and righteous individuals were truly devoted in the complete sense, but the social and communal demands of *Deen* are not universally applicable; rather, they vary according to circumstances. This is why there have been differences among believers in different eras regarding these demands. Some were able to fulfill them, while others were not, and some received such commands while others did not.

For this reason, while *Deen* is a term that includes various components listed in the Shari'ah, there is no verse that universally requires obedience to the entire list. The discussions on *Ilah*, *Rabb*, and *Ibadah* provided earlier have highlighted the core of a "comprehensive concept." Now, let's also review the verses cited in the book to support the comprehensive understanding of *Deen*.

The first verse is:

"Among the People of the Book are those who neither believe in Allah (that is, they do

not acknowledge Him as the sole Supreme Authority), nor in the Last Day (that is, the Day of Reckoning and the Day of Recompense), nor regard as forbidden what Allah and His Messenger have declared forbidden, nor adopt the true religion as their way. Fight against them until they pay the jizyah by their own hand and live in submission.” (Quran, 9:29)

The translation I provided above is the one from the book’s author. Following this, the author states:

In this verse, ‘*Deen al-Haqq*’ (the religion of truth) is a technical term, and its meaning is clarified in the first three phrases by Allah Himself. We have numbered the translation to show that all four meanings of the word *Deen* are explained in these phrases, and then their collective understanding is called *Deen al-Haqq*.” (p. 93)

The interpretations derived from this verse, to the best of my knowledge, have not been mentioned by any commentator, nor do the words of the verse support such explanations. The attempt to derive the “first” and “second” meanings of *Deen* from the phrase “لا يؤمنون بالله” (they do not believe in Allah)—specifically, that they do not recognize God’s “sovereignty and

supreme authority” and do not accept and obey that sovereignty—is a weak argument, similar to how some people interpret belief in the “state” as faith in Allah. Similarly, trying to establish the “third meaning” of *Deen* from “ولا يجرمون ما حرم الله ورسوله” (they do not consider unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful)—which refers to “the system of thought and action established under this sovereignty”—is simply a distortion of the words rather than a valid scholarly argument. Furthermore, claiming that “دين الحق” includes all four meanings of *Deen* is an unsupported assertion. There is no linguistic indicator in the verse to suggest that *Deen al-Haqq* is used here to represent a collection of these four meanings.

The specific meaning that this verse is intended to establish in the book under discussion certainly does not emerge from it, and no commentator supports it. However, setting that aside, there is a difference of opinion among scholars regarding the correct interpretation of the verse. One group interprets “يدينون” as referring to the acceptance of Islam (*Tafsir al-Qurtubi*, Vol. 8, p. 110). However, this interpretation creates a contradiction within the verse. According to this view, the reason for waging war against the People of the Book is that they do not adopt the religion brought by Muhammad ﷺ as their own. If the reason

for the war is this, then logically, the war should end on the same basis. In other words, the war should cease when the People of the Book accept the religion of truth or are defeated in battle. If the initial basis for the war is this, the final basis should naturally be the same. However, the verse states that if they pay the *jizyah* and accept political authority, the war will be halted. In other words, the war will commence due to the crime of the People of the Book in not accepting the religion of Islam, but afterward, it will cease solely on the basis that they have agreed to pay the *jizyah*.

Therefore, the correct interpretation of the verse is that the phrase “يدينون دين الحق” refers to accepting the political authority of the Prophet. The phrases “لا يؤمنون” “بالله ولا باليوم الآخر ولا يحرمون ما حرم الله ورسوله ولا يدينون دين” “الحق” refers to their failure to accept political authority. For the People of the Book, the correct stance would have been to believe in the final Prophet, who had long been prophesied to them. However, since they did not do this, the alternative was that they should agree to the political authority of the Prophet (as stated in the discussion on the obligation to fight the polytheists and the obligation regarding the People of the Book: to fight them until they accept Islam or pay the *jizyah* (*Tafsir al-Razi*, Vol. 16, p. 25). Yet, they were not open

to this second option either. Now, since they only have the choice regarding the first option, and the second option is mandatory, it was commanded that they be fought until they are compelled to accept it.

In the first sentence, the mention of faith and the prohibition of what Allah has forbidden has been interpreted by some to refer to the absence of their belief and adherence to the Mosaic Law, while others see it as their lack of belief in the final Prophet's law. However, these two interpretations are not contradictory. This is because, if they truly had faith in their own religion, then that faith would necessarily lead them to believe in Muhammad ﷺ, as all previous prophets gave the glad tidings of his coming and commanded their communities to follow him. As Ibn Kathir states: "If they truly believed in what was with them in a sound manner, it would lead them to believe in Muhammad because all prophets gave glad tidings about him and commanded following him" (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 4, p. 132).

Another opinion has been narrated regarding interpretations of "يدينون دين الحق" (adhere to the religion of truth):

Abu 'Ubaydah explained that it means they do not obey the obedience of the Muslims, and anyone who is under a king's authority is considered to be under his religion, and it is said that he has 'submitted' to him (*Al-Bahr al-Muheet*, Vol. 5, p. 400).

Ibn Jarir al-Tabari also adopted this interpretation. He writes:

“ولا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ)” means “they do not obey Allah with true obedience.” This refers to the Jews and Christians, and anyone who obeys a king or someone in authority is considered to be following his rule. In Arabic, the expression “دان فلان لفلان فهو يدين له ديناً” is used in this sense (*Tafsir Ibn Jarir*, Vol. 11, pp. 406).

According to this explanation, the verse suggests that after refusing to believe in the final Prophet and abandoning the teachings of the divine religion, their means of salvation would be to accept the political authority of the true religion. However, they were unwilling even for this. As for the first matter (faith), they cannot be forced into it, but for the latter (political obedience), they must be compelled. Fighting will continue until they agree to accept the political authority of the Islamic state.

After this, in the book, five verses are quoted in a particular sequence, and from them a structured conclusion is drawn. I reproduce the whole portion here:

1. Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam.
(3:19)

2. And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and he will be among the losers in the Hereafter. (3:85)
3. It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, so that He may make it prevail over all religion, even though those who associated partners with God dislike it. (9:33)
4. And fight them until there is no more fitnah, and [until] the religion is entirely for Allah. (8:39)
5. When the help of Allah comes and victory is achieved, and you see people entering into the religion of Allah in large numbers, then glorify your Lord and seek His forgiveness. Indeed, He is always accepting repentance. (110:1-3)

In all these verses, *Deen* indicates the complete system of life, including its doctrinal, intellectual, moral, and practical aspects.

In the first two verses, it is stated that the only correct way of life for humanity in the sight of Allah is the one based on obedience and servitude to Allah alone (Islam). Any other system that relies on obedience to any other assumed authority can never be acceptable to the Creator and Sovereign of the universe. This is because the One who created, owns, and nurtures human beings, and in whose dominion, they reside

as subjects, cannot permit humanity to live a life of obedience and servitude to anyone else, nor does humanity have the right to follow the guidance of anyone else.

In the third verse, it is stated that Allah sent His Messenger with this true and upright way of life—Islam—and the ultimate goal of his mission is to establish the dominance of this system over all other systems.

The fourth verse commands the followers of Islam to fight in this world and not to rest until fitnah—the existence of systems founded on rebellion against Allah—is eliminated and the entire system of obedience and servitude is rendered solely to Allah.

“In the fifth verse, Allah addresses the Prophet ﷺ at a moment when, after 23 years of continuous effort, the revolution in Arabia has been completed. Islam, in its full and detailed form, has become established as a system of belief, thought, morality, education, civilization, social life, and also an economic and political order. Delegation after delegation from various parts of Arabia now enters this system. At this point, when the mission assigned to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has reached its fulfillment, he is instructed not to view this achievement as a personal accomplishment or source of pride. Only the flawless, perfect essence

belongs to your Lord. Therefore, in recognition of this monumental achievement, glorify and praise Him, and seek His forgiveness for any shortcomings or mistakes that may have occurred while fulfilling your duties over these 23 years of service.” (page 94-95)

In the excerpt above, if it had simply been stated that *deen* (religion), in terms of its list of directives, includes everything the Prophet conveyed throughout his Prophetic mission regarding individual and collective aspects of life, we would have no objection to that. In this sense, the term *deen* could indeed be seen as encompassing all Islamic injunctions. This is an accepted fact, and there is no question of disagreement with it (for reference, see *Tafsir Khazin*, Vol. 1, p. 278).

However, what is stated here is different. It claims that *deen* is a complete system of governance (state) and that it is required of us in that role. The Prophet, it is asserted, came for this very purpose, and the ultimate goal of his mission was to establish this entire system above all others. This is said to be the revolutionary task the Prophet Muhammad carried out during his period of prophethood, and this is the same revolutionary mission that we, the followers of the Prophet, are expected to carry out across the entire world.

We disagree with precisely this concept of religion as a political or state-centered mission. In other

words, presenting the establishment of a state or a system as the primary mission of prophethood, and claiming that the prophets began their work from the very first day with this objective, is incorrect. The entire substance of our criticism of the book under discussion can be summed up as follows: matters that enter religion from different angles after faith has been accepted have been presented in this book as the core mission of prophethood itself. Regarding this, our position is that such a claim is not established by any verse of the Quran.

The first two verses are from chapter 3 and are meant to show that, until the Day of Judgment, the only religion acceptable to Allah and a way to salvation is “Islam.” Right after this, it is immediately stated:

“And the People of the Book only disagreed after knowledge had come to them, out of envy among themselves.” (Quran, 3:19).

This means that the objections of the People of the Book to the final, accepted, and authentic status of Islam are simply due to their defiance. Otherwise, based on the knowledge they have received from previous prophets, they are well aware of Islam’s authentic status. This is the interpretation adopted by commentaries on the Quran. I will cite two references.

“Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam” (3:19) means that the only religion approved by Allah is Islam. As stated elsewhere, “I have chosen Islam as your religion” (5:3). This statement serves as a rebuttal to the claims of the Jews and Christians: the Jews asserted that Judaism is the superior religion, and the Christians claimed that Christianity is the superior religion. Allah refuted them, stating that only Islam is the religion in the sight of Allah (*Tafsir Khazin*, Vol. 1, p. 234).

“Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam” (3:19) means that no other religion besides Islam is approved by Allah. (*Ruh ul Ma’ani*, Vol. 2, p. 103)

Similarly, the second verse’s main topic also concerns which religion is accepted by Allah. Immediately following this, several verses stress that anyone who follows a religion other than Islam will be considered a “disbeliever” in Allah’s eyes and will deserve punishment in the Hereafter (Quran, 3:85-91).

This is also the understanding held by tafsir scholars. I will cite two references:

“And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him,” meaning that the only religion accepted by Allah is Islam, and all other religions are not accepted by Him.” (*Tafsir Khazin*, Vol. 1, p. 266)

In the words of the verse “وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا” “فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ” God has clearly declared that after the coming of the final Messenger, whoever follows a religion other than the one he brought will not be accepted by God. (*Ruh al-Ma’ani*, Vol. 2, p. 207).

The point made in these two verses is not that the only correct way of life for humanity in different areas is the one established under Allah’s authority. Instead, it challenges the claims of other religions that they serve as means of salvation in Allah’s eyes. It states that from now on, the only path to salvation is the religion sent through the final Messenger.

Regarding the third verse, we have covered it in detail elsewhere. Here, we will briefly discuss one aspect that shows the specific concept of *deen* in question cannot be derived from it.

The author under review’s detailed interpretation of this verse, as cited in another section, shows that he interprets لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ (to make it prevail over all religion) to mean the dominance of all forms of obedience. According to him, this includes replacing personal desires, customs, laws, and government with divine obedience. However, if we reflect, it becomes clear that such comprehensive obedience cannot be

enforced on others through external dominance. For example, can a person's obedience to his own desires be removed by the army or the police? Clearly, it cannot. The truth is that only a few forms of outward conduct can be controlled or enforced through power. Inner obedience—such as submission to one's desires—lies beyond the reach of coercion. Therefore, most kinds of obedience cannot be made a subject of enforcement.

Furthermore, the actual historical events related to the emergence of *deen* do not support this interpretation. The verse addressed two groups: the Arab polytheists, with the choices being “either the sword or Islam,” and the People of the Book, who were permitted to practice their religion after paying the *jizya*. Thus, one group was religiously subdued and the other politically subdued. Clearly, we cannot say that Islam was established over either group in a way that every demand and requirement of Islam was enforced on them, both internally and externally.

Therefore, the scholars of *tafsir* understood this verse to imply a general dominance, either over other religions or their followers. For example, in *Kashshaf*, it is stated: “to make it prevail” means to make the Prophet prevail “over people of all religions”, or “to make the true religion prevail over every religion” (*Tafsir Kashshaf*, Vol. 2, p. 265).

In *Madarik al-Tanzil*, it is stated: “to make it prevail” means “to make it dominant over all religions, over all people of various religions, or to make the religion of truth prevail over every other religion” (*Tafsir Madarik al-Tanzil* by al-Nasfi, Vol. 1, p. 676).

A detailed discussion on the fourth verse will follow, demonstrating that the concept in question cannot accurately be applied to this verse. This discrepancy led the author under review to express contradictory views on two different occasions. Since the author needed to establish a broad and comprehensive meaning of *deen* in the book under discussion, he claimed in one place that the term “*deen*” in this verse refers to a complete system of life, encompassing all aspects—doctrinal, intellectual, moral, and practical (p. 94). However, when extracting a revolutionary mission from this verse elsewhere, he realized that *deen* was linked to the command of fighting to establish it, meaning to bring people to *deen* through combat. Thus, to make this verse the source of the Revolutionary Therefore, taking this verse as the basis of a political revolutionary mission would imply that matters of faith and ideology are to be imposed through fighting and coercion. However, it is clear that the doctrinal and intellectual aspects of religion cannot be imposed by force but require persuasion and advice.

In a later interpretation, the meaning of *deen* becomes more specific. In *Tafheem al-Quran*, he changes his stance while explaining this verse and interprets وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ as meaning that, regardless of whether people believe or not, the earthly legal system should remain under God's authority, and for this reason, fighting is justified (*Tafheem al Quran*, Ch. 2, V. 193, Footnote 205).

Similarly, the lengthy interpretation given for the last reference (Chapter *Al-Nasr*) has no connection to the actual words of the Chapter. The phrase "إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ" "وَالْفَتْحُ" refers to the victory granted by Allah, where the Prophet ﷺ prevailed over the enemies of Islam. The verse "يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا" speaks of the occurrence that, after this victory, people began accepting Islam in large numbers.

According to Ibn Abbas, before this victory, when the final Prophet and the Quraysh were in fierce conflict, the Arabs believed that the side which won was in the right. So, when the Prophet ﷺ defeated his enemies and gained control, many people started converting to Islam. As a result, Islam became more powerful both politically and in numbers, allowing the ongoing mission of spreading the religion after the Prophet's time, as Allah intended. This is why, when the Prophet ﷺ and his close companions heard this

Chapter, they saw it as a sign that his time was nearing. Here, I will quote some excerpts from classical tafsir texts to clarify this interpretation.

“إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ”)—‘nusr’ means assistance and prevailing over the enemy, and ‘fath’ refers to the conquest of lands. The meaning is the victory of the Prophet ﷺ over the Arabs, specifically the Quraysh, and the conquest of Makkah. “وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا”—when you see the people entering Allah’s religion in multitudes, referring to the people of Yemen embracing Islam in large groups, whereas earlier they entered one or two at a time. (*Madarik al-Tanzil*, Vol. 3, p. 688)

In *Tafsir Abi al-Su’ud*, it is explained: “They enter Allah’s religion”—that is, the religion of Islam—“in large groups,” such as the people of Makkah, Ta’if, Yemen, Hawazin, and other tribes of Arabia, who previously entered Islam one or two at a time (*Tafsir Abi al-Su’ud*, Vol. 9, p. 208).

In *Ruh al-Ma’ani* (Vol. 15, p. 492), it is stated that the meaning of people entering Allah’s religion in groups is that large numbers began to accept Islam without fighting. This event took place between the conquest of Makkah and the Prophet’s death. Before this, people accepted Islam individually or in pairs.

This chapter of the Quran clearly indicates the arrival of victory and the widespread acceptance of Islam—specifically, victory through Allah’s help and a large number of people embracing Islam. There is no mention of the background or circumstances surrounding this victory and assistance. Therefore, interpreting these verses as suggesting that the previous efforts of the Prophetic mission in Arabia were aimed at establishing a particular political system, and that this victory and support marked the end of that revolutionary fight, is an external interpretation that has been added and connected here. These verses do not describe the nature of the Prophetic mission, nor is there any explicit evidence elsewhere to support such an interpretation. As a result, this argument is similar to someone hypothesizing that the Prophetic mission was primarily a struggle to free the Arab nation from the control of religious leaders and landowners. Such a person might connect this view to these verses and claim that the message is that the Arab national struggle led by Muhammad ﷺ succeeded on the day of the conquest of Makkah, after which the oppressed people under the old system gathered in large numbers under his banner. If this latter interpretation is incorrect, then the first interpretation cannot be correct either.

INTERPRETATION OF THE ISLAMIC MISSION

Over the last fifty years, the social ideologies that have gained popularity are those aimed at improving material conditions and promoting political revolutions. Today, a movement is only seen as vibrant if it aligns with these goals. This influence has become so widespread that even followers of traditional schools of thought start interpreting their ideologies this way. The modern literature on Hinduism and Christianity clearly shows this trend. As a result, religion is now often viewed as a matter of worldly progress rather than preparation for the Hereafter.

If you study Islam influenced by the current atmosphere, your understanding of the Islamic mission might start to mirror what's around you. Since you naturally have reverence for Islam because of your cultural and ethnic connections, your subconscious may want to see Islam aligned with what's widely regarded as a high and credible level of thought—an aspect of

credibility you are also likely to accept unconsciously. Afterward, as you notice that Islam includes directives for all aspects of life, that there have been struggles with those in power throughout Islamic history, and that Islam has gained political power, these elements will likely come together in your mind as a framework for understanding Islam as:

“Islam is a complete system of life, and the Prophets were sent to establish a divine government and implement this highly accurate system on earth.”

On the surface, there may appear to be nothing incorrect in this interpretation. It is certainly true that Islam has its own system of life, that the Prophet established a government, and that he implemented God’s laws on earth. However, piecing these elements together to construct a new framework is, in terms of reality, like combining bones from various animals to create a new skeleton and then claiming it is a historical creature that roamed the earth fifty million years ago. According to this view of Islam, the purpose or “goal” of believers in this world was expressed in the following phrase at the time of *Jamaat-e-Islami*’s founding:

“The ultimate goal of *Jamaat-e-Islami* and the purpose of all its efforts is to establish the divine government in the world and attain Allah’s pleasure in the Hereafter.”

In the Constitution, this statement of purpose is further clarified as:

“This refers to establishing Allah’s *Shariah*-based governance, related to those aspects of human life in which Allah has granted human beings a degree of choice.”

This means the detailed law God has sent through His prophets—covering beliefs, morality, social conduct, culture, politics, and more—must be accepted. Those who refuse to do so are, in effect, rebelling against God.

“The duty of a believer is to eliminate this rebellion from the world and to end the lordship of anyone other than God over God’s earth. The mission of a believer’s life is to establish God’s divine law over humanity just as His cosmic law governs the entire universe. The ultimate aim of a believer’s efforts is to free people from the servitude of everyone except God and make them servants of God alone. Ideally, this work is to be done through advice, persuasion, encouragement, and preaching. However, those who have illegitimately taken control of God’s domain and turned His servants into their own do not usually abandon their lordship merely through advice. Therefore, believers are often

compelled to engage in combat to remove obstacles that stand in the way of establishing divine governance.”

After the partition of the country, when a separate *Jamaat* was established in India, the leaders there made some adjustments to the wording of the statement of purpose, presenting it as follows:

“The purpose of *Jamaat-e-Islami* and the goal of all its efforts is to establish *Deen* (the religion of Allah) in the world and to attain Allah’s pleasure in the Hereafter.”

This change did not signify an alteration in the objective itself but was merely a linguistic modification. Therefore, a note was added below the revised phrase in the Constitution, stating:

“Previously, in the *Jamaat’s* Constitution, the term ‘divine government’ was used instead of ‘establishment of *Deen*.’ It was actually used in the same sense as ‘establishment of *Deen*.’ However, misunderstandings arose and were being created regarding the term ‘divine government.’ Therefore, it was deemed necessary to choose a term for expressing our objective that is a technical term from the Quran, comprehensively conveys all its meanings, and does not cause any misunderstandings.”

The same objective of *Jamaat-e-Islami Hind* is now expressed in its current constitution as follows:

“The objective of *Jamaat-e-Islami Hind* is the establishment of *Deen*, motivated solely by the desire for Allah’s pleasure and the attainment of success in the Hereafter. ...This *Deen* encompasses both the internal and external aspects of human life, as well as all individual and collective spheres of life. From beliefs, worship, and morality to economics, social life, and politics, there is not a single domain of human life that falls outside its scope.

This *Deen*, while guaranteeing Allah’s pleasure and success in the Hereafter, is also the best system for solving worldly issues, providing a suitable way of life. A righteous and progressive individual and collective life is possible only through its establishment.

The establishment of this *Deen* means to follow it sincerely without any separation or division, wholeheartedly, and to implement it in all individual and collective aspects of human life so that the development of individuals, the construction of society, and the formation of the state are all in accordance with this *Deen*.”

This perspective is repeatedly expressed in various

ways throughout the literature produced under this ideology. Here are a few lines from an article:

“Islam (in its general sense) is not the name of a religion, nor is a Muslim the name of a nation. In reality, Islam is a revolutionary ideology and movement that seeks to transform the entire global social order according to its own ideology and principles. A Muslim is a member of this international revolutionary group organized by Islam to implement its desired revolutionary program, and jihad is the term for the ultimate exertion of force employed in this struggle to achieve that purpose.”

“Whoever accepts this call becomes a member of the Islamic group, thus forming the international revolutionary party referred to in the Quran as ‘*Hizb Allah*’ (the party of Allah). Upon its formation, this party immediately begins its jihad to fulfill the purpose of its existence. Its very essence necessitates that it endeavors to dismantle non-Islamic systems of governance and, in their place, establish a balanced and moderate social order, which the Quran comprehensively refers to as the ‘*kalimat Allah*’ (word of Allah).”

“This is not a group of preachers and

missionaries merely engaged in religious preaching; rather, it is a community of God's enforcers. Its task is to eradicate oppression, corruption, immorality, tyranny, and illegitimate power from the world by force, to end the lordship of entities other than Allah, and to replace evil with goodness. Therefore, this party has no choice but to seize the reins of governmental power, for a corrupt social system is sustained by a corrupt government, and a righteous social system cannot be established until governance is transferred from corrupt hands to those of the righteous." (*Tafhimat*, Vol. 1, "*Jihad fi Sabil Allah*")

Here, I will quote another passage that explains this perspective in more detail. Under the heading "The Islamic Objective," it is written:

"The answer given in the Quran to this question is as follows:

'He is the one (i.e., Allah) who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth so that He may make it prevail over all religions, even though the polytheists detest it' (9:33).

In this verse, *al-huda* refers to the correct way of

life in the world, covering every aspect of human life—personal conduct, family structure, social organization, economic matters, national governance, political strategies, international relations, and every aspect of human existence. Allah sent His Messenger with guidance on the proper behavior for all these areas.

The second thing the Messenger brought is the *deen al-haqq* (the true religion). The word *deen* means obedience or system of authority. When *deen* is used for “faith” or “religion,” it’s because a person follows a specific system of thought and action. However, in its core meaning, *deen* is similar to what we now call the “state.” A “state” is created when people accept the authority of a higher power and follow it, which is essentially what *deen* means. The “true religion” is when a person abandons servitude to others, their own desires, and all creation, and recognizes Allah alone as the supreme authority, submitting only to Him.

The Messenger’s mission was then defined as establishing this system of obedience (*deen*) and way of life (*al-huda*) over all forms of obedience. By “the entire category of religion” is meant that all the forms in which human beings, individually or collectively, obey

someone in this world are different varieties within the same category of religion. A son's obedience to parents, a wife's to her husband, a servant's to their master, a subordinate's to a superior, the citizens' obedience to the state, followers' to leaders—these and countless others form a complete system of obedience. The purpose of the Messenger's mission is that this entire system, with all its components, becomes subject to one primary obedience and one superior law. All obedience should fall under obedience to Allah, and it is His law alone that should regulate every form of obedience, with none existing outside its bounds.

This is the Prophet's mission, and he is committed to fulfilling it, regardless of how much opposition he encounters from polytheists. Polytheists are those who, in their personal and communal lives, associate other forms of obedience with Allah's. According to Allah's natural law, all human beings follow it inevitably because they have no choice. However, within human freedom, some individuals entirely submit to non-divine powers, while others divide their lives, obeying Allah's moral law (*Shariah*) in one part and following their desires or others in another. This is what it means to combine obedience to Allah with obedience to other powers.

People caught in these various forms of polytheism find it uncomfortable to dedicate their voluntary obedience solely to Allah, just as they must obey His natural laws. Out of ignorance or moral weakness, they persist in their polytheism. Yet, the Messenger's duty remains to fulfill his mission despite resistance from such people. (*Muslim aur Siyasi Kashmakash*, Vol. 3, titled, "*Islam ki Rah-e-Rast aur Us Se Inhiraf ki Rahein*")

The views expressed in the above excerpts are not inherently wrong. However, when this becomes the sole focus for believers, it indeed becomes flawed. This is because the true purpose of a believer's life is to develop a relationship with God—to become deeply attached to Him and to live life in complete devotion to Him. This is the ultimate reason why humanity was created, and it is the purpose toward which a believer should direct all their attention. The main goal of a believer's actions in this world is to bond with God, not to establish any specific system of government.

Bringing about a social revolution or establishing a system of justice and fairness in life is truly a fundamental aspect of faith, which takes different forms depending on the circumstances. Personally, when I walk down the street and hear the sound of

movies playing loudly from speakers, I wish I had the power to put an end to such frivolous noise entirely. When I read the daily newspaper and see that human villains have become leaders and filled the earth with corruption, my mind burns with anger, and I long for a way to rid the land of these wrongdoers.

When I see people trapped in the web of foolish human-made laws and crushed under a flawed economic system, it feels as if a fire sparks inside me. I wish to tear apart this web and destroy this system. When I observe that the ruling class, intoxicated with power, has become like Pharaohs and has turned national and international life into a living hell, I naturally feel the urge to imprison these criminals and freeing humanity from their tyranny.

When I see that the world has reached a point where Earth's best resources are being wasted solely on war efforts, and politics has become just a way to cling to power by any means necessary, I feel driven to throw such rulers into the very fiery pits they have prepared for their supposed enemies and political opponents.

It's possible that my feelings contain some extremism, but I am sure that if faith truly takes root in someone's heart, they cannot remain indifferent to such conditions. A believer naturally feels troubled by the

corruption in the world, considers ways to fix it, and strives to the best of their ability to do so. But if someone claims that this is the primary mission of the faithful—the very purpose for which all the Prophets were sent—then I would argue that such a claim is just as misguided as asserting that the moral and social decline of society has nothing to do with a Muslim and that he should not concern himself with it at all.

If you walk into a house filled with filth and garbage everywhere, then clearly, the cleanliness demanded by faith would make you very aware of this and motivate you to clean it up. But if you start to say, “The true purpose of faith is to clean houses,” then this statement would be completely absurd and deserving of rejection.

This is why, despite being a well-known issue, social reform and civilizational revolution do not stand as the core Islamic mission. The idea that Islam is the best political and social system and that implementing this system is a task given to us by God is a concept of the Islamic mission that the Quran does not support. I have not found a single verse in the Divine Book from which this idea can truly be derived. The verses typically cited in support of this will be presented in the following pages, along with a brief discussion of each.

Arguments from the Quran

1. The first verse is:

“And thus We have made you a middle nation

so that you may be witnesses over the people,
and the Messenger may be a witness over you.”
(Quran, 2:143)

When we consult scholars of tafsir (exegesis) to understand this verse, we find that nearly all of them interpret “bearing witness” here as a role that belongs not to this world but to the Hereafter. This means that on the Day of Judgment, Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) community will be presented as witnesses in cases involving previous prophets and their disbelieving nations. This interpretation is based on certain narrations, which tell us that:

“On the Day of Judgment, there will be some prophets with only one or two or a few believers, while the rest of their people would have denied them. Then that nation to whom the Prophet was sent will be summoned. They will be asked, ‘Did Our message reach you?’ The people will respond, ‘No, it did not reach us.’ Then the Prophet will be asked, and he will say, ‘Yes, I delivered it.’ He will then be asked, ‘Do you have a witness?’ In response, the Prophet will name Muhammad ﷺ and his community. Then, Muhammad ﷺ and his community will be called and asked, ‘Did this prophet deliver the message to his people?’ They will answer,

‘Yes.’ Then the witnesses will be questioned, ‘Your time was after theirs; how do you know?’ They will reply, ‘Our Prophet informed us.’ This is the meaning of the verse, ‘And thus We have made you a middle (just) nation so that you may be witnesses over the people.’ (In another narration) following this, the state of the *Ummah* will be asked of Muhammad ﷺ, and he will testify to their fairness. This is the meaning of the verse ‘and the Messenger will be a witness over you.’” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 11558, 11283)

Quoting this hadith, Allama Alusi of Baghdad writes:

You may be witnesses over the people—meaning, over all other nations on the Day of Judgment, bearing witness that Allah indeed made His way clear to them, sent Messengers who conveyed the truth, and fulfilled their duty of sincere counsel. “We made” in the verse refers to the appointment of this *Ummah*, and its purpose is specifically this. (*Ruh al-Ma’ani*, Vol. 1, p. 404)

Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi, while discussing scholars’ interpretations of this verse, writes:

One interpretation, supported by the majority

of scholars of tafsir, is that this testimony pertains to the Hereafter. This means that the previous nations who denied their prophets will find this *Ummah* presented as witnesses on behalf of the prophets. This interpretation of bearing witness is substantiated by narrations in Bukhari and other hadith collections. (*Al-Bahr al-Muheet*, Vol. 2, p. 12)

However, there is more to understand about this verse. The accountability Allah will hold people responsible for on the Day of Judgment will clearly be based on the fact that the message of truth had reached them in this world, yet they chose not to accept it. In other words, the testimony given in the Hereafter about misguided nations will concern an event that already took place in this world. Therefore, the testimony in the Hereafter inherently means that a testimony of truth had been conveyed in this world earlier.⁶ In the past, the responsibility of delivering this testimony of truth was on the prophets, but after prophethood ended, it falls on the *Ummah* of Prophet Muhammad. Accordingly, some rare interpretations suggest a worldly aspect to this testimony.

6. The root meaning of *shahada* (testimony) is the act of informing about what one has witnessed. (Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al Arab*, Vol. 3, 240)

Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi has mentioned this view in the following words:

Some have interpreted this to mean that the knowledge of *deen* (religion) you have received should be conveyed to others in the same manner that the Messenger conveyed it to you.

(*Al-Bahr al-Muheet*, Vol. 2, p. 12)

This interpretation is further supported by the fact that, even if this specific verse does not explicitly mention this responsibility, the duty to convey religious knowledge to others is a well-established obligation supported by other texts. It is also clearly stated in explicit texts that this work of preaching and invitation should be carried out so that Allah's case against people may be established in the Hereafter.

“Messengers who brought good news and warnings so that the people would have no argument against Allah after the Messengers.”

(Quran, 4:165)

Even if we accept all these possible interpretations within the context of the verse on *shahada* (bearing witness), what is ultimately established is only the responsibility of *dawah* (inviting) and *tabligh* (conveying the message), or warning and giving glad tidings. In other words, people should be fully informed of the reality that the Hereafter is coming and that there will

be accountability, so that when people are gathered on the Day of Resurrection and asked about their deeds, no one can say, “You are holding us accountable for something about which we were not informed.” However, the mission of establishing divine governance does not arise from this verse.

2. The second verse in this regard is as follows:

Allah has prescribed for you the same religion that He enjoined upon Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. And, O Muhammad, We have also revealed to you that you should uphold this religion and not be divided in it. (Quran, 42:13)

This verse is used to argue that *al-deen* here includes all individual, social, national, and international rules found in Islamic law, and that *iqamat* (establishment) means to uphold and enforce them. Therefore, this verse is understood to command the full implementation of the *Shariah* system in human life, making it completely dominant and enforced.

