

BELIEF AND ACTION AFTER SHAHADAH

an authentically founded course on the essentials

by Aiman W. Mueller

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‘Aauthubillaahi minash-shaytaanir-rajeem; bismillaahir-Rahmaanir-Raheem; Allahumma salli wa sallam wa barak ‘alaa Rasoolullaah; walhamdulillaah.

Assalaamu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullaahi wa barakatuhu:

Whether you are studying this booklet entirely on your own or also joining the corresponding class, the only certain requirement for this course is shahadah, or, more properly, ash-Shahadatayn, the two testimonies. The course should increase you in knowledge, giving you chances to clear doubts or confusions and increase in faith. A Muslim with a doubt or uncertainty about Islam should not remain like that, but, rather, seek to quickly clear that with the authentic evidences and explanations. However, those interested in information about Islam, either for general interest or with interest in perhaps becoming a Muslim, as well as those who would debate Islam, then those pursuits are all well and good but not suitable to the design of this booklet or course. In such cases I would prefer to discuss Islam in another context. In other words, the design of the course is not to prove Islam or passively overview it, but rather to follow up learning with belief and practice, just as the name of the course indicates.

The booklet begins with vital preparatory information, including a definition of what does and does not entail religious evidence in Islam, an advisement to avoid speaking without knowledge, introduction of the concept of ikhtilaaf (difference of opinion among scholars), a note on ablution and prayer, and definition of terms. I, myself, am a revert/convert and understand what it is like finding contradictions or mistakes in instructions or information received from the internet, books, and other Muslims. The course starts with concepts that smooth that experience.

Along with the prep is a sort of manifesto to frame the course. The subsequent chapters then cover not all the subjects of Islam, but those most vital to a Muslim’s belief, worldview, and daily practice. The course contents listed below were compiled with close reference to al-Qur’an, sound ahadith, and the writings of the central scholars of Islam, mercy and increase upon all of them. Besides taking three formal classes in aqeedah (creed) at Mishkah University, I’ve also consulted Imam Morsy of Masjid at-Tawheed as needed to help ensure the accuracy and truth of this important information. If you plan to attend the course sessions, Allah willing, complete the entire booklet and have questions prepared.

May Allah guide and bless you,

Aiman W. Mueller

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CHAPTER 1: PREPARATION & MAINTAINING FAITH

Preparation

Besides reading the letter on the previous page, there are several points that must be understood in preparation of the rest of this book, most of which are also important to safely and comfortably navigating the study and discussion of Islam in general:

- The intention of the booklet and course is to provide and discuss correct information each student can apply of their own volition for the Sake of Allah. The intention is not to look over anyone's shoulder or to make anyone feel judged or pressured on account of others.
- Following is an overview of what does and does not constitute evidence in Islam, an explanation of how evidence should be understood, and a related warning:
 - *The evidence:* The shahadah is really the shahadatayn, or two testimonies, i.e., that none has the right to be worshiped except Allah and that Allah selected the human Muhammad as His messenger. If we stop at saying only Allah has the right to be worshiped, then we leave the door open for debate on who Allah is and how He wants to be worshiped. The second statement, though, says that we will believe in Allah and worship Him according to the method and message conveyed by Muhammad, peace and blessings on him. That message is constituted from al-Qur'an, which is the Speech of Allah, and as-Sunnah, which is the way of Prophet Muhammad based on sound ahadith, the validated reports of his sayings and actions and those of the early generations of Muslims. Allah says, "It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a plain error." Thus, if anyone constitutes anything beyond or in divergence from al-Qur'an and as-Sunnah and attaches that thing to the deen, it will be labeled bid'ah (innovation) and rejected. Even in matters of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), where other means of evidence are employed (explained later in this chapter), the intention is achievement of the message of al-Qur'an and as-Sunnah.
 - *The understanding:* Evidence can be interpreted and applied variously. As well, combining several evidences can yield a different result than taking one at a time. Thus, even when the sources of evidence are agreed upon, the possibilities of controversy, misunderstanding, and misapplication still arise. Among us, however, are scholars. Abu Dawood (3641) narrated that Abu'd-Darda' said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: "The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets. The Prophets did not leave behind dinars or dirhams, rather they left behind a heritage of knowledge, and the one who acquires it acquires an abundant portion" (classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood). The righteous scholars are those of comprehensive knowledge with good character and truthfulness, yet we do not follow them blindly. They are bound to bring proof and sound means of interpretation in line with the long line of scholarship. Similarly as we would not enter a hospital seeking surgery from the janitor or perform surgery on our own selves. We would prefer, instead, the doctor. Likewise, for what is not apparent or clear to us, then we would seek the assistive guidance of the experts in the matters of Islam.
 - *The warning:* We should not speak on Islam except what we know, and the scholars are foremost in saying, "I don't know," when the limit of one's knowledge has been reached.
- Following are important terms and concepts:
 - *eemaan & aqeedah:* Eemaan typically refers to the faith Allah puts in a person's heart, but it has also been used to refer to the definitions of what a believer believes, more like the idea of creed or a list of beliefs that could be written down. More often, though,

eemaan is used just to reference faith in the heart; the scholarship started using the word aqeedah when discussing the definitions of faith. However, aqeedah, like eemaan, is inseparable from a person's heart and actions. To have correct faith, whether we call it eemaan or aqeedah, is not merely to be able to write down correct statements of belief, but that the activity of the heart and limbs reflect those definitions.

- *shari'ah*: the law of al-Qur'an and as-Sunnah with regard to what is prescribed for us and what is forbidden to us.
- *fiqh*: jurisprudence, which overlaps the shari'ah, but includes interpretation and circumstantial application as well, explained further below.
- *ikhtilaaf*: difference of opinion between the scholars. The scholars are in agreement on the central issues of eemaan & aqeedah as well as the shari'ah. In other words, there is no contention among the rightly guided as to what Islam is and what it calls for. However, when practically applying Islam in a detailed manner the scholars resort to interpretation (ijtihad), analogy (qiyaas), coming to consensus (ijmaa'), and the like of those. This means there is a significant amount of variance in opinion among the scholars in matters of fiqh. This could be troubling, but it is not (except unnecessarily) because of the following:
 - Such difference of opinion happened and was normal at the time of the Prophet, peace on him. In one instance, the Prophet, peace on him, ordered that his companions should not pray 'Asr (the third prayer of the day) except at the place of Banu Quraydah. They went and before they had gotten to the place the time for the fourth prayer was approaching. The companions discussed what to do. Some decided the emphasis of the order was to go quickly while others took a more literal interpretation that 'Asr had to be prayed in the place of Banu Quraydah. Thus, some prayed on the spot and others held off praying until they had gotten all the way to their destination. Later, they came to the Prophet, peace on him, to ask which group had done correctly, but they both received tacit approval. In both cases, they had taken the evidence (the order they received) and soundly interpreted it with sincere intention.
 - The points of variance do not constitute, on their own, disunity. For example, we all pray in the same direction with the same intention with, really, the same method. That some of us move the finger during tashahud and others hold it still is of no consequence.
 - Though agitation and problems arise over ikhtilaaf, none of that occurs when the manners of Islam are applied. Whoever is not qualified to debate the merits of various opinions, then he or she can take the opinion of whichever righteous scholar he or she trusts and let others select as they choose, whether similarly or differently. Whoever is qualified to compare, may compare for his or her own self and discuss those matters peacefully and with respect for all valid opinions.
 - Invalid opinions (innovations, extremes, and the unfounded or outlying) are clearly refuted by the righteous scholars and such information is widely available.
- The Prophet, peace on him, identified as-Salah (formal Islamic prayer), as the boundary between belief and disbelief. He also said, "Wudoo' (ablution) is half of salah" (Muslim). Purification and prayer should, thus, be a primary focus. These are best learned with an in-person instructor, but chapters 9 through 11 provide support materials and basic descriptions. Internet videos and recordings can also be useful.