The original meaning of *iqamat* is to fulfill or perform something properly and completely (*iqamat al-shay*” means “to fulfill its right” (*Al-Mufradat* by Raghib Isfahani, p. 692). It can be used to refer to the external enforcement of a command, but its essential meaning is to perform an action accurately, not merely to enforce

it. In a hadith, when the initial verses of Chapter *Al-Mu'minun* were revealed, the Prophet said:

“Indeed, “ten verses have been revealed to me; whoever upholds them [aqamahunna] will enter Paradise.” (*Mustadrak al-Hakim*, Hadith No. 3521)

The commands in these ten verses are as follows: to observe humility and attentiveness in prayer, to avoid frivolous and meaningless pursuits, to be steadfast in paying zakat, to guard one's chastity, to fulfill trusts and commitments, and to be diligent in safeguarding one's prayers. It is clear that all of these are individual duties, so the question of establishing or enforcing them on others does not arise. Here, *iqamat* means to fully adopt these practices and make them part of one's life.

The interpretation of the verse described above is a modification that, to my knowledge, has not been offered by any major commentator so far. All tafsir scholars interpret *al-deen* in this verse as referring to the core of religion or its fundamental teachings, rather than the entire *Shariah* system. They agree that *iqamat al-deen* here does not mean establishing the entire *Shariah* system over others but rather fully adopting this essential part of the religion which is obligatory for every individual in all circumstances. And only

after fully incorporating this into one's life does a person become a Muslim in the sight of God. "*Sair ma yakun al-mar' bi iqamatihi Musliman*" (*Al-Kashshaf* by Al-Zamakhshari, Vol. 4, p. 215; *Madarik al-Tanzil* by Al-Nasafi, Vol. 3, p. 248). That is, it signifies everything that, when upheld, defines a person as a Muslim.

In the circle influenced by the interpretation under discussion, this verse is often translated as "establish the religion." Although this translation is not incorrect, it can lead to misunderstandings. In particular, within the framework shaped by this interpretation, the phrase tends to be understood as "make the religion dominant and enforced" or "implement it in all aspects of life, from the individual to the entire world." However, this is not the intended meaning of "*aqemu al-deen*" at all. A more accurate translation in Urdu, based on the original meaning, would be "adhere firmly to the religion." Consequently, Urdu translators have generally not translated it as "establish the religion," but rather have used wording similar to what we have chosen in our own translation. Here are some Urdu translations with English by notable scholars:

Shah Abdul Qadir: *ye ke qayam rakho deen aur phoot na daalo.* (Establish the religion and do not get divided.)

Shah Rafiuddin: *ye ke qayam rakho deen aur mut mutafarraq ho beech is ke.* (Establish the religion and do not create divisions within it.)

Abdul Haq Haqqani: *isi deen par qayam rehna aur is mein phoot na daalna.* (Adhere firmly to the religion and do not create divisions within it.)

Ashraf Ali Thanwi: *isi deen ko qayam rakhna aur is mein tafarraqa na daalna.* (Remain steadfast on this religion and do not create discord within it.)

Deputy Nazir Ahmad: *isi deen ko qayam rakhna aur is mein tafarraqa na daalna.* (Keep firm on this religion and do not create divisions within it.)

Sheikh-ul-Hind Mahmood Hasan: *qayam rakho deen ko aur ikhtilaf na daalo is mein.* (Maintain this religion and do not create divisions within it.)

One indication that “*al-deen*” here specifically refers to the core aspects of the faith is found in the following verses, where elements of false religions are contrasted with the true religion. These elements are limited to essential issues, as outlined in the Quranic verses.

- “arguing about Allah” (42:16)
- “debating about the Hour” (42:18)
- “seeking only worldly gains” (42:20)

After mentioning these three points, it is stated:

“Or do they have other gods who have

prescribed for them a religion that Allah has not permitted?”(Quran, 42:21)

Commentator Alusi of Baghdad interprets the *deen* of shirk (the religion of those who associated partners with God) here as specifically referring to these three aspects: associating partners with Allah, denying the resurrection, and working solely for worldly gains. (*Ruh al-Ma’ani*, Vol. 3, p. 28)

These fundamental elements of the false religion emphasize what the key components of the true religion are, which the polytheists are being invited to embrace instead: monotheism, belief in the afterlife, and actions for the Hereafter. These three core elements are also highlighted in the verses defining the true religion, as seen in verses 4, 7, and 12 of this Chapter: 42.

This interpretation is based on the wording of the verse itself. When looking at the entire verse, it becomes clear that the command is to establish a *deen* that was revealed to all the prophets, from Noah to the final Messenger. Since the teachings revealed to different prophets were not exactly the same—though their core beliefs and principles were—the part of *deen* being referred to here must be the one that stayed consistent across all of them. Imam Razi comments on this as follows:

Prophet Noah is mentioned first, with all the

other prophets following, which indicates that the command here refers to adhering fully to those aspects of the *Shariah* which were unanimously accepted by all the prophets. (*Tafsir Kabir*, Vol. 27, p. 587)

Imam Razi explains this interpretation as follows:

It is essential that “*al-deen*” here refers to something other than practical obligations and specific rulings, as these vary among the different prophets, according to the Quran’s own clarification. Therefore, “*al-deen*” here must refer to those matters that remain unaffected by the differences in *Shariahs*. These include belief in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day. From this foundational faith, further qualities emerge—such as detachment from worldly concerns, focus on the Hereafter, embracing good morals, and avoiding bad ones. (*Tafsir Kabir*, Vol. 27, p. 587)

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (1863-1943), one of the most prominent Muslim Ulama of the Indian subcontinent, writes in his commentary of the Quran:

“What is meant by ‘*al-deen*’ here are the fundamental principles of religion, which are common across all *Shariahs*, such as

monotheism, prophethood, resurrection, and similar matters. ‘Establishing’ here means to uphold it without alteration or abandonment.” (*Bayan al-Quran*, Chapter 42, Verse 13)

All the commentators have expressed this same view. In any significant tafsir, I have not come across the interpretation that this verse commands, “Implement all individual and collective rulings of the religion across all areas of life.” Here, I will provide a few of these interpretations:

Abu al-‘Aliyah: In this verse, the meaning of establishing the religion (*iqamat al-deen*) is sincerity for Allah and worshipping Him. (*Al-Bahr al-Muheet*, Vol. 9, p. 329)

Mujahid: Allah commanded every prophet to establish prayer, give zakat, affirm belief in Allah, and obey Him; this is what is meant by *iqamat al-deen* (establishment of the religion). (*Ruh al-Ma‘ani*, Vol. 3, p. 231)

Abu Hayyan: This refers to the universally agreed-upon beliefs, including the oneness of Allah, obedience to God, belief in His messengers, His books, the Last Day, and the reward and recompense of deeds. (*Al-Bahr al-Muheet*, Vol. 9, p. 328)

Khazin: Here, *iqamat al-deen* (establishing the religion) refers to belief in the oneness of God, His books, His messengers, and the Hereafter, along with obedience to Him in His commands and prohibitions. It encompasses

acting upon all those things by which one becomes a Muslim. In this context, *deen* does not refer to the specific *Shariah* laws prescribed for different nations, as these vary according to circumstances. Allah says, “To each of you We have prescribed a law and a clear way.” (*Lubab at-Ta’wil*, Vol. 4, p. 96)

Alusi al-Baghdadi: This means that *deen al-Islam* refers to monotheism (*tawhid*), obedience to God, belief in His books, His messengers, and the Day of Judgment, and everything by which one becomes a believer. *Iqamat al-deen* means to properly fulfill its pillars, safeguard them, and remain steadfast upon them. (*Ruh al-Ma’ani*, Vol. 13, p. 27)

Nizamuddin Qummi Nishapuri: “This means upholding its fundamentals, such as monotheism, prophethood, the afterlife, and the like, rather than the subsidiary rulings that vary according to times, as indicated by His saying: ‘To each of you We have prescribed a law and a clear way.’” (*Gharaib al-Quran*, Vol. 6, p. 70)

In other words, this refers to adherence to the fundamental teachings—such as monotheism, prophethood, belief in the Hereafter, and other essential principles—distinct from the subsidiary matters in which different *Shariahs* have differed.

Qurtubi: “It is the oneness of Allah, obedience to

Him, belief in His messengers and books, the Day of Judgment, and everything by which a person, through upholding it, becomes a Muslim. It does not include the specific laws that are tailored to the welfare of different communities according to their circumstances, as these vary and differ.” (*Tafsir Al-Qurtubi*, Vol. 16, p. 10)

That is to say, it means affirming the oneness of God and obeying Him, believing in His messengers, His books, and the Day of Judgment—indeed, all those essentials by adhering to which a person becomes a Muslim. Here, it does not refer to the specific *Shariahs* given to different nations according to their circumstances, for these have always varied.

Ibn Kathir: “What is meant is the common ground between them, which is worshipping Allah alone without any partner, even though their *Shariahs* and paths may differ.” (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 7, p. 197)

That is to say, it refers to the common core of the prophets’ teachings: the worship of the one God alone, even though their *Shariahs* and practical laws may differ beyond that.

Abu al-Barakat al-Nasafi: “Allah has prescribed for you the religion of Noah, Muhammad, and the prophets between them, peace be upon them. Then He explains the shared prescribed principles among these

distinguished prophets with His words, (establish the religion). What is meant here is the establishment of Islam, the oneness of Allah, obedience to Him, belief in His messengers and books, the Day of Judgment, and all that makes a person a Muslim by upholding it. It does not refer to the specific *Shariahs*, as they vary. From a grammatical perspective, the phrase “that you establish the religion” is either in the accusative case, functioning as a substitute (*badal*) for the object of “He prescribed,” or it is an independent sentence in the nominative case. As if the question were: What is it that has been prescribed? It was answered: It is to remain established upon this religion (upon which they were all agreed). (*Madarik al-Tanzil*, Vol. 3, p. 248)

This means that Allah has prescribed for you the religion of Noah, Muhammad, and the religion of the prophets who came between them. He then specified what is prescribed and common among these great prophets by saying, “establish the religion.” Here, *iqamat al-deen* (establishing the religion of Islam) refers to monotheism, obedience to God, belief in the messengers and the revealed books, the Day of Judgment, and all essential aspects that define a person as a Muslim. This command does not encompass the specific *Shariahs* of the prophets, as these differed among them. Grammatically, “*an aqimu al-deen*” could be in the accusative position, as it serves as a

replacement for the object of *shara'h* (prescribed), or it could be a separate clause in the nominative case. It is as if the question were, “*What has been prescribed?*” and the answer given is, “It is to establish this (universally agreed upon) religion.”

From these excerpts, it is evident that the specific wording of the verse led the scholars of tafsir to interpret *deen* here as adherence to the core teachings of faith. Given this, it would not be correct to interpret the verse as a command to implement all individual and collective laws of the religion across every domain of life.

This does not mean that, beyond the core principles of *deen*, the social and civilizational laws of *Shariah* are not relevant for us to “establish.” My purpose is simply to demonstrate that the establishment of these laws is not imposed upon us in absolute terms, as this interpretation attempts to do. This explains why the Quranic verses often cited in support of such an interpretation do not, in fact, substantiate it in the sense of explicitly commanding the implementation of collective religious laws by force on others. For example, “O David, We have made you a vicegerent on the earth, so judge between people in truth and do not follow desire” (Quran, 38:26). In contrast, this interpretation consistently draws its arguments from verses that are unrelated to the real issue. It is

like someone who opposes private ownership of land and seeks to establish the theory of social ownership from the Quran. Such a person would not find their position supported by verses that discuss economic laws directly. Instead, they would turn to verses like “The earth belongs to Allah” and interpret it as support for their theory, even though the phrase has nothing to do with issues of land or factory ownership. In this way, all non-Quranic theories often seek validation from verses that are, in fact, irrelevant to the point at hand.

The third verse in this series is as follows:

“And fight them until there is no more *fitnah* (persecution or oppression), and the religion is entirely for Allah. But if they cease, then indeed, Allah is Seeing of what they do.” (Quran, 8:39)

This same verse appears elsewhere in the Quran, though without the word *kullahu* (entirely) (Quran, 2:193). It is said that in this verse, “the followers of Islam are commanded to fight in the world and not rest until all *fitnah*—meaning any systems based on rebellion against God—are eradicated.” (from *Quran Ki Chaar Buniyadi Istlahein*, discussion on “*Deen*”)

Further elaboration on this is that *fitnah* refers to “a state in society where human beings hold dominion and authority over others, making it impossible to

live according to Allah’s laws.” Here, the meaning of “ceasing” does not imply that disbelievers must abandon their disbelief or polytheism, but rather that they must desist from the *fitnah* (oppression and rebellion). Disbelievers, polytheists, and atheists all have the right to hold their beliefs, worship as they wish, or choose not to worship at all. In addressing this misguidance, we will advise and counsel them, but we will not fight them for their beliefs alone. However, they do not have the right to implement false laws in place of God’s law on earth, or to make God’s servants subservient to anyone other than God.

To combat this *fitnah*, believers may use both persuasion and force, as appropriate and feasible, and a believer will not rest until the disbelievers cease from this *fitnah*. (*Tafheem-ul-Quran*, commentary on Al-Baqarah, note 204-205)

To understand this argument, let us first review the two verses in the Quran where this command appears:

“So kill them; such is the recompense for the disbelievers. But if they desist, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. And fight them until there is no more *fitnah* (persecution or oppression) and the religion is entirely for Allah.” (Quran, 2:191-193)

The second passage is as follows:

“Say to those who have disbelieved that if they desist, they will be forgiven for what has passed. But if they persist in their previous ways, then the law concerning former peoples has already been enforced. And fight them until there is no more *fitnah* (persecution) and the religion is entirely for Allah. Then, if they cease, Allah is Seeing of what they do.” (Quran, 8:38-39)

Careful examination of the wording of the verse indicates that it does not simply command the establishment of a worldly system of governance, as explained above, without touching upon matters of belief. Rather, it commands fighting to change their beliefs:

1. According to the verse, if the disbelievers stop the “*fitnah*” they are involved in, which is the reason for the command to fight them, they will be granted “forgiveness.” Clearly, forgiveness is not the reward for simply giving up political power or avoiding worldly corruption; it is only given to those who abandon disbelief and polytheism.⁷

⁷ The literal meaning of *fitnah* is not shirk (polytheism) itself; rather, shirk is one of its manifestations. The literal (lexical) meaning of *fitnah* is to subject something to heat” or “to test.” From this root meaning, the concepts of testing and trial developed. Over time, undesirable

2. It is stated: “Say to those who have disbelieved, if they cease...” The structure of this phrase indicates, from a grammatical perspective, that “if they desist from disbelief” is implied, meaning that if they stop disbelieving, forgiveness is granted to them; otherwise, it is not.
3. Furthermore, the purpose of this command, as understood by the source of revelation (the Prophet), and as shown in the way he fought his enemies, was, according to explicit hadiths, exactly this: to keep fighting them until they declared the declaration of monotheism (the *kalimah* of *tawhid*).

Accordingly, leaving aside a few isolated views, almost all commentators have understood this verse to mean that fighting has been commanded until people accept faith, and not merely in the general sense of putting an end to disorder or mischief. In their view, *fitnah* here signifies polytheism, and the term “its end” means the abandonment of polytheism. In other words,

matters into which people commonly fall—such as disbelief (*kufir*) and oppression (*zulm*)—also came to be described as *fitnah*. Ibn al-Athir explains: “The term came to be frequently employed for what trials reveal of that which is undesirable. Its usage then broadened, such that it came to denote sin, disbelief, fighting, burning, removal, and diversion from a matter” (*Al-Nihayah*, vol. 3, p. 411). Likewise, in *Lisan al-‘Arab* it is noted: “*Al-fitnah* is disbelief”; *fitnah* signifies misguidance and sin” (vol. 13, pp. 318–319).

this command is to fight them until they are either killed or forced to abandon shirk and accept Islam. This interpretation is unanimously transmitted from Ibn Abbas, Abu al-‘Aliyah, Mujahid ibn Jabr, Sa’id ibn Jubayr, Hasan al-Basri, Qatadah ibn Di’amah, Dhahhak ibn Muzahim, Al-Rabi ibn Anas, Maqatil ibn Hayyan, Al-Suddi, and Zayd ibn Aslam (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 1, p. 227). These are all early authorities of Islamic scholarship, particularly known for their contributions to Quranic interpretation.

After quoting this opinion, Ibn Kathir writes:

This interpretation is supported by the narrations in the two Sahih collections (Bukhari and Muslim), which state that The Prophet ﷺ said: “I have been commanded to fight the people until they say with their tongues, ‘There is no deity but Allah.’ Once they acknowledge this word, they will protect their lives and property from me, except in cases where they incur a right against them, and their account is with Allah.” (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 2, p. 309).

Similarly, Alusi Al-Bhagdadi writes: In this verse, *fitnah* refers to polytheism, as narrated from Qatadah, Sudi, and others. This interpretation is supported by the fact that for the polytheists of Arabia, the options are either Islam or the sword; there is no alternative. As stated in another part of the Quran, Allah says, “You fight them or they submit.” (*Ruh al-Ma’ani*, Vol. 1, p. 427)

I will provide two references:

1. Here, Allah Almighty is telling His Prophet ﷺ to say to the disbelievers: “If you desist from disbelief and hostility towards Islam, and accept Islam and adopt the path of repentance and obedience, then all your sins from the time of your disbelief will be forgiven.” (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 4, p. 54)
2. The meaning is that you should fight them until polytheism is completely eradicated from among them, all their false religions are eliminated, and only the religion of Islam remains. Then, when they abandon disbelief and accept Islam, Allah Almighty will reward them for their acceptance. However, if they do not believe and do not abandon their disbelief, then Allah will be your helper. (*Madarik al-Tanzil*, Vol. 1, p. 645)

The core message of this verse is that the *qital* (fighting) mentioned here is a specific type related to the final Messenger. In this verse, the disbelievers are subjected to the sunnah (tradition) of previous nations. Here, disbelievers refer to those who, despite receiving the final Messenger’s invitation and full clarity, still remain disbelievers. The way of Allah, as described in the Quran concerning such people, is that they are destroyed by calamities from the earth and from above. In the case of the addressees of the final Messenger,

this punishment, for specific reasons, took a particular form: the believers were granted permission to fight them and put an end to their dominance: “Fight them; Allah will punish them by your hands.” (Quran, 9:14).

The history of a people from Arabia (Thamud) is narrated in the Quran, stating that when their Prophet had completed his mission, and they still did not believe, they were ultimately given a warning: “Enjoy yourselves in your abode for three days.” (Quran, 11:65) After those three days, a great calamity struck them. They were annihilated as if they had never existed. In the same way, when the final Prophet completed his argument against his people, it was announced: “Travel freely on the earth for four months.” After the four months, the believers were commanded to kill them wherever they found them. Their choice was either Islam or death; there was no other option. (Quran, 9:1-5)

If we consider this verse in connection with the *qital* that began after the Hijrah between the Messenger and his earliest audience (the descendants of Ishmael), based on God’s direct command, we can understand it easily. For these people, due to specific circumstances, the Messenger received the command that nothing should be accepted from them except Islam. However, if this is taken as a theoretical basis to derive a general mission for Muslims, then according to this verse, that

mission would imply that we fight to make people accept Islam. Yet it is known that Allah has not given us such authority.

A Doubt

The stance taken regarding the descendants of Ishmael—that after completing the work of preaching, the Prophet declared his disavowal of them and ultimately announced that anyone among them who did not believe would be killed—has generally been referred to by non-Muslim historians as coercive propagation of Islam. In the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1958), referencing these verses under the title of Jihad, the following words are stated:

“This is a religious obligation imposed on the followers of Muhammad in the Quran (2:216-217, 8:39-42, 9:5,6,29). It means that war should be waged against those who do not accept the doctrines of Islam.”

Such views have long been expressed against Islam, especially by Christian scholars, who have highlighted this issue significantly. The reason for this is that the battles the final Messenger fought with the people of Makkah and the declarations he made regarding them are studied by these individuals in the same light as the proponents of the discussed interpretation, under the guise of spreading Islam. However, this was not

a struggle for the propagation of Islam; it was the manifestation of a divine decree against the rejecters of the Prophethood, which is articulated in the Quran using terms such as “the command of Allah,” “the decree of Allah,” “the promise of Allah,” etc.

This aims to establish the truth and eliminate falsehood. Essentially, it was not an attempt to impose Islamic principles but rather a punishment for denying those principles, carried out in a specific way by the Owner of the heavens and the earth. This punishment is inevitably due to anyone who refuses to accept God’s guidance. The only difference is that ordinary humans will face this punishment in the Hereafter, while the direct audience of the Messenger experiences it both in this world and in the Hereafter: “And most surely We will make them taste a lesser punishment before the greater punishment.” (Quran, 32:21)

It is true that the implementation of this divine decree brought about several benefits for Islam, including its propagation and expansion. However, these were just some of its additional outcomes, as every event has multiple consequences and effects. As far as the fundamental nature of the command is concerned, it remains as stated above. If this aspect of its nature is not considered, it is certain that severe misunderstandings will arise regarding it.

The fourth verse is as follows:

“You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah.”
(Quran, 3:110)

In this verse, two terms are noteworthy: (1) *Amr wa Nahi* (enjoining and forbidding) and (2) *Ma'ruf wa Munkar* (what is right and what is wrong).

Ma'ruf means what is preferred or good, while *Munkar* means what is disliked or bad. In Islamic terminology, these terms refer to all matters related to beliefs and actions that are specified by *Shariah* as either desirable or undesirable. *Ma'ruf* includes everything mandated by *Shariah*, whereas *Munkar* covers everything that is prohibited or discouraged, whether related to beliefs, acts of worship, or actions. These words seem to encapsulate the essence of the entire Shari'ah:

“*Al-Ma'ruf huwa ismun jaami'un likulli ma 'urifa min ta'atillah wal-taqarrub ilayh wal-ihsaan ila al-naas.*” (*Lisan al-Arab*, Vol. 9, p. 240). That is, “*Al-Ma'ruf* is a comprehensive term for all that is known to be obedience to Allah, drawing closer to Him, and doing good to people.”

“*Al-Munkar zidd al-ma'roof. Wa kullu ma qabbahush-shar'u wa harramahu wa karihahu fahuwa munkar.*” (*Al-Nihaya* by Ibn al-Atheer, Vol. 5, p. 115). That is, “*Al-*

Munkar is the opposite of *al-Ma'ruf*. Everything that is condemned by the law, forbidden, and disliked is considered *munkar*.”

Here are a few references:

- Ibn Abbas: “There is no deity but Allah; He is the greatest *ma'ruf* (what is right), and denial (of Him) is the greatest *munkar* (what is wrong).” (*Ibn Jarir*, Vol. 5, p. 676)
- Maqatil: “The good is Islam, and the *ma'ruf* is obedience to Allah, while the *munkar* is disobedience to Him.” (*Ruh al-Ma'ani*, Vol. 2, p. 238)
- Khazin: “*Ma'ruf* is monotheism, and *munkar* is polytheism.” (*Lubab at-Ta'wil*, Vol. 1, p. 285)
- Razi: “Know the *ma'ruf* as the true religion and faith in monotheism and Prophethood, and recognize the *munkar* as disbelief in Allah.” (*Tafsir Al-Razi*, Vol. 8, p. 325)
- Alusi Al-Bhadadi: “What is generally understood as *ma'ruf* are the acts of obedience, and as *munkar* are the sins that have been rejected by *Shariah*.” (*Ruh al-Ma'ani*, Vol. 2, p. 244)
- Hafiz al-Deen Nasafi: “‘You enjoin what is right’ (*al-amr bil-ma'ruf*) means faith and obedience to the Messenger, and ‘and forbid what is wrong’ (*wanahyu an al-munkar*) refers to disbelief and all that is prohibited.” (*Madarik al-Tanzil*, Vol. 1, p. 282)

- Imam Raghīb: “*Ma’ruf* is a term for every action that is recognized by reason or *Shariah* as good, and *munkar* is that which is rejected by both.” (*Al-Mufradat*, p. 561)

Now let’s consider the terms *amr* and *nahi*. The meaning of ‘Amr’ is to give a command: “*Iza kallafthahu an yaf’ala shay’an*” (*Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran*, p. 88). That is, “When you instruct him to do something.” And the meaning of ‘Nahi’ is to forbid or stop: “*Nahahu an katha ay mana’ahu ‘anhu*” (*Irshad al-Fuhul li al-Shawkani*, Vol. 1, p. 278). That is, “He forbade him from such and such, meaning he prevented him from it.”

From the hadith, it is evident that the primary demand of *Shariah* concerning the practice of *amr* and *nahi* is that people should be compelled to adhere to it by force:

“Whoever among you sees a *munkar* (an evil or wrong), let him change it with his hand; if he is unable to do so, then he should speak out against it with his tongue; and if he is unable to do even that, then let him consider it evil in his heart, and that is the weakest of faith.” (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 49)

According to this hadith, the primary objective of this command is to change the *munkar* through force, unless one lacks the ability to do so.

It becomes clear that this verse commands the enforcement of all the requirements of *Shariah*, whether they relate to beliefs, acts of worship, morals, transactions, or any other matters, as long as one is capable of doing so. Additionally, it directs that individuals should be forcibly prevented from opposing these principles in both belief and practice.

This explanation clearly shows that such a verse cannot be used to define the entire mission of the Islamic movement. The Islamic movement is not like typical secular movements, whose goal is simply to impose a specific law on people through coercion and suppression. Instead, the Islamic movement seeks to awaken people's awareness that they should recognize God and get ready for the upcoming Day of Judgment. This is the main goal of the Islamic movement.

In a secondary sense, what is also desired is that if people are unwilling to change themselves, then, circumstances permitting, they should be compelled to change so that the state of the world does not deteriorate further.

Furthermore, the matters for which *amr* (command) and *nahi* (prohibition) are prescribed in this verse include both beliefs and acts of worship. This also suggests that these terms cannot be seen as representing the overall mission of the believers. According to this

view, the broad application of this command can only be directed toward Muslims, while it might only partially apply to non-Muslims. However, this interpretation presents this verse as a source for a common mission that those calling to Islam should undertake in relation to both Muslims and non-Muslims.

As far as those who have accepted Islam are concerned, Allah Almighty demands that, to the extent of their ability, they must adhere to the Islamic requirements without tolerance for any deviation. Even if they insist on such deviations, *qital* (fighting) may be warranted against them. (*Majmu'at al-Fatawa* by Ibn Taymiyyah, Vol. 4, p. 281)

Abu Hamid al-Ghazali writes: “Allah, the Exalted, said: ‘And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two.’ The purpose of reconciliation is to deter oppression and restore obedience. If they do not cease, Allah has commanded to fight against them, saying: ‘And fight the one that opposes until it returns to the ordinance of Allah.’ This refers to the prohibition of wrongdoing.” (*Ihya Ulum al-Deen*, Vol. 2, p. 307)

The principle of mandatory obedience for Muslims isn't limited to a specific issue; instead, the entire *Shariah* falls under this rule. For example, if a ten-

year-old Muslim child doesn't pray, the ruling is that he should be disciplined until he prays. It's clear that a prayer done out of fear of punishment isn't a genuine prayer. This command aims to prevent an environment of open deviation from religion within the Muslim community. It's an effort to uphold Islamic discipline socially. This reasoning is entirely valid within a Muslim family. However, if someone were to start disciplining non-Muslim children to make them pray, this valid principle would lose its meaning due to its improper application.

If this command is interpreted broadly, it would mean that, like Muslims, non-Muslims should also be (to the extent of their ability) forced to follow all Islamic requirements—from politics to beliefs and acts of worship—without any “discrimination or division,” and they should be compelled to refrain from any actions that oppose Islam in every aspect. In other words, their religion should be altered, and they should be fully converted into Muslims, with the same rights granted to them under the Islamic state as those given to Muslims.

It is clear that this view is incorrect. Concerning non-Muslims, with some exceptions, it is widely accepted that they cannot be forced to accept Islamic beliefs

and acts of worship. While we can invite others to consider beliefs and worship, we cannot command or prohibit them in these areas. However, the “command” concerning monotheism and the “prohibition” of polytheism, or the forced imposition of Islamic acts of worship on them, is beyond our authority. Doing so would amount to *ikrah fi al-deen* (coercion in religion), which is explicitly considered unacceptable in *Shariah*. In this matter, the relationship between us and non-Muslims is not one of ruler and subjects but rather one of inviter (*da’i*) and invited (*mad’u*).

In specific circumstances, believers can carry out *amr* (command) and *nahi* (prohibition) with non-Muslims. However, the scope of *amr* and *nahi* regarding non-Muslims is limited. Therefore, these terms cannot encompass the entirety of what we are to undertake concerning non-Muslims. The primary goal regarding non-Muslims is to invite them to reflect on the truth of God’s oneness and the reality of the Hereafter, so that they may find spiritual guidance and salvation. The means for this endeavour are invitation (*dawah*), preaching, and admonition (*tazkeer*). If these efforts prove ineffective and they remain unwilling to follow the path of worshiping God, then the secondary goal is for the Islamic government to compel non-Muslims, to the extent necessary, to adhere to the laws of *Shariah*,

as far as it is essential to establish social justice and protect the community from corruption.

The leaders of Islam have various approaches to handling non-Muslims. In an Islamic society, the duty of *amr bil ma'ruf* (enjoining what is right) actively works to protect Muslims from faith corruptions. If it becomes known that some non-Muslims have started a wrong action in a Muslim community that could spread to others, it becomes necessary to remove this *fitnah* (trial) to prevent Muslims from falling into *munkar* (evil). (Ibn Taymiyyah provides some examples of this in his book *Al-Hisbah fi Al-Islam*.)

Similarly, there are certain prohibitions and *munkarat* (wrongdoings) in *Shariah* that should be made clear to non-Muslims, such as atheistic and polytheistic beliefs. However, there are also some matters in which, when possible, Muslims have the right to forcibly prevent non-Muslims from engaging in them. Examples include bribery, murder, and so on. Thus, *amr wa nahi* (enjoining and forbidding), in its most comprehensive sense, only partially applies to actions concerning non-Muslims. This is an exceptional circumstance rather than a general rule.

Now, if the terms *amr bil ma'ruf* (enjoining what is right) and *nahi an al-munkar* (forbidding what is wrong) are seen as the main principles for all our responsibilities

regarding non-Muslims, then it either requires forcibly imposing beliefs and acts of worship on them, or, if strictly limited, it suggests that these terms only apply to actions involving non-Muslims in social and communal contexts. This would exclude the most crucial aspects of *Shariah* that relate to beliefs and acts of worship. In these matters, we cannot simply command or prohibit; instead, we can only invite and advise.

The reality is that if this reasoning is accepted, there would be no distinction left between the Islamic movement and the Islamic army. Indeed, the Islamic army is also a manifestation of Islamic life, but the Islamic movement is a broader concept, which must be understood under a more extensive framework.

It becomes clear that the terms *amr bil ma'ruf* (enjoining what is right) and *nahi an al-munkar* (forbidding what is wrong) do not primarily refer to the work of invitation and preaching that we must undertake towards others as a primary objective. Rather, according to the wording of the hadith, they signify the duty of *tahweel* (change) that is carried out to the extent of one's ability in cases where the change is not voluntarily accepted.

Furthermore, since this verse commands *tahweel* regarding all negative and positive requirements related to beliefs and actions, its broad application can only be directed toward Muslims. This is because we

have the right, within our ability, to strive to instill every requirement of *Shariah* in them, whether related to beliefs and worship or ethics and transactions. In contrast, for non-Muslims, a significant part of the religion must be conveyed through invitation and teaching, with the goal of helping them develop understanding so they may engage with these ideas.

There is only a limited and relatively secondary aspect of *Shariah* in which, if possible, we can adopt the method of *tahweel bil yadi* (changing by hand) upon them.

According to Rashid Rida, a prominent Islamic scholar of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the primary and foremost task of those who call to the truth is to invite people toward it and to instill within them the light of faith and Islam. “*Amr wa nahi*” (commanding and prohibiting) comes after this, encompassing two aspects within Islam.

Firstly, once the audience accepts the call to truth, there must be a continuous process of oversight and accountability to guide their lives along the path of Islam and to ensure they fulfill all *Shariah* responsibilities. Secondly, the group of believers should establish such a system among themselves to remain organized, active, and purposeful, thereby protecting themselves from corruption and ensuring that God’s support does not abandon them. (*Al-Manar*, Vol. 4, pp. 27-28)

The terms *amr bil ma'ruf* (enjoining what is right) and *nahi an al-munkar* (forbidding what is wrong) are not suitable for a comprehensive interpretation of the mission of the believers. This is why these terms were not used in the Quran to describe the mission of Prophethood. The Muslim *Ummah* has been entrusted with a duty in this world that is akin to what was assigned to the earlier prophets. This *Ummah*, in a sense, serves as a successor to the prophets.