Maintaining faith

We have all testified that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and that Muhammad, peace on him, is the Messenger of Allah. Now we hope to develop deeper faith. After all, deep faith is a protection against enticement into misguidance and the false paths of *ash-Shaytaan*: **“And he who changes faith for disbelief, verily, he has gone astray from the Right Way” (al-Qur’an 2:108)**. Alternatively, establishing the habits of a sincere Muslim and developing strong belief are the means of keeping ourselves firm upon the only path to success in this life and the next. But how do we do that? See what becomes clear about faith from the evidences below:

- ❖ “By time, indeed, man is in loss except those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other in truth and advised each other in patience” (al-Qur’an 103).
- ❖ “The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely” (al-Qur’an 8:2).
- ❖ Umayr ibn Habib al-Khatmi, *Allah be pleased with him*, used to say: “Faith increases and decreases.” Someone asked: “What increases it and what decreases it?” He replied: “If we remember Allah, praise Him, and declare His perfection; that is what increases it. If we are heedless, squander and forget; that is what decreases it.”
- ❖ “The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely” (al-Qur’an 8:2).
- ❖ Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn Taymiyyah, and others, mercy of Allah be on them all, said something similar to this: Faith is the speech of the heart and tongue, and the actions of the heart, tongue and limbs.
- ❖ Regarding al-Qur’an 2:177, Shaykh ‘Abd ar-Rahmaan al-Sa’di wrote, “These are the ones who are ‘the people of the truth’, whose faith is sincere, because their actions confirm their faith” (Tafseer al-Sa’di, p. 83).

Summary of above evidences:

- ✓ Faith increases with remembrance of Allah, recitation of al-Qur’an, and good actions.
- ✓ Faith decreases with forgetfulness of Allah, negligence, and bad actions.

Importance of sincerity of intention to the acceptability of good deeds:

- ❖ “Say (O Muhammad): ‘Verily, I am commanded to worship Allah (alone) by obeying Him and doing religious deeds sincerely for His sake only’” (al-Quran 39:11)

Importance of knowledge (of what pleases Allah) to performance of deeds acceptable to Allah:

- ❖ “It is only those who have knowledge among his servants who fear Allah” (al-Qur’an 35:28).
- ❖ The Prophet, peace be on him, said, “Beware newly invented matters, for every invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is a misguidance, and every misguidance is in the hellfire” (Abu Dawood and at-Tirmidhi).

Summation

In order to stay on the straight path we must maintain our faith by learning and doing the actions which Allah has informed us please Him (correct method). Furthermore, we must understand and intend those actions according to correct belief and for the Sake of Allah only (correct intention).

#1 Action of a Muslim: *Focus on ablution and formal prayer because the Prophet Muhammad, peace on him, said, “The barrier between a man and disbelief and idolatry is the prayer” (Saheeh Muslim).*

Learning these rituals is best done with an in-person tutor, but chapters 9 and 10 of this booklet provide the basics while chapter 11 covers general purity, which is also important to the validity of prayers.

CHAPTER 2: SIX ARTICLES INTRO & AT-TAWHEED, التوحيد

Six articles of faith:

1. Allah
2. Messengers and prophets of Allah, peace on all of them
3. Books of Allah
4. Angels
5. The Devine Decree, the good and the bad of it
6. Resurrection on the Day of Judgment

Any one of the six articles could be discussed from now till the Last Day. This course, Allah willing, will briefly introduce all of them with a focus on Allah and His Devine Decree, the rest of this session focusing exclusively on Allah, Himself, and how our belief in Him according to at-Tawheed.

We say, “Amantu billaah,” (I believe in Allah, *Allah*, الله). Allah is the focus and basis of our religion and our lives and His position is exclusive. No creature or thing is comparable to Allah. We believe in him with at-Tawheed (belief in the Oneness of Allah) which requires avoidance of shirk (association of partners) and kufr (disbelief).

The Oneness, *at-Tawheed*, التوحيد:

“Say: ‘He is Allah, the One. Allah, the Self-Sufficient. He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him.’” [al-Qur’an, 112:1-4; see also 19:65] Allah is the Unique . . .

. . . and thus has unique rights. Narrated Mu'adh bin Jabal: While I was riding behind the Prophet and between me and him there was only the back of the saddle, he said, "O Mu'adh!" I replied, "Labbaik, O Allah's Apostle, and Sa'daik!" he said, "Do you know what is Allah's right upon his slave?" I said, "Allah and his Apostle know best." He said, "Allah's right upon his slaves is that they should worship Him alone and not worship anything else besides Him." Then he proceeded for a while and then said, "O Muadh bin Jabal!" I replied, "Labbaik, O Allah's Apostle:, Sa'daik!" He said, "Do you know what is the right of the slaves upon Allah if they do that?" I replied, "Allah and his Apostle know best." He said, "The right of the slaves upon Allah is that He will not punish them (if they do that)." (al-Bukhari 72:850)

According to Islam Q&A, “The Arabs say waahid, ahad and waheed, all mean one. Allah is Waahid, meaning that He has no rivals or peers in any way. So Tawheed means knowing Allah is One, with none like unto Him. Whoever does not acknowledge Allah in these terms and does not describe Him as being One with no partner or associate does not believe in Tawheed. With regard to the shar’i (Islamically legal) definition of Tawheed, it means believing in Allah alone as God and Lord and attributing to Him alone all the attributes of Lordship and divinity.”

Tawheed is also affirming the essence of ash-Shahadatayn: The Prophet Muhammad, peace on him, said to Mu’aadh, “You will come to some people from among the People of the Book; so when you come to them, call them to bear witness that none has the right to be worshiped except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.” [al-Bukhaari, 1492]. The Message Allah sent through the Prophet, peace on him, defines Tawheed and we equate obedience to Allah with obedience to the Prophet. To be clear, Allah selected the Prophet, peace on him, to convey His Message, but the Prophet has NO share in divinity: His authority is an authority Allah assigned him. See al-Qur’an 4:65, 53:3-4, 33:36, and 59:7.

Traditional categorization of at-Tawheed, based on al-Qur’an and as-Sunnah:

A) Oneness of the Lordship of Allah (*Tawheed ar-Ruboobiyyah*)—Belief that Allah is the One, the Unique in His actions as the Lord, the Creator, the Organizer, the Planner, the Sustainer, the Giver of Security, the Life Giver, the Life Taker, etc. We affirm that no one provides us with rain or food, grants us life or death, brings benefit or causes harm, answers prayers, or has control over us except Allah.

- “Unquestionably, His is the creation and the command; blessed is Allah, Lord of the worlds.” [al-Qur’an 7:54]
- “Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is, over all things, Disposer of affairs.” [al-Qur’an 39:62; see also 13:16 and 23:84-89]

B) Oneness of the worship of Allah (Tawheed al-Uloohiyyah)—Belief that none has the right to be worshiped except Allah, and, thus, that all objects of worship taken besides Allah are false.

- “Say (O Muhammad): ‘Verily, I am commanded to worship Allah (alone) by obeying Him and doing religious deeds sincerely for His sake only.’ [al-Quran 39:11; see also 1:2, 1:5, 2:21, 39:2-3, 39:14-15, and 98:5]

C) Oneness of the Names and Attributes of Allah (Tawheed al-Asmaa’ was-Sifaat)—Belief that i) We cannot name or qualify Allah except with that which He and His Messenger, peace on him, named or qualified Him. ii) We cannot assign the Names and Attributes of Allah to other than Allah. iii) We must affirm and believe in the Names and Attributes of Allah without changing their meaning, ignoring them completely, twisting their meaning, or likening them to creation.

- “He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor, the Fashioner; to Him belong the best names.” [al-Qur’an 59:24; see also 1:3-4, 17:110, 19:65, 20:8, and 42:11]

Ascribing one or more partners or rivals to Allah (or any worship of other than Him), shirk, شرك:

Major shirk invalidates a person’s Islam and salvation except after sincere repentance because Allah says, “And they set up rivals to Allah, to mislead (men and women) from His path! Say: ‘Enjoy (your brief life)! But certainly, your destination is the (Hell) Fire!’” [al-Qur’an 14:30]. It is ascribing to something or someone other than Allah what belongs only to Allah (i.e., divinity/lordship, worthiness of worship, and His names and attributes—the three categories of Tawheed).

- Bowing before idols, making sacrifices to false gods, or supplicating to other than Allah (i.e. actions and words of worship to other than Allah)
- Putting trust in false gods or hypocrisy (outward Islam with inward shirk)
- Belief that someone or something other than Allah has a role in creation, granting life and death, forgiving sins, ordering what is permissible and what is impermissible, etc. For example, Allah’s Messenger, peace on him, recited al-Qur’an 9:31 and ‘Adi bin Hatim said, “O Allah’s Prophet! They do not worship them (Rabbis and Monks).’ Allah’s Messenger said, “They certainly do. They (i.e. Rabbis and Monks) made legal things illegal, and illegal things legal, and they (i.e. Jews and Christians) followed them; and by doing so they really worshiped them.” [Narrated by Ahmed, At-tirmidhi, and Ibn Jarir] in Tafsai At-Tabari, Vol. 10, Page No. 114]
- Giving devotion or love only Allah deserves to other than Allah (see al-Qur’an 2:165 and 9:24). For example, you may hear songs that say, “Every breath I take, I take it for you,” or, “I can’t live without you,” about a person. Or, imagine one who loves even the smell of money.
- Believing someone or something knows the Unseen as Allah knows it. For example, among Raafidis (a Shi’ah sect), extreme Sufis, and Baatinis (esoteric sects) are those who believe their Imams or Saints have special knowledge of the Unseen.
- Theologically dividing, compartmentalizing, or pluralizing Allah.
- Making deliberate effort to destroy or hinder Islam and the Believers or spreading shirk.

Minor shirk includes anything that may lead to major shirk or anything which is called shirk but—despite its destructiveness—does not necessarily invalidate a person’s Islam and salvation. In other words, the matters of minor shirk may become major shirk.

- Intention matters: Abu Dawood (3910) narrated from Ibn Mas’ood (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Tiyarah (superstitious

belief in omens) is shirk, tiyarah is shirk,” three times, and there is no one among us but (will have some of that) but Allah will rid him of it by means of tawakkul (putting his trust in Allah).

- Attachment to artifacts or taking any means for religious purpose without proof from al-Qur’an or as-Sunnah. For example, someone might hang up specific beads thinking it will protect them or ward off evil. Another might think wearing a ring with Allah’s name *al-Haafidh* on it is a means to Allah’s protection. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Incantations, amulets and love spells are shirk.” [Narrated by Abu Dawood, 3883; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in al-Silsilah al-Saheehah, 331] The word shirk is in the indefinite form which the scholars usually classify as minor shirk, rather than major.
- Venerating of someone or something short of ascribing Lordship—swearing by something other than Allah, for example.
- Worshiping apparently for Allah with the intention to show off in front of others is minor or hidden shirk, but—as with other forms of the minor—it can become or lead to the major (as with hypocrites—see al-Qur’an 4:142). In al-Musnad (27742) it is narrated that Mahmoud ibn Labeed said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The thing that I fear most for you is minor shirk.” They said: “O Messenger of Allah, what is minor shirk?” He said: “Showing off, for Allah will say on the Day when people are recompensed for their actions: ‘Go to those for whom you were showing off with your deeds in the world, and see what reward you find with them.’” Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in al-Silsilah al-Saheehah, 951.

Disbelief, kufr, كفر:

The word kufr means covering or concealing something. In Islam it means “not believing in Allah and His Messenger, whether that is accompanied by denial or it is not accompanied by denial but rather doubt, or turning away from faith out of jealousy or arrogance, or because one is following whims and desires that prevent one from following the message. So kufr is the attribute of everyone who rejects something that Allah has commanded us to believe in, after news of that has reached him, whether he rejects it in his heart without uttering it, or he speaks those words of rejection without believing it in his heart, or he does both; or he does an action which is described in the texts as putting one beyond the pale of faith.”

[Majmoo’ al-Fataawa by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, 12/335; al-Ihkaam fi Usool al-Ahkaam by Ibn Hazam, 1/45]

Kufr is a denial and can even take a form where a person inwardly recognizes the truth but outwardly rejects it, as with the Jews at the time of the Prophet Muhammad, peace on him. Allah says, “Then when there came to them that which they had recognized, they disbelieved in it” [al-Qur’an 2:89], and, “They belied them (those Ayaat) wrongfully and arrogantly, though their own selves were convinced thereof.” [al-Qur’an 27:14] Contrarily, the hypocrites proclaim belief while they hide their strong doubt and rejection of Islam in their hearts (see al-Qur’an 2:8, 2:14).

- Arrogant disobedience or defiance toward Allah’s Laws or His Prophet, peace on him, by words or actions: “And [remember] when We said to the angels, “Prostrate before Adam”; so they prostrated, except Iblees. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers. [al-Qur’an 2:34]
- Avoiding what Allah sent: “And who is more unjust than one who is reminded of the verses of his Lord but turns away from them and forgets what his hands have put forth?” [al-Qur’an 18:57]
- Hypocrisy: Making the actions and words of belief while rejecting belief in the heart (see al-Qur’an 2:8-20).
- Making permissible what is impermissible or making impermissible what is permissible (see al-Qur’an 16:116 and 42:8).
- Being hesitant toward or doubting what the Messenger of Allah, peace on him, came with (see al-Qur’an 18:35-38). This could naturally occur as part of the process of entering or establishing

Islam, so facing and resolving doubts by investigation and asking those who know is better than retaining doubts which may prevent sincere submission to Allah.