However, when we study the Book of Allah, it becomes clear that *amr bil ma'ruf* and *nahi an al-munkar* are never presented as the general mission of the prophets throughout the Quran. There are numerous verses that explain the purpose of the prophets' missions, but nowhere does it say: "We have sent messengers to command what is right and forbid what is wrong to the people of the world." The very fact that the Quran does not use the expressions enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong to describe the general mission of the prophets is, in itself, sufficient evidence that these terms cannot be taken, in an absolute sense, as the basis for defining the entire objective that we are required to pursue in relation to humanity at large, following the Prophet's mission.

The fifth verse that is cited in this context is as follows:

“He is the One who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, even if the polytheists dislike it.” (Quran, 9:33)

According to the interpretation under discussion, this verse states that “Allah sent His Messenger with the correct and true system of life, which is Islam, and the ultimate purpose of His mission is to establish this system above all other systems.” (*Quran Ki Chaar Buniyadi Istlahein*). The said interpretation goes on to say that since the Muslim *Ummah* is to carry out the same work after the finality of Prophethood for which God’s Messenger was sent, it follows from this verse that, in the succession of the Messenger, the aim of Muslims is to establish the Islamic system over all other systems and to enforce Islamic governance in all aspects of life.

In the Muharram 1382 Hijri issue of *Zindagi*, a full article is published under the title “Isharat” (the magazine’s regular editorial heading). The learned writer of the article had been informed by one of his “associates” that “some people” raise an objection to the objective of *Jamaat-e-Islami*, arguing that according to it, establishing the religion becomes our responsibility, rather than merely striving to establish it. This criticism is based on the fact that the organization has written

“establishment of religion” in its Constitution, not “striving for the establishment of religion.” In response, the author provided various examples to demonstrate that, in his view, it “shines like a clear mirror” that when any individual or group is given a command from God, it does not mean that “they should bring that command into existence, but rather that they should strive to bring it into existence.”

In response, the writer passionately writes by giving several examples of commands:

“Now suppose someone argues that Allah has placed a responsibility on humans in these commands that is beyond their capacity. The answer to this would be that the responsibility assigned in these commands is only for the effort, not for bringing these things into actual existence. If the objector then asks where in the Quran it says, ‘Strive to protect from the Fire,’ ‘Engage in reform,’ and ‘Strive for the establishment of the religion,’ then the response would be gently to advise him to reflect on this matter privately, as his objection now deviates from common sense and is also indicative of ignorance of the language of commands and rulings.” (Magazine *Zindaqi*, Muharram 1382, p. 7)

The article does not specify who these “some people” are that presented this meaningless objection to your

“companion.” However, as far as my point is concerned, it has no relation to this objection. I am not saying that according to the constitutional wording of your objective, the responsibility of the believers is to actually establish it instead of merely striving for it. Rather, my argument is that if the verse regarding the establishment of the religion is taken as a source for the objective, then according to this verse, your responsibility becomes to bring into reality what is mentioned in the verse. This is because the verse does not merely speak of “effort”; rather, it declares a necessary outcome. As the Quran says, “God seeks only to perfect His light.” (9:32).

Refuting someone else’s viewpoint based on the questions they have raised is a very effective method in that it makes it much easier to challenge the opponent. However, this is the same approach for which the *Jamaat-e-Islami* has grievances against its opposing scholars. These individuals criticised the *Jamaat-e-Islami* based on the points provided by their adherents. In response, the leaders of the *Jamaat-e-Islami* stated that the perspective of the movement is well-documented in its own literature, and therefore anyone wishing to comment on the movement should thoroughly read the movement’s literature and comment in light of it. It is not correct to form an opinion based on questions compiled by others and then target the movement with criticisms. I would say the same to my critics, as I

fear that some people will attempt to repeat this tested method of the opponents against me.

The aforementioned verse is actually part of a passage that consists of two verses found in three chapters of the Quran (Chapters *Al-Tawbah*, *Al-Fath*, and *Al-Saff*). Here, I will quote the passage from Chapter *Al-Tawbah*:

These people want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah refuses except to complete His Light, even if the disbelievers dislike it. He is the One who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religions, even if the polytheists dislike it. (Quran, 9:32-33)

The first point is that this verse mentions the “manifestation of religion” (making the religion prevail), which is an action that occurs despite the “displeasure” of the disbelievers and polytheists. However, the primary and foremost task of the Prophet is to convey the message of the religion with the aim that people willingly accept the Prophet’s message and joyfully incorporate it into their lives. The Prophet primarily comes to save people from the torment of Hell, which is only possible if they willingly embrace the religion, rather than imposing it on them against their will despite their displeasure. In such a situation, it is evident that the manifestation of religion (even if the

polytheists dislike it) cannot be considered a reflection of the original and complete mission of Prophethood.

In the other verses, there are several clear indicators that lead us to believe that the action being mentioned is not truly a human mission; rather, it is a divine plan. By its very nature, it represents a manifestation of God's decision rather than a description of human effort. It is true that to bring this action into existence, Allah has utilized His Messenger as a means, and in this regard, the ultimate goal of the last Prophet's mission included the unfolding of this event in Arabia through him. However, in terms of its essential reality, this was a divine plan and not the general and specific responsibility of Prophethood that a Prophet is personally obligated to fulfill. This is what is referred to when it is stated, "And if you do not do [what you are commanded], then you have not conveyed His message." (Quran, 5:67).

1. The first indicator is that upon examining the words used here, it becomes apparent that this is a proclamation rather than a general command. In other words, the "manifestation of religion" (making the religion prevail), is not merely commanded as an attempt; rather, it is stated that the manifestation of religion must necessarily occur. Allah has sent His Messenger for this very

purpose—to establish His religion over all other religions. Although the disbelievers and polytheists are exerting all their strength to prevent this event, the Lord of the Universe denies the possibility of such an outcome when His plan is to be realized.

“And sufficient is Allah as a Witness” concerning what He has promised, which will certainly come to pass. (*Tafsir Abi Su’ud*, Vol. 8, p. 114)

“And sufficient is Allah as a Witness” according to Al-Hasan, as He has witnessed to Himself that He will establish your religion. (*Al-Kashshaf*, Vol. 4, p. 346)

The promise of the manifestation of religion that Allah has made will certainly come to fruition. It is reported from Imam Hasan that Allah has testified to Himself that He will soon make your religion prevail.

This manner of expression clearly indicates that it does not mention the mission of any created being that is only capable of making an effort, regardless of whether the outcome of that effort is successful or not. Rather, it speaks of an entity whose actions embody the command of “Be, and it is.” Here, it is essentially an announcement of Allah’s own will, which He will certainly fulfill despite all the opposition from disbelievers and polytheists. The style

of divine discourse is such that it decisively rejects the possibility that the event planned to occur in Arabia will not come to pass. It is evident that this can only be an act of God and not of any human. Such necessity between intent and occurrence may be possible for God, but it is beyond human capability to ensure that whatever they desire must come to fruition regardless of circumstances.

2. The second indicator pertains to the pronoun in “*li-yuzhirahu ‘ala ad-deen* (لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ).” Upon examining the relevant phrases, it becomes clear that here the subject of “*yuzhir*”—He may have it prevail—is Allah. This is because the kind of necessary manifestation of religion being mentioned here can only be carried out by God. Consequently, all the commentators, except for a few exceptions, agree that the subject of “*yuzhir*” is God and not the Messenger. There is indeed a difference of opinion regarding the object pronoun (هـ); some consider it to refer to the Messenger, while others refer it to the religion of truth. However, the subject of “*yuzhir*” is agreed upon as God among all.

Rashid Rida, while explaining the viewpoint of the commentators in this regard, writes:

“Regarding the object pronoun (هـ), there are two opinions. One is that it refers to the

Messenger. This is reported from Abdullah ibn Abbas. In this case, it would mean that Allah will inform the Messenger about all the matters of religion that he needs as a Messenger, including beliefs, etiquette, governance, and rulings. This is because Muhammad, ﷺ, was sent with the final religion, after which humanity does not require any further guidance in matters of faith.”
(Tafsir al-Manar, Vol. 10, p. 339)

The second opinion is that the pronoun (*hu*) refers to the religion of truth with which the Messenger, was sent. Its meaning would then be that Allah will exalt this religion and elevate its status above all other religions (*Tafsir al-Manar, Vol. 10, p. 340*).

According to this second opinion, the pronoun (هو) refers to the religion of truth that you brought. Its meaning is that Allah will exalt this religion above all other religions and enhance its honor.

Commentator al-Razi writes:

“Most commentators believe that the pronoun (*hu*) in the phrase *li-yuzhirahu* (‘to make it prevail’) refers to the Messenger. However, most commentators also agree that the pronoun in *li-yuzhirahu* refers to the religion of truth (*deen al-haqq*), meaning that Allah sent the Messenger with the religion in order to make the religion of truth prevail over all

other religions. In this regard, it is possible that the subject of the verb *yuzhir* ('to make prevail') could be Allah, or it could refer to the Prophet—meaning 'the Prophet will make the religion of truth prevail.'" (*Tafsir al-Razi*, Vol. 7, p. 882)

Imam al-Razi (and some other commentators) have acknowledged this possibility while also accepting that the subject of the verb could be the Prophet. However, their opinion is based solely on grammatical reasons. Otherwise, they believe that the action described in this phrase is genuinely an act of Allah, with the Messenger simply serving as a visible means. Therefore, after quoting the verses above in the interpretation of Chapter *Al-Tawbah*, Imam al-Razi states:

"Ilm annahu ta'ala lamma hakka 'anil a'daa annahum yuhawiloona ibtaala amri Muhammad (sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam) wa bayyana ta'ala annahu ya'ba dhalika al-ibtaal wa annahu yutimmu amrahu, bayyana kayfiyyata dhalika al-itmam faqala: 'Huwa allathee arsala rasoolahu bil-huda wa deenil haqq, li yuzhirahu 'ala ad-deen kullihi.' (Tafseer al-Razi, Vol. 6, p. 321)."

That is, know that when Allah, the Almighty, narrated about the enemies attempting to nullify the matter of Muhammad ﷺ, He made it clear that He would never allow their efforts to succeed and that He would

complete His mission. Then, He explained how this completion would occur, saying: ‘It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, to make it prevail over all religions.’

This means that, according to Imam al-Razi, the “divine will” mentioned in the earlier verses (*wa-Allahu mutimm nurihi*—“and Allah will perfect His light”) refers to the same divine intention, and the second verse (*arsala rasulahu bi-l-huda wa-deeni al-haqq*—He is the One who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth...) describes how this will be accomplished. Therefore, the implication of the verb *yuzhira* (to make prevail) being attributed to the Messenger indicates an explanation of the action of the original doer, rather than defining the doer itself.

Qadi al-Baydawi expressed the same idea in a different way. He sees the second phrase (*huwa alladhi arsala rasulahu...*—He is the One who sent His Messenger...) as an explanation of the first one (*yuriduna an yutfi’u...*—They wish to extinguish...). Since Allah, the doer, is clearly mentioned in the first phrase (*wa-Allahu mutimm nurihi*—“and Allah will perfect His light” and *yuriduna an yutfi’u*—they wish to extinguish), it’s natural to understand that He remains the doer in the second phrase as well. According to this view, identifying the doer of the omitted pronoun isn’t relevant anymore, since the doer is already mentioned in the speech.

Al-Baydawi's words are:

“Huwa allathee arsala rasoolahu bil-huda wa deenil haqq li yuzhirahu ‘ala ad-deen kullihi” kal-bayani li qawlihi: “Wa ya’ba Allahu illa an yutimmu noorahu,” wa lidhalika karrara: “Wa law karihal mushrikoon,” ghayra annahu wada’ a al-mushrikeen mawdi’ a al-kafiroon. (Tafseer al-Baydawi, Vol. 3, p. 79).

That is, He is the one who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to make it prevail over all religions,” is like the explanation of His statement: “And Allah refuses but to complete His light,” and for this reason, He repeated, “Even if the polytheists dislike it.” The difference is that in the first sentence, it mentions “kafiroon” (disbelievers), while in the second, it mentions “mushrikoon” (polytheists) instead.

Al-Alusi al-Baghdadi expressed the same idea in these words: The verse (*huwa alladhi arsala rasulahu...—He is the One who sent His Messenger...*) is an explanation of the previous verse (*yuriduna an yutfi’u...—They wish to extinguish...*), as the manifestation of the religion is, in fact, the ultimate result of the completion of the light. (*Ruh al-Ma’ani*, Vol. 5, p. 278)

3. The third point is that the understanding of this command by the recipients of revelation, and their actions in response, was essentially an act that can

be called a divine decree, but it cannot be regarded as a human mission.

This manifestation of religion, which, according to the words of the author of *Ruh al-Ma'ani*, was achieved through the domination of the believers over all people of other religions (*Ruh al-Ma'ani*, Vol. 13, p. 275), raises the question of which event is being referred to and whether it has occurred or not. In this regard, Imam Razi has mentioned five opinions.

The third opinion is:

This means to make Islam prevail over all the religions of the Arabs. This event has indeed occurred because Allah has not left any disbeliever remaining in Arabia. (*Tafsir Kabir*, Vol. 6, p. 33)

This opinion is more consistent with the words of the verse, as it announces the implementation of the manifestation of religion despite the aversion of the disbelievers and polytheists; therefore, no scenario can be considered its example if it has not yet occurred. Al-Shawkani writes: "This has taken place, and all praise is due to Allah" (*Fath al-Qadir*, Vol. 2, p. 405).

The scope of this action was the land of Arabia, as some scholars have explicitly stated:

It was Allah's decision to establish the religion in the Arabian Peninsula, and He has done so. (*Tafsir al-Qurtubi*, Vol. 8, p. 122).

This process of manifesting the religion was specific to the Arabian Peninsula, which occurred in such a way that no disbeliever remained there. (*Al-Bahr al-Muheet*, Vol. 5, p. 406)

In the case of the children of Ishmael, the method adopted for the manifestation of the religion was that the Prophet waged war against those among them who chose intense opposition and confrontation, meaning that they were to either accept faith or face death. It is mentioned in a reliable Hadith:

I was commanded to fight the people (and in the narration of an-Nasa'i, 'to fight the disbelievers') until they testify that there is no god but Allah. Once they say it, they have protected their lives and wealth from me, and their reckoning is with Allah. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1399; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 21; *Sunan an-Nasa'i*, Hadith No. 3966; *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 10840)

In some narrations, the phrase "and Muhammad is His servant and Messenger" is also included. In others, there are additions like "and they should establish prayer and pay *zakah*," or "and disbelieve in what is worshipped besides Allah," and in some, "and they should face our *Qiblah* and eat our sacrificial animals,"

while others include “they should believe in me and what I have brought” (*Sharh Muslim* by Nawawi, Vol. 14, Page 84).

Consider the points mentioned above in this context. It would indeed be very strange if we were to take an *Ayah* (verse) as a source for the mission of the Muslim *Ummah*, which narrates an act of Allah. What linguistic or rhetorical principle could possibly support the notion that a phrase stating “Allah intends to do this” can be interpreted as “the mission of Allah’s servants is to do this”? If this *Ayah* is declared as the source of the Muslim *Ummah*’s mission, it would imply that we would launch a war against people that will not end until they change their beliefs and become Muslims. Furthermore, since the wording of the *Ayah* does not merely mention the effort to manifest the religion, but rather declares that the manifestation of the religion must actually come to pass, taking this *Ayah* as a source for the mission would mean that we are bound to ensure the completion of the “light” and the “manifestation of the religion” as mentioned, within our sphere of action. Yet, it is known that it is only within human capacity to make efforts, not to guarantee the occurrence of any results.

Regarding the verse about the manifestation of the religion, one interpretation that has been reported is

that it means teaching the Messenger all the laws of the Shari'ah and informing him about them: "*Li yu'allimahu shara'i' al-deen kullaha, fa yutli'ahu 'alayha.*" (*Tafsir Al-Tabari*, Vol. 14, p. 215). This opinion is attributed to the famous companion, Abdullah ibn Abbas.

Abdullah ibn Abbas explained the meaning of this Ayah as indicating that Allah will inform His final Messenger about all matters of the religion. He will bestow upon him the entirety of the religion, leaving nothing hidden from him, even though the polytheists and the Jews despise it. (*Al-Durr al-Manthur*, Vol. 4, p. 175)

According to this interpretation, the term "manifestation" does not refer to dominance but to informing someone of a secret. In Arabic, *zahara* (ظَهَرَ) can also mean "to reveal," as stated in the Quran: '*alim al-ghaybi fa-la yuzhiru 'ala ghaybihi ahadan*—"He is the Knower of the unseen, and He does not disclose His unseen to anyone" (Quran, 72:26).

However, as I understand it, the interpretation of this Companion does not necessarily contradict the meaning of dominance. Instead, it reflects one of the wisdoms behind the specific form of the dominance of religion granted to the final Messenger. Allah has promised that He will surely make His Messenger prevail, as stated in the Chapter *Al-Mujadilah*:

kataba Allahu la-aghlibanna ana wa-rusuli—“Allah has decreed: “I and My messengers shall most certainly prevail.” (Quran, 58:21).

But in the case of past prophets, this dominance typically manifested through the annihilation of the deniers of the prophets by means of divine punishment, rescuing the believers and establishing them in a liberated region. However, in the case of the final Messenger, Allah’s law was implemented in such a manner that, in the words of Al-‘Alusi, it—meaning is to conquer the deniers in the area of the invitation of Bani Ismail and to establish the rule of the believers over them (*Ruh al-Ma’ani*, Vol. 9, p. 55). This was a specific matter predestined for the final Messenger according to divine knowledge.

Thus, people were long forewarned about this through the heavenly kingship mentioned in the scriptures of Bani Israel.

What was the wisdom behind the specific enforcement of this divine law? It is expressed in the relevant Ayahs of the Quran as “the completion of light.” Here, “light” particularly refers to those laws and guidance sent down for human direction in worldly life. When Allah decided to conclude the arrival of messengers after Muhammad ﷺ, it necessitated the revelation of laws related to every aspect of life that would guide humanity until the Day of Judgment.

However, it has been Allah's custom that the entire religion is not revealed all at once in written form. The fundamental and basic teachings of the religion are revealed to the prophets at an early stage, but the detailed laws related to society and politics descend only when a practical political and economic organization is established. This is why many prophets received only the basic laws; their audiences had not accepted Islam to the extent that a separate political system could be established, so such laws could not descend upon them.

In the case of the final Messenger, such a situation could not be tolerated, as it would imply that teachings related to all aspects of life could not be revealed, and there would be no guidance in Allah's religion for all eventualities.

This is why the specific form of dominance was chosen for the final Messenger, and he was granted a "great kingdom" or "heavenly kingship." Without this, the completion of religion or the fulfillment of divine light upon the servants could not take place. Thus, in Surah *Al-Fath* (Chapter of Victory), the wisdom of dominance is described: *wa-yahdiyakum siratan mustaqiman* (48:2)—"and that He may guide you to a straight path." Here, the guidance of the

Straight Path refers to the provision of detailed laws, as Ibn Kathir wrote:

This means that by establishing the laws of the *Shariah* and true religion, He has shown you the Straight Path (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 7, p. 327). If the believers had not been granted dominance and the opportunity to organize their own independent society, they would not have encountered all the situations of life. As a result, the laws related to every aspect of life would not have been revealed either. It is Allah's tradition that laws concerning practical situations are revealed only after the relevant circumstances arise.

Considering these points, it becomes clear why Abdullah ibn Abbas provided the aforementioned interpretation of the Ayah. This is essentially a statement of the specific wisdom hidden within the scheme of the dominance of religion. This discussion does not imply that the task of establishing dominance was solely the responsibility of the era of Prophethood, and that now we need not do anything regarding it. In reality, whenever there is a confrontation between religion and secularism, it becomes the duty of Muslims to stand firm and strive to establish religion. However, to categorically declare this as the mission of all Muslims and to interpret religion in such a way that this becomes the primary task is not correct.

Arguments from Hadith

Recently, I came across an article that stated the objective adopted by *Jamaat-e-Islami* is not influenced by the personal likes or dislikes of any of its members. Instead, it believes that Allah has appointed all the prophets, culminating in Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, for this very mission, this goal, and this purpose. Now, until the Day of Judgment, the Muslim community continues to exist with this same purpose as his representative. The mission of the *Jamaat-e-Islami* is intrinsically connected to the purpose of Muhammad's Prophethood.

According to the author of the article, this mission is described as: "To establish Allah's legislative rule in the world," "To implement the divinely revealed religion and *Shariah* and to reform the world," and "To establish the true religion and make it prevail over all false religions."

In the author's view, this is the "purpose of Muhammad's Prophethood," which is found in the Book of Allah, present in the sayings of the Messenger, and reflected in Islamic history. Among the numerous arguments he presented, he only cited one Hadith, which, in his opinion, clearly supports his claim and serves as the "best explanation" for the other texts related to this issue.

This is a narration from Al-Bukhari, also reported by

other hadith scholars. Ata bin Al-Sa'ib narrates that he met Abdullah bin Amr bin Al-As and asked him, "Please tell me about a description of the Messenger of Allah that is mentioned in the Torah." In response, he recounted several attributes mentioned in the Torah, one of which was:

Allah will not take his soul until He has straightened the crooked religion through him, such that people begin to say, "*la ilaha illa Allah* (There is no god but Allah)." Through this, He will open many blind eyes, deaf ears, and sealed hearts. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 4558)

In explaining this Hadith, the conclusion was drawn that "the purpose of the Prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ was to establish the religion." It was foretold in the Torah hundreds of years before the Prophethood of Muhammad that He would not die until the religion is established. At the end of the article, it was stated:

"This detail reinforces our belief that the mission adopted by the *Jamaat-e-Islami* is not in error. Rather, this mission is indeed the mission of the entire Muslim *Ummah*, which it is neglecting."
(*Monthly Zindagi*, Rampur, April 1962)

The author of the article translated *al-millah al-'iwaja'* as "crooked religion." However, the phrase *ban yaqulu*

indicates that in this context *millah* refers to a group rather than to a religion. This is because the subject of a statement is people themselves, not their religion. In reality, the reference here is to Allah's specific decree, which required that the final Messenger confront his earliest audience in battle and compel them to abandon their false beliefs. As a result, many who were disbelievers were guided to the right path.

Here, I will quote the words of 'Ayni and Ibn Hajar, which further clarify this interpretation:

The phrase *yuqimu bihi* means that Allah, through His Messenger, will negate polytheism and affirm monotheism. The term *al-millah al-'iwaja'* refers to the Arab nation, which is described as "crooked" because they altered the religion of their forefather, Prophet Abraham, and adopted idol worship. The establishment of this nation entails bringing them from disbelief to faith (*'Umdat al-Qari*, vol. 11, p. 243). Similarly, *al-millah al-'iwaja'* is explained as "the Arab nation," described as "crooked" due to their worship of idols, and its "establishment" is understood as leading its people from disbelief to faith (*Fath al-Bari*, Vol. 4, p. 343).

It is clear from this explanation that the argument based on this hadith is not correct:

1. Firstly, the hadith mentions the act of people saying

la ilaha illa Allah (There is no god but Allah), but it is unclear on what basis this has been interpreted to mean “reforming the world” or “establishing a legislative government.”

2. Secondly, according to the wording of the hadith, it does not specify the duty of the *Ummah*; rather, it describes an act of Allah that He will accomplish through His Messenger—that is, Allah will, have the “crooked nation” utter *la ilaha illa Allah* (*Irshad al-Sari* by al-Qastallani, Vol. 4, p. 58).
3. Thirdly, it is stated that Allah will not take the soul of His final Messenger until he has caused people to say *la ilaha illa Allah*. This clearly indicates an event in which the Messenger himself remains alive until people have declared the testimony of monotheism. If this phrase were to be interpreted as the ongoing mission of believers after the Prophet, it would imply that each Muslim must vow not to die until their audiences have converted to Islam. Is the author of the article prepared to make such a vow?
4. Fourthly, of the claim that the term *iqamat al-deen* (establishment of the religion) was frequently used by the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions is supported by a collection of hadiths. Along with this claim, a respected writer presented some hadiths and,

criticizing my view, wrote: “If the respected author reflects on these hadiths, it is hoped that he will not find any limitations in the meaning of *iqamat al-deen* as we advocate. On the contrary, he will clearly see that these hadiths contain a political and social dimension of establishing the religion, which not only exists but is prominently featured something he insists has no relation to *iqamat al-deen*.”

5. I do not deny that *iqamat al-deen* (establishing the religion) is a legitimate Islamic term, nor do I deny that *deen* (religion) encompasses political commands. However, the interpretation of the Islamic mission being argued on the basis of these words does not derive from this definition. In this respect, the hadiths cited are entirely unrelated to the actual issue. At this point, I will mention two prominent hadiths.

The first Hadith is taken from *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Book of Judgments:

“Indeed, this authority will remain with Quraysh. No one will oppose them except that God will cast him down on his face, as long as they uphold the religion.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 3497)

This narration has been reported through several chains with different wordings, which Hafiz Ibn Hajar has brought together in *Fath al-Bari* (Vol. 13, p. 116). If I quote these different narrations, their meaning will become easily clear.

- (a) “Indeed, this authority will remain with Quraysh as long as they obey Allah and remain steadfast in His command.” (*Al-Sunan al-Kubra* by al-Bayhaqi, Hadith No. 16537)
- (b) “Leadership will remain with Quraysh as long as they act according to the commands.” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 19782)
- (c) “O people of Quraysh, you will stay the people of authority as long as you do not deviate.” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 22355)
- (d) “You are the most entitled to authority as long as you are upon the truth.” (*Al-Umm* by al Shafi‘i, Vol. 1, p. 188)

In these hadiths, the term *amr* (command or authority) refers to the caliphate. This indicates that the power granted by Allah to the Muslims in Arabia rightfully belongs to the tribe of Quraysh, and that this right will remain with them so long as they adhere to their religion and fulfill their obligations in accordance with the *Shariah*. As long as they do so, Allah’s assistance

will remain with them, and no one will succeed in removing them from their position of leadership.

I do not understand how this guidance or prophecy relates to the issue we are discussing here. If the intention is to say that some narrations mention “as long as the Quraysh remain steadfast in their religion,” and that this steadfastness relates not only to the core of the religion but also to matters of governance and politics, then I agree with that viewpoint. However, it is unfortunate that what they are trying to prove does not follow from this. The Hadith refers to a responsibility that the Muslim rulers must fulfill within the established framework. The issue at hand is what the absolute “mission” assigned to the believers in this world is. Therefore, they needed to present a Hadith that states, “The mission of the believers is to change all aspects of individual and social life and establish a complete Islamic government in the world.” In other words, there needed to be a phrase that explains the work of the invitation, rather than a statement outlining the status and duties of empowered Muslims. I also agree that if the scope of Muslim activities expands up to governance and politics they must adhere to the laws of Allah in those matters as well. However, this statement cannot serve as an absolute definition of the Islamic call.

2. The second Hadith is presented in the following words:

“Those are the companions of Muhammad ﷺ. Allah chose them to accompany His Prophet and to establish His religion.”

This is part of a longer Hadith. First, I will present the entire Hadith here:

Ibn Mas’ud said: “Whoever wants to follow a path should follow those who have passed away, for the living are not immune to trials. Those are the companions of Muhammad ﷺ. They were the best of this *Ummah*, the most sincere of hearts, the deepest in knowledge, and the least pretentious. Allah chose them to accompany His Prophet and to establish His religion. Therefore, recognize their excellence and follow them closely, adhering to their morals and manners as much as you can, for they were upon the straight guidance.” (Narrated by Razeen, as referenced in *Mishkat al-Masabih*, Hadith No. 193)

This is a piece of advisory discourse or a speech by Abdullah ibn Mas’ud, which he delivered to some Muslims during the time of the Tabi’in (the generation after the Companions). In it, the phrase “establishment of religion” refers to the adherence to the religion.

Ibn Mas'ud intends to convey that the Companions of the Prophet were the best examples, chosen by Allah to accompany His Messenger and to accept and follow His religion. They fulfilled their duty of companionship and left no shortcomings in adhering to the religion. Therefore, they are the most deserving of being emulated in religious matters. Their lives serve as the best examples of following the religion. This is why scholars of Hadith have put this tradition under “sticking to the Book and Sunnah”. This means, according to the scholars of Hadith, that in this tradition it has been encouraged to adhere to the Book and Sunnah in the strongest possible way.

In “*Ash‘at al-Lama‘at*” by Shaykh Abdul Haqq Dehlawi, this is translated with the phrase “for the purpose of upholding the religion.” The term “upholding” signifies carrying or bearing. In this context, it implies that Allah has chosen them to be bearers of His religion. This is something that cannot be disputed, but it does not support the interpretation under discussion.

One drawback of this interpretation is that the term “establishment of religion,” which was used in this speech to describe an internal act, has, due to this specific mindset, become framed as an external act. In the monthly magazine “*Zindagi*,” an article was published titled *Sahaba Kiram Iqamat-e-Deen ke Sipahi*—“The Companions of the Prophet: Soldiers of Establishing

Religion” (September 1962). However, it would have been more appropriate for the title to be *Sahaba Kiram Deen ke Behtareen Pairo*—“The Companions of the Prophet: The Best Followers of the Religion.”

Argument from Islamic Jurisprudence

One argument presented by the ideologues of this interpretation is as follows:

Jihad, cutting off the hand (for theft), the punishment for false accusation (*qadhf*), the punishment for adultery (*zina*), the punishment for alcohol (*khamr*), and making decisions in accordance with the guidance revealed by Allah regarding transactions are all definitive commandments in the Quran that cannot be denied. However, these laws are currently not being enforced. Every Muslim reads them in the Quran. Discussions about them occur in religious schools, and speakers and writers elaborate on their details. Yet, when it comes to practical application, it is often said that an Islamic government is necessary for their enforcement, and since there is no Islamic government today, we cannot implement these laws.

We argue that if these laws are contingent upon the existence of an Islamic government,

then acquiring the conditions necessary for that government is obligatory, as it is a well-established principle of Islamic law that the fulfillment of obligations and duties depends on the conditions required to achieve them. For example, along with the obligation of performing ablution (wudu), making an effort to obtain water is also obligatory to the extent of one's ability.

Ala tara anna tahseel asbaab al-wajib wajibun wa tahseel asbaab al-haram haramun. (*Musallam al-Subut*, Vol. 1, p. 94) That is, do you not see that acquiring the means to fulfill an obligation is itself obligatory, and acquiring the means to commit a forbidden act is itself forbidden, by consensus. (*Monthly Zindagi*, December 1962)

In my opinion, there is a fallacy underlying this argument. The principle concerning the acquisition of the means to fulfill an obligation is presented as if it were an absolute rule that applies to everything labeled as “obligatory” or “mandatory” in the Quran and Hadith. This suggests that for every action mandated by Islamic law, believers must endeavor to provide the means for its fulfillment, and if they do not currently have them, they should work to obtain those means. However, this is not accurate.

The situation is not such that for every action regarded as obligatory by *Shariah*, the acquisition of its means is also necessarily obligatory. Instead, there are specific conditions. Here, we quote the editor of the “*Zindagi*” who wrote the following note beneath the aforementioned lines:

“In the case of obligatory acts, the scholars of *Usul al-Fiqh* have placed two conditions on the necessity of acquiring their means and prerequisites. The first is that the obligation must be absolute and not conditioned by any specific reason or prerequisite from the lawgiver. The second is that the means and conditions must be within the capability of the responsible person (*mukallaf*). If either of these two conditions is absent, then acquiring the means and prerequisites will not be obligatory.

A legal example of the first condition is the issue of *Zakat*. The reason for the obligation of *Zakat* on gold and silver is the possession of a complete *Nisab* (minimum threshold), and the condition is that a year must pass (*Hawl*). However, it is not obligatory for any Muslim to strive to attain the *Nisab*, nor is it obligatory for someone who has *Nisab* to ensure that it is preserved for a full year to fulfill the obligation of *Zakat*. This is because the ruling regarding *Zakat* is not absolute

but rather a conditioned ruling from *Shariah*. The requirement of *Shariah* is that if a Muslim possesses the *Nisab* and it remains with him for a year, then the obligation to fulfill the ruling applies only when the means and conditions are present.”