- Hating or mocking Allah, His Signs, or His Messenger, peace on him (see al-Qur'an 47:8-9 and 9:65-66).
- Disbelief in or denial of all or any of the Six Pillars of Faith: Allah, His angels, all or any one of His Messengers, His Books (even one letter therefrom), the Day of Resurrection, or the Divine Decree (both the good and the bad of what Allah has ordained to occur). Part of the famous hadith in which Jibreel, peace on him, appeared as a man to question the Prophet, peace on him about Islam is the statement, "Belief means having faith in Allah, angles, heavenly Scriptures, Messengers of Allah, life after death, and good and bad destiny." [Muslim 1/259]

The Prophet, peace on him, said: "Whoever has pride in his heart equal to the weight of a mustard seed shall not enter Paradise." Someone asked, "A person likes to wear beautiful clothes and fine shoes." He replied, "Allah is beautiful and likes beauty. Pride means rejecting the truth and looking down on other people." [Sahih Muslim]

The Connection between shirk and kufr:

Kufr and shirk are distinct in their meanings, but, according to, for example, Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz (may Allah have mercy on him) "a kaafir may be called a mushrik and a mushrik may be called a kaafir" because calling on other than Allah is referred to as kufr in al-Qur'an 23:117 and shirk in 35:13-14. Also—and this is included as evidence, not as a topic (see *special note* below)—the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Between a man and shirk and kufr there stands his giving up prayer." Narrated by Muslim in his Saheeh from Jaabir ibn 'Abd-Allah (may Allah be pleased with him). And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The covenant that differentiates us from them is prayer; whoever gives it up is a kaafir." Narrated by Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaa'i and Ibn Maajah with a saheeh isnaad from Buraydah ibn al-Husayb. When shirk is obvious, then kufr is behind it, and when kufr is obvious shirk is behind it.

Shaykh al-Baani explains an example in which we see one coming with the other, as I summarize here: A person denies a letter of al-Qur'an, denies that fasting in Ramadan is obligatory, or the like. This is kufr. However, Allah says in al-Qur'an 45:23, "Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire . . ." If someone makes kufr by disbelieving in an order from Allah then it is because, as a basis for the kufr, that person has followed desire, intellect, or some other false god, i.e. shirk.

The example of the Quraysh demonstrates the reverse case. They did not deny the existence of Allah but insisted worshipping their idols got them closer to Allah. This is shirk. However, by doing so they not only failed to believe in Allah but also made clear kufr by rejecting al-Qur'an and the Messenger of Allah, peace on him. Further, their shirk and any shirk amounts to kufr—disbelief—in at-Tawheed.

Al-Qur'an 5:73 provides another example: "They have certainly disbelieved who say, 'Allah is the third of three.' And there is no (true) god except one God. And if they do not desist from what they are saying, there will surely befall the disbelievers among them a painful punishment."

Special note: If someone believes that alcohol is forbidden but drinks alcohol even to the point of alcoholism, then this person has committed sin but not shirk or kufr, though that sin may lead to worse. The obligatory prayer is *somewhat* different in that total abandonment or denial of prayer endangers a person's Islam in a way alcoholism (in and of itself) does not; however, as with the previous example, a person who accepts that prayer is obligatory and agrees with Allah's commands regarding it, but has deficiency in prayer either due to the initial struggle to establish it or due to laziness, etc. then this is also a different condition than shirk or kufr.

CHAPTER 3: THE PROPHETS, THE BOOKS, & THE ANGELS

Allah sent down His Books to His messengers and prophets, peace on them all, by way of His angles, peace on them as well.

Messengers and Prophets of Allah, peace be on them all: Allah has selected certain humans for the purpose of reminding people of Himself and reality in order that they may accept guidance and in order that the rejecters would not be able to claim ignorance on the Last Day. The Qur'an mentions 25 prophets of Islam, but Allah says, "Among them there are those we have not related to you" (al-Qur'an 40:78). Some ahadith which may not be sound mention there have been 124,000 prophets, 315 of whom were messengers. Regardless of the exact number, Allah says, "To every people we have sent a guide" (al-Qur'an 13:7).

- As for the difference between a messenger and a prophet, then there are various means of differentiation. A basic "rule of thumb" is that a messenger is a prophet with whom Allah sends a specific message with a new law while a non-messenger prophet supports a law previously revealed.
- The lives of the prophets, peace on them, are examples for humanity to follow. They are human and have no share in divinity, but Allah protected them from the deliberate sins. For example Allah says of the Prophet Muhammad, peace on him, "He does not speak from his own desire. It is no less than an Inspiration sent down to him" (al-Qur'an 53:3-4). Further, when the prophets made mistakes (for instance by choosing the lesser of two virtuous actions) or unwittingly crossed a boundary of Allah, then Allah corrected them such that we are aware of Allah's correction. For example, the Prophet Muhammad, peace on him, declared Zaid ibn Haritha his son (i.e., adopted him) such that he was known as Zayd ibn Muhammad; however, Allah later revealed a verse in al-Qur'an 33:40 disallowing this type of adoption that covers lineage (whereas sponsoring a child or caring for an orphan is highly meritorious).
- We do not differentiate among the prophets regarding validity. They all properly conveyed and did what Allah chose them for. While the details of the law Allah established have varied according to Allah's Wisdom, all the prophets came with the exact same message of at-Tawheed (Oneness of Allah).
- However, in al-Qur'an 4:35, Allah mentions the messengers of "strong will." The term applies to the five greatest prophets who Allah tested most, may Allah's prayers and blessings be upon all of them: Nuh (Noah), Ibraheem (Abraham), Musa (Moses), 'Eesa (Jesus), and Muhammad.
- Prophet Muhammad, peace on him, is the final Messenger of Allah and the cornerstone of the house of the prophets. While other prophets were sent to specific groups, Prophet Muhammad, peace on him, came to call all humankind to Islam. When 'Eesa, peace on him, returns, he will legislate according to the way of the Prophet Muhammad, peace on him.

Books: The Books are a guidance from Allah for humankind and we must abide by Allah's guidance as He says, "And this is a blessed Book (the Quran) which We have sent down, so follow it and fear Allah" (6:155). Following are the key beliefs we must hold regarding the Books:

- We must believe Allah spoke or wrote the Books and revealed them: "It is not given to any human being that Allah should speak to him unless (it be) by Revelation, or from behind a veil, or (that) He sends a Messenger to reveal what He wills by His Leave. Verily, He is Most High, Most Wise." [al-Qur'an 42:51] "... and to Musa Allah spoke directly." [4:164] "And We wrote for him on the Tablets the lesson to be drawn from all things and the explanation for all things." [7:145]
- We must believe in the specifically named Books as well as the Books in general (peace be on the prophets named below):

- The named Books are the Scriptures of Ibraheem and those of Musa, Tawrah (revealed to Moses), Zaboor (Psalms revealed to Dawood [David]), Injeel (Gospel revealed to 'Eesa), and al-Qur'an (revealed to the Prophet Muhammad).
- We also believe in Allah's revelations comprehensively: ". . . say: 'I believe in whatsoever Allah has sent down of the Book'" (al-Qur'an 42:15).
- We must believe everything said in the Books is true. Disbelief in one letter from them is paramount to complete disbelief in all of them. However, we do not regard the modern Bible as an accurate record of previous revelations, so we neither deny nor confirm its contents except what is apparent by means of verification in al-Qur'an.
- We must believe al-Qur'an is a confirmation and witness over the previous revelations because Allah says, "And We have sent down to you (O Muhammad) the Book (this Quran) in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it and" (al-Qur'an 5:48). Commentary from Shaykh Munajjid's Islam Q&A website explains, "The mufasssirin (commentators) said that Muhaymin means trustworthy and a witness over the Books that came before it, and confirming them, i.e., confirming whatever is true in them and rejecting whatever alterations, distortions and changes have occurred in them [i.e., their early records], and ruling that the previous rulings have been abrogated – i.e., they are no longer applicable – and that new rulings and laws have been promulgated. Hence all those who were following previous books and who have not turned on their heels should submit to it, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): 'And when it is recited to them, they say: We believe in it. Verily, it is the truth from our Lord. Indeed even before it we have been from those who submit themselves to Allah in Islam as Muslims' (al-Qur'an 28:52-53)."
- The Book of Allah cannot be destroyed; the Books are Allah's Words. While the earthly records of previous revelations are no longer reliable, the original revelations are all intact with Allah. Allah says, "So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write (i.e., Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), who believes in Allah and His Words" (al-Qur'an 7:158).
- With regard to al-Qur'an, the early record is surely intact for us to follow as Allah says, "Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian" (al-Qur'an 15:9).
- Shaykh Munajjid summarizes our duty to al-Qur'an as follows: "What is meant by adhering to the Quran and giving it its due is: regarding what it permits as permitted, regarding what it forbids as forbidden, obeying its commands, avoiding that which it prohibits, paying heed to its lessons, learning from its stories, understanding its clear and unambiguous texts, referring the exact meaning of its ambiguous texts to Allah, not overstepping its limits and defending it, whilst memorizing it, reciting it in a proper manner, pondering the meanings of its verses, reciting it in prayer night and day, being sincere towards it in all senses, and calling others to do likewise with understanding."

Angels, *malaa'ikah*, الملائكة: It is incumbent upon the Muslim to confirm the existence of the Unseen, though understanding is limited. Angels are part of this world of the Unseen. They are created and share no part in divinity. Below are a few features and aspects of angels around which we may encourage our faith (summarized predominantly from <http://islamqa.info/en/ref/843/angels>):

- Allah created them from light: 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) reported: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'The angels are created from light, just as the jinn are created from smokeless fire and mankind is created from what you have been told about (i.e. various forms of soil or clay)" [Muslim]
- Allah created Angels before He created mankind because Allah says, "Behold, your Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a vicegerent (i.e., humankind) on earth'" (al-Qur'an 2:30).
- Angels have true forms but can take other forms. For example, in a famous, very long agreed upon hadith Jibreel comes to the Prophet Muhammad, peace on him, in the form of a beautiful man "whose clothes were extremely white, whose hair was extremely black, upon whom traces of

travelling could not be seen, and whom none of us knew.” He also came to Maryam in the form of a man (see al-Qur’an 19:17). As mentioned later, angels also came in the form of men to Ibraheem. Jibreel, however, is described in true form in a hadith from ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ood (may Allah be pleased with him) who said, “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saw Jibreel in his true form. He had six hundred wings, each of which covered the horizon. There fell from his wings jewels, pearls and rubies, only Allah knows about them.” It was reported by Ahmad in al-Musnad, and Ibn Katheer said in al-Bidayah that its isnad (chain of narrators) is jayyid (good). In yet another hadith, the Prophet, peace on him, said, "I saw Jibreel descending from heaven, and his great size filled the space between heaven and earth." [Muslim].

- They can be exceedingly large, as noted above and in a hadith from Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who said: ‘I have been given permission to speak about one of the angels of Allah who carry the Throne. The distance between his ear-lobes and his shoulders is equivalent to a seven-hundred-year journey.’” [Abu Dawood].
- They have wings, as mentioned in al-Qur’an 35:1: "Praise be to Allah, Who created (out of nothing) the heavens and the earth, Who made the angels messengers with wings - two, or three, or four (pairs). He adds to Creation as He pleases: for Allah has power over all things." [35:1]
- They vary in status as in the hadeeth narrated by Mu‘adh ibn Rifa‘ah al-Zuraqi from his father, who said: "Jibreel came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) and asked, ‘How do you rate the people among you who were present at Badr?’ He said: ‘They are the best of the Muslims,’ or something similar. [Jibreel] said: ‘So it is with the angels who were present at Badr.’” [al-Bukhaari]
- They do not eat or drink as evidences in al-Quran 51:26-28 when angels who appear as men giving glad tidings to Ibraheem of a son refuse food. The son would turn out to be prophet Ishaq, peace on him and his father. Also see 11:70.
- They do not get tired of remembering and praising Allah as Allah says, “They celebrate His praises night and day, nor do they ever slacken” [al-Qur’an 21:20]. Also see 41:38.
- There are many angels, and Allahs knows best how many, as evidenced in several hadith, including the following: "Then I was taken up to the Much-Frequented House: every day seventy thousand angels visit it and leave, never returning to it again, another [group] coming after them." [al-Bukhaari]. ‘Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘Hell will be brought forth that day by means of seventy thousand ropes, each of which will be pulled by seventy thousand angels." [Muslim].
- Some of the angels are specifically named and/or assigned duties, peace be on all of them, so, besides believing in angels in general, we believe in those angels by their names and duties:
 - Jibreel (جبريل), among many other things, brought the Revelation from Allah to Muhammad, peace on him, as mentioned, for example in al-Qur’an 2:97. Also, when Allah says, “And We gave ‘Eesa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary), clear signs and supported him with Ruh-ul-Qudus,” the scholars identify Jibreel as this roohul-Qudus (the Holy Spirit) (as would be supported by 26:193 and 19:17).
 - Meekaa’eel (ميكائيل) is mentioned in al-Qur’an 2:98 and he is the head of the angels who direct the rain, clouds, wind, etc according to Allah’s Will.
 - Israafeel (اسرافيل) is mentioned in a hadith narrated by Muslim and will blow the Trumpet on the Last Day.
 - Maalik (مالك) is the Keeper of Hell mentioned in al-Qur’an 43:77 and is the leader of among nineteen angels (see al-Qur’an 74:27-31) who are the “guards of hell.” Also see al-Qur’an 39:71 and 97:17-18.
 - Munkar (منكر) and Nakeer (نكير), mentioned in a hadith from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be

upon him) said: ‘When the deceased is buried (or he said: when one of you is buried), there come to him two blue-black angels, one of whom is called Munkar and the other Nakeer. They ask him, ‘What did you used to say about this man?’ and he says what he used to say: ‘He is the slave and Messenger of Allah: I bear witness that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is the slave and Messenger of Allah. They say, ‘We knew beforehand that you used to say this.’ Then his grave will be widened for him to a size of seventy cubits by seventy cubits and it will be illuminated for him. Then they tell him, ‘Sleep.’ He says, ‘Go back to my family and tell them.’ They tell him, ‘Sleep like a bridegroom whom no-one will wake up except his most beloved,’ until Allah raises him up. If (the deceased) was a hypocrite, he says, ‘I heard the people saying something so I said something similar; I do not know.’ They say: ‘We knew beforehand that you used to say this.’ The earth will be told to squeeze him, so he will be crushed until his ribs are interlocked, and he will remain like that until Allah raises him up.” [al-Tirmidhi].