An example of the second condition is the prayer times, which serve as means for prayer but are not obligatory for anyone to acquire, as they are beyond a person’s control.

The meaning of this excerpt is not that the editor of “*Zindagi*” disagrees with the aforementioned writer or that he agrees with my opinion in this discussion. He accepts the classification of the aforementioned rulings, but he believes that the obligation of “cutting off the hand of a thief” and “punishing the adulterer” given to Muslims is a “general obligation.” Its existence or validity depends on the existence of a government. Therefore, the acquisition of this condition is indeed obligatory. He further writes:

“The Muslim Ulama are agreed that appointing an *Imam*, or establishing an Islamic government, is a necessary condition for carrying out these injunctions. That is to say, the obligation of these injunctions does not mean that if a caliph exists and a government is established, then you should act upon them. Rather, it means that these

injunctions, which are obligatory upon you, cannot be fulfilled without the appointment of a caliph and the establishment of government; therefore, acquiring this condition becomes obligatory upon you in order to act upon these injunctions.” (Monthly *Zindagi*, December 1962 / Rajab 1382 AH)

The “consensus” of the Muslim Ulama to which the writer refers here is itself correct—that the enforcement of collective injunctions requires the existence of an Islamic government. But the question of who the addressees of these collective injunctions are is a separate issue, which is not established by this “consensus.” His error lies in considering the general body of believers as the addressees of these injunctions, misapplying the “you” to whom the command is directed. In reality, the addressees of collective and societal injunctions are the community of believers as an organized body possessing authority, not individual and scattered believers. This is a conditional command, not an absolute one. (For details, see the chapter “*Correct Understanding Of Religion*” in the book.)

The second point is that recognizing the qualification or condition of these rulings does not mean that “when a government is established, then implement them.” Instead, this qualification means that the demand for implementing these rulings is not placed on ordinary

Muslims, but on those believers who are empowered and capable. Whenever such believers are present, the command will immediately apply to them, and they will need to acquire the “cause” that is a prerequisite for fulfilling these rulings. In other words, it is obligatory for the empowered Muslim community to enforce these rulings, and because it is obligatory for them to do so, they must establish an Islamic government among themselves to enforce these rulings.

However, this does not end the discussion, as there is another mistake hidden in this argument. Regarding the interpretation at hand, it is fundamentally incorrect to cite the issue of the appointment of an *Imamate* as evidence supporting it. This is because this interpretation explains the entire mission of *dawah*. It defines our responsibility regarding all the commandments. In contrast, the issue of appointing an Imam only concerns the political organization of a society; it addresses the requirements of Islam regarding a specific matter. Citing it as an argument for the interpretation at hand is like trying to understand the whole human experience based on issues related to economic demands. Clearly, economic rulings relate to a specific aspect of life and cannot serve as a basis for studying the entire human being.

Furthermore, this interpretation presents a vision of the Islamic mission that aims to establish Islamic

governance throughout the world. This means that this interpretation articulates the work we are tasked with by Allah, which must be carried out universally for both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. No matter where we are or in what condition we find ourselves, this is the mission entrusted to us by Allah, and it is for this that we must remain active. This is the call found in the literature of the interpretation under discussion that is spread across all books. However, the issue of the appointment of an *Imamate* has no connection to such a mission. The obligation of appointing an *Imam* is determined specifically in relation to the Muslims' own sphere of action, not the entire world.

It is another matter that when this *Imamate* is established, non-Muslims living in its territory also come under its jurisdiction, and many of its rulings apply to them as well. However, when the theologians say, “*al-muslimoon la budda lahum min imaam*” (*Al-Aqaid al-Nasafiyyah* with the commentary of *Taftazani*, p. 467), meaning that it is essential for Muslims to have an Imam; or when they say, “*nasb al-imaam 'indana wajibun*” (*Al-Mawaqif fi 'Ilm al-Kalam* by Al-Iji, p. 395), meaning that appointing a leader over themselves is obligatory for Muslims—this statement refers to a duty that concerns the Muslim community itself. That is, it does not mean that “Muslims are obliged to establish an Islamic government over all believers

and non-believers throughout the world.” Rather, it means that “Muslims are obliged to appoint among themselves a political leader for implementing Islamic laws and safeguarding the objectives of the *Shariah*,” according to our view.

As I have stated, my main objection concerns how the mission has been interpreted in the literature under discussion. Therefore, mentioning the appointment of an Imam does not override my objection. Using the appointment of an Imam to justify the interpretation is like deriving the command that “appoint an Imam over the entire world” based on the rules for appointing an Imam for congregational prayers.

It should be clear that I have no opposition to the appointment of an Imam or an Islamic government. My objection is actually to the interpretation that claims the true demand of the religion and the mission of the believers is to strive for the establishment of an Islamic government in this world. A certain practical approach may be correct at times, but if this is given a general and theoretical status, then this theory will be inherently flawed.

One writer states:

If viewed purely from a juridical and legal perspective, it will also be established that the responsibility of the Muslims here is to strive for an Islamic revolution in this

country in accordance with the objectives presented by the group. Before British rule, India was a *Dar al-Islam*, but afterward, the infidels took control of this *Dar al-Islam* and transformed it into a *Dar al-Kufr*. Regarding such a situation, the verdict of the jurists is that it is obligatory for Muslims to end this infidel occupation and restore the country to being a *Dar al-Islam*.

This argument contains two mistakes. First, it tries to generalize a specific and temporary ruling, which clearly applies only to reclaiming a usurped *Dar al-Islam*. This matter relates to a specific legal situation, while we are discussing a broad and universal issue. The legal point simply shows what Muslims should do if that particular situation occurs. However, the issue we are examining is what Muslims should do in every situation. The individual could have easily understood this point if they had considered that their argument, if valid, only justifies a political goal for Muslims in India. But this argument does not justify adopting such a political goal in many other countries that, from a legal perspective, have never been considered a “*Dar al-Islam*.” Yet, your claim is that what you call the mission of Islam should be the singular mission of all Muslims worldwide.

The second mistake is that a political ruling has been used to argue about a theoretical issue. A political

requirement only expresses the demands of Islamic law regarding politics, just as a ruling concerning worship reveals the requirements of Sharia related to worship. However, the issue at hand pertains to the justification of the entire Sharia. How can an opinion be formed about the entire framework from a specific ruling? Is the entire Sharia merely the name of this particular part? While presenting this argument, the individual seems to have forgotten that they are citing a purely political ruling to support their objective, despite their own claim that this objective relates to all the demands of the religion, not just its political aspect.

Finally, another type of argument emerges. These are people who, after realizing their weakness in reasoning, try to justify their position with a strange kind of logic: that their claim requires no proof at all. They say: “You have unnecessarily dragged us into the ‘circle of argument.’ Otherwise, this matter is so self-evident that one can understand it through reason alone. What need is there for a proof from the religious sources for it? It is merely the result of historical circumstances that Muslims now find it hard to believe that it is also obligatory upon us to change existing conditions.” For this reason, they add: “We now look for such clear verses of the Quran in which we are directly commanded that—the revolution of leadership is obligatory upon Muslims—and since no

such explicit command appears before us, we regard all such aspirations as mistaken and all such efforts for a righteous revolution as un-Islamic.” (*Al-Hasanat*, March, 2nd Issue, 1962)

This argument stems from the writing of Maulana Sadruddin Sahib, which he prepared in response to my reply. I initially addressed this point of his in my letter to Abul Laith Sahib, dated August 19, 1962, included in the second chapter of this book. It has now been taken from there and moved to this chapter. While “appointing an Imam (head of the community)” within their own sphere of authority is indeed obligatory for Muslims, I do not understand on what basis the mission of establishing a global revolution in leadership can be inferred from this.

I would say that the fact that there is no “clear command” in the Quran supporting your interpretation of Islam is evidence in itself that this is not the correct interpretation of the Islamic movement. If it were the correct interpretation, it should certainly have been mentioned in God’s book. Despite this reality, if you insist on your specific interpretation based on a rational analogy, it further proves its shortcomings. When there is no explicit confirmation in the Quran for an interpretation and its supporters present rational arguments instead of Quranic verses, such arguments do not prove its validity but rather indicate its error.

The purpose of the Islamic movement and the mission of the Muslim *Ummah* should be derived from clear verses of the Quran, not from rational speculations.

In conclusion, are the arguments on which the proponents of this interpretation believe that their interpretation has been established through the explicit texts of the Quran and Hadith. If only people realized that what they call “certainty” is often nothing more than an illusion.

CONSEQUENCES OF MISINTERPRETATION

Q*uran Ki Chaar Buniyadi Istlahein* (English trans: Four Key Concepts of the Quran) is a significant work produced under this interpretative approach, presenting a “broad and complete” concept of *Deen* (religion). In concluding the discussion on *ibadah* (worship), it states:

“Those who accept a limited interpretation of the Quran’s message will follow it incompletely and inadequately.”

However, sadly, as per my study, the attempt to present the Quranic message as comprehensive and complete has, in itself, become a means of limiting it. Due to an incomplete understanding of *Deen* presented based on this interpretation, a proper relationship could not be established between nature and the religion of nature. As a result, the effects and outcomes of *Deen* could not manifest properly.

Consider an electric lamp: if its plug is not correctly

placed, and you press the switch, the lamp will either emit dim light or burn out and turn off, or perhaps only the filament will glow red. But if the plug is correctly positioned, the lamp will fully illuminate and provide a continuous light. In this analogy, the plug represents God's *Deen*, the socket symbolizes human nature, and the hand placing the plug represents one's perception. If the perception is flawed, it results in an outcome similar to that of a hand failing to properly fit the plug into the socket.

This situation parallels the present discourse: a single misalignment has prevented a true connection between human nature and God's *Deen*, resulting in the absence of genuine manifestations of devotion to God in people's lives. Although this flaw was subtle, *Deen* is so delicately structured that even a slight deviation disrupts its entirety—just like a complex machine where a minor fault affects its overall function. Consequently, based on this interpretation, individuals shaped by it are observed by its very proponents to lack the essence of *Deen*. Here, I will highlight some aspects of this issue, beginning with theoretical aspects, followed by practical ones.

Difference in Perspective

The first evident flaw resulting from this constructional error is that it changed the perception of *Deen*

(religion) in people's minds. Every entity has specific, minor aspects and an overarching essence. A mistake in understanding one of the minor aspects remains localized. However, a change in perspective regarding the essence alters the entire view of that entity. For instance, Aristotle believed that women have fewer teeth than men. Though this was a mistake, it was a minor, localized one, so it did not lead to a significant harm. In contrast, thinkers who proposed the theory of equality between men and women—assuming that women are inherently the same as men in terms of abilities—developed a mistaken view about women as a whole. This misconception altered their entire perception of women, leading to social and familial issues that the initial proponents of this idea could not have foreseen.

The error in the interpretation being discussed is similarly related to an overarching perspective. Consequently, those who embraced it began viewing the entire corpus of *Deen* from a different lens. When the view of the whole changes, so does the perception of all associated components. This school of thought has drawn a picture of religion in which, apparently, all the components of religion are present, but all of them have been displaced from their proper position. The arrangement of these components is such that, when one looks at it, Islam as a “system”

appears very prominent, while its devotional aspect becomes weakened.

In this depiction, terms like *Iman* (faith), *Shariah* (piety), and *Shariah* (excellence) are all present.⁸ However, these words do not truly describe the stages of a person's relationship with God; rather, they are presented as the "moral foundations of the Islamic movement." They function as standards for those specific expressions of one's relationship with God that appear in the form of righteous leadership and the "establishment of the system of truth," which, according to this interpretation, is "the real objective of religion" and the "ultimate goal of a Muslim's struggle in this world." In this view, these are stages in the expression of faith that indicate a person's position in relation to the above-mentioned revolutionary struggle.

When *Deen* is understood in this way, it should not surprise you if the religious commitment of such individuals appears vibrant concerning the

8. The terms *Iman* (faith), *Islam*, *Taqwa* (piety), and *Ihsan* (excellence), as used progressively in this literature, do not carry the same specific sequential meanings in the Quran. However, this is a minor technical point, so it doesn't warrant criticism. While these terms may not appear in Quran and Hadith in these progressive stages, it remains true that *Iman* is indeed a developing reality, with stages and phases. We may use different words to describe these stages, but the concept remains valid.

implementation of a specific political structure, yet the true essence of devotion, such as *dhikr* (remembrance of God), *shukr* (gratitude), and the qualities of humility and return to God (*ikhbat wa inabah*), is notably absent in them.

Subconscious Act

If the position of a brick is changed, the difference remains limited to that single shift. But the case of changing the human mind is different. A human being is an intellectual creature. Changing the mind means changing the line of thinking. After that, everything begins to take shape in the mind in a new way. Even regarding many clear and obvious matters, the mind will unconsciously form such strange and unusual opinions that the person will not even realize what has happened.

Consider a few examples of the mindset in question:

There is a verse in the Quran: “O you who believe, be persistently standing firm in justice” (4:135). The term *qawwam* is an intensive form of *qa'im* (one who stands), meaning “one who firmly establishes” or “one who remains steadfast.” Thus, *qawwamin bil-qist* implies a deep, consistent commitment to justice. Urdu translators have rendered this phrase as “O believers, remain steadfast in justice” or “become those who stand

firmly for justice.” This translation is closer to the verse’s original meaning.

Commenting on this phrase, Allama Alusi Al-Baghdadi writes:

“Be persistently standing firm in justice (*qawwam bil-qist*), meaning remain committed to justice in all matters, striving to the utmost, without allowing anything to divert you from it.” (*Ruh al-Ma’ani*, Vol. 3, p. 161).

This statement conveys that believers are instructed to uphold a standard of justice in their own dealings, exerting their utmost effort to ensure they remain on the path of equity, undeterred by any distractions. However, the perspective as presented in the interpretation under discussion conceptualizes *Deen* as a “system” to be enforced on earth. As a result, the act of *qiyam* (standing for justice) becomes an external action in this interpretation, and thus it was translated as:

“O you who believe! Be standard-bearers of justice” (*Tafheem al-Quran*, Vol. 1).

Further details are provided in a note below this translation:

“It is not sufficient to simply follow the path of justice; rather, it is commanded to become standard-bearers of justice. Your duty is not

merely to act justly but to rise with the banner of justice. You must be prepared to eradicate oppression and establish justice and fairness. As believers, your role is to be the support that justice needs to be upheld” (*Tafheem al-Quran*, Chapter *Al-Nisa*, Note 164).

Observe how, due to a difference in perspective, an individual, personal command unconsciously transformed into a call for global revolution.

2. The Concept of Worship in Arabic

In Arabic, the concept of ‘*ibadah* (worship) is often explained in lexicons using the word *khudu‘*, which means humbling oneself, bowing, or lowering oneself before someone. It is an internal, sensory state that begins in the heart and manifests outwardly through one’s actions. However, for the mindset in question, envisioning ‘*ibadah* as a sensory, heartfelt state is challenging. In this interpretation, the ultimate concept of *Deen* is its establishment as a complete system on earth—in other words, *Deen* in its final form is viewed as a physical structure rather than a heartfelt state. Consequently, the concept of *khudu‘* has shifted in their mind. Here are some translations that illustrate this change:

- (a) *Al-‘ibadah*: Worship, as defined here, refers to obedience that is carried out with full submission.

- (b) “We worship You” means “we obey You with complete submission.”
- (c) *Fulanun ‘abidun*: He is one who humbly submits and is fully compliant to his Lord

(*Quran Ki Chaar Buniyadi Istlahein*, Chapter on Worship, Introduction).

The term *farma’nbardari* (obedience) essentially carries the same meaning as *ita’at* (obedience), leading to the interpretation that “worship means complete obedience.” Clearly, this interpretation omits any concept of *khudu’* (humility and submission).

3. The Concept of *Khatam an-Nabiyyin* in Chapter *Al-Ahzab*

In the Chapter *Al-Ahzab*, a response is given to the objections of opponents concerning one of the actions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Among the statements in this context is the verse 33:40, *wa khatam an-nabiyyin* (and he is the Seal of the Prophets).. Explaining why this phrase appears in this context, *Tafheem al-Quran* notes:

“He is the Seal of the Prophets—meaning that after him, not only will there be no messenger, but not even a prophet will come, to rectify any part of the law or society that may have been left unaddressed during his time. Therefore, it became even more necessary for him to

personally eliminate this pre-Islamic custom” (*Tafheem al-Quran*, Vol. 4, *Al-Ahzab*, Fotenote No. 77; *Khatm-e-Nubuwwat*, 1962, p. 7).

Due to a pre-existing focus on the concepts of “establishment and enforcement,” words like “implementation” and “practical elimination” unconsciously appeared in the interpretation of prophetic work. If the function of prophethood is assumed to mean that each prophet must fully implement everything revealed to him from God, practically abolishing what is wrong, this would be a standard that no single prophet could fulfill. This would not only be unattainable for previous prophets, but even for the last Messenger, who had more opportunity for action, as certain revealed commands (such as those regarding behavior towards parents) were not practically exemplified by him.

Both Fakhruddin Al-Razi and Mahmud al-Alusi make similar remarks in their interpretations of this phrase in Chapter *Al-Ahzab* (33:40), but they use “explain” rather than “implement” when describing the role of prophethood.

Imam Razi writes:

“The phrase *Khatam an-Nabiyyin* (Seal of the Prophets) was used here because when a prophet is to come after another, if the earlier prophet

leaves any part of guidance or explanation incomplete, the one who follows can rectify and complete it. But the one after whom there is no prophet is all the more compassionate toward his community, more earnest in guiding them, and more beneficial to them. He is like a father to a child who has no one else to rely on.”
(Tafsir al-Razi, Vol. 2, p. 171).

Both interpretations present the same idea. Yet, in the case of the ideology under discussion the mindset interprets it through terms like “implementation” and “completion,” Whereas Razi framed it as a matter of “guidance” and “explanation.” It should be noted that in this specific verse of Chapter *Al-Ahzab* (33:40), where the prophetic role is referenced, action was indeed required. Without it, the psychological discomfort among Arab Muslims—rooted in centuries-old customs regarding marriage to the ex-wife of an adopted son—could not have been dispelled. However, *Tafheem al-Quran* presented it as a general principle, not specifically related to the immediate situation, making this interpretation inaccurate.

These were some of the theoretical consequences of the error in this interpretation. Now I will mention its practical implications. (additional examples of

theoretical outcomes can be found in other chapters of the book).

Drifting from the Quran

Individuals influenced by a distorted interpretation of *Deen* are often more drawn to that specific interpretation, which they have accepted as truth, than to the Book of God itself. The reason is quite clear: the Quran's explanation of *Deen* aligns with its own concept of *Deen*, not with any other interpretation. When a person approaches the Quran with an alternative concept, they do not find satisfaction or resonance within its pages. The Quran does not present *Deen* in the way they envision it, and consequently, they begin to experience a sense of discomfort—an emotion the Quran refers to as *ishmi'zaaz*⁹ (aversion) (Quran, 39:45). On the contrary, he shows great interest in the literature produced under his preferred interpretation.

9. The term *ishmi'zaaz* (disgust) implies a feeling of constriction or repulsion, which is a purely psychological state. It is not always necessary for a person to be fully conscious of this feeling. Such states often emerge in the subconscious, and one becomes aware of them only when they gain a conscious understanding of their error and break free from it. If someone is heavily influenced by another person and has adopted that person's way of thinking rather than thinking independently, you will find it nearly impossible to convince them that they are caught up in personality worship. Awareness of such a condition usually dawns only when they step out of that mental grip.

This is because it fully satisfies his emotions. By contrast, he shows great interest in literature based on the interpretation he favors.

You may find some Muslims who, when given books such as *Sirat al-Nabi* and *Uswah al-Sahabah* to read, return them without finishing them. In contrast, they read Abdul Haleem Sharar's "Islamic novels" with such fervor that they can't rest until they have finished them. The reason is that the vivid, colorful portrayal of Islamic history they prefer is not found in authentic historical works. They are more interested in a version of Islamic history that aligns with their particular preferences rather than actual history itself. Thus, they favor historical novels over pure historical texts.

Shaping Religion to One's Mind

When a person is shaped by a particular interpretation, they begin to see every issue in its light. For example, politics is undoubtedly a component of *Deen*, but if one elevates it from its rightful place to a central position and interprets *Deen* in such a way that political revolution appears to be the ultimate goal of the Islamic movement, this shift will certainly alter one's way of thinking. Consequently, every other aspect of *Deen* will be understood in relation to this central political concept. No part of *Deen* will seem comprehensible

until it is connected to the overarching idea of politics. In this mindset, even *salah* (prayer) may transform into a mere “training supplement” intended to prepare political activists for the cause of Islam. If a Muslim were to find himself alone on a deserted island, a person influenced by this philosophy might struggle to understand why prayer would even be necessary in such a situation.

A person confined to this specific mindset will instinctively try to find answers to every question within the realm of political terminology. Such a person cannot be satisfied with any explanation of an aspect of Islam that lacks a political tone. For instance, if you notice a lack of enthusiasm among Islamic workers, an absence of longing for God, or lack of tears shed for His sake, you would likely attribute it to the lack of political engagement in their lives. Your best advice would be to introduce programs that involve confronting the political powers of the time.

Certainly, moments of confrontation can occur in a believer’s life. However, there are other, more effective and accessible ways to foster a sincere desire for Islam: studying the Quran, contemplating God’s signs in the universe, praying deeply, enduring fasting with patience, waking at night to worship instead of

sleeping, giving charity despite personal hardships, and sacrificing one's desires, habits, and comforts for the hereafter. Many such opportunities are always available anywhere and anytime.

Each of these actions holds tremendous potential to stir one's heart. But you have been deprived of these simply because you have absorbed a self-constructed interpretation of *Deen* in your mind. This skewed perspective has led you to see Islam from a distorted angle, causing you to overlook the spiritual domains where God's angels continuously distribute boundless nourishment for faith. Consequently, afflicted with insensitivity and stagnation, you find yourself lamenting that your leaders do not provide you with a revolutionary program to revive and energize you.

The result of a distorted understanding of the Quran's message is that one begins to see the entire Quran in a different light. Psychologically, this leads to an attachment only to those verses or interpretations that align with one's preconceived notion, while other verses or alternative interpretations are mentally sidelined and do not hold the place they deserve.

Although one cannot see into another's mind, this mindset can certainly be observed in outward behavior. I have seen individuals who, when presented

with a proposal to enhance the effectiveness of Islamic work—such as launching a daily newspaper to overcome certain challenges—quickly appreciate its importance. They readily understand the value of financially supporting media to further their message, or even purchasing skills from the market to achieve their goals.

However, they struggle to comprehend the idea that “seek help in prayer to become a true caller to faith” or “prepare yourself for impactful missionary work through standing in prayer at night.” Even when clear Quranic verses are recited to them, they dismiss these suggestions, saying, “That sounds like Sufism.” They embody the mindset of those who say, “Bring a Quran other than this, or change it.”

Shift in Focus

The commands that Islam has given aim to direct your mind toward specific objectives. But if a person misunderstands a command or adopts a different interpretation, their example becomes like that of a hunter who fires at the shadow of an animal, thinking it to be the animal itself. In such a case, the shot will miss the target, and even after using up all the ammunition, the hunter will remain deprived of what they were seeking.

In the external world, believers are given a mission of *Dawah* (invitation) and *Shahadah* (bearing witness), creating a vast field for serving the *Deen* (religion) of Allah. *Shahadah* means that you fully utilize your capacity for expression and communication to convey God's message to those who are heedless of Him or have turned away from Him. You present it with such intensity and conviction, as if these divine realities are first-hand experiences that you are witnessing and testifying to before the world.

This is a mission that never ends. One never feels that there is a lack of opportunities to fulfill it. It involves you in an immensely active life, for as long as there is a single person on earth straying from the path of God, and as long as you have a pen in hand or words in your mouth, there is work to be done.

However, the interpretation mentioned above took this valuable field away from the believers by describing their external mission not as bearing witness, but as "revolution," thereby depriving you of this precious field. Under the concept of *shahada* and *tabligh* (dissemination), the ultimate goal for a preacher is to fully deliver God's message to God's servants. However, as a natural consequence of its structure, this interpretation assumes the responsibility that "the ultimate goal we wish to achieve in this world is to end the leadership of the sinful and corrupt, and

to establish the system of the righteous community.” Naturally, those whose minds are shaped by this specific interpretation will feel compelled, by their mental framework, to make political change their primary objective. This is because, in their view, establishing the righteous leadership is not possible without political transformation.

Under the concept of *shahada*, a person considers success as simply conveying their message to the very end. But the interpretation under discussion assigns a task that cannot be considered fulfilled unless it takes the form of a system established in practice on earth. According to this interpretation, the Quranic term “*shahadah*” and similar words could have led someone to the misunderstanding that mere verbal testimony was sufficient to fulfil this responsibility. However, by creating the philosophy of “practical shahada,” it has been asserted that unless a formal state is established, the responsibility of shahada cannot be fulfilled.

Those who fall into this mentality will, by nature, seek a political program to exercise their powers. They will consider “the task” to mean striving for a change in government. For them, mere preaching and understanding will not constitute the task they need to accomplish in the external world to fulfill their faith.

Now, if the conditions are favorable for revolution, and they find a successful political program leading them towards a change in power, they will act. They will feel that they possess the “task” for which they should devote their efforts. However, if political conditions are unfavorable, and they cannot find a path that visibly leads to the doors of Parliament, they will be at a loss as to what to do. Surrounded by millions of people that need to be conveyed God’s Message, they will still have a program right in front of them, but without the opportunities for political change or a practical plan that satisfies their revolutionary desires, they will feel as if they have no program at all. In the midst of so many opportunities for working for the Islamic mission they will feel as though they are without a program.

Advisors may remind them of their missionary duties, but they will not find any attraction in such tasks. They will not understand that simply conveying the invitation is also a task worthy of dedicating their efforts.

It is important to note here that my objection to this interpretation is not that it includes politics within Islam. Politics is an essential part of life, and any ideology that addresses human life cannot be devoid of political aspects. Nor do I disagree with the idea that, at a specific time, an Islamic group may need to

dedicate a significant or even complete amount of its strength to the political front. In a crisis, it is entirely possible that an Islamic group might need to invest most or all of its resources toward achieving political change. My actual objection is that, while politics is only one aspect of Islam, an attempt has been made to interpret the entirety of Islam based solely on this aspect. Something may indeed be true in its proper context, but if it is removed from that context, even a correct thing can end up being misrepresented.

But the issue does not end here. In reality, if a person cannot find the center of their emotions for a period, they begin to fall into apathy. It is crucial to keep one's aim in clear view. If it becomes obscured, one cannot prevent themselves from succumbing to despair. In this way, the members of a "failed" Islamic movement will first feel despair upon observing unfavorable conditions. This despair will lead to disunity, and disunity will bring them very close to moral decline.

It is also important to understand that the command in the words *aqimu ad-deen* (establish the religion) directs us toward the duties and responsibilities that, in relation to our own selves, God has imposed upon us. However, if the interpretation I mentioned earlier becomes entrenched in your mind, a natural consequence will be a shift in the focus of this command in your

understanding. Instead of focusing on oneself, the external world will become the place where one seeks to fulfill the command of *aqimu ad-deen*. Rather than focusing on transforming one's own life, all attention will be directed toward changing the system.

The condition of such people is that they remain oblivious to themselves, yet they never tire of discussing global issues. They will have little interest in the "establishment" of prayer (*iqamat al-salat*), yet they will raise slogans for establishing divine governance (*al-hukumat al-ilahiya*). There will be substantial voids in their personal lives, yet they will speak of filling the gaps in the global system. In their own homes, where they still hold a position of leadership (*qawam*), they may be imitating the ways of worldly people as much as possible, yet they will campaign for acquiring a leadership role in the nation to rid it of the influence of worldly leaders. Their hearts may be devoid of God's remembrance, yet they will propose acquiring power over broadcasting stations to promote God-consciousness globally. While failing to uphold the principles needed for fulfilling personal responsibilities, they will have a plethora of principles ready for reforming everything from the national system to the structure of the United Nations.

Their paper plans and press statements may suggest

they deeply care about the welfare of the Muslim community, as if any issue remotely related to the community causes them great unrest. But if you look closely, you will find that this expression of grief is no more than a formal condolence—offered not out of real sorrow, but out of the fear that others might complain. In their present, actual sphere of influence, they may lead superficial, irresponsible lives, yet they portray their post-revolutionary ambitions as if the era of the Rashidun Caliphate (The Rightly Guided Caliphate) will return anew.

Look at how this misinterpretation has shifted the targets of their actions. The Quran has set for us a clear aim: establish God’s religion upon ourselves and convey its message to others. However, this interpretation has instead placed a different aim before them—“Strive to establish the Islamic system in the world.” As a result, attention has been diverted from both of these original aims. The focus is no longer on acting upon Islam in one’s own life, nor on conveying its message. Instead, all energy is directed toward finding ways to bring about a change in power so that Islamic laws can be enforced.

In the same way that the mission of the Communist Party does not encourage its members to transform their personal lives, nor do they see mere propagation as a sufficient cause for mobilization, but rather

focus their minds on strategies for seizing power, this interpretation has cultivated a similar mentality among those who are influenced by it.

Effect on the Audience

Those influenced by this interpretation begin to perceive Islam primarily as a political and social system. Consequently, they start viewing their audience in much the same way that general political and social movements view theirs. Their focus shifts from guiding people toward spiritual rectitude to “shaping public opinion” to secure as many votes as possible for gaining power in the current democratic age. The distinctions between Muslim and non-Muslim change in their perspective. At this point, I would like to quote a line from *The Policy of the Jamaat* (published in 1959):

“Since the Quranic invitation is a universal one, addressing every individual regardless of race or community, and since both Muslim and non-Muslim communities exist in our country, our movement will consider both types of people as its audience. From the perspective of the movement’s interests, each of these groups holds a distinct importance that is not shared by the other.”

The significance of the Muslim group, according to this interpretation, lies in the assumption that members for

the movement can likely be found within it, as has been proven through experience. Therefore, in practice, this group becomes the primary field of action. The non-Muslim group is considered significant because, at present, they not only constitute a vast majority in the country but also hold a superior position in intellectual, social, and economic terms and possess political authority. Hence, any movement aiming for success cannot overlook this majority group in the country.”

Reflect on this excerpt. Its first evident flaw is that it places Muslims and non-Muslims on the same level. The unique status of the Muslim *Ummah* (community) no longer holds any significance in this mindset. It views Muslims in the same way it views other people around the world. If the Muslim group holds any particular importance, it is not due to any religious or *Shariah* (Islamic) law considerations but simply because, from the movement’s perspective, it holds a specific practical importance. This importance is solely that, by assumption, the movement is likely to find its members within this group—and indeed has done so through experience. In other words, if this ideology has any special interest in Muslims, it is purely pragmatic, similar to how a country’s Ministry of Defense views its “recruitment area.”

The existence of the Muslim *Ummah* does not instill

any sense of responsibility in their minds. Instead, they perceive it as a kind of “raw material” from which they can extract individuals to become “members” of their movement. Such people naturally do not consider it appropriate to design any reform program specifically aimed at Muslims, as they view this as contrary to Islam’s global revolutionary character. In their view, this would cast doubt on Islam’s “universal ideology” in the eyes of the people. This mindset can reach such an extent that even in the most severe conditions, if some among them—those with softer hearts—feel compassion for the deteriorating state of the Muslim *Ummah* and wish to add “community issues” to the organization’s policy, others in the group will immediately perceive a hint of nationalism in this approach. They will strongly object, arguing that it is against Islam’s foundational principles to develop a program focused on a specific group.

A similar situation applies in relation to people of other faith. The Quranic conception describes believers as witnesses to the truth among them, bearing testimony to ultimate accountability in the Hereafter. The function of this testimony is to serve as a reminder of human responsibility and the transience of worldly power. Yet, when the pursuit of political dominance began to be viewed as the primary goal of Islam, this deeper moral and Hereafter concern were pushed into the

background. Instead, thoughts of them arose from the perspective that “a movement cannot succeed without engaging with the majority group in the country.” As a result, the true nature of non-Muslims faded in the minds of those influenced by this interpretation. They were not concerned with rescuing them from the accountability of the Hereafter; rather, they began viewing them as a group whose “opinions” needed to be “shaped” in favor of the movement to secure their votes. An illustrative example of this mentality can be seen in the following clause from Article 5 of the Constitution of the *Jamaat*:

“The organization will pursue its objectives through constructive and peaceful means. It will achieve this by reforming minds and character through preaching, persuasion, and the dissemination of ideas, thus preparing public opinion to bring about the desired righteous revolution in the country’s social life.”