- The angels are given the task of collecting peoples souls because Allah says, “Say: ‘The angel of death, who is set over you, will take your souls, then you shall be brought to your Lord’” (al-Qur’an 32:11).
- Further, Allah says, “For each (person), there are angels in succession, before and behind him. They guard him by the Command of Allah.” (al-Qur’an 13:11). In fact Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet, peace on him, said, “Angels come to you in succession by night and by day, and all of them get together at the time of Fajr and ‘Asr prayers. Then, those who have stayed with you overnight, ascent unto Allah who asks them—and He knows the answer better than they—‘How have you left My slaves?’ They reply, ‘We left them while they were offering prayer and we came to them while they were offering prayer.’” [al-Bukhari]
- There are two angels for each of us writing our good deeds and bad deeds as referred to in al-Qur’an 6:61, 43:80, 50:17-18, and 82:10-11. A special note regarding these angels and Allah’s Mercy on us: “Abu Umamah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah, peace on him, said, ‘The angel of the left raises [and holds] his pen for six hours for the Muslim servant of Allah who has wronged or committed a mistake. So if he regrets and seeks Allah’s forgiveness from it he returns it back, and if that is not the case then it is written as one.’” [Collected by at-Tabarani in Kabir 7667, Abu Na’eem in Hilya 6/124, and al-Bayhaqi in Shu’ib 6788—classed as hasan by Shaykh Albani in Saheehah 1209]
- There are angels who guard the unborn in the womb as mentioned in numerous ahadith in al-Bukhari and Muslim.
- Some angels carry the Throne of Allah as mentioned in al-Qur’an 40:7.
- Some angels join those who are engaged in the remembrance of Allah: Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him) said: ‘Allah, be He blessed and exalted, has angels who travel the highways seeking out the people of dhikr. When they find people remembering Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, they call out to one another, "Come to what you hunger for!" and they enfold them with their wings, stretching up to the lowest heaven. Their Lord asks them, and He knows better than them, "What are My slaves saying?" They say: "They are glorifying, magnifying, praising and extolling You." He asks, "Have they seen Me?" They say, "No, by Allah, they have not seen You." He asks, "And how would it be if they saw Me?" They say, "They would be even more fervent and devoted in their praise and worship." He asks, "What are they asking me for?" They say, "They ask You for Paradise." He asks, "And have they seen it?" They say, "No, by Allah, O Lord, they have not seen it." He asks, "And how would it be if they saw it?" They say: "They would be even more eager for it and they would beseech You even more earnestly." He asks, "And what do they seek My protection from?" They say, "From the Fire of Hell." He asks,

- "Have they seen it?" They say, "No, by Allah, they have not seen it." He asks, "And how would it be if they saw it?" They say: "They would be even more afraid and anxious to escape it." Allah says: "You are My witnesses that I have forgiven them." One of the angels says: "So-and-so is not really one of them; he came (to the gathering) for some other reason." Allah says, "They were all in the gathering, and one of them will not be excluded (from forgiveness)."" [al-Bukhaari].
- Some angels are responsible for the mountains: ‘Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): "Have you ever faced any day more difficult than the day of Uhud?" He said: "I suffered at the hands of your people and the worst that I suffered was what I suffered at their hands on the day of ‘Aqabah. That was when I went to call Ibn ‘Abd Yalayl ibn ‘Abd al-Kalal to Islam, and he did not respond. I left, feeling depressed and hardly knowing where I was going. I did not recover until I found myself in Qarn al-Tha‘alib. I raised my head and saw that I was being shaded by a cloud. I looked, and saw Jibreel in the cloud. He called me and said: ‘Allah has heard what your people said and how they responded to you. He has sent the Angel of the Mountains so that you can tell him to do to them whatever you want.’ The Angel of the Mountains called me and greeted me, then said: ‘O Muhammad, tell me what you want me to do. If you want, I can crush them between two mountains.’" The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "All I hope for is that Allah will bring forth from their loins people who will worship Allah alone and not associate any partner with Him." [al-Buhaari].
 - Shaykh Munajjid explains of the angels in constant positions of worship: "There are also angels standing in rows, who never get tired or sit down, and others who bow or prostrate, and never raise their heads, as was reported by Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, who said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘I see what you do not see and hear what you do not hear. The heaven makes a noise like groaning, and it has the right to (or it is no surprise), for there is no space in it the width of four fingers, but there is an angel there, placing his forehead in sujood (prostration) to Allah. By Allah, if you knew what I know, you would laugh little and weep much, you would not enjoy your relationships with women and you would go out in the street praying to Allah’" (al-Tirmidhi).

CHAPTER 4: THE DEVINE WILL & DECREE, *AL-QADAA` WAL-QADAR*, القضاء و القدر:

Al-Qadaa` is typically said before Al-Qadar perhaps because it easier to say that way, but Al-Qadar would more logically come first. While the term Al-Qadar or Qadar of Allah is often used to refer to the whole matter, when it is defined separate from al-Qadaa` it refers to the foreknowledge of knowledge and His writing of everything that would happen before He created this world. Al-Qadaa`, then, refers to His Will by which He creates everything in accordance with what He knew and wrote aforetime.

Achieving continual applied understanding of this particular article of faith is one of the greatest and most rewarding tests before us as Muslims. It opens the door to benefit in all circumstances, calms the heart, increases the *eemaan* (faith), and leads to success and tranquility in all things. However, it is an easy issue to misunderstand or neglect. After all, how can we believe nothing happens, good or bad, except by the Decree and Power of Allah, the Most High, Most Great, such that we are grateful in ease and patient in difficulty, relying on Allah and His Wisdom—and, *at the same time*—also believe Allah created us with intentionality such that we are responsible for our own actions as we freely choose them? Following the brief introduction below (i), which servers to point us in the direction and put us on the right foot, are three more sections intended for us to feel secure regarding the issue of al-Qadaa` wal-Qadar. Section (ii)

is a description of a true story that will help set up our understanding of al-Qadaa` wal-Qadar, but not prove the issue. Section (iii) outlines the four aspects of al-Qadaa` wal-Qadar the scholars reiterate as well as further key points along with their evidences. That final section is important to correct belief in al-Qadaa` wal-Qadar (and, thereby, to achieving its benefits and the peace associated with it) as well as avoidance of disbelief in al-Qadaa` wal-Qadar and all the spiritual and psychological harms that come with that disbelief.

(i) Introduction: Both among Muslims and non-Muslims are those who make one of two erroneous arguments. *First* is the argument exclusively for free will, the idea that humans freely choose what to do independent of the Will of God. If that were true, individual humans would be responsible for directing the shape of their lives, history, and the interrelationship of everything like little gods apart from divine mercy, wisdom, and planning. Are we really willing to say Allah has no idea what we will do before we do it? And if Allah does not know what we will do, then how is it by His Power that we do what we do? The argument, thus, implies we are all able to bring our own actions into being by our own ultimate power. This is an affront to Allah, who is the First and the Last, the All-Powerful, the “best of planners” (al-Qur’an 8:30). *Second* is the argument exclusively for preordainment, the idea that everything is set by God beforehand and that we have nothing to do with what happens. If that were so, God would be unjust by making people do evil things without any will of their own and then punishing them for those deeds God made them do. This is *not* the reality of Allah, The Just. There would be no difference, in the case humans were compelled by Allah, between giving charity and murdering. In neither case would the person have had any role in choosing to do those actions. In the fallacy of the second argument, nothing is good and nothing is bad.

Contrary to those fallacies, as we will see in the evidences from al-Qur’an and ahadith, divine preordainment and human intentionality are simultaneous realities. We have already believed that Allah created something from nothing (see al-Qur’an al-Qur’an 30:8 and 21:56), so we know very well that Allah is not bound by our created intellect and reason; He is above having the same attributes as His creation and He is “able to do all things” (al-Qur’an 16:17); “When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is” (al-Qur’an 2:117). It is easy for Allah to know and preordain everything before it happens and yet incorporate our intentions into that preordained plan and His creation of everything. *How* is beyond us and we would only harm ourselves to seek what is beyond us.

(ii) The People of the Elephant: Before getting into the precise evidences, take the people of the elephant Allah mentions in chapter 105 of al-Qur’an as an example. During the time of jahiliyah (ignorance), in the same year the Prophet Muhammad, peace on him was born, Yemen was controlled by Christian Abyssinia (modern Ethiopia). The co-governors there, Abrahah and Aryat, were accompanied by a huge army. The two bickered over many matters and instigated infighting until they decided to have a duel to put an end to the situation. Abrahah won the duel, but his king back in Abyssinia, an-Najashi, was displeased with what had happened and threatened to come tread on Yemen and cut Abrahah’s forelock off. To appease an-Najashi, Abrahah sent dirt from Yemen along with his forelock and a promise to build a grand Church in an-Najashi’s honor.

Abrahah built a grand, beautifully crafted church so tall that looking at the top would cause one’s cap to fall off. Further, he tried to force the Arabs to make pilgrimage to his church rather than the pilgrimage they had always done to al-Ka’bah (remember, this is before the revelation from Allah, so this pilgrimage is not the same as al-hajj in Islam). This angered the Arabs to the point that one of them went to the church and relieved himself in it.

In response to that, Abrahah mobilized his huge army which would be led by al-Aswad bin Mafsood. Included in the army were elephants, among which was one an-Najashi supplied specifically for the

mission. It was of incredible size and named Mahmood; they planned to use Mahmood to pull chains tied around al-Ka'bah in order to destroy the structure. Dhu Nafr gathered and led the people of Yemen in a fight against Abrahah, but they failed. As the army continued on toward al-Ka'bah, Nufayl bin Habib al-Kath'ami led several tribes, again, in an attempt to stop Abrahah, but also failed. Abrahah and his army continued until they had reached an area near Makkah called al-Mughammas, where they settled.

While they were settled they went out to gather camels belonging to the locals. As well, Abrahah sent a message for the leader of Makkah that he would not attack the people of Makkah so long as they did not get in the way of his intention to destroy al-Ka'bah. After listening to 'Abdul Mu'taalib, the messenger brought 'Abdul Mu'taalib to talk with Abrahah directly. At first Abrahah was impressed with his stature and appearance, so he came down off his seat and sat down with him and asked him via a translator what he needed. Since some of the camels taken by Abrahah's men belonged to him, he replied, "I want the king to return my camels which he has taken from me which are two hundred in number." Abrahah returned by saying, "I was impressed by you when I first saw you, but now I withdraw from you after you have spoken to me. You are asking me about two hundred camels which I have taken from you and you leave the matter of a house which is (the foundation of) religion and the religion of your fathers, which I have come to destroy and you do not speak to me about it" 'Abdul-Muttalib said to him, "Verily, I am the lord of the camels. As for the House, it has its Lord Who will defend it." Abrahah said, "I cannot be prevented (from destroying it)." 'Abdul-Muttalib answered, "Then do so."

Incidentally, Abrahah did give back 'Abdul Mu'taalib his camels and after returning from the meeting 'Abdul Mu'taalib instructed the people of Makkah to seek shelter in the tops of mountains so that they might avoid any harms Abrahah's army might do to them. It appeared nothing stood between Abrahah and al-Ka'bah. In the morning he assembled his army and the elephants. Meanwhile, Nufayl bin Habib who had been defeated earlier and forced at the threat of death to be a guide for Abrahah's army, approached the head elephant, Mahmood, took the creature by the ear, and told it, "Kneel, Mahmud! Then turn around and return directly to whence you came. For verily, you are in the Sacred City of Allah," after which, indeed, it knelt. The man then fled into the mountains.

After that, the soldiers could not get the elephant to stand up, though they even beat it using axes and hooks. Eventually they tried turning the elephant back toward Yemen and it rose and walked quickly. They then turned it toward ash-Sham (roughly to the north) and it again walked quickly. They turned him back toward Makkah and he knelt down again refusing to move forward.

Abrahah and his army never were able to enter Makkah because it was then that Allah sent punishment on them in the form of birds, each carrying three tiny stones: one in each claw and a third in the beak. The birds dropped the stones from a height such that the stones passed all the way through the bodies all but a few of Abrahah's soldiers, killing them. Others, including Abrahah, were attacked with pieces of their bodies falling off as they retreated until they had entered Yemen, Allah knows best, so they could spread the story of what had happened.

The scholars debate the possible wisdoms behind the order of the chapters of al-Qur'an, but there being a connection between chapters 105, which is about the people of the elephant, and the following chapter, 106, is widely agreed (including a mention of connection in Tafseer Ibn Katheer). Chapter 106 reads, "(It is a great Grace and Protection from Allah), for the taming of the Quraish, (And with all those Allah's Grace and Protections for their taming, We cause) the (Quraish) caravans to set forth safe in winter (to the south), and in summer (to the north without any fear), so let them worship (Allah) the Lord of this House (the Ka'bah in Makkah). (He) Who has fed them against hunger, and has made them safe from fear."

Allah knows best, but it seems Allah used the actions of Abrahah and all these related events as a means to affect the Quraysh and their status. Allah knows best, but the event would seem to call the Quraysh to thankfulness for being the keepers of al-Ka'bah, "taming" or uniting them, while also establishing respect and safety for a people the believers among whom would eventually spread Islam across the entire globe. As the story spread, respect and fear of the Quraysh increased. Further, it is by Allah that such a spotlight

was placed on al-Ka'bah in the same year his prophet (Muhammad, peace on him) would be born and soon purify the vicinity from idolatry, calling people back to "worship (Allah) the Lord of this House," without associating any partners with him, Glory be to Allah. The event was also part of the fulfillment of the supplication of the Prophet Ibraheem, peace on him, "My Lord, make this a City of Peace, and feed its people with fruits."

It would seem Abrahah were merely a means or a tool in Allah's planning. Yet, Abrahah clearly had a will and purpose of his own. Allah sent two army's to stop him, but he continued. Allah sent 'Abdul Mu'taalib to warn him, but he did not listen. Allah made Mahmood the elephant mobile in any direction except the direction of al-Ka'bah, a sign Abrahah again cast away before his own ambition and strong intention. Isn't it clear Abrahah did what he did by his own intention, and yet he did that by Allah's Decree and in fulfillment of Allah's plan?

We can take this as glad tidings as well, as we will see in more detail through ayaat from al-Qur'an and ahadith on the issue of al-Qadar, that no matter what happens, Allah has not left his slaves to happenstance or the whims of other human beings. Allah has wisdom in everything and "the believers must eventually win through" (al-Qur'an 23:1), so "fear none but Allah" (al-Qur'an 9:18).

(iii) The four pillars of *al-Qadaa` wal-Qadar* with additional key points:

Knowledge (pillar 1)—Allah knows all things with no exceptions. There is not an atom or less than an atom in the earth or skies that is not utterly encompassed by Allah's knowledge.

"He is Allah, beside Whom none has the right to be worshipped, the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful." (al-Qur'an 59:22)

"And that Allah surrounds all things in (His) Knowledge" (al-Qur'an 65:12)

He even knows how things that do not happen would happen if they did. For example, on the Last Day, disbelievers will ask to be put back on the earth again promising they would do good. Allah says, "But if they were returned (to the world), they would certainly revert to that which they were forbidden. And indeed they are liars" (al-Qur'an 6:28).

Writing (pillar 2)—Further, everything that has ever happened or will ever happen in this world was already written in *al-lawhul-mahfoodh* aforetime. [But this does not negate our intentionality. Later points in this chapter will show that Allah wrote what He knew we would choose to do, and, by Allah, what we do fulfills His ultimate Wisdom, including sins, disasters, etc.]

Abdullah b. 'Amr b. al-'Aas reported: I heard Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: "Allah ordained the measures (of quality) of the creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth, as His Throne was upon water" (Muslim Book #033, Hadith #6416).