Observe how, in this interpretation, non-Muslims, who are fundamentally the subject of our reminder regarding the Day of Meeting (*Yawm al-Talaq*), have been reduced to a matter of shaping public opinion. It’s as if, as long as they align with us at the ballot box, there’s no further need to think about them. For, according to this view, this alone suffices to bring about a righteous transformation in “collective life.”

Political Extremism

Pandit Nehru writes in his autobiography that while he was studying at Cambridge, he considered joining the Indian Civil Service after graduation, as this was a prestigious goal for an Indian at the time. However, as his sense of independence grew, he developed an aversion to this idea, realizing, in his words, that joining the Indian Civil Service meant becoming a mere “cog” in the administrative machinery of British rule. And how could someone whose life mission was to expel British rule from his country serve as an agent of that very government? (*Autobiography*, London, 1936, pp. 24–25)

This issue has always been central to political thought and is bound to arise in any ideology of this nature. It also emerges strongly in the interpretation under discussion. According to this interpretation, the core objective of the Islamic mission is “changing the system.” I acknowledge that systemic change is indeed one stage in Islamic struggle, but this interpretation has removed it from its proper context. In doing so, it has led to distortions similar to those that arose in various religions when the Islamic value of “detachment from the world” was taken out of its true place. The philosophy of monasticism, by indulging in spiritual extremism, imposed many unnecessary hardships

upon the devotees of God. Similarly, this modern revolutionary view has led to political extremism, placing God's servants in difficulties that God did not actually require of them.

A clear example of this is the issue of employment in institutions established under the current un-Islamic system, which this interpretation has labeled as "illicit income." In this view, there is no distinction between different components of this system—every part is equally tainted, regardless of its apparent innocence. Even the elements that appear entirely harmless are, according to this interpretation, as impure as other components that are more obviously corrupt. Furthermore, they assert that a non-Islamic system governed by Muslims is equally condemnable; Muslim control does not grant it any certification of purity.

Just as many people, under the influence of monasticism, subjected themselves to various forms of self-inflicted suffering, the outcome of this new ideology is that many have abandoned government jobs, considering them forbidden, to the point that even schoolteachers and clerks in the railways and post offices resigned. In doing so, they unnecessarily imposed hardships upon themselves and their families that God did not obligate. A more regrettable aspect of this situation is that most people could not sustain this unnatural course of action for long. Eventually, they were forced

by circumstances to either reinterpret their previous stance and return to what they had once condemned as forbidden, or to adopt a means of livelihood even worse than government employment.

Misinterpretation of Religious Dominance

In the Quran, the concept of *ghalaba* (dominance) is consistently presented as a result of God's support. This does not mean that dominance randomly "descends" upon anyone. Rather, it implies that in this world, only those whom Allah has decreed to achieve dominance are able to prevail. Our primary task is not to aim directly at dominance and launch movements focused solely on achieving it from day one. Instead, the real task is to strive to make ourselves deserving of divine support. Once we have achieved this worthiness, Allah will create circumstances for us. He will create opportunities for us, just as He created opportunities for the Prophet Joseph in one particular form and as He did uniquely in another form for the final Messenger.

How does one attain this worthiness? The Quran describes this path in various ways. For instance, in Chapter *Al-Ma'idah* (5:12), a *sawa as-sabil* (clear path) is outlined for believers who live in particular circumstances. This path includes leading an organized life, establishing prayer (whose essence is humbly and eagerly connecting with one's Lord), paying zakat

(which essentially purifies one of greed and selfishness, creating a morally refined individual), and believing in and supporting the Messengers, which today translates to fully supporting movements that carry on the prophetic mission. This also involves continuing the witness-bearing efforts in the face of challenges and opposing forces. Finally, it includes “giving a goodly loan to Allah,” meaning spending one’s best wealth sincerely and generously for God’s cause”.

This is the *sawa as-sabil* (clear path) for which Allah has promised, “Indeed, I am with you,” indicating that He will support and help them in worldly life.

However, without a proper mindset, verses like these will offer no sustenance, as the focus will remain fixed on political change rather than on this clear path. When such individuals think about the dominance of Islam, they will view it solely as a political matter. Their attention will not turn to God’s assistance, nor will such discussions occur in their gatherings. Instead, they will remain entangled in “practical programs” and “political strategies.” Yet, when their efforts fail to produce the desired outcome—which is, in truth, something that only materializes through God’s aid—these individuals are likely to fall into despair and disarray. Consequently, they may abandon even the aspects of religion they could have achieved without a complete social revolution.

Faith Without Warmth

In general, the form of religion found among most Muslims is limited and devoid of spirit; this interpretation terms it as “formal religiousness.” I agree with this critique, but the mindset produced by this interpretation is also not a truly Islamic one. Its achievement is simply replacing formal religiousness with a type of ideological religiousness. Yet, the true essence of connection with religion is heartfelt sincerity and humility—qualities that are missing both here and there.

This interpretation presents Islam as “a comprehensive revolutionary ideology that aims to replace all worldly ideologies with its own.” While this view is not entirely incorrect, this interpretation has turned it into Islam’s core essence. The result is that Islam becomes merely a type of ideological concept, subject to the same flaws we see in other ideologies. Revolutionary ideologies worldwide are, essentially, collections of words; they lack any psychological foundation. Thus, they are widely discussed on paper and often spoken of fervently but do not touch the human soul, do not integrate into human nature, and do not impact one’s inner being. Similarly, when Islam is reduced to an ideology competing with other ideologies, it also becomes just another “ideology”—something that fuels intellectual debates but does not awaken the inner self. It does not foster any

psychological connection, nor does it introduce people to the reality of closeness to Allah, which is the greatest achievement any servant of God can attain in this world.

The harm of this interpretation does not stop here; it extends further, leading to a state where neither reality nor ideology remains. When the interpretation of something diverges from its true essence, it becomes nothing more than a collection of words, unable to take root in human nature. This is why those who adopt this interpretation of religion experience an initial burst of excitement in their lives, but it fails to inspire any profound action and eventually settles into the mind as a lifeless theory. Even if one remains religious afterward, this religiousness is no longer drawn from a deep intellectual source but results only from inherent cultural effects that happened to be present earlier and became a fallback once the intellectual connection was severed. This form of religiousness resembles a leaf that has detached from its root but remains entangled in the lower branches. Outwardly, it appears to be connected to the tree, but in reality, it has already separated and has no true existence.

Deviation from reality not only deprives a person of that reality but also of the very thing for which they abandoned it. In this universe, there is only one source from which everything emerges; once detached from it, nothing can truly exist.

Missing the Real Task

Today, the leaders of *Jamaat-e-Islami* appear to be actively involved in various community affairs: participating in educational conferences, proposing ideas in Muslim conventions, organizing relief work during communal riots, attempting to launch an English-language newspaper for Muslims, issuing statements and “interviews” on national and international issues. However, these activities do not truly stem from an intellectual foundation. There are other reasons behind them, which is why these activities lack the genuine spirit that should be present in religious service.

1. The primary reason for this new trend in *Jamaat-e-Islami*'s history is that, according to its ideology, its members are naturally inclined to seek “political” types of work. Due to the specific circumstances in Pakistan after the Partition, the *Jamaat*. there found such work, which provided it with a support base. However, the situation in India was different, and no similar work could be identified. This led the members of the movement in India to experience stagnation and apathy. To counter this, a campaign for “mental development and purification of the heart” was initiated. The policy of the *Jamaat* dictated that “in principle, most of our efforts should be devoted to internal training, but the current circumstances have further

increased its importance.” Consequently, out of the three divisions in the issues related to the “movement and the *Jamaat*,” the highest priority and at least half of the resources were allocated to internal matters, leading to a nationwide program for training and spiritual purification.

However, after a short period, it became clear that this effort was not yielding significant results. The internal decline in members, which this program aimed to curb, showed no signs of improvement.

During this period, many within the *Jamaat* argued that the approach to training was similar to that of *khanqahi* (spiritual retreat-based) training and that it would not instill any life within the *Jamaat*. They claimed it was like “feeding grass to a lion in an attempt to make it strong,” which could never succeed. The correct way to instill life in the *Jamaat*, they asserted, was to create a revolutionary, action-oriented program. They argued that, being a revolutionary group, the *Jamaat* could only be energized by a revolutionary program. This new thought gradually emerged from the failure of the previous approach. Some leaders of the *Jamaat*, while not entirely convinced by this idea, saw no other solution given the prevailing mindset of the members under their care. Consequently, this shift led the *Jamaat* to turn towards practical and urgent tasks.

Since it had limited opportunities to participate

in general national politics, the *Jamaat* found some “practical tasks” within Muslim politics that could keep its members engaged. As a result, what the previous training program failed to accomplish now appeared to be happening. Ever since these “practical tasks” were initiated, a new wave of life has emerged within the *Jamaat*. Its leaders have gained newfound confidence. However, this renewed energy does not signify an increased connection to Allah, improved prayers, or a deeper inclination towards the Creator. Rather, it is a form of organizational vitality—and, therefore, inherently temporary. I have no doubt that the leaders who are pleased with this quick solution will not be able to celebrate for long. A slight turn of events could easily overturn this entire structure, revealing an even more frightening form of the internal decline they had merely concealed under temporary measures.

2. The second reason, which appears to have subtly infiltrated life in the *Jamaat*, is that the *Jamaat* has been unable to fulfill the objectives it set for itself. Consequently, the sense of failure has driven it to find simpler tasks to satisfy its psychological need for achievement. After the Partition, the *Jamaat* devised a structured plan for itself with four primary components: the end of national conflict, widespread dissemination of religious knowledge

among Muslims, moral, social, and cultural reform to such an extent that non-Muslim neighbours would clearly see the Muslim society as superior to their own, gathering as much intellectual strength of the nation around the movement, and ensuring that all members gain proficiency in writing and speaking in local languages, transferring essential Islamic literature into these languages.

In April 1947, at a gathering in Madras, the *Jamaat* approved this plan, and its members were told that they needed to accomplish this within the next five years:

“Your small group has an enormous task to accomplish in the next five years... a task no less daunting than bringing forth streams of milk from a mountain... You must redirect Muslim public opinion and its national attitude. You must bring about doctrinal, moral, and cultural reform among the general Muslim population. You must penetrate the educated classes of Muslims and prevent them from falling into intellectual and practical disarray, guiding them instead toward the path of Islamic revolution. You must make arrangements to publish Islamic literature in the languages of different parts of the country.”

This was the mission for which the *Jamaat* members

were instructed to dedicate all their collective strength with total focus. I do not intend to debate the five-year time frame here, as such estimates are usually inaccurate. However, in a situation where none of these tasks have yet been accomplished, it was incumbent upon the *Jamaat* to continue striving with full force to complete them. But the strength to “bring forth streams of milk from a mountain” was no longer present.

On the other hand, the absence of a dedicated Muslim organization created an opportunity for anyone willing to raise slogans that appealed to Muslim sentiments to gain immediate support. After the Partition, with the decline of the Muslim League in India, a leadership vacuum appeared within the Muslim community. Reflecting on how Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind sought to fill this vacant role, Maulana Abul Lais Islahi, the then Ameer of Jamat Islami Hind, once remarked:

“These people, seeing the field empty, are running at full speed.”

Today, these very words have come back to apply to *Jamaat-e-Islami*, which now seems actively engaged in taking up the mantle of Muslim leadership following the failure of Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind to fill this role.

3. Another reason for this shift is the influence of mainstream Muslim politics. For a long time, the *Jamaat* had been the target of criticism from Muslims, who argued that it did nothing for them,

took no part in solving their practical issues, and was instead pursuing an idealistic goal of establishing an Islamic system. These criticisms gradually went beyond mere complaints and led to a significant decline in Muslims' interest in the *Jamaat*. This situation gradually impacted the *Jamaat*, and it has now reached the point where it has turned toward the very path it had consciously decided to avoid at the outset.

Results Reveal Theoretical Flaw

What I have discussed above under the heading “Outcomes” is, in fact, acknowledged as a reality even by the proponents of the interpretation in question. However, few among them are willing to admit that these outcomes stem from an ideological flaw. This reluctance is largely due to human nature, as individuals rarely accept their mistakes on an ideological level, though they are quick to acknowledge practical shortcomings. This is because, on a practical level, they can always find comfort in the principle that “human beings, after all, are human and cannot be free from error.”

While this principle is correct in itself, its application here is misplaced. In the context of this specific discussion, it would be entirely appropriate to assert that if these outcomes are indeed a reality, they provide clear evidence of an underlying ideological flaw.

I acknowledge that it is not necessary for those who believe in an ideology to fully embody its practical demands. However, this observation applies not to the early believers in a movement but to those who join it later. At its inception, a movement is purely ideological, attracting only those deeply influenced by its distinct ideas—people whose minds have been transformed to the extent that they consider their previous views mistaken and consciously choose a new way of life over their former one. If the movement eventually gains dominance and authority, it enters a second phase. Now, along with its ideological appeal, factors like political pressure, economic interests, and public trends also work in its favor, drawing many individuals to comply for such reasons. These later joiners do not undergo any mental transformation; rather, they conform outwardly, aligning their names and behaviors with the movement based on temporary benefits.

When flaws appear in individuals of the first type, their root cause should be sought in the ideology itself. This is because these individuals were drawn directly by the movement's ideals and were originally shaped as embodiments of its ideology. They were the living interpretation of the ideology. They did not carry their previous lives into the movement but left them behind, dedicating themselves to the movement to be moulded

as it wished. Thus, it is entirely natural to attribute their virtues and faults to the movement itself.

However, the flaws of individuals in the second category cannot be attributed to the ideology. These people did not make the ideology of the movement their true object of devotion; rather, they were still carrying their own false gods within themselves. Studying such people based on the movement and its principles is therefore misguided, as their behaviour is not a reflection of the movement's ideological foundation but of their own unchanged, underlying motives.

However, as far as the Islamic movement is concerned, there is an even more crucial point to consider. Embracing Islam essentially means establishing a connection with God, placing oneself under the guardianship of the Lord of all worlds. Therefore, when a person's relationship with God is genuinely established, they should experience all that God grants to such individuals. If these divine gifts are absent in someone who claims to have faith, it is clear evidence that their faith has not yet reached the true level that God's Messenger came to teach.

Allah has promised that He will be the "Protector" of those who believe, taking them out of darkness into light (Quran, 2:257). Thus, a believer should never find themselves in a situation where they feel lost,

without a clear purpose or direction. Allah promises to guide those who strive toward Him (Quran, 29:69), so a believer's life should never reach a stage where they feel unable to find a path leading them closer to their Lord. God promises that those who choose the right path will see an increase in their faith and humility, with continual advancement in guidance (Quran, 8:2, 17:109, 47:17). Therefore, a believer should not fall into apathy or decline, nor should their Islam be stagnant.

God has said that He honours His faithful servants by clothing them in “the garment of piety” and providing them with His “provisions of goodness,” which far surpass worldly sustenance (Quran, 7:26, 20:131). Therefore, it should not be the case that a person, even after embracing faith, remains deprived of goodness, and their soul is not nourished with the sustenance of the Lord. God has promised those who choose faith and righteous deeds that they will be granted *hayat tayyiba* (a pure life) (Quran, 16:97), giving them the opportunity to lead a life of devotion and purpose. Hence, those who claim to have faith should not find themselves absorbed in worldly pursuits, in the same activities which worldly people are engaged, missing out on the blessed life of worship and testimony.

If these results are evident in the real world—and

they indeed are—then it is clear proof that a person has not successfully established a connection with God, the true source of all blessings. Instead, they are attached elsewhere, caught in worldly entanglements that keep them from fully receiving divine guidance and transformation.

LINGERING DOUBTS

Some people might be puzzled by the question: “How can you object to this interpretation? We have witnessed with our own eyes how it has transformed so many people remarkably. How can we then assume that all of this was wrong?” My response would be that, indeed, your observation is valid. However, you are making the mistake of treating a past experience as if it were a current reality. If you were to step out of your realm of devotion and see your idealized personalities as they appear today, you would realize that what you perceive as “transformation” was, in fact, a temporary fervor that has long since dissipated (except in rare cases, if God wills).

1. Human beings inherently seek an ideal. The rush of many people toward misguided philosophies or erroneous religious interpretations results from this inner quest. However, the search for an ideal is essentially the natural urge to seek one’s Creator. This desire can only find true fulfillment when a person’s journey genuinely leads them to

God, where their soul connects with its Master without any intermediary barrier. Such a person finds infinite potential for growth. There is no question of any decline. But if one approaches a limited or lesser reality, mistaking it for the absolute truth, it will not be long before nature reveals its incompatibility with that person. An artificial ideal can never replace a true one. Consequently, life will naturally start to revert to its former state. The initial enthusiasm within will fade, eventually bringing about a time when one will become completely indifferent, lying lifelessly by the edge of their chosen ideology—much like how the moths, that restlessly circled all night, appear in the morning: lying motionless around the extinguished light.

This outcome is destined for all the major and minor figures of such movements. However, if any among them possess certain innate qualities that appeal to the masses—such as intelligence, physical charisma, eloquence, or the ability to write or speak effectively—then these outward traits will continue to hide their lifeless personalities from many people. Their followers will continue to think of him as alive, just as the jinn under the command of Prophet Solomon assumed he was still alive after his death, merely because of his outward appearance. Likewise, some individuals are

naturally endowed with commendable traits like good manners and compassion. Such qualities can be found in anyone involved in a movement. But these are personal attributes that should not be attributed to the movement itself, nor do they hold any ideological significance. In the same way, some qualities develop only as part of group identity or movement ethics, while a person's personal life becomes empty of serving others. Yet, under the "service to humanity" department, they appear active in collective programs alongside others.

2. At times, people find it difficult to recognize the flaws in a movement that claims to work for the religion because they see that some benefits are indeed resulting from it. They think that if a movement benefits the religion, it cannot possibly be flawed. Its usefulness, in their eyes, serves as proof of its correctness. However, the truth is that there is no necessary link between the two. It is entirely possible for an effort to bring some benefit to the religion while still being fundamentally flawed. In Europe, for instance, some Christians have provided extremely high-level scientific arguments in favour of God's existence—arguments that no Muslim scholar has been able to match thus far. Yet, despite this, no one would claim that this is what God ultimately

desires from a human being or that Christians are true representatives of God's religion.

The presence of both good and bad aspects within a movement is a common observation, and even Prophet Muhammad ﷺ predicted such occurrences. In a lengthy hadith narrated by Hudhayfah, he asked the Prophet:

“We were in ignorance and evil, then Allah brought us this good (Islam). Will there be evil after this good?”

The Prophet replied: “Yes.”

Hudhayfah continued: “Will there be good after that evil?”

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Yes, but it will not be pure. Rather, it will be mixed with impurity.”

Hudhayfah asked: “What is that impurity?”

The Prophet ﷺ replied: “There will be people who follow other than my Sunnah, and who guide according to other than my guidance. You will see some things they do as good, and you will reject others as wrong.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith 7084; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith 1847).

In essence, efforts made in the name of religion can be divided into two categories: witnessing to the truth of

religion (*shahadat al-deen*) and supporting the religion (*ta'yid al-deen*).

- Witnessing to the religion refers to a movement that arises solely to convey the pure message of Islam, presenting it in its most authentic form, free from the deficiencies previously mentioned. This is the truly desired path, and in the Hereafter, only those who work in this way will be raised as true witnesses.
- Supporting the religion refers to efforts that, directly or indirectly, contribute to strengthening Islam. Examples include refuting false ideologies, defending against enemies, or striving to preserve even a part of the faith. For this type of effort, neither soundness of belief nor uprightness of personal conduct is an essential condition.

As the Prophet ﷺ said: “Indeed, Allah supports this religion even through an irreligious man.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith 3967)

I have no hesitation in acknowledging the valuable contributions of those holding the ideology under discussion; they have provided significant service in defending Islam. I am also willing to admit that they have a greater understanding of Islam’s interests than many of today’s so-called “Islamic representatives.” However, I strongly believe that the way they present Islam is

not accurate. While they have certainly defended Islam against external attacks, they have also tried to interpret Islam by offering a specific understanding of it. And it is precisely in this interpretive effort that they have made a mistake. Their interpretation has seriously distorted the true essence of Islam, and this is why I feel compelled to speak out against them. If their work had been limited to simply defending Islam without trying to give a particular interpretation, I would never have critiqued them.

3. One person, after reading my writings, commented, “Your analysis seems accurate, but it is still hard to understand how everything that Maulana Maududi wrote in his explanation of Islam could be entirely wrong.” This doubt can easily be cleared up if we understand the nature of the literature in question. As I have mentioned before, Maulana Maududi did not focus on any specific part of Islam; instead, he aimed to provide a comprehensive explanation of the entire religion. He sought to establish an overarching concept that could help understand all aspects of Islam, including its components. This is a significant task but also a very delicate one, because its accuracy or errors impact the entire understanding of Islam. If correct, the perspective on Islam as a whole will be accurate; if not, it will lead to a flawed view of the entire religion.

For example, if Shah Waliullah were to make a mistake in explaining the wisdom behind ablution, it would not impact the rest of his work. However, Maulana Maududi's project is different. He has tried to explain the wisdom of the entire religion, so any mistake he makes could affect his entire ideology, making the whole body of his work questionable. Errors in explaining specific parts of Islam are limited to that particular issue. But if someone attempts to explain the wisdom of Islam in its entirety and makes a mistake, that mistake influences their entire argument, ultimately distorting their entire ideology.

Imagine a building in front of you, and you describe one part of it as a "window." This explains a specific part. If you mistakenly call the window a "door," that would be a mistake, but it would only apply to that particular part. You can still have the correct view of the rest of the building, even if you misunderstood the nature of one window.

In contrast, if you describe the whole building as a "house," this reflects your overall understanding of the entire structure. This term signifies the main idea through which you connect all its parts into a unified whole. On the other hand, if you call it a "factory," that represents an entirely different interpretation of the same structure. With this new concept, you would

see each part in a different way. Therefore, it's not just your understanding of one part that changes, but your whole perspective on the structure.

It's clear, then, that a minor error limited to a specific component warrants only limited criticism. However, we should not treat a mistake that alters one's understanding of the entire structure the same way.

4. You may hear some people say, "Despite this long discussion, we still don't understand the difference between the two interpretations." I don't consider this doubt to be entirely baseless. Sometimes, two things may appear similar but be fundamentally different in essence. Imagine a child tipping over his four-wheeled cart, tying a string to it, and then pulling it from the back. At first glance, the cart's appearance hasn't changed much, but this act has completely ruined its function.

Those who doubt are focusing on the difference in how the two interpretations look outwardly, which is why they don't see the true distinction. The real difference isn't in their outward appearance but in their underlying essence. The issue with the interpretation being discussed isn't that it has deliberately changed the forms of religion, but that it has misunderstood their true nature. Essentially, the actions remain the same, but the ideology behind them has shifted. The other

flaws we see in this interpretation weren't intentionally added but are results of this fundamental mistake.

The truth is that everything has a real form. If you understand the real nature of something, you can also see all its outer features clearly. But if you misunderstand its reality, everything will seem different in your mind. For example, if an elephant statue is somewhere, recognizing it as an elephant helps your mind connect all its physical features to the idea of an elephant. But if you see that figure as a carved stone building, your interpretation changes completely. You might see its legs as pillars, its back as the roof, and the trunk and tail as drains hanging from the roof. Its ears could look like windows. In this way, the whole image of the elephant would turn into a building in your mind, and your view of it would change accordingly. Now, the form of an elephant would no longer imply a mode of transportation but might instead be seen as a shelter you could rest under, not ride.

Your perspective on an issue shapes all your associations with it. Communism and the Sarvodaya movement both advocate for a collective economy, but the former views its purpose in material terms, while the latter sees it in spiritual terms. This difference causes communism followers to focus mainly on politics, whereas Sarvodaya followers appeal to human morals.

The error in this interpretation is that, due to certain reasons previously discussed, it has not understood the true image of Islam. Consequently, the entire nature of the image has shifted in the mind of its adherents. The same structure, which once represented an elephant, now appears as a building due to a difference in perspective. It's similar to how, in the eyes of a believer, all phenomena of life appear as the creation of the Creator. Yet, within Darwin's framework, they serve to affirm the theory that plants and animals are not products of creation but merely outcomes of evolutionary processes.

I'll provide an example here. This interpretation, with its revolutionary explanation of Islamic concepts, led followers to conclude that the "ultimate goal of Islam" is to create a righteous society and a divinely-guided government. The natural result of this interpretation was that rituals like prayer and fasting were seen as "training exercises" to prepare individuals as "ideal recruits" for this specific mission (as described in Islamic *Ibadah* and sermons), while beliefs were viewed as "ideological foundations" for this righteous social and political system. Therefore, elements that Islam directly aims for as ends in themselves were, within this framework, shifted to a secondary, indirect role.

When the primary goal of Islam is viewed as

establishing a specific system on Earth, the realities of the Hereafter cannot play a direct, intentional role in a person's life; instead, they can only serve as supplementary tools for guidance. Admittedly, in later policies, there are statements like: "We must conduct our work of calling others to Islam in a way that impresses upon the audience the true reason behind it—that salvation in the Hereafter should be presented as the central concern of life. The foundational tenets of this call—*Tawheed* (oneness of God), the Hereafter, and Prophethood—should be deeply rooted in hearts and minds by critiquing the false foundations of the current system" (Monthly *Zindagi*, August 1960). However, in reality, this new interpretation has not changed the core message. Its only addition is the word "drive." According to this view, the real goal of the Islamic movement remains establishing a system for worldly salvation; only now, this worldly salvation is motivated by the promise of salvation in the Hereafter! Consequently, despite this addition, the overall rhetoric and discourse remain unchanged. Even after the formation of this policy in November 1960, a major national gathering took place in the capital. However, the announcements and speeches surrounding it did not suggest that this was a gathering of a movement aiming to bring "salvation in the Hereafter" to the forefront as the

“central issue.” Instead, throughout these proceedings, Islam was presented as a way to create a better citizenry, a better society, and a better state.

In this example, you can clearly see that prayer, fasting, heaven, and hell are all part of this religious framework, but due to a shift in ideological perspective, these elements no longer hold their original significance. The religion of God has, in a sense, become foreign within its own structure.

Some people might not outright reject my observations, but they may feel there is significant “exaggeration” in them. They might doubt that the image before them is truly their own, since it looks so alarming and distorted. If that’s the case, I would compare their situation to someone who doesn’t understand the science behind an iceberg. If a thousand-foot iceberg were lifted from the ocean and placed in front of them, they might find it hard to believe that this huge mass of ice is the same as the one they saw before, with only a hundred feet visible above the surface.

This doubt mainly arises because, when a person looks at the literature of this interpretation and the lives of its followers, they see that outwardly, everything seems to align with what the Quran and Hadith teach. So, they are confused about what flaw in this interpretation might justify such harsh criticism. However, this “everything” that you see within its framework is not

truly an essential part of it. Most of its elements were not adopted consciously; rather, they have entered it mechanically under the influence of tradition.

In reality, not everything a person does is driven by conscious awareness. Much of human action originates from suppressed, subconscious motives. Because we hold certain beliefs at the conscious level, we tend to attribute our entire lives to that ideology. We assume that everything we do is motivated by this ideology, but if we were to conduct a psychological analysis, we would find that a large part of our actions and beliefs is not directly connected to our conscious thoughts or decisions. Instead, they are simply expressions of deep-rooted, hidden influences.

The subconscious is like the huge part of an iceberg hidden below the surface of the ocean. Trying to understand yourself only through conscious thoughts, without considering this subconscious part, is as wrong as trying to judge how big an iceberg is by only looking at what is visible outside the water.

A further example will help clarify this. If you study the great thinkers and scientists who emerged in Europe between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, you will find that most of them believed in a single Creator. From Descartes to Newton, all acknowledged the existence of God. Even Darwin's

famous book *Origin of Species*, published in the mid-nineteenth century, which sparked intense debate and criticism within religious circles, contains multiple references to a Creator. He concludes his book with the words: “There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been evolved.” (*The Origin of Species*, pp. 528-529)

Yet, the next generation of these scientists became either atheistic or, at the very least, skeptical of God. Why did this happen? After examining this, we conclude that the scientific theories developed by these scientists carried within them an inherent spirit that shaped the mindset of later generations. The way scientists approached the study of the universe suggested they intended to explain the cosmos without calling upon God. In other words, they were, at their core, secular thinkers. When we see acknowledgments of God in their statements or writings, it was not from clear, conscious awareness but rather because of the religious environment in which they were raised and the long history of Christianity they were part of. This environment naturally added certain influences to their thinking.

Their true intellectual pursuit aimed to uncover the mysteries of the universe without including the concept of God. However, due to subconscious impressions formed by their environment, they could not explicitly deny God's existence. The idea of God was like a piece of furniture in their household—present but often unnoticed by the inhabitants. God was not a genuine part of their intellectual lives but rather a traditional fixture. As these historical influences faded in later generations, open deniers of God began to emerge, and the very findings of scientists who once believed in God were used as evidence to argue that there is no God—that the universe operates solely according to natural laws.

If someone now quotes isolated statements from these early scientists to argue that their thinking was not opposed to belief in God, it would be naive.

The same situation will happen among Muslims. Since Islam has an authentic book and a history lasting over a thousand years, any movement claiming to be in the name of Islam, even if flawed from the start, will likely include elements that have always been linked to Islam and are now seen as part of it. As a result, people influenced by such a movement will bring along the beliefs and customs they have inherited from their family and community. These beliefs, deeply rooted in their subconscious over the years, are so part of

them that even if they wanted to let go of them, they probably couldn't.

This phenomenon applies not only to the visible beliefs still present in their lives but also to those that might not be outwardly expressed yet are stored in their memory. When individuals are influenced by a movement that claims to revive Islam, all those previous feelings about Islam, which were buried in their subconscious, will resurface. Along with adopting the specific program of the movement, they will also naturally accept aspects of Islam that the movement did not explicitly promote but which their subconscious tells them are necessary to be a Muslim.

This is why, for example, a secular-minded young person in Egypt influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood does not necessarily feel compelled to grow a beard or avoid photography. In contrast, a similarly secular-minded young person in India, influenced by an equivalent movement, might grow a beard and even tear up their photographs. This difference between Egypt and India arises from the differences in the form of Islam traditionally practiced in each country.

When something stems from subconscious emotions, it does not genuinely become part of one's life or conscious understanding. Instead, it may only show up on paper or in outward behavior. Observers can easily see that the version of Islam a person practices

through their specific movement reflects their true understanding of Islam, while other aspects of Islam that appear alongside are simply formal or traditional attachments, not part of their consciously chosen Islam. Let's understand this through a few examples:

1. At a public event to introduce your movement, you prepare an "opening speech" that begins by stating that the movement's three main principles are God, the Hereafter, and Prophethood. However, with the phrase, "the root cause of all the corruption in the world is a departure from these fundamental truths," the speech diverges, and for the next forty pages, the focus shifts entirely to national issues. It makes no mention of an additional concern after death that people should fear. Yet, as the speech ends, the traditional mindset pushes for the inclusion of a phrase like, "The sole purpose of a believer is to attain the pleasure of God and success in the Hereafter." There is no logical flaw in this lengthy presentation, as it links success in both this world and the Hereafter to Islam. However, after reading the entire speech, anyone can see what the speaker is truly warning about and what they prioritize. Are they more worried about linguistic disputes and economic issues, or are they imagining the angel Israfil standing ready

with the trumpet, waiting for the command to blow and overturn the world?

2. A “distinguished scholar of Islam” fills thousands of pages in the effort to present Islam. His works are full of critique and investigation, high-level oratory, and powerful language. However, his writings lack signs of genuine sincerity; his words do not carry the heat of a true inner fire. His works lack glimpses of truth that someone close to divine secrets would see and share with others. Nowhere in his lines do we see tears blur the ink. He discusses dozens of philosophies around prayer and fasting, but from what he writes, it’s clear that he views these acts of worship as merely external practices. The prayer that overwhelms a person, turning into a whispered conversation and encounter with God, still escapes him. He writes on topics like connection with God and the Hereafter, yet his sentences lack the restlessness that would show he is speaking from the depths of a transformative experience. Remove some of the literary flourishes, and it becomes clear that this isn’t a discourse on spiritual invitation and purification, but a dry treatise on the philosophy of *Shariah*, offering a superficial explanation of Islamic teachings based on familiar rules.

3. Determining the truth of something solely because ‘everything’ appears listed is a flawed approach. Often, ideas linked to a certain ideology are claimed by people either knowingly or unknowingly without truly belonging to that ideology. Sometimes, even when they are headed in a completely different direction, a person adds something to their list just to reassure themselves they are not straying. For example, regarding China’s aggression against India in late 1962, *Jamaat-e-Islami* Hind posted a poster titled “Protect Freedom,” calling for a united response to this challenge. One reason mentioned in the poster was that China “wants to make the servants of Allah into its own slaves.”

It’s clear that the phrase about “making the servants of Allah into its own slaves” has no real connection with the protest against Chinese aggression, since, according to *Jamaat-e-Islami*’s stated ideology, the same offense is being committed by the very government in whose favor this protest was held. So, what sense does it make to support one guilty party while opposing another? In reality, this phrase was included simply to give a sense of satisfaction—that their actions were fully in line with their purpose, not something separate from it.

The truth is that, from a psychological perspective, what matters is not what elements a person includes in their list, but what they truly value. Many reasons might exist for including something in a list, but a person's genuine focus rarely errs; it immediately reveals the individual's core personality and the worldview they have truly adopted.

You will find many Muslims who see themselves as completely religious. You would never be able to convince them that their Islam is lacking. Still, when we look at how they live, we notice that worldly affairs are always on their mind; even small disruptions in these matters cause them great distress. But when it comes to Islam and the Hereafter, they are content with just fulfilling the obligatory duties, and their faith doesn't push them to seek more. This shows that their Islam is truly incomplete—their real devotion is to material things, not to the Hereafter.

The same issue is clear in this interpretation. On the surface, it appears to cover everything, from changing the world to changing the self. But when we see that all the energy is focused on outer transformation while inner transformation is mostly seen as just obligatory duties, the truth of this 'comprehensive list' becomes obvious. Here are a few examples to illustrate this point.

1. When someone speaks under the banner of an “Islamic revolution,” it quickly becomes clear to him that just following the law isn’t enough to earn a reward for this effort. He says: God and His Messenger have prescribed the minimum rights of God upon you, but no limit has been set for the maximum. Therefore, you should participate with the spirit of always striving to do more. This is a great mission, for which you must go “beyond the bare requirements of duty.” You should “give preference to God’s work over your personal affairs” and “develop within yourself the spirit of financial and physical sacrifice.” He emphasizes that, to succeed in this work, you must abandon all pursuits and interests that take your time and attention away from this cause, and—aside from unavoidable economic needs—dedicate every moment of your time to it.

Yet the very next day, when someone stresses the need for a simple life as part of self-reform, he dismisses the suggestion as a “demand for ostentatious poverty,” and says:

“Let me assure you that neither the Companions nor the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ ever tried to make their lives seem more ascetic than they were, nor did they intentionally lower their

standards for clothing, housing, and food simply to be admired for their poverty. They all led naturally simple and balanced lives, guided by the principle of avoiding what is forbidden by *Shariah*, keeping life within permissible limits, earning lawful sustenance, and remaining firm on the path of God—whether that involved enduring hardship or being blessed with God’s bounty. Deliberately wearing poor clothing when good clothing is available through lawful means, or eating inferior food when quality food is accessible through lawful ways, was not their approach. Among them, those who could earn lawful wealth while striving in the path of God would eat well, dress well, and live in well-built houses. The Prophet ﷺ never approved of wealthy individuals pretending to be poor; in fact, he told them that Allah loves to see the signs of His blessings on His servants through their clothing, food, and transportation.”

Consider this: in order to play one’s full part in the “lesser *jihad*,” the need for a certain principle was felt with great intensity—yet that very need was forgotten when it came to the “greater *jihad*.”¹⁰ (the inner struggle).

10. After returning to Madinah from a battle, the Prophet told his companions, “We have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater

In the struggle in God's path that takes place in the political field, success was seen to require going beyond the legal limits of what is prohibited and permissible, and adopting the path of sacrifice. But in the struggle in God's path that takes place within the self, merely avoiding prohibitions was regarded as sufficient.

What was considered so essential in the campaign for reforming society was deemed unnecessary in the campaign for reforming the self. In the first case, apart from unavoidable economic needs, there appeared no hope of attaining anything else; but in the second case, worldly prosperity was also secured in full measure. To the extent that, in order to validate this perspective, you even went so far as to wrongly pull the Messenger of God to your side—whereas it is an established fact that the Messenger of God deliberately chose for himself a simple and austere life. This fact is so evident that it requires no proof. Nevertheless, I will cite a brief reference below:

“The Prophet ﷺ was the most abstinent of all people in regard to worldly possessions, despite having full ability to acquire them.” (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol. 5, p. 327)

In other words, although the Prophet ﷺ had the means

jihad.” (*Tareekh Baghdad* by Al-Khateeb, Hadith No. 7297)

and power to obtain the comforts of this world, he chose instead to renounce them more than anyone else.

2. During the Makkan period, the Companions faced great difficulties and hardships. Explaining the reason for these trials, someone said, “These trials were necessary because, without them, they could not develop the deep commitment to the cause that a true believer needs. Enduring hardships for the sake of Islam cultivated the correct Islamic mindset, built a pure Islamic character, and continually deepened their sincerity in worship. This intense training through suffering naturally nurtured the Islamic spirit within them. When a person rises for a cause and goes through struggle, hardship, suffering, hunger, exile, and other tribulations, the core of that cause fully takes over their heart and soul, transforming their entire personality into a reflection of that purpose.”

However, when you tell these individuals that a believer should not seek comfort in worldly life because it weakens one’s sense of the Hereafter, they respond by saying:

“Perhaps you think that God’s blessings¹¹ are

11. The perspective given to us regarding worldly blessings is that we should regard them as means of sustenance (provision for temporary residence”) (Quran, 4:5). It does not befit a believer to view them

reserved only for those who busy themselves with their own affairs instead of serving His cause—while those who dedicate themselves to God’s work are undeserving of His bounty. Or perhaps your mind is so shaped by the image of monks and ascetics that you regard piety and monasticism as inseparable. That is why a devout believer who eats and drinks in the normal way appears to you as an anomaly.”

Consider this: you understand that a longing for something can only develop in the heart of someone who has endured hardship for it—at least from a political and revolutionary point of view. However, you did not see the same thing from another perspective: that the desire for the Hereafter can only grow in the heart of someone who has sacrificed worldly pleasures for it. To adopt a revolutionary mindset, it was necessary to endure hardship for the revolution’s sake. But to adopt the longing for the Hereafter, you didn’t feel the same need—that a person must go through trials endured for the sake of the next life. What was regarded as so important for worldly goals became, in the case of the Hereafter, a subject of ridicule.

3. A person might have such sharp political instincts

as “blessings,” for a true believer’s real blessings are God and His paradise (Quran, 20:131).

that he declares any employment under a “non-divine system of governance” to be illegal, and even issues a ruling that: “There is no difference between one part of a non-divine system of obedience and another. Those parts which seem innocent are just as impure as the rest.”

Yet when it comes to using worldly conveniences, he reasons in this way:

“In my view, every lawful facility that helps a person perform religious work better and more effectively is not only permissible but also preferable to use. Just consider: if someone can travel comfortably in second class and start his work right after arriving the next day, why should he endure a sleepless night in third class and then spend the next day recovering from fatigue instead of working? If, in the heat, he can use an electric fan to do more mental work, why should he sweat profusely and waste a large portion of his energy? Should he abandon these facilities just because they are blessings from God enjoyed by those who serve Satan, not by those who serve God?”

Consider this: the same person who struggled to accept conveniences under an opposing political system became indifferent when seeking comforts in worldly life. However, if working for a non-Islamic

government is seen as collusion with false politics, then indulging in worldly luxuries is no different from cooperating with one's lower self. He argues that such comforts help a person to perform religious duties more effectively and in greater measure. But in reality, what really matters for religious work is a sincere longing of the heart—and that longing begins to fade once layers of comfort cover it.

It must be clarified that there is a difference between necessity and comfort. For religious necessity, anything may be used, and in that case it is the better option. But for physical comfort, nothing can be considered better, even though legally all such things are entirely permitted. At this point, I will quote a passage from Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al Ghazali (1058–1111 CE), one of the most influential Muslim scholars:

One must recognize that a person cannot reach Allah, the Exalted, except by turning away from desires, restraining oneself from pleasures, limiting them to necessities, and devoting oneself wholly to Allah in every movement and stillness. (*Ihya Ulum al Deen*, vol. 1, p. 265)

Worldly pleasures are indeed permissible, but overindulgence in them risks dulling one's finer sensitivities, leaving the soul without a strong desire for the Hereafter. Such a person may still engage in

Islamic work, but it would be purely an intellectual pursuit, lacking genuine heartfelt commitment, much like many orientalists who study external subjects without any personal attachment.

To serve faith, we need someone who isn't satisfied even in luxury, finds air travel uncomfortable, and loses peace when surrounded by comforts that ordinary people enjoy.

There are many such examples all around us. If you observe carefully, you can see what people have already gained and what they still lack. However, despite these obvious facts, if you claim, "I have not made any alteration in the religion; I only wish to establish it in its highest and most complete form," then, in my opinion, such a claim holds no weight.

For example, a Muslim who understands the hadith of the Messenger—"Whoever says *La ilaha illa Allah* shall enter Paradise" (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 2638)—as guaranteeing Paradise for anyone who utters the testimony, may not necessarily reject the commands of Islam. Yet it is certain that his motivation to act upon those commands will be weakened.

CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF RELIGION

The commands of religion are similar in form, but they don't apply to us in the same way. For example, the Quran commands: "Establish prayer" and also commands: "Give *zakat*." On the surface, both are expressed as imperatives, yet our relationship to each is different. The obligation to pray is absolute; it applies to every believer at all times. However, the obligation to give *zakat* depends on possessing the minimum required wealth (*nisaab*). A person who does not have that amount is not required—neither to pay *zakat* nor to try to acquire wealth just to fulfill this duty.

The flaw in the ideology being discussed is that it fails to recognize the different relationships between *Shariah* (divine law) and *mashru' lahu* (the person for whom the law is legislated). It assumes a uniform relationship between us and all religious commandments, reducing all obligations to a single duty: to establish and practice Islam as a complete way of life. However, within the

“Islamic way of life,” there are commands that are absolutely required and others that depend on specific circumstances. The obligation of any command applies to us only in the way it was originally intended. If the specific condition exists, then it is obligatory; if not, we are not obligated, nor should we try to put ourselves in circumstances that make it mandatory.

This is why, even though the list of religious duties covers every part of life, the way this thinking relates to those commands—and how it defines the Islamic mission—is not actually derived from any specific verse of the Quran. The information I’ve presented in the previous pages has already made this point clear.

Let me clarify how we should properly see our relationship to various religious commands:

From the Quran it is clear that the central thing God requires from His servants is worship:

“I created the jinn and humankind only so that they might worship Me.” (51:56)

This idea is mentioned multiple times throughout the Quran. For example:

“O people, worship your Lord.” (2:21)

“Worship your Lord until certainty comes to you.” (15:99)

“We sent no messenger before you without revealing to him that there is no god but Me, so worship Me.” (21:25)

These verses state that the very purpose of human creation and its primary responsibility is to worship God. In these verses, the purpose of human creation and his responsibility is explained as worshipping God. The literal meaning of ‘*ibadah* is to bow down and humble oneself before another: *asl al-‘ubudiyah al-khudu’ wa-al-tadhallul* (*Lisan al-‘Arab*, Vol. 3, p. 271). Likewise, *asl al-‘ubudiyah al-khudu’ wa-al-dhull* (*al-Sihah* by al-Jawhari, Vol. 2, p. 503), that is, the essence of worship is submission and humility.

The literal sense of ‘*ibadah* is the same as its legal or religious sense. Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi wrote: *al-‘ibadah: al-tadhallul, qalahu al-jumhur* (*Al-Bahr al-Muheet*, vol. 1, p. 41). Worship is (defined as) humility; this was said by the majority of scholars.

For this reason, in the Quran the opposite of worship is expressed with the word *istikbar* (arrogance): *inna alladhina yastakbiruna ‘an ‘ibadati sayadkhuluna jahannama dakhirin* (40:60)—“Those who act arrogantly, turning away from My worship, will enter Hell humiliated.”

Here we cite the opinions of some scholars and commentators regarding worship:

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas (RA): *iybaka na‘budu—ya‘ni iybaka nuwahhidu wa-nakhafu wa-narju rabbana la ghayrak*

(*Tafsir al-Tabari*, Vol. 1, p. 157). Meaning: “We worship You”—that is, we affirm Your oneness, we fear only You, we place our hopes only in You. O Lord, in these matters we associate no one else with You.

Fakhr al-Deen al-Razi: *al-‘ibadah ‘ibarah ‘ani al-fi ‘l al-mushtamil ‘ala nihayat al-ta‘zim, wa-nihayat al-ta‘zim la taliq illa biman yasduru ‘anhu nihayat al-in‘am* (*Tafsir al-Razi*, Vol. 20, p. 321). Meaning: Worship is an act that embodies the utmost reverence, and such reverence is only appropriate for one from whom the utmost beneficence has come.

‘Ala’ al-Deen al-Baghdadi: *al-‘ibadah aqsa ghayat al-khudu’ wa-al-tadhallul, wa-summiya al-‘abdu ‘abdan li-dhillatihi wa-inqiyadihi* (*Tafsir al-Khazin*, Vol. 1, p. 20). Meaning: Worship represents the greatest level of submission and humility. A slave is called ‘abd because of their low status and full obedience.

Nizam al-Deen al-Qummi al-Nisaburi: *inna al-‘ibadah ‘ibarah ‘an nihayat al-ta‘zim fa-la taliq illa li-man sadara minhu ghayat al-in‘am wa-huwa Allah ta‘ala* (*Tafsir al-Nisaburi*, Ghara’ib al-Quran, Vol. 1, p. 103). Meaning: Worship is the highest reverence, and it is fitting only for the One from whom the greatest blessings come—namely, God Almighty.

Qadi al-Baydawi: *wa-al-‘ibadah aqsa ghayat al-khudu’ wa-al-tadhallul, wa-li-dhalika la tusta‘malu illa fi al-khudu’*

li-llah ta'ala (*Tafsir al-Baydawi*, Vol. 1, p. 29). Meaning: Worship is the highest form of submission and humility. Because of this, the term is used exclusively for submission to God.

Abu al-Su'ud: *al-'ibadah aqsa ghayat al-tadhallul wa-al-khudu'* (*Tafsir Abi al-Su'ud*, Vol. 1, p. 16). Meaning: Worship represents the ultimate level of humility and submission.

Alusi al-Baghdadi: *al-'ibadah a'la maratib al-khudu'*, *wala yajuzu shar'an wa-la 'aqlan fi 'luha illa li-llah ta'ala, li-annah al-mustahiqqu li-dhalika li-kawnihi muwliyan li-a'zam al-ni'am mina al-hayat wa-al-wujud wa-tawabi 'ihima* (*Ruh al-Ma'ani*, Vol. 1, p. 89). Meaning: worship is the highest form of humility and submission, and it is not permissible—either in the *Shariah* or in reason—to direct it to anyone other than God, because as the greatest Benefactor, He alone truly deserves it.

Shaykh 'Ali al-Maha'imi: *al-'ibadah tadhallul li-ghayr 'an ikhtiyar li-ghayat ta'zimih* (*Tafsir al-Maha'imi*, Vol. 1, p. 24). Meaning: Worship is to humble oneself by choice before another in order to honor him greatly.

Although the essential meaning of *'ibadah* is humility and submission, when used in relation to God it also includes love—for a believer's humility before God cannot exist without it. Hence scholars often define Islamic worship as combining both.

Ibn Kathir writes: *al-‘ibadah fi al-lughah min al-dhull, yuqal: tariq mu‘abbad, wa-ba‘ir mu‘abbad, ay mudhalla, wa-fi al-shar‘ ‘ibarah ‘amma yajma‘u kamal al-mahabbah wa-al-khudu‘ wa-al-khawf* (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 1, p. 134).

Meaning: The linguistic sense of *‘ibadah* is lowliness. Thus one says *tariq mu‘abbad* (a road made smooth) or *ba‘ir mu‘abbad* (a tamed camel), both implying subjugation. In the *Shariah*, it refers to that which combines perfect love, humility, and fear.

Ibn Taymiyyah states: *‘wa-lafz al-‘ubudiyyah yatadamman kamal al-dhull wa-kamal al-hubb* (*al-Fatawa al-Kubra*, Vol. 5, p. 196). Meaning: The word *‘ubudiyyah* signifies both perfect humility and perfect love.

Ibn al-Qayyim writes: *al-‘ibadah tajma‘u aslayn: ghayat al-hubb bi-ghayat al-dhull wa-al-khudu‘* (*Madarij al-Salikeen*, Vol. 1, p. 115). Meaning: Worship consists of two elements: utmost love along with utmost humility and submission.

The core of worship is to completely humble oneself before God. This is the message the Quran conveys through words like *khashyah* (awe), *tadarru‘* (earnest supplication), *ikhbat* (devotion), *inabah* (turning back), *khushu‘* (humble submission), *khudu‘* (bowing low), and *qunut* (obedient devotion). To worship God means to surrender oneself fully before Him.

The One before whom this surrender occurs is not a

tyrant or oppressor, but the most compassionate Being, whose blessings upon us are boundless. That is why this expression of humility naturally carries the essence of love. The relationship between the servant and God is one of profound love combined with deep humility. Even in those moments when the servant trembles in fear, when just the thought of God brings tears to the eyes, his innermost feelings remain wholeheartedly dedicated to Him. With ardent longing, he turns toward God, finding himself enveloped in the highest state of tender love—Those who believe love God most. (Quran, 2:165)

The humility before God is undoubtedly based on a deep fear of Him, but this fear isn't like the reaction to something frightening. It is an emotion that can't be easily summed up in a single word. It's a mix of great hope and strong concern, where the believer can never decide which one comes first. It is a state of love and fear in which a person runs toward the very One they fear; from the One they feel could take away from them, they also hope to receive. It is a restlessness that is complete reassurance, and a reassurance that is complete restlessness.

This explanation shows that *'ibadah* (worship), in its true essence, is an inner, existential reality rather than an external act. In their ultimate experience, a

human being is a living, conscious entity; therefore, the highest form of worship for humans must be an inner, existential reality, not just an external act. That is why the Quran presents *taqwa* (God-consciousness) as the ultimate result of worship: People, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, so that you may become righteous. (Quran, 2:21)

In its outward form, worship is a life of *taqwa*, or God-consciousness. In its deeper essence, worship is a strong awareness of God and a close connection with Him, where the servant becomes so focused on their Lord that they feel a deep sense of divine presence.

“The essence of *ihsan* (excellence in worship) is expressed in the words of the Prophet as follows: “Worship Allah as though you see Him.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 50)

According to this Prophetic teaching, the highest form of worship is when a person becomes so absorbed in the remembrance and awareness of God that they feel as if they are in His presence, as if they are seeing Him. This state of closeness is the ultimate level of worship. All acts of worship, known as *qurbat* (acts of closeness), *manasik* (rituals), or *marasim al-'ubudiyyah* (rituals of servitude), are ways to attain this state and are expressions of that worship, as established by God Himself.

If a person claims to worship God without these

manifestations, or outside of them, their claim is false, because true worship cannot exist within a person without them, for genuine worship cannot exist without them. Although the essence of a human being lies in a spirit that we cannot see, it is equally true that in this world, the existence of a human being cannot be conceived without the human body.

Although the word ‘*ibadah* (worship) broadly covers the entire *Shariah*—as everything a servant does to please God and follow His commands is driven by the spirit of servitude—‘*ibadah* specifically refers to the unique act that exists only between the servant and God. How a person behaves with other people is the outcome of worship, whereas the act between God and a human being is worship in itself. For example, when a person prays, they are directly engaged in worship, bowing in submission to God without any intermediary. On the other hand, in ethical behavior and social interactions, when a person follows God’s commands, they are fulfilling the duties that come with their servitude to others. These duties are obligatory just like specific acts of worship, but it’s important to understand the difference in nature between the two, as this distinction is essential for a proper understanding of religion. Requirements are always sought in relation to something else, whereas the true reality is sought in itself.

For example, if it is said that “being a Muslim requires a person to distribute inheritance according to God’s law,” it does not mean that everyone must actively seek to acquire property to fulfill the laws of inheritance. Instead, it means that if a Muslim inherits an estate, their faith and Islam require them to manage it according to those laws. This obligation depends on acquiring property and does not apply universally to everyone.

This understanding of worship clarifies that love and fear of God are not merely “motivations” in practical life; they are the true goals we are to achieve in this world. The essence of all actions and practices is to create in us the spiritual wealth that scholars describe as *wusul ila Allah* (attaining closeness to Allah) and *ta’alluq bi Allah* (connection with Allah). In other words, the relationship between us and God is not just a theoretical mental concept (i.e., that performing certain acts will please God in the heavens), but a direct connection.

Outwardly, a servant’s actions may seem like obedience to commands, but deep down, their goal is to elevate themselves to a place where they can connect with God—where they can whisper to their Lord, cry, and plead before Him, and cling to Him with passionate devotion. This sense of placing oneself at the feet of one’s Lord is the highest truth of religion in this

world. All commands and manners serve to guide the servant to this ultimate level. Whoever attains this connection with their Lord in this life will also find their Lord in the Hereafter, while those who miss it here will also be deprived of the blessing of meeting their Lord in the Hereafter.

Let there be no misunderstanding that I am endorsing the view held by certain schools of thought which claim that human perfection in this world lies in merging with God or achieving a direct vision of Him. Some have even idealized the event of the *Mi'raj* (ascension of the Prophet) as a goal to strive for. These people are indeed under a significant misconception. They regard closeness to God as a literal, physical reality, whereas it is only a spiritual or sensory experience in this life. True closeness to God, to the extent possible for a servant, can only be achieved in the Hereafter. However, this closeness will be granted to those who have become acquainted with this state in this world. The difference between the two is that the closeness we experience in this world is sensory, whereas the closeness in the Hereafter will be a real, tangible experience.

From this perspective, defining the ultimate goal of the faithful as—“Our purpose is to establish the system of truth in the world”—is incorrect. While it contains some truth, it is an inaccurate representation

because it suggests that the ultimate reality of faith is an external perception. In reality, the ultimate reality of faith is an inner realization. The highest achievement in this worldly life is to recognize God as our true Lord and to establish a sensory connection with Him. It is not necessarily about building a social structure or aiming to establish one. However, when circumstances require, believers must work toward such goals, though their importance is secondary rather than primary.

REQUIREMENTS OF WORSHIP

What Allah primarily and fundamentally requires from humans is that they humble themselves before Him, and this is the essence of worship (*'ibadah*). However, a person was not created in a vacuum but placed in a world filled with diverse situations. Therefore, it is necessary for a worshiper's sense of servitude (*'ubdiyyah*) to be expressed in all aspects of life within the material world. This expression of worship takes several forms:

- 1. Obedience in Daily Life:** One aspect of worship stems from external circumstances. Whenever a person faces a choice in life between following the path of God, their own self, or other false deities, their sense of service compels them to abandon all other options and select the one prescribed by their Lord. The God they devote themselves to should also be the one they demonstrate obedience to in practice. This form of worship, influenced by circumstances, is also known as "obedience." This obedience applies at home, in the workplace, in

the marketplace, in parliament, and in all other areas of daily life.

2. **Calling Others to Worship:** The second aspect is that which arises in relation to other human beings. All those people who live on this earth yet remain unaware of their Lord—and because of this unawareness are moving toward permanent failure in the Hereafter—create a serious concern in the heart of the believer. This realization compels him to strive to guide them as well to the path of God’s worship that he himself has chosen. This is the form of worship that manifests itself in relation to other human beings, and its other name is *shahada* (bearing witness) or *tabligh* (conveying the message of God).
3. **Community within the Muslim *Ummah*:** For those who have already embraced faith, Allah wants them to build a strong community with mutual support and advice. The Quran calls this *tawasi bil-haqq* (advising each other to truth) and *tawasi bis-sabr* (advising each other to patience). Another way to describe this is *amr bil-ma‘ruf* (enjoining good) and *nahi ‘anil-munkar* (forbidding evil). This represents the third form of a life of worship, relevant within the community of worshipers themselves.

- 4. Supporting the Religion of God:** When God's religion faces any form of threat, worship involves dedicating oneself to its protection. Although this is not a separate requirement, we highlight it under a distinct heading to emphasize its particular importance.

Let us understand each forms of worship mentioned above one by one in the next pages.

The Essence of Obedience

Now consider the first expression of worship: obedience. Obedience and worship are not two entirely separate things. Rather, this is an analytical distinction, meant to clarify the difference between two types of commands. In the same way, jurists classify certain rulings as *al-ahkam al-taabbudiyya* (devotional rulings) in order to distinguish them from rulings related to ethics and social dealings. Yet in truth, ethics and social dealings are also, in a sense, acts of worship and are not separate from it.

Obedience is categorized into two primary types: individual and collective. Individual Obedience refers to obeying God in matters related to a person's private life. It includes all commands related to ethics and social dealings. Everything that a person can do on their own and every decision they make in personal

matters, if they follow divine guidance, constitutes individual obedience. It is impermissible for a Muslim to deviate from a command of God in their personal matters if they know it applies to them and are able to fulfill it. The Quran says:

“It is not fitting for a believing man or woman to exercise any choice in his or her own affairs once God and His Messenger have reached a decision upon them. Anyone who disobeys God and His Messenger is in manifest error. (Quran, 33:36)

This individual obedience is a mandatory right that Allah has over every person. No one can be considered a true servant in God’s sight if they do not follow the commands given to them by God in their daily life, according to their circumstances and responsibilities. If *‘ibadah* (worship) reflects a person’s inner submission, *ita‘ah* (obedience) is about surrendering one’s outward actions to God. A believer’s external life should be completely aligned with God’s will. It is crucial for every believing man and woman, in all aspects of their lives, to fully obey God, even in simple matters like eating and drinking, by adhering to His commands. There is a verse in the Quran: “O you who have believed, eat from the good things which We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is [indeed] Him that you worship.” (2:172)

The set of commandments I have grouped under the title “obedience” includes a second category, which we can call collective commandments. These are commands whose enforcement does not rely solely on an individual’s will; they can only be carried out when the entire society is ready to support them. This is why such commandments were revealed only after believers had established a political organization among themselves, giving them the power to enforce social laws with authority. The collective commandments of *Shariah* are aimed at an empowered Muslim society, not isolated individual believers.

Throughout the history of the Children of Israel, we see that while they were in Egypt, they were not given the legal commandments of the Torah. However, once they left Egypt and became a free and empowered community, Allah immediately sent down the laws. The same pattern was followed in Arabia. In Makkah, only the parts of *Shariah* that were individually required of each believer and had to be maintained under all circumstances were revealed initially. The rest of the *Shariah* was revealed gradually as circumstances permitted. These commandments were given later, once the believers had gained control over a land.

The order in which the commandments were revealed shows that, under normal circumstances, the essential part of faith for believers is limited to what was revealed

before the period of political authority. Beyond this, following additional commandments becomes mandatory only when they have gained power and authority, which is necessary to enforce these laws.

After reading my statements, a gentleman responded with strong criticism, stating:

“We cannot compare ourselves to the Muslims of the Makkan period. If a Muslim in Makkah engaged in usury, married a polytheist, did not stone an adulterer, or did not cut off the hand of a thief, they would not be blamed because no command on these matters had yet been revealed. Today, however, the situation is completely different. It is no longer feasible for someone to dismiss issues like usury, gambling, alcohol, or marriage with polytheists by labelling them as Madinan commandments. Nor can they justify ignoring the collective commandments of religion by citing a lack of practical implementation.”

My response is that this criticism merges two different types of commandments, which causes a misunderstanding.

Regarding the personal prohibitions of usury, gambling, and alcohol, the fact that these prohibitions were revealed in their complete form in Madinah

does not mean they were irrelevant in Makkah or similar circumstances. Instead, this gradual revelation was due to the wisdom of *tadreej fil-ahkam* (gradual implementation of commandments), as explained in the hadith of *Sahih al-Bukhari* (Hadith No. 4993), narrated by Aisha (R.A.), the wife of the Prophet ﷺ and one of the foremost scholars among the early Muslims. Had this gradual approach not been necessary, these commands would have been fully revealed in Makkah because their fulfillment does not require authority; they are individually binding on every Muslim.

In contrast, for commands such as “whip the adulterer” or “cut off the hand of the thief,” having authority is crucial for their enforcement. These commands could only be issued and carried out in Madinah, where Muslims had established authority. Such commands were never given to any community before they gained authority, nor can they be enforced without such authority.

In other words, the commandments of the first type were revealed in Madinah simply because of the sequence of events (afterward), while the revelation of political and social commands in Madinah indicates that they were dependent on Muslims attaining authority.

The difference between the two types of commandments is clearer because the first type

started to be revealed before the period of authority and was later completed, while the second type was not revealed until the believers achieved independence and authority.

The gradual unveiling of *Shariah* commandments, aligned with their expanding practical scope, clearly shows that these commandments are not always obligatory but depend on specific circumstances. Their relevance is always based on the actual conditions of the individual or group they are meant for. In practice, commandments related to social and community issues are only required to be fulfilled by a group of believers who can enforce them. Believers with limited authority are not commanded to impose religious laws on society or the nation.

The fulfillment of commandments is a practical requirement, and a practical requirement can only be enforced on those who have already committed to it and to the extent that it is possible for them. *Shariah's* clear principle, as mentioned in the Quran, is:

“Allah does not burden a soul beyond its capacity.” (Quran, 2:286)

Therefore, believers cannot be given commandments they are unable to fulfill. If someone explains the details of religious commandments and claims that believers

are always responsible for following the entire list of these commandments while living on earth, it would be as unreasonable as someone referring to *zakat* laws and saying that every Muslim is responsible for acquiring wealth in all categories so they can meet all the *zakat* requirements.

It becomes clear that the detailed requirements of religion are not universally obligatory but depend on circumstances. As the influence of believers increases, so do the demands of religion. When an individual becomes a believer, only the personal aspects of faith are required of them, and their personal life becomes the arena where they enact divine guidance. When believers form a family or small group, then the family or group will be guided according to its sphere of influence. When believers reach the status of an empowered society, then the entire society is obligated to fully follow all commandments from God related to communal matters.

Since societal implementation is impossible without authority, when a society of believers is addressed by these commandments, it means they must establish political leadership over themselves. Under this leadership, they should organize their collective life and enforce all the laws of *Shariah*.

Some people argue that “seeking power directly is not a religious duty for the followers of Islam. Rather, power

is a reward granted by Allah to the believers as a result of their sincere adherence to religion.” Supporters of this interpretation strongly criticize this view. They list Islam’s political and social commandments and question how these could be fulfilled if gaining government power were not essential. However, both sides are mistaken in this debate.

The correct understanding is that it is the duty of an independent Muslim society to establish a political system based on Islam among themselves, as *Shariah* cannot be implemented on a societal level without such a system. But where Muslims are not in such a position, the program that Islam gives them for their external life is not the establishment of political leadership, but calling people to awareness of God’s creation plan and giving glad tidings. In carrying out this mission, whatever stages may arise, they should remain fully steadfast in it.

In the first case, establishing a government is the duty of the believers. In the second case, gaining government is a reward from God.

The issue of appointing an *imam* (a ruler or head of state) relates to this final situation, which is unanimously considered obligatory. For example, here are a few references:

Nasb al-imam ‘indana wajib (Sharh al-Mawaqif, al-

Jurjani, Vol. 8, p. 376). That is, it is obligatory for Muslims to appoint a ruler over themselves.

La budda lil-ummah min imamin (*Sharh al-Maqasid*, al-Taftazani, Vol. 5, p. 233). That is, the Muslim community must have a ruler.

Al-muslimuna la budda lahum min imamin (*al-'Aqa'id al-Nasafiyyah* with commentary by al-Taftazani, p. 467). That is, Muslims necessarily need a ruler.

The importance of this matter is such that no book of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) or *'aqa'id* (creed) omits mentioning it. Aside from a now-extinct sect among the Khawarij called the "Najdat," no one has disagreed on this point. Ibn Hazm, Abu Muhammad 'Ali ibn Ahmad al-Andalusi, a well-known Muslim scholar of the 11th century, writes:

Ittafaqa jami' ahl al-sunnah wa jami' al-murji'ah wa jami' al-shi'ah wa jami' al-khawarij 'ala wujub al-imamah, hasha al-najdat mina al-khawarij (*al-Fasl fi al-Milal* by Ibn Hazm, Vol. 4, p. 72).