Narrated Imran bin Husain: . . . The people of Bani Tamim came to the Prophet . . . "We have come to ask you about this matter (i.e. the start of creations)." He said, "First of all, there was nothing but Allah, and (then He created His Throne). His throne was over the water, and He wrote everything in the Book (in the Heaven) and created the Heavens and the Earth" (al-Bukhari 54:414).

Allah says, "No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but it is inscribed in the Book of Decrees (al-Lawhal-Mahfooz)" (al-Qur'an 57:22).

Will (pillar 3)—There is no Power except with Allah. Whatever happens is by Allah's Will and whatever Allah does not Will then all the creation are helpless to make it happen. Nothing, whether it is good or bad, happens except by the Decree of Allah (this Will is sometimes called Allah's Universal Will to differentiate it from Allah's *legal* will, mentioned later in this chapter).

"And never say of anything, 'I shall do such and such thing tomorrow,' except with the saying, 'If Allah wills'" (al-Qur'an 18:23-24).

“And you cannot will unless (it be) that Allah wills, the Lord of the ‘*Aalameen* (mankind, jinn, and all that exists)” (al-Qur’an 81:29).

“Say, ‘Never will we be struck except by what Allah has decreed for us; He is our protector.’ And upon Allah let the believers rely.”

“But those who deny Our verses are deaf and dumb within darkness. Whomever Allah wills, He leaves astray; and whomever He wills, He puts him on a straight path” (6:39).

Creation (pillar 4)—Allah is the Creator of all things, even the actions of His creatures.

“Allah is the Creator of all things” (al-Qur’an 39:62).

“While Allah has created you and what you make.” (al-Qur’an 37:96)

And the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Allah has made every doer and what he does” (Narrated by al-Bukhari in *Khalq Af’aal al-‘Ibaad* 25 and by Ibn Abi ‘Aasim in *al-Sunnah* 257 and 358; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *al-Saheehah*, 1637).

Legal Will--The Will of Allah already mentioned is sometimes referred to as Allah’s universal Will. That will is in accordance with the set Decree of Allah and includes our obedience and its consequence as well as our disobedience and its consequence and everything else, including what we ate for breakfast. However, Allah also has a legal will, which are the commands and guidance Allah provides mankind to live by, such as found in al-Qur’an and as-Sunnah. It concerns what Allah wants for us. People choose to either obey or disobey Allah’s legal will. For example, Allah has ordered us to pray, but some pray and some do not.

Human intentionality—Allah decrees everything we do before we do it, but, simultaneously, we act according to our own intention and should not quit striving falsely thinking we have no choice. This is apparent to us rationally in that we are self-aware about our choice making. If we are offered chicken, beef, or a vegetable plate it is not the case that we ignorantly watch ourselves choosing wondering which dinner we will select. Rather, we deliberate and consciously choose. Nonetheless, there are many evidences that demonstrate human intention as well as evidences that make it clear we must strive, rather than apathetically relying on Allah’s Qadar.

Narrated 'Umar bin Al-Khattab: I heard Allah's Apostle saying, "The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended. So whoever emigrated for worldly benefits or for a woman to marry, his emigration was for what he emigrated for" (Bukhari 1:1:1).

“To whomsoever among you who wills to walk straight” (al-Takweer 81:28).

“Whoever does righteousness, it is for his [own] soul; and whoever does evil [does so] against it. And your Lord is not ever unjust to [His] servants” (al-Qur’an 41:46).

“To any of you that chooses to go forward (by working righteous deeds), or to remain behind (by committing sins)” (al-Qur’an 74:37).

“Or lest you say, ‘If only the Scripture had been revealed to us, we would have been better guided than they.’ So there has [now] come to you a clear evidence from your Lord and a guidance and mercy. Then who is more unjust than one who denies the verses of Allah and turns away from them? We will recompense those who turn away from Our verses with the worst of punishment for their having turned away” (al-Qur’an 6:157) (also see 11:17)

“Then after them succeeded an (evil) generation, which inherited the Book, but they chose (for themselves) the goods of this low life (evil pleasures of this world) saying (as an excuse), ‘It will be forgiven for us’” (al-Qur’an 7:169).

“What is [the matter] with you [that you are] two groups concerning the hypocrites, while Allah has made them fall back [into error and disbelief] for what they earned. Do you wish to guide those whom Allah has sent astray? And he whom Allah leaves astray, never will you find for him a way [of guidance]” (al-Qur’an 4:88).

“And those who disbelieved say, ‘Why has a sign not been sent down to him from his Lord?’ Say, [O Muhammad], ‘Indeed, Allah leaves astray whom He wills and guides to Himself whoever turns back [to Him]’ 13:27

Allah says to the Prophet, peace on him, “So if they argue with you, say, ‘I have submitted myself to Allah [in Islam], and [so have] those who follow me.’ And say to those who were given the Scripture and [to] the unlearned, ‘Have you submitted yourselves?’ And if they submit [in Islam], they are rightly guided; but if they turn away - then upon you is only the [duty of] notification. And Allah is Seeing of [His] servants” (al-Qur’an 3:20).

"But you cannot will unless Allah wills; Allah is Knowing, Wise" (*al-Qur'an* 76:30).

Muslim narrated in his saheeh that 'Ali said: "We were at a funeral in Baqee' al-Gharqad²⁶ and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came to us. He sat down, then we sat down around him. He had a small stick with him, and he lowered his head and started to draw lines on the ground with his stick. Then he said: 'There is no one among you, there is not a living soul, but Allah has already decreed his place in Paradise or in Hell, and it has been decreed whether he is blessed or doomed.'" A man asked: "O' Messenger of Allah, why do we not rely on what has been written, and not bother to strive?" He said: "Whoever is one of the blessed will end up doing the actions of those who are blessed, and whoever is one of the doomed will end up doing the actions of those who are doomed." Then he said: "Strive, for everyone will be guided. Those who are blessed will be guided to do the actions of those who are blessed, and those who are doomed will be facilitated to do the actions of those who are doomed." Then he (ﷺ) recited: “As for him who gives [in charity] and keeps his duty to Allah and fears Him, And believes in Al-Husnaa [the best] . We will make smooth for him the path of ease [goodness]. But he who is greedy, miser and thinks himself self-sufficient, and belies Al-Husnaa, We will make smooth for him the path for evil” (al-Qur’an 92:5-10).

The above hadith takes us right up to the furthest extent of what we as humans can or need to know about al-Qadaa' wal-Qadar. It makes clear what our job is. When Allah decrees some food for someone, He also decrees with it the exact means of getting it, whether that is a job and a store to buy it and cook it, etc. or someone preparing it for the person, etc. A person does not ask for food and then sit and wait for it to appear in the stomach. Likewise, a person is not destined for the Paradise except along with that are good deeds and a person is not destined for the Hellfire except with that are bad deeds. So if we are good we will do good and if we are bad we will do bad. Therefore, we must strive to do good. Further, though Allah knows each person's final end, that is matter yet unknown to us. If someone is doing bad, as far as we know, the chance for repentance is open. And if someone is doing good, only Allah knows the person's intentions and what they will do next, so that person is not secure until he or she dies in a good condition.

Allah's Decree is according to His Wisdom—Allah is the First and the Last, the Immanent, and there is no Power, except with Allah. Even while there is evil, that is by Allah's wisdom and is for an ultimate good. If there were no poor, for example, the rich would have no one to give to. And we are tested by ease to prove