That is, all the Sunnis, the *Murji'ah*, the *Shi'ah*, and all the *Khawarij* except the *Najdat*, a subgroup of the *Khawarij*, among them agree that the institution of leadership (*imamah*, i.e., rulership) is obligatory.

In this matter, the main difference lies in how it is perceived: *Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah* consider it obligatory based on *samaa'* (revelation), meaning a *Shariah* requirement, while some sects, such as the Zaydiyyah and the Mu'tazilah, see it as obligatory through reason (*'aql*). However, the issue of appointing a political *imam* (leader) specifically concerns a Muslim community that has a stable and independent collective identity, allowing them to establish their own political structure. There is no question of appointing a political leader for scattered and divided Muslims. In other words, this is not an absolute obligation; rather, it applies to a group of Muslims with a clear social identity. For such a group, it is necessary to organize their society based on religious principles, appoint a political leader, and live under their guidance. Political leadership reflects a group's collective authority and can only exist where that authority is present. When such authority is lacking, there can be no political leadership, nor can obligations related to it be enforced.

One might wonder how we could attain this status of a free and unified group if we don't already have it. However, this question comes from a misunderstanding. If the Islamic mission were primarily about establishing a divine government on earth, then, in all cases, the main focus would be on pursuing political change,

making it the goal of the struggle and using all possible strategies to achieve it. But, as previous discussions have shown, political change is not sought as an end in itself; rather, it falls within the broader obedience to commandments based on circumstances. Just as financial commandments do not mean that every Muslim's mission is to become wealthy to fulfill financial commandments, these laws only explain how a property owner or wealthy person should use their assets. Similarly, political commandments indicate that Muslims who hold political and governmental power should exercise it in a way that aligns with divine intent. All commands of obedience offer guidance on the proper use of authority and, therefore, only apply to individuals who genuinely hold such authority.

In normal circumstances, what is required is that the believers, by making themselves devoted and obedient to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, should launch the mission of acquainting people with Allah. They should strive to make those who are distant from God aware of His plan of creation. This mission must continue in every situation in its most effective form. That is why the Quran does not present caliphate and government as the goal of the struggle to make people aware of God's plan of creation, but rather as a promise and a reward.

Testimony to the Truth

The second aspect of this mission is *shahadah* or *dawah ilal-Islam* (calling to Islam). This involves fully delivering God's message to His servants, so no one on the Day of Judgment can claim ignorance as a defense for their misguidance, shifting responsibility for their deviation elsewhere:

They were messengers, bearing good news and giving warning, so that mankind would have no excuse before God, after the coming of the messengers.” (Quran, 4:165)

The main purpose of sending messengers is to warn people of the truth through *i'lan* (declaration) and *israr* (insistence), making them aware of God's message. This is an act of divine enlightenment and communication meant to inform people about the reason they were created and the ultimate outcome of that purpose. It reveals to them the unseen matters that will become clear when the present world ends and the unseen becomes visible.

In modern times, some people see the call to truth (*dawah*) as presenting Islam as a superior and complete way of life. While this view isn't necessarily wrong or something to be avoided, it's best used as a strategy

for theological debate and to meet apologetic needs. However, if presenting Islam as a better lifestyle becomes the main or essential approach to Islamic *dawah*, it risks losing its true meaning.

If Islam is mainly promoted as a superior way of life, then people might see *dawah* just as an effort to address worldly issues, like economic or political problems, instead of a call to avoid divine punishment in the Hereafter. The Quran describes the Prophets' message as a warning about celestial punishment rather than a solution to earthly struggles:

He lets the Spirit descend at His behest upon whichever of His servants He will, so that he may warn of the Day of Meeting.” (Quran, 40:15)

The ultimate goal of *tabligh*—the conveying of God's message—is that the *mad'u* (invitee) accepts the invitation and lives accordingly. However, from the perspective of the *da'i* (inviter), the highest form of this mission is simply to deliver the message as clearly as possible so that no one can claim ignorance or make excuses. For the Prophets, the standard for fulfilling their duty of *itmam al-hujjah* (conveying the proof) was to communicate the truth completely. They were not required to force acceptance beyond just delivering the message.

In the Quran, the nations that ignored the Prophets' message and thereby became deserving of divine punishment are those who had the message delivered to them through words and speeches. All that was needed was clear communication.

Proclamation (*sad' bil-amr*): "Proclaim openly what you have been commanded." (Quran, 15:95)

Clarification (*tabyin dhikr*): "We have sent down the Reminder to you so that you may make it clear to the people." (Quran, 16:44)

Notification (*i'dhan wahy*): "If they turn away, then say: I have made you fully aware of the message of God." (Quran, 11:109)

Conveying the message (*iblagh risalah*): "[Salih said:] O my people, I have conveyed to you the message of my Lord and given you sincere advice." (Quran, 7:79)

Recital of the Signs (*qasas ayat*): "O children of Adam, messengers will come to you from among yourselves, reciting My signs to you." (Quran, 7:35)

Recitation of the Quran (*qira'at Quran*): "We have revealed the Quran in stages so that you may recite it to the people slowly." (Quran, 17:106)

Recitation of the Book (*tilawat kitab*): "Is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book, which is recited to them?" (Quran, 29:51)

Warning and glad tidings (*indhar wa-tabshir*): "We have

sent you only as a bringer of glad tidings and a warner to all people.” (Quran, 34:28)

Call to faith (*nida' al-iman*): “Our Lord, we have heard a caller calling us to faith.” (Quran, 3:193)

Invitation to Islam (*dawah ila al-islam*): “Who is more unjust than one who fabricates lies about God while he is being invited to Islam?” (Quran, 61:7)

Conveying revelation (*tabligh ma unzila Allah*): “O Messenger, convey what has been revealed to you from your Lord.” (Quran, 5:67)

Reminder of God’s days (*tadhkir bi-ayyam Allah*): “Remind them of the days of God.” (Quran, 14:5)

The believer in God’s message begins this task with the mindset of striving to communicate the divine message to people as fully as possible, fulfilling all demands of sincerity and truth. Any incidents that happen during this mission are not about the act of *tabligh* (propagation) itself but about how those receiving the message respond and react. That’s why there is no single, definitive way that the outcome of such a mission is achieved, nor can any specific result be considered the standard of successful testimony.

The outcomes can vary significantly. It may happen that the *da'i* dies while merely calling others to the truth. It is possible that significant figures of the time embrace Islam, leading to the swift spread of God’s

religion across a region. There could be confrontation and resistance from those being addressed, who may, either alone or with the backing of power, conspire to end the movement. Allah may also cause changes in circumstances such that the initial *da'i* or their companions eventually gain control of the land's leadership. Even in the case of gaining control, various outcomes are possible: it might result in simple political dominance, or the movement might garner such widespread public support that a well-organized society emerges.

All these possibilities exist, and each scenario has examples throughout the extensive history of Islam's call to truth. However, none of them are the only or standard way to fulfill the duty of bearing witness to the truth. The core of fulfilling *shahadat al-haqq* (testimony to the truth) or invitation is simply to convey God's message thoroughly, meeting all conditions of sincere *nasihah* (advice) and in language that is a complete and clear *qawl baligh* (eloquent expression). Any obstacles encountered along the way should be met with perseverance, and the effort should continue regardless.

What happens afterward is the worldly consequence of this struggle—mainly, the various incidents that occur during the history of *dawah*, which take different forms depending on the situation. Therefore, the only requirement from the *da'i's* perspective is to deliver God's

message to the best of their ability and continue doing so throughout their life. The other aspects are primarily about the *mad'u* (invitees), not the *da'i*. Naturally, it's impossible to create a fixed list of possible outcomes, and the nature of these outcomes doesn't determine whether the *da'i*'s work was incomplete or complete.

Some people argue that prophets initially focus on societal reform before seeking political power. However, this order of priorities, in my view, merely shows that such individuals haven't gone beyond the framework set by their dominant interpretation and are trying to find comfort within this view under a new label. Among the prophets mentioned in the Quran, only three—besides the last Messenger—combined both kingship and governance: Prophet Dawud (David), Prophet Sulayman (Solomon), and Prophet Yusuf (Joseph), peace be upon them. For any of these three prophets, it is hard to prove that their rule was a response to societal needs or that they first reformed society before establishing a government.

In this context, it is worth noting that when communicating with those unfamiliar with Islam, it is not necessary to present the entirety of the religion at once. A more meaningful approach is to begin with its foundational ideas: the concept of God, the concept of Prophethood, and the concept of the

Hereafter. These principles are introduced gradually and from different perspectives, allowing space for questions and hesitations. Where doubts arise, they are thoughtfully engaged with and clarified through reasoned explanation

Once these foundations are understood and acknowledged, the specific religious practices are then introduced, such as those prescribed for the community of believers. A narration recorded in both *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* recounts that when the Prophet ﷺ sent Mu‘adh ibn Jabal to Yemen, he advised him: ‘You will meet a group of the people of the Book, so let the first thing you invite them to be the testimony that there is no god but God’ (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 1458; *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 9). Only after this principle was accepted were additional practices, such as prayer and other obligations of the *Shariah*, to be conveyed.

This is why prophets, in the early stages of their mission, would come only with basic teachings and spend a long time sharing them. Only later, as practical circumstances changed, were detailed instructions revealed. It never happened that when a prophet visited a people, he started by presenting a complete social and civil system and demanded that they establish an Islamic state to enforce all its laws in every aspect of life.

The third aspect of this mission concerns Muslims themselves. Allah wants to see a spirit within the Muslim community where members are well-wishers for one another, not living only for themselves but continually working for the guidance and well-being of those around them. Just as professionals might form a trade union based on common interests, the shared devotion among worshippers of Allah urges them to unite and dedicate themselves to each other's improvement and progress.

This command has two levels of implementation: individual and collective. Individually, it means that every Muslim should actively engage in the betterment of other Muslims, using their own abilities and capacities. As expressed in the Bible, "He became his brother's keeper" (Genesis 4:9). This concept is also mentioned in the hadith as *al-deen al-nasihah* (*Sunan Abi Dawud*, Hadith No. 4944), meaning that one part of faith is for Muslims to be well-wishers of one another. Regarding the pledge the Prophet ﷺ took from him upon accepting Islam, Hadrat Jarir ibn 'Abdullah said:

"I pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on three things: establishing prayer, giving zakat, and being sincere to every Muslim." (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 529)

In other words, this is called *Amr bil Ma'ruf* (commanding good) and *Nahi 'an al-Munkar* (forbidding evil). Imam Al-Nawawi states:

There is consensus in the Quran, Sunnah, and Ijma' (consensus of the *Ummah*) on the obligation to enjoin good and forbid evil. Religion is described as sincere counsel, and *amr bil ma'ruf* and *nahi 'an al-munkar* are essential parts of this sincere counsel. (*Sharh Sahih Muslim*, Vol. 2, p. 22)

This very act is mentioned in Chapter *Al-Asr* with the words *Tawasi bil-Haqq* (counsel each other to truth) and *Tawasi bis-sabr* (counsel each other to patience). In reference to Muslims, Allah has highlighted two significant aspects of the servant's expression of devotion by describing it as mutual advice on truth and patience. One aspect of this act is that we, who are bound by our faith and commitment to Allah, encourage others towards that which Allah desires from His servants. The second aspect involves striving to maintain adherence to Allah's will, even amidst the challenges and difficulties posed by this material world, fostering the strength to remain steadfast on His path. One of the Quran commentators explains both aspects in the following words:

“And they enjoin one another to the truth—this shows their concern for others’ well-being, meaning they advise each other about the established command that cannot be denied, whose positive effects last in both worlds. It refers to all good: faith in God Almighty and following His Books and Messengers in every belief and action. And they encourage one another to patience—that is, avoiding sins to which human nature is inclined, persevering in acts of obedience that are difficult to perform, and remaining steadfast in the trials with which God Almighty tests His worshippers.” (*Tafsir Abi al-Sa‘ud*, Vol. 9, p. 197)

Thus, *tawasi bil-haqq* means encouraging fellow believers to do good, urging one another to follow God’s commands—commands that cannot be ignored and whose benefits last in this world and the hereafter. This includes all goodness found in faith in God and in following His revealed scriptures and messengers in every aspect.

Tawasi bil-sabr means helping one another avoid sins that human nature is inclined to, encouraging each other to fulfill difficult duties, and urging perseverance through the trials that God tests His worshippers with.

After this, as he explains the wisdom of pairing truth (*haqq*) with patience (*sabr*), he writes:

“Because the first pertains to the station of worship (*‘ibadah*), which is doing what pleases God Almighty; and the second pertains to the station of servitude (*‘ubdiyyah*), which is being content with whatever comes from God Almighty.” (*Tafsir Abi al-Sa‘ud*, Vol. 9, p. 197)

That is, *haqq* signifies the aspect of worship where a person actively does what pleases God, while *sabr* signifies the aspect of servitude where a person is fully content with whatever God decrees.

The fulfillment of this obligation on a group level depends on the overall condition of the Muslim *Ummah*. If the Muslim *Ummah* is autonomous and has authority, it is their responsibility to choose specific individuals and give them the authority to formally enforce the commands of *Shariah* on the people. An example of this principle is seen when Prophet Musa (Moses), upon reaching the Sinai Desert, divided the Children of Israel into twelve tribes and appointed twelve leaders over them.

However, if such formal arrangements are not possible, it is advised that people appoint teachers and preachers among themselves. This was the approach

taken with the Ansar of Madinah before the Hijrah. During the second pledge of Aqabah, when seventy-five people from Madinah (seventy-three men and two women) accepted Islam, the Prophet ﷺ instructed them to choose twelve representatives from among themselves. They selected twelve individuals—three from the tribe of Aws and nine from the tribe of Khazraj. The Prophet then told them: “*Antum kuffala’u ‘ala qawmikum*” (You are guardians and responsible for your people). (*Al-Tabaqat* by Ibn Sad, Vol. 3, p. 557)

Similarly, there was the leadership of Ja’far ibn Abi Talib, who was appointed as the leader of the emigrants to Abyssinia (as seen in *Seerah Ibn Hisham*, Vol 1, p. 337). Likewise, as Muslims expanded to regions beyond *Dar al-Islam* (the Islamic territories), they aimed to establish organized communities wherever they settled. In addition to practicing Islam personally and inviting others to Islam, they prioritized organizing themselves and fulfilling their religious duties under a leader.

SERVING GOD'S CAUSE (*NUSRAT AL-DEEN*)

The fundamental duty in the relationship between the servant and the Creator is what is called *Nusrat al-deen* (support of the faith). *Nusrat al-deen* mainly involves efforts to revive and reaffirm any part of Allah's religion that is waning. In *Shariah*, this is known as *I'la Kalimatullah* (raising the word of Allah). It is a complex effort that isn't limited to just one approach. Whenever Allah's religion faces challenges, or when human effort is needed to protect, maintain, renew, or revitalize it, dedicating one's abilities and resources for Allah's religion is considered *Nusrat al-deen*.

Among human emotions, one of the noblest is a strong concern for the well-being of someone to whom one is deeply attached. A person of noble character cannot bear to knowingly witness harm to someone they care about. When this feeling is directed from a servant toward their Creator, it is called *Nusrat al-deen*.

In Arabia, when opponents of the final Messenger

plotted to eliminate him and his message, and the companions risked their lives and wealth to defend the Prophet, this was the earliest and most profound example of *Nusrat al-deen*. Likewise, when the righteous Caliph Umar ibn Abdul Aziz sacrificed his own life in his efforts to reform corrupt practices within the Islamic government—an effort for which he was eventually poisoned by the royal family—this also exemplified *Nusrat al-deen*.

In the second century Hijri, when wealth and power fostered a culture of luxury within Islamic society, leading to weakened faith and a decline in devotion to Allah, Hasan al-Basri, embodying poverty and fervor, worked to revive the spiritual life of the *Ummah*. This was also an example of *Nusrat al-deen* (support of the faith). Later, as Greek philosophy began influencing Muslim society, causing doctrinal confusion and the emergence of the *Khalq al-Quran* (The Quran's createdness) controversy, Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal remained firm to defend the truth, which also demonstrated *Nusrat al-deen*.

In the sixth century Hijri, when European nations invaded the Islamic state, penetrating it “as a wedge drives into old wood,” according to English historian Stanley Lane-Poole, Salahuddin Ayyubi, with unwavering faith and great courage, freed the Islamic

territories from the oppression and domination of Western forces. This too was *Nusrat al-deen*. Similarly, figures such as Imam Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari, Imam al-Ghazali, Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani, Allama Ibn al-Jawzi, Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, Shah Waliullah, Sayyid Ahmad Bareilvi, and many other scholars, saints, and men of resolve dedicated themselves to serving the needs of the religion in their respective areas, this was also *Nusrat al-deen*. They used all their strength to support the faith. Each of them was a supporter and helper of the religion, and each holds a high rank with Allah.

Just as the support needed for faith depends on the requirements of the time, so is the support provided by individuals based on their own abilities and resources. Everyone is responsible for offering what they have: those endowed with speech and knowledge will support faith through their words and wisdom, while those blessed by Allah with physical and external resources will use these to fulfill the needs of the religion.

In this regard, I quote Shaykh al-Islam 'Izz al-Deen Ibn Abd al-Salam (578–660 AH), one of the most respected and influential scholars of Islamic history:

Allah has commanded us to strive in support of His religion. The weapon of the scholar is his knowledge and his tongue, just as the weapon

of the ruler is his sword and spear. Therefore, it is just as unacceptable for rulers to keep their weapons sheathed against the enemies of the faith as it is for scholars to remain silent in the face of those who deviate or innovate. (*Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah* al-Kubra by Ibn al-Subki, Vol. 5, p. 90)

A COMPARISON

In the explanation of Islam I provided above, a key point is that both the core of the faith and its outward expressions are appropriately balanced, with neither being neglected or losing their true importance. However, this is not true for the interpretation being discussed. I will explain this difference with a few examples.

Example of Prayer (*Salat*)

According to this interpretation, a believer's duty in this world is to establish God's law. Consequently, all other aspects of religion become secondary to this central principle, serving as its extensions and attachments. In this context, prayer (*salat*) functions as a kind of training that prepares the soldiers of the Islamic revolution. In the book "A Research-Based Study of Islamic Worship," prayer is described as a "program for the preparation of the individual," which is divided into five parts.

1. Keeping alive in a person's mind the awareness that he is not an independent being in this world but a servant of the *Rabb al-Alamin* (Lord of all worlds) and must act accordingly.
2. Instilling a sense of duty in him as a servant and fostering the habit of fulfilling his obligations.
3. Distinguishing between the dutiful and the undutiful, and identifying and excluding those who do not fulfill their responsibilities.
4. Embedding a complete system of thought—an ideology—into the person's mind and solidifying it to the point that it becomes an essential part of their character.
5. Developing in a person the strength to act according to his beliefs and understanding, and to utilize all his physical and mental abilities in pursuing this path.

The purpose of making congregational prayer obligatory is to promote these same objectives on a collective level. This is because:

“For a Muslim, this world is a battleground of intense struggle, competition, and conflict. Large groups of people here rebel against God, enforcing their self-made laws with full force

in human life. In contrast, a Muslim bears the heavy, almost overwhelming responsibility of spreading and implementing God's law, eradicating human-made laws wherever they are enforced, and establishing a system of life based on the law of Allah, the One without partners. This monumental task assigned by Allah to Muslims cannot be achieved by a single person against the organized forces of rebellion. Even if millions of Muslims exist worldwide, if they work individually and separately, they cannot succeed against the well-organized opposing forces. Therefore, it is crucial that all individuals who wish to worship God unite into a single group and work together toward their goal.

Prayer, along with building individual character, serves this collective purpose. It constructs, establishes, and sustains the entire framework of this social system, setting it into motion five times a day, like a machine, ensuring its continuous operation. (*Islami Ibadat par ek Tahqeeqi Nazar* by Maulana Maududi, pp. 41-45)

The benefits of prayer described in this interpretation are not entirely wrong. However, the core of prayer has been overlooked. The true nature of prayer is that:

It is a remembrance of God (*Aqim as-*

Salat li-Dhikri—“Establish prayer for My remembrance”). (Quran, 2:14)

It involves bowing before God and offering one’s inner feelings in sacrifice (*alladhina hum fi salatihim khashi’un*—“those who humble themselves in their prayers”). (Quran, 23:2)

It is a means of elevating the believer to a state where he begins to whisper to God—“When any one of you is engaged in prayer, he is indeed whispering to his Lord.” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 14099)

It is about connecting with God, asking for His help, and seeking His guidance (*isti’inu bi’s-sabri wa’s-salat*— “seek help through patience and prayer”). (Quran, 2:45)

By engaging in prayer, a believer experiences closeness to his Lord, which is the greatest blessing for a believer (*wasjud waqtarib*—“prostrate and draw near”). (Quran, 96:19)

In the revolutionary framework being discussed, these aspects of prayer are overlooked because they don’t match the revolutionary mission. Consequently, even though prayer was examined analytically, this original dimension of prayer was missed. In their description, this aspect vanished, similar to how, if a photographer takes a picture from behind, the back and other rear

details of the person are visible, but the face and entire front are missing from the photograph.

Regarding the other qualities mentioned in the earlier excerpt, they truly are natural results of genuine prayer. Connecting a servant with God is essentially the unification of all realities in their purest form. When realities align in their true nature, all the qualities we see as virtues or praiseworthy arise effortlessly, because all goodness is simply the unavoidable outcome of this union of truths. An electric switch does not create light or make a fan spin; it merely connects these devices to the power source. This connection alone is sufficient to illuminate or operate them in their respective functions.

But the issue is not limited to this. A human is not just a lifeless machine; instead, he is a conscious being. Therefore, when he forms a relationship with God, this connection naturally awakens his awareness and requires certain things from him. It tells him that the God he fears, loves, and genuinely desires to be close to cannot be forgotten in his daily activities. If he does not remember God in his practical life, it means he did not truly remember God even in the mosque. It is impossible to remember God in one place and forget Him in another. If someone genuinely finds God on a psychological level, it is impossible for his practical life to be free of this realization. He will inevitably

reflect divine purpose in his outward actions just as his inner being is enlightened by God. In this way, every relationship he has in the world will naturally mirror his connection with God.

In the interpretation under discussion, certain outcomes and results (which are actually incidental—because if a person were alone on an island, there would be no need for this kind of revolutionary training) are emphasized as if they are the main purpose. As a result, the original essence of prayer remains hidden in this portrayal.

Secondly, this interpretation aligns smoothly with the whole religion without causing any disruption, while the interpretation being discussed cannot be integrated into the religious framework without creating imbalance. An example of this is the unique concept of “practical testimony” in this interpretation, which had to be created because, without it, those influenced by this perspective could not understand the duty assigned to us in terms of testimony or invitation and propagation (dawah and tabligh).

The concept of “practical testimony” mentioned above includes two parts: *Qawli Shahadat* (verbal testimony) and *Amali Shahadat* (practical testimony). *Qawli Shahadat* refers to expressing the call to religion through speech and writing. However, just verbal propagation is

not enough to fulfill the duty of testimony. It is also important that:

“We demonstrate the principles we proclaim as true through our lives. The world should not only hear about their truth from our words but also see their virtues and blessings in our actions. They should experience the sweetness in our behavior, which stems from the sweetness of faith that enriches our morals and dealings. They should observe for themselves how this religion produces upright individuals, creates a just society, establishes a virtuous social order, nurtures a pure and refined culture, and encourages the growth of knowledge, literature, and arts in a sound way. They should witness the rise of an equitable, compassionate, and selfless economic system. Every aspect of individual and collective life should improve, become richer, and overflow with goodness. This testimony is fulfilled only when we, individually and collectively, become living examples of the truth of our beliefs. Our conduct should prove its authenticity; our homes should be fragrant with its scent; our shops and factories should shine with its light; our institutions and schools should be illuminated

by its radiance; our literature and journalism should reflect its excellence; and our national policies and collective efforts should serve as clear evidence of its truth. In short, anyone who interacts with us—whether as individuals or as a nation—should find evidence in our personal and collective character that the principles we claim as true are indeed valid and that they truly improve and elevate human life.”

This testimony is complete only when a state is founded on these principles. Such a state would implement religion fully and, through its justice, reform efforts, exemplary governance, concern for the welfare of its people, piety of its leaders, virtuous domestic policies, straightforward foreign policies, noble conduct in war, and faithful peace agreements, demonstrate that the religion from which this state originates truly supports human welfare and that following it benefits humanity. When this testimony is coupled with *Qawli Shahadat* (verbal testimony), the responsibility of the Muslim *Ummah* is fully fulfilled. This provides undeniable proof for humanity, and only then will our *Ummah* be deemed qualified to stand before the court of the Hereafter, after the Prophet ﷺ, and testify that we conveyed what was

delivered to us by him. Those who still stray from the path of righteousness will bear sole responsibility for their misguidance. (*Shahadat-e-Haq*)

At first glance, this interpretation of *Shahadat-e-Haq* (testimony to the truth) seems quite appealing. However, forgive me for saying that it is not only poetic but also places a significant accusation on God and all His Prophets. If *Shahadat-e-Haq* is truly as defined here, then it suggests that no Prophet has genuinely fulfilled the duty of testimony. This interpretation claims that for the “complete” fulfillment of testimony, it is necessary to practice the entire religion and demonstrate full adherence to all commands and guidance, from personal life to collective matters, including international issues outlined in God’s *Shariah*. In this sense, none of the known Prophets (may peace be upon them all) have ever provided complete testimony to their people. Conversely, we see in the Quran that during the early stages of invitation, when the people of truth are still oppressed and only verbally conveying their message, disbelievers are warned that if they continue to deny, they will deserve punishment (Quran, 11:3). Now, if fully practicing the entire religion is essential for the completion of testimony and proof, then this early warning loses its meaning.

This, then, represents the stage of verbal proclamation, followed by the momentous event of the Hijrah—a decisive declaration of disassociation from those who rejected the call of God.¹²

When a Prophet migrates, it signifies that he has provided his community with the testimony of truth for which he was sent. However, this migration does not happen without any practical demonstration. The type of practical testimony mentioned above would only be possible if the Prophet had authority over the social affairs of the area he was calling to the truth. If that were the case, then migration would not be necessary at all. Migration happens precisely because the Prophet's people have not accepted him as an authority. In such a situation, there is no need

12. The discussion on “practical testimony” arises from the interpretation mentioned earlier, which claims that, for the testimony to be valid, Shariah must be practically demonstrated as a complete state. Otherwise, it is obvious that for someone to testify to the truth, being a practicing believer is a fundamental part of their own faith and doctrine. A person who warns others about the Hereafter but does not fear it himself, who preaches devotion to God but lacks that spirit in his own life, is not a true caller; he is a mockery of a man, and his invitation is just words. Words alone cannot make someone a witness in the sight of God or people. Shah Ismail Shaheed writes:

“A preacher who does not practice is a barrier on the path of the seeker of truth, because his lack of practice makes the truth seem unreliable in the eyes of others.” (*Mansab-e-Imamat*, p. 16)

to establish an Islamic state or practically demonstrate *Shariah* laws before the people. Yet, it is this migration that makes the people deserving of punishment.

From this, it becomes clear that Allah's goal of establishing testimony over humanity is achieved solely through the effort of verbal propagation (*tablighi jihad*). If this were not enough, the Prophet's followers would not have been considered deserving of punishment and destruction after his migration. Migration is not based on practical proof but rather on verbal proof. In fact, the migration of the final Prophet ﷺ was somewhat different from that of previous Prophets. After his migration, his people were not immediately punished by divine punishment; instead, the disbelievers were later defeated by the swords of believers. During this time, upon reaching Madinah, the Prophet worked to establish a social system. However, the effort to create an organized system in Madinah was not aimed at completing the testimony. The work of testimony was already fulfilled to the fullest in Makkah, and the completion of this task is evident because, before the migration, they were addressed as "O disbelievers" (Chapter *al-Kafirun*). This term does not refer to inherited disbelief but to the disbelief that becomes evident after the necessary completion of testimony.

The truth is that the guilt of the polytheists of Makkah

was established at the time of the migration, not after the establishment of the Islamic state in Madinah. Additionally, it is worth noting that the system established in Madinah was not only physically distant from the people of Makkah but also had not yet developed to the extent that it could be called “practical testimony” in the sense mentioned above. The Battle of Badr, in which many leaders of the polytheists were killed—and which, according to the Quran, was a punishment inflicted upon the people of Makkah “by the hands of the believers” (Quran, 9:14)—took place only a year and a half after the migration¹³, at a time when many aspects of life were still developing. At this point, the rulings of the *Shariah* had not yet been revealed in full, and the early Madinan state had not yet been able to demonstrate the comprehensive practices deemed essential in the previous analysis. So, were these people punished for “not coming to the right path” before the completion of evidence (*itmam al-hujjah*)? Did the Prophets not fulfil the mission for which they were sent, or was it that Allah destroyed the communities addressed by them without complete proof?

13. In the thirteenth year of his Prophethood, during the month of Rabi' al-Awwal, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ reached Madinah. The following year, in Ramadan of the 2nd Hijri year, the Battle of Badr took place. In the Gregorian calendar: arrival in Quba on September 20, 622 CE... Battle of Badr on March 13, 624 CE.”

Not only that, but the philosophy presented in the interpretation under discussion of practical testimony has itself changed the very idea of bearing witness to the truth. It has shifted the focus of testimony away from the reward and punishment in the Hereafter and instead directed it toward the reward and punishment of this world. The true purpose of testimony is to reveal the realities of the Hereafter. However, this interpretation has turned testimony into something whose goal is simply to demonstrate the realities of worldly life.

Consider once more the passage I quoted earlier: if this utopia were to be realized and you truly testified in all aspects of human and international life as described in that passage, then tell me—what would you actually be testifying to? Only this: that Islam sets morals and dealings right; that it brings about prosperity and justice; that it establishes social welfare and political integrity. You would be testifying that if people do not adopt the Islamic system, their politics and society will decay, and they will destroy themselves through conflict.

But think carefully—is this really the testimony we are commanded to give before the world? Were thousands of messengers sent only to show people the worldly results of theistic belief? According to the Quran's

clear declarations, the true purpose of testimony is to inform mankind that Islam alone is the guarantor of man's salvation in the Hereafter. Yet even at the final stage of your struggle, the testimony you offered was only that Islam is the guarantor of man's well-being in this world.

The truth is that this fact alone is enough to prove the error of the interpretation under discussion: it reduces Islam to a concern with worldly problems, and when it does mention the Hereafter, it treats it as though it were Kant's "practical reason" or Voltaire's "moral hypothesis"—a mental construct meant merely to provide a psychological basis for improving life in this world.

The philosophy of "practical testimony" did not develop on its own; it is, in fact, an inevitable result of the above interpretation of Islam. When testimony (*shahadah*) is defined as something to be demonstrated through action, then naturally, there must be something that can be expressed practically. Clearly, beliefs or states of piety and humility are not things that can be demonstrated practically, nor can Heaven and Hell be shown to anyone.

The only aspect that can be practically displayed is the visible, ongoing life in this world. Therefore, when interpreting testimony, the mind naturally gravitates

toward worldly matters. A task originally meant to testify to the realities of the Hereafter becomes, due to a flawed understanding, testimony to worldly issues. After all, news of the Hereafter can only be conveyed; what can be shown are the events of the physical world, not the occurrences of the unseen realm.

Additionally, to integrate the ideology under discussion fully into Islam, this type of interpretation was necessary. Whenever you interpret Islam, it is essential to include all known and clearly defined components of Islam and align them with your interpretation. Without doing so, your interpretation cannot be considered a correct Islamic interpretation. This also led your mind to the philosophy of practical testimony, to demonstrate that fulfilling the obligation of testimony requires a complete revolution. Without this, the duty under the name of testimony cannot be fulfilled. Once the Islamic movement was defined as a mission to change the world order and establish a new system, it became crucial to interpret the command of preaching and testimony in a way that the difference between preaching and transforming the system would vanish, making them appear as one and the same.

However, God's religion is a perfectly harmonious whole, united with the utmost wisdom. If there is an error in interpreting any of its components, it will

inevitably conflict with the other parts, and this conflict will serve as clear evidence that your interpretation does not accurately reflect God’s religion.

As a result, the language used to describe religious realities is mainly political. For example, the *Mi’raj* (Ascension) is one of the most famous events in Islamic history. The Quran states that the purpose of this journey was to see the “signs of Allah.” Hadith literature offers more details, describing how, during this journey, the Prophet ﷺ was shown the other realm of God beyond the physical world—where angels, Heaven and Hell exist, and where people are taken after death. During this journey, he was honored with the privilege of speaking with the Almighty, was prescribed the five daily prayers, taught the last two verses of Chapter *Al-Baqarah* (Chapter 2) of the Quran, given hope for forgiveness of sins, except for polytheism, and informed that those who do evil will be repaid according to their deeds, while those who do good will be rewarded more generously than their actions.

However, the interpretation in question finds little satisfaction in this view of the *Mi’raj*. It laments that, “The significance of the Night of Ascension has become obscured in theological discussions. Few are aware of the monumental achievement realized that night for the advancement of humanity.” This perspective introduces the nature of this journey with the following words:

“The truth is that this Earth, where we live, is just a small part of God’s vast kingdom. The prophets sent to this world by God are similar to the governors or viceroys that earthly governments send to their regions. In some ways, there is a clear difference between the two.”

Reading the final sentence, one might expect the “difference” between the two roles—specifically, that one pertains to worldly affairs while the other relates to the Hereafter—to be clarified. However, the following words are:

“Governors and viceroys of worldly governments are appointed only to handle administrative tasks, while the leaders and viceroys of the Sovereign are chosen to teach the principles of true civilization, pure morals, and sound knowledge and actions—principles that serve as guiding lights, leading humanity along the straight path for centuries.” (*Mi’raj ki Rat* by Maulana Maududi)

The above description of the *Mi’raj* is not fundamentally incorrect. My point, however, in describing it, the perspective in question chose words that made the event seem clothed in political terms. In reality, according to the details given in Quran and Hadith, the essential aspect of this event is a vision of the

Hereafter, not the building of worldly order. This interpretation mentions these details but sees them as related to the “condition of the *Mi’raj*.” In its view, the true significance of *Mi’raj* is not in its conditions but in its purpose and outcome (*Mi’raj ki Raat* by Maulana Maududi: Preface).

This difference in mindset becomes even more noticeable when it describes the fundamental “principles” given to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as the “true purpose” of the *Mi’raj*. These are “fourteen principles” designed to shape “human civilization and morals.” In the author’s words: “The Islamic movement was about to transform into a state; hence, at this important juncture, the King of the Universe summoned the Prophet to His presence to grant him a new appointment and new instructions.” After listing these fourteen principles, the author writes:

“These fourteen principles given to the Prophet on the Night of Ascension were not just moral teachings; they served as the manifesto of Islam, the blueprint for building society in the future. These instructions were given at a time when the Prophet’s mission was shifting from preaching to governance and political authority. Therefore, before this transition, it was made clear that God’s Prophet would establish the

civilization's order based on these principles. That's why, along with these fourteen principles given during the *Mi'raj*, Allah prescribed the five daily prayers for all Muslims—to instill moral discipline in those working to implement this program and to keep them mindful of God. Five times a day, they are reminded that they are not autonomous but are accountable to God, their Supreme Ruler.” (*Mi'raj ki Rat* by Maulana Maududi)

These fourteen principles are drawn from the Chapter *Al-Isra* (17:23-38) of the Quran. Whether these instructions were given during the *Mi'raj* or revealed separately is another matter. The question is whether “the Islamic movement was about to transform into a state and move from the stage of preaching to that of governance and political power.” Still, the instructions provided are mainly personal and moral. Anyone can open the relevant section of Chapter *Al-Isra* and see that none of these instructions are directly related to law or politics. However, the first principle has been given a political interpretation in these words: “No partner shall be acknowledged in His supreme authority.” But this is an interpretation by the commentator; there is no mention of it in the relevant part of the Quran.

As a result of this specific interpretation of the *Mi'raj*,

the five obligatory prayers came to be seen as a way to promote “moral discipline.” Their purpose was redefined as a means to ensure that those working to carry out this societal program would complete their tasks effectively.

The Task at Hand

Now, I will outline what needs to be done based on the aforementioned interpretation of religion. Regarding Pakistan, I see the campaign led by Maulana Maududi for implementing *Shariah* law as fundamentally correct. Pakistan is a Muslim country, and in principle, after gaining independence, its people have the right to choose any way of life and social system they prefer. In this context, it becomes the duty of Pakistan’s Muslim community to establish an Islamic governance system and organize all aspects of life according to Islamic rulings and laws. However, it is vital that the campaign for implementing *Shariah* considers the principle of gradual progress.

But my opinion only concerns the form of this campaign; the underlying philosophy is flawed. This philosophical mistake has caused many issues within the campaign, with more problems developing over time. It has also led to serious practical shortcomings among the people involved, from the lowest to the highest levels.

Therefore, I do not expect this campaign to succeed. However, even if it does, a lack of character of the people will soon turn it into a failure. If my prediction is wrong, I would be happy, but as with expressing my views, it's natural to speak only about what I observe.

One example is the issue of the *kiswah* *al-ka'bah* (the cloth that covers the Kaaba) in 1963. One example of this is the issue of the Kaaba's covering (1963). The way the pieces of the covering were ceremoniously sent off to Makkah, and the manner in which they were taken to the airport in a grand procession of hundreds of thousands of people, almost like a *tazia*, may or may not be considered a innovation (*bid'ah*), but it is certain that it was merely a public spectacle with no real connection to genuine religiosity. (Similarly, the "Day of the Strength of Islam" in 1970). However, the very people who previously argued that gatherings and processions for Milad al-Nabi lacked Islamic spirit and love for the Prophet now issue the fatwa that the Ghilaf-e-Kaaba (The *kiswah*) procession was a "great good," a magnificent display that took place on a grand scale in Lahore, and they call those criticizing it "flies" who ignore all positive aspects to focus on minor faults (*Tarjuman al-Quran*, April 1963, p. 55).

Without the right mindset, movements eventually reach this stage. At first, when such public events have no political significance for them, they criticize them.

But as they move to later stages, when these events start to carry political importance, their language and judgments shift. What once seemed wasteful and flawed now becomes a “great good.”

I will divide the task that lies before us in India into several points and present them under separate headings:

1. First, we must fulfil the personal duties and responsibilities required of every believer. This includes genuinely becoming worshipers of God, fulfilling the obligations that God has placed upon our lives and wealth accurately, and observing all the moral and transactional restrictions related to personal life as outlined by Islamic *Shariah*.
2. The second duty that Muslims in India have as a religious obligation is organization. The Quran emphasizes this with the words, ‘Hold fast to the rope of Allah’ (3:103). Its importance is so high that even if three Muslims are in a remote place, they are instructed to form a group and select one of them as their leader (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 6647).

Organization means that Muslims should not be divided into separate groups or scattered factions, but rather live as a united community. They should have an elected leader whom everyone obeys and a central institution from which they receive guidance. In the current situation, establishing an organization

to the best of our ability is a *Shariah* obligation upon us, and Indian Muslims cannot absolve themselves of this duty until they practically establish such an organization among themselves and fulfill their Islamic responsibilities under its guidance. This organization is one of the unavoidable worldly needs of the believers. As stated in the hadith: Muadh ibn Jabal reported that the Prophet ﷺ, said, “Satan is to man what the wolf is to sheep; he seizes the one that is isolated and away from the flock. So beware of separating into groups and divisions; hold fast to the community, to the masses, and to the mosque.” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 22028)

Collective unity is essential in Islam. However, this command’s purpose is to foster unity among all Muslims. Claiming smaller types of collective unity as its fulfillment actually encourages division within the *Ummah*. This doesn’t mean that no form of collective organization should be present before true unity is achieved. Clearly, groups will be formed beforehand, but these are not substitutes for the ideal Islamic unity; rather, they are efforts aimed at reaching it—whether through individual or collective endeavors.

If there is ambiguity about the nature of this secondary unity, there is a serious risk that these collective efforts may be mistaken for the real Islamic unity, and that

leaving such a group may begin to be treated as if it were an act of apostasy.

Given the current situation, our collective organization should aim to unify under a single structure to the best of our ability, ensuring that all religious and community tasks are carried out with shared interests in mind. We should have a *Dar al-Qada* (Islamic judiciary) and a *Bayt al-Mal* (Muslim public treasury), through which people can be informed about *Shariah* matters. Decisions on internal disputes should be made according to Islamic laws, and *Zakat* and other communal funds should be collected and used collectively. Preaching and outreach efforts should be organized systematically. Oversight of schools, mosques, and cemeteries should be established, and new Muslims should be protected and guided, among other responsibilities.

One principle in Islamic jurisprudence states that “in *Shariah* matters, the decree of a non-Muslim ruler over Muslims may be outwardly enforced but is not valid in essence.” For example, if a non-Muslim ruler annuls a Muslim’s marriage, then even if it is annulled outwardly by law, it is not annulled in reality under *Shariah*, nor is it permissible for the woman to marry someone else according to Islamic law. If she does remarry, that marriage will be invalid, and in the eyes of Islamic law, any children born from it would be considered

illegitimate. Therefore, to obtain true *Shariah* rulings, an Islamic judge (*Qadi*) is necessary. Additionally, jurists state that when the people of a city pledge allegiance to a person's authority, he becomes their ruler. However, the public cannot appoint a *Qadi* in the same manner. A *Qadi* can only be appointed by the Caliph.

Some people interpret these two points as meaning that it is impossible to establish *Shariah* courts under a non-Muslim government because an authorized *Qadi* is essential for *Shariah* judgments, and the general public cannot appoint a *Qadi* on their own. Only an Islamic government can do so. Therefore, they conclude that we have only two options: either accept de facto apostasy or change the authority and establish an Islamic government.

But this line of reasoning is based on a misunderstanding. When the jurists say that the entire Muslim community cannot appoint a *qadi*, it is meant in a specific sense. I will quote here a passage from the *Hanafi* jurist *Ibn al-Bazzaz*.

“If the people of a town gather together and appoint someone as judge, it is not valid because there is no necessity. But if their ruler dies and they make a consensus to have someone as ruler, it is valid because necessity requires it.” (*Al-Fatawa al-Bazzaziyyah*, Vol. 1, p. 489).

From this, it is clear that the difference between these two types of matters is in “necessity.” For appointing

a ruler, the consensus of the Muslim community is required, and they choose him based on their collective opinion. However, for appointing a *Qadi*, their opinion is not needed, as the ruler himself is present to make the appointment.

Ibn Abidin, the author of *Radd al-Muhtar*, states after quoting this issue from *Fatawa al-Bazzaziyah* by Hafizuddin Muhammad:

“I say, this only applies when there is no necessity. Otherwise, the general body of Muslims also has the authority to appoint a judge.” (*Radd al-Muhtar*, vol. 5, p. 367).

This means that the ruling (that general Muslims cannot appoint a qadi) applies when there is no need. But if there is a necessity, then the principle is “they also have the authority to appoint a judge.” In other words, just as the general Muslims have the right to appoint a ruler, they also have the right to appoint a judge. When Muslims agree upon someone as a judge, he becomes a judge by their mutual consent:

Yaseeru al-qaadi qaadiyan bi-taraadi al-muslimeen.
(*Radd al-Muhtar* by Ibn Abidin, Vol. 5, p. 369)

The principle is that the source and origin of all religious offices is, in fact, the entire Muslim community. In the presence of the Islamic caliphate, since the caliph exercises authority on behalf of the Muslims, he acts as their representative. If the caliph or governor appoints

someone as a judge and this appointment is valid, it is because, once chosen, the caliph or governor becomes the representative of the Muslims. Through this representation, he gains, on their behalf, the authority to appoint a judge, and after such an appointment, the judge essentially becomes the deputy of the Muslim community itself.

Judges believe that if the caliph or governor dies, the judge they appointed stays in office because his position comes from the Muslims themselves, who still exist. Since the authority that grants his position still exists, the death of the caliph or governor does not end his term. (See *Bada'i al-Sana'i*, Cairo 1910, vol. 7, p. 16, section: *bayan ma yakhruju bihi al-qadi 'an al-qada'*).

3. The third key responsibility can be described, following the earlier discussion under the title “Witnessing and Introducing,” as the task of presenting Islam to those who do not know about God and His plan of creation—standing before them as carriers of both warning and glad tidings. After the conclusion of prophethood, Muslims are understood in this framework to act as representatives of the Prophet, tasked with sharing God’s message with all people. Thus, for Muslims, their immediate audience is the community of the land into which they were born. In this view,

the most important duty is to make Islam known among the people of one's country so fully that, on the Day of Judgment, no one could claim ignorance of it.

This responsibility is framed as one requiring utmost sincerity and honesty: a long-term endeavor to articulate Islamic thought across many years, ensuring that the message is communicated widely and clearly. It is acknowledged as a difficult and demanding process, one that may involve challenges similar to those faced during the Prophet's own mission. Yet, faith and perseverance are seen as essential, sustaining this effort until, by divine will, hearts are opened to the message or an alternative way forward becomes clear.

The responsibilities of Muslims in India, given their current situation, are based on the Quran and Hadith. This understanding is shared by scholars of the *Ummah*, and Muslims in similar circumstances have always aimed to fulfill their *Shariah* obligations in this way.

The tasks I outlined above serve two main purposes. First, they help us fulfill our responsibilities as Muslims, as commanded by God. Second, if we perform these duties correctly, it will attract God's support. By following the commands of the Almighty, a servant not only meets his obligations but also becomes worthy of the blessings of the Lord of the heavens and the earth.

Divine aid is bestowed upon those who obey, bringing empowerment in this life and inheritance of Paradise in the hereafter. Our true success depends on shaping our individual and collective lives in accordance with God's will; only then can we find paths to success. Without this, no political campaign or revolutionary effort can truly solve our problems.

Another point to understand here is that the tasks I listed above do not mean that our practical and conveying efforts will follow a strict order. Practical and conveying efforts are flexible; they don't follow a rigid, logical pattern but flow and adjust like a stream. The purpose of this list is simply to help us develop a clear understanding of our *Shariah* responsibilities so that our practical program is well-organized and each *Shariah* requirement is addressed properly.

This is an intellectual framework of the issue, not its preaching approach. If the intellectual side of an issue is clearly and accurately defined, then despite taking different outward forms, one's efforts will stay aligned with the main goal and remain on the right track. However, if the intellectual basis is unclear or faulty, then one risks heading in the wrong direction. Sometimes, even correct actions may have flawed elements because the underlying understanding was not accurate.

OBSTACLES TO ACCEPTING THE TRUTH

Just because something might be correct doesn't necessarily mean that the listener will accept it as true. There are various conscious and unconscious factors that often act as obstacles for a person to accept the truth. One individual, influenced by the line of thought being discussed, told me after hearing my views: "Whatever may be right, one thing is certain—their argument is much easier to understand than yours." But this apparent clarity does not reflect the truth of the matter itself; instead, it stems from the listener's mental makeup.

Before the Partition, when the Muslim League was at its peak, Maulana Mawdudi outlined the Islamic movement. The common response from Muslims at that time was: "What you say does not make sense to us. What does make sense is that wherever Muslims are in the majority, they should have their own government, and then govern according to their own beliefs and

schools of thought.” Clearly, this response was simply a reflection of their own mental outlook, for in reality, the alternative to the Pakistan idea held greater truth.

Similarly, when the Islamic economic system is introduced, it does not resonate with socialist minds. They say: “What makes sense to us is that sources of ownership should be taken out of private hands and managed according to the collective interest of society. What you propose seems to us purely imaginary.” But we know that it is only their own mindset speaking in this way, for in fact, the Islamic economic scheme is, in every respect, superior to and more practical than socialism.

Another reason for this situation is materialism, which causes people to become desensitized and superficial. Understanding the true nature of religion and identifying potential errors in its interpretation are delicate, nuanced discussions that require careful reflection. However, today, people are so absorbed in material possessions that they overlook the *ayat* (signs) of Allah. The distractions of this transient world have become their main focus and interest. They believe it is enough to fulfill their own desires, ignoring the “sustenance of goodness” coming from their Lord. This has made them desensitized and superficial, blocking the vision needed to see subtle truths. They only see what is directly in front of them, lacking the capacity

to understand deeper realities. The superficial nature of our era has even become a veil that hides many truths. Once, a wise elder commented on a speech, saying, "It was brimming with faith and conviction." Yet, I felt it was nothing more than eloquence.

When a person becomes affected by superficiality, it becomes difficult for them to feel the weight of reason. Due to their desensitization, they fail to understand non-material truths. It is a fact that only the person who has risen above the world and worldly things can attain the higher realities of Islam. One who cannot rise above them may have the voice of truth resounding right in front of their eyes, yet they will remain unable to grasp it. They lack the ears to listen and the heart to comprehend. No matter how strong the arguments are, they will not feel the need to reconsider their views. They stay in their familiar sphere, much like a person who, despite having plenty of health resources around, is afflicted by a chronic disease. They remain ill despite all the available health and strength resources. Similarly, when someone is afflicted with the disease of desensitization, all sources of light and guidance become ineffective; they cannot benefit from them even if they have them.

Another factor in this regard is idolizing personalities. Sometimes, a person becomes so deeply influenced by

someone else that everything they say seems correct. Whatever they say about any issue is viewed as the ultimate truth, and they are subconsciously elevated to a standard of truth. Such a person either avoids considering others' views altogether or, even if they do consider them, they have developed a specific taste that makes others' words unappealing. It's as if their taste buds have become so used to one flavor that they cannot appreciate any other. Often, this happens completely unconsciously—they believe they are honoring someone for religious reasons, but in reality, they have fallen prey to idolizing personalities, a disease more damaging to their intellect than even tuberculosis or cancer.

One educated Muslim I know is deeply influenced by a certain author. I showed him a passage from the said author's book, which was clearly contradictory to Quranic teachings. After explaining my assessment, I asked for his thoughts on the matter. The difference was so obvious that I was sure any impartial person would agree. Yet, after reading the passage several times, his response was, "I believe this is absolutely correct; there is nothing in it that contradicts the Quran." By God, as he spoke these words, I could see the color drain from his face. It was clear that his understanding was struggling to accept this, yet the only obstacle was

his idolization of this personality, whom he could not imagine being in error. Personality worship had closed all the windows of his mind, leaving no way for the light of truth to enter.

Another issue is arrogance, or a sense of superiority. Arrogance is, in fact, a state of self-delusion. Such a person, seeing certain qualities in themselves, creates a self-made standard of superiority and inferiority, which prevents them from recognizing the true virtues in others. In their mental framework, their own existence is always elevated above others.

A person afflicted with this type of psychology can never recognize the truth. They will always focus on the person presenting the truth rather than the truth itself. Due to their particular mental conditioning, their arrogance will prevent them from accepting the words of someone they perceive as “inferior” to themselves.

A person filled with arrogance encounters the truth but is unwilling to accept it. The voice of truth shakes their inner self, leaving them intellectually defeated by its arguments. Despite this, they lack the courage to embrace it. Even when doubt troubles them, they continue to show false confidence. They respond with superficial arguments, give inconsistent answers at different times, avoid addressing the core issues, divert attention by raising irrelevant points, and misrepresent

opposing views to criticize unfairly. No matter how solid the other side's arguments are, they dismiss them as insignificant, as though it carried no weight at all, while inwardly feeling restless in the search for a solid basis to reject it with certainty. These behaviors reveal that their certainty in their own stance has wavered. Sparks of truth reach their mind, but their pride prevents them from accepting it.

Internally, they tell themselves, "I am more qualified than the one presenting this truth to me. My scholarly superiority is well-recognized. My contributions to Islam are acknowledged by many." Such thoughts surround them like a thick fog, leaving them blind despite having eyes to see. They believe that if this were truly the case, they would be the first to uncover it. Although they are in the best position to understand the truth, they remain deprived of it. In the Quran, this is described as charging ahead as though blind and deaf. When someone is reminded through the signs of God, one appropriate response is to understand the truth clearly and respond sincerely. Another response is to ignore the core aspects of the matter and attack it from irrelevant angles, dismissing it with unrelated objections. The first approach is to see, hear, and engage with the matter as it is, while the second features reacting as if one were blind and deaf, as if the truth had never been recognized. (Quran, 25:73)

Another barrier to accepting the truth is the fear that embracing it might dismantle one's established foundation. This world is a place where every idea has a chance to thrive, and any concept presented forcefully can find supporters and allies. Over time, as an idea persists, it develops a particular sphere, attracts resources, and spawns various enterprises linked to it, providing livelihoods for many people. Slogans emerge that allow some individuals to gain intellectual prestige and political influence. New values are introduced to the public, and by supporting and promoting these values, one can gain support from others. Many people abandon their previous pursuits and dedicate their lives to this cause.

Among them are those who, in their youth, were vibrant and capable, but now have aged and lack the energy to rebuild their lives from scratch in a new domain. They no longer have the strength to venture into a new path and redefine their lives.

In such circumstances, when the voice of truth is raised, the inherent nature that God has placed within people begins to stir within many. Sometimes, a glimmer of truth flashes before their clouded eyes. Occasionally, when they manage to clear their vision and truly see, they start to realize that indeed, this is the truth. However, very soon, the veil of material interests and

worldly fears covers their vision again. The fear that a well-established life might be disrupted affects their thinking, consciously or unconsciously, in such a way that even after coming close to the truth, they turn away from it. Even after recognizing the truth, they choose to remain deprived of it simply out of fear that accepting it would cost them their worldly life.

It should be noted that this often happens unconsciously. Most people remain unaware of what they are actually doing. A person may think they are abandoning something simply because they believe it to be incorrect, whereas it is often a mere deception of their imagination. Hidden fears in their subconscious affect their thinking in such a way that they are unable to make a clear decision and remain bound to their old ways under a vague and artificial sense of certainty.

Another reason people miss out on the truth is that they avoid deep reflection, instead offering a quick “answer” to reassure themselves that their current stance is correct. A person sometimes falls into the misconception that a claim is considered true only if it has no possible answer at all. If a claim can be answered, its truth is then regarded as doubtful. This is a very serious mistake. This is a serious mistake. There is no truth in the world that cannot be countered by a string of words. However, such responses cannot be

considered genuine answers—they are merely false justifications, not true responses.

If someone is unwilling to accept something, no amount of argument will ever persuade them. You can present the strongest and most convincing reasons, but with every point you make, they will always find a way to dismiss or twist it. That’s why the Quran describes *jadl* (argumentativeness) as a major barrier to recognizing the truth:

“We have explained in various ways in this Quran, for the benefit of mankind, all kinds of examples, but man is most contentious.”
(Quran, 18:54)

Certainly, many responses can be given to my observations. However, if these responses are the same ones I have heard repeatedly, I have no reply to them. In such cases, I recall words I did not say to an audience but to myself. I once had the opportunity to discuss the points I have written in this book with a respected scholar. After listening to his responses, my heart involuntarily thought, “If this is truly the response that supporters of this interpretation have to my objections, then by God, I am indeed on the right path.”

Another major reason someone might reject the truth is that they have spent their entire life believing in a

particular idea, and accepting a new one would mean giving up that belief. When someone holds onto a specific belief for a long time, they become so used to it that it's hard to imagine it could be wrong. This belief becomes something they accept as if it requires no evidence. Even if someone presents facts showing there's no basis for their assumed belief, they're still reluctant to abandon it. Such reasoning does not appear to him as reasoning at all, but rather as, in the words of the Quran, "a strange thing" (38:5). It was this kind of mindset that led past nations to call their prophets "sorcerers." Having lived with certain ideas for so long, they believed in them as undeniable truths. Even when a prophet challenged these beliefs with strong reasoning, and they realized they had no real response beyond irrelevant arguments, they still refused to change and claimed, "This is a sorcerer who has deceived us with his eloquence. Otherwise, how could something believed for so long be wrong?"

To illustrate this, let me share an incident involving the famous Italian thinker Galileo. He lived between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a time when Aristotle's ideas dominated the intellectual landscape. Aristotle held the view that if two objects of different weights were dropped from the same height, the heavier object would reach the ground before the

lighter one. This theory had become so widely accepted that no one felt the need to question it. Galileo was the first to challenge this idea, asserting instead that both objects would hit the ground simultaneously, aside from a slight difference caused by air resistance. The scholars of his time ridiculed him for daring to disagree with a great thinker like Aristotle. But Galileo was insistent and claimed he could prove his theory through experiment.

One morning, he gathered students and teachers from Pisa University at the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Climbing to the top, he took two balls, one weighing ten pounds and the other one pound. He placed both at the edge of the tower and released them at the same time. Both balls hit the ground simultaneously. His theory was proven correct. Through further experiments and studies, Galileo discovered three fundamental laws of falling objects, which are now taught in schools and universities. He clearly proved that he was right and that Aristotle was wrong. However, the scholars refused to accept the obvious reality they had seen. They continued to believe that their familiar theory was true and that the young Galileo had merely tricked them in a “web of arguments.”

It's clear that once someone reaches a point where even direct observation can't persuade them, no argument can change their mind. They will only see

their familiar world as the real one, even if that world is just an illusion with no true foundation.

Another obstacle to accepting the truth is that a person often develops a fixed mental framework that, over time, becomes so inflexible that no change can take place within it. Only ideas that fit this framework and provide satisfaction without challenging its structure are accepted. Any concept that threatens to break this framework to make room for itself will be rejected outright without a second thought.

For example, a person deeply involved in worldly pursuits, viewing them as the highest form of success, will likely not find appeal in a transformative religious idea. However, if you tell them that a specific *dhikr* (remembrance) offers great reward or that praying a few extra units at a certain time can atone for a year's sins, they might adopt such a view of religion, adding it as a sacred supplement to their life. Similarly, you see people immersed in worldly comfort and pleasures, yet, because of their traditional mindset, they also desire a reserved place in paradise. They find the idea appealing that "Islam is the way to success in both this world and the hereafter." In contrast, they would never accept a view of religion that involves crying and yearning, teaches detachment from the world, or sees sorrow as a believer's sustenance.

You may meet people who aren't particularly interested in *dhikr* (remembrance) or prayer, and who shy away from words like piety and devotion. Yet, they would eagerly give long speeches on topics like "Islam as the best way of life" or "Islam as the solution to all problems, capable of establishing peace in the world." Similarly, those who dwell in superficial thought, whose minds are caught up in issues stirred up by professional leaders and who are preoccupied with political unrest, will find no interest in the deep truths of religion. They might casually dismiss such matters as "Sufism," "personal preference," or "extremism."

Another situation occurs when remnants of an Islamic movement in decline are regarded as the complete and final form of Islam. Such individuals cannot be swayed by any interpretation of Islam that offers a deeper and broader view of religious practice. Their focus remains on constructing mosques and *madrassa* (Islamic seminaries), or they may associate themselves with a *khanqah* (spiritual retreat) and believe they have fully met their religious duties.

This does not mean that these efforts are wrong. If someone honestly assesses their abilities and circumstances, determines they can only do so much, and dedicates themselves fully to it, then in my view, they are better than someone who shows intense restlessness to promote Islam socially or internationally

but neglects to act within their own life and family—even though that’s within their reach.

There’s another point worth mentioning—something I have personally experienced. Over the past several years, I have shared the true concept of Islam as I understand it from the Quran in my writings, and it has generally been well-received. However, now that I have written the present book under the title “*Tabeer Ki Ghalati* (The Error of Political Islam),” the same people who once saw my words as their own voice have become deeply upset. I wondered why this reaction occurred. In my view, the only difference is that what was previously communicated in a broad, vague way is now presented with clearer detail. What was earlier described positively as coming from the Quran and Hadith is now explained in relation to a specific interpretation of Islam.

The answer is that human beings are naturally inclined toward the true faith by their very nature. Therefore, when the nourishment of the religion of *Hanif* (the natural, pure religion) enters a person, they naturally align with it and feel compelled to accept it. However, due to certain factors, the structure of their mind has shifted, and on a conscious level, people have started to think in ways that oppose the natural disposition given by God. As a result, the positive impression of

al-deen al-hanif (God-oriented faith) remains only as long as they experience it unconsciously. The moment it is stated explicitly, their conscious mind rises in opposition, and the very thing they had previously considered completely right now begins to appear poisonous to them.

A person who believes in vegetarianism drinks water every day, and each time they do, they feel a deep inner connection, thinking it is exactly what they need. They see it as the perfect way to quench their thirst. However, if one day they saw with their own eyes that the glass of water they are about to drink contains millions of tiny living organisms, they would likely drop the glass in horror, as they would see it as something forbidden to consume. This very water, which they had always regarded as the greatest blessing, would suddenly seem frightening to them.

The reason for this change stems from the difference between their natural instinct about water and the consciously developed altered perspective. When the reality about water was hidden from this artificial view, they drank it eagerly. However, when this reality was made clear to them, their distorted perception rejected it. What was once a familiar, beloved substance now seemed repulsive—even though the only difference is that one is simply “water,” while the other is a self-observed analysis of that same water.

FINAL WORDS

After finishing this writing, one day I was talking to a friend about it when these words slipped from my lips: “When I think that this writing will someday be published and seen by people, I feel ashamed. It seems to me as if I am exposing myself.” These words, which I said to my dear friend, are my apology for this lengthy writing.

Over a long period, the moments of my days and nights—known surely to God—stand as witness that writing something like this has brought me no joy. This is not a “pleasant tale” that I have chosen to narrate at length. Rather, it is the pain of the heart that, unable to remain contained, has poured out.

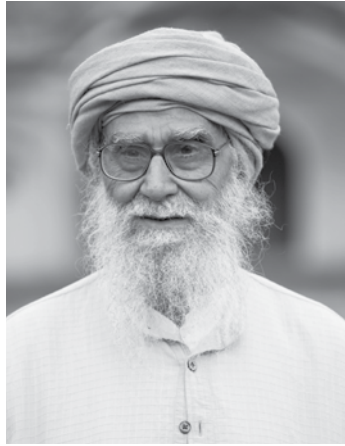
The truth is that if I were given a choice between two things—either to go on living in order to express the thoughts surging within me, or to be taken away from this world, where a person is bound to present whatever he sees as truth without holding anything back—I would, without hesitation, choose the latter. For me, death would be better than a life in which I must carry out this bitter duty: to speak about the intellectual and practical shortcomings of those with

whom I have been closely associated for the past fifteen years. (However, in this world, God has not granted human beings the option to choose death at will; rather, one is only given the opportunity to follow the path of truth and to declare it.)

If words could speak, they would say that this is not, in the usual sense, an act of pen and ink. These are molten emotions that have broken through the barriers of restraint and flowed outward, taking shape as words on paper. This is an offering of my blood and my tears, drawn from within me to the very last drop, and presented before my companions. It is the restless outpouring of those sorrowful thoughts that have unsettled my days and nights for the past five years.

Today, the truth may be hidden from people's sight, but it will not remain hidden forever. The day will surely come when God's angels will make it clear under what heart-rending circumstances these pages were written.

That day, which is undoubtedly approaching, will come when each of us will stand before the Lord of all worlds. On that day, the truth will be fully revealed. The beautiful words and appealing justifications that everyone now uses to shield themselves will fall apart, leaving people so exposed that not even a leaf will remain to conceal them. Blessed is the one for whom that day brings the glad tidings of "efforts well rewarded." And unfortunate is the one whose "faith" is not accepted, and to whom God says, "The matter for which you contended was merely the product of your own mind. It was not from Me."



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (1925-2021), an Islamic scholar, spiritual leader, and peace activist, was internationally recognized for his seminal contributions to world peace. The Government of India posthumously honored him with the Padma Vibhushan Award in 2021 for his contributions to spirituality. Maulana authored over 200 books that delve into Islam's spiritual wisdom, the Prophet's non-violent approach, its relationship with modernity, and other contemporary issues. His English translation of the Quran and Quran Commentary are widely appreciated for their simplicity, clarity, and ease of understanding. In 2001, he founded the Centre for Peace and Spirituality International to promote a culture of peace and share the spiritual message of Islam across the world. Today, the CPS International network continues to carry this legacy forward.

The author of this book had an intellectual disagreement with the early leadership of Jamaat-e-Islami. Over several years, discussions and correspondence continued between the author and Jamaat leaders.

The complete record of this exchange has been compiled in this work. Additionally, the issue discussed has been analyzed in the light of the Quran and Hadith from a purely scholarly perspective. It proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that the political interpretation of Islam is an error in interpretation.

Islam presented in the Quran, and Hadith is a God-oriented religion that is a subject of self-following, not a 'politically oriented' religion to be enforced on others. This book serves as a comprehensive document on the subject.

Goodword Books
CPS International

PDF



Order



ISBN 978-93-49952-90-4



9 789349 952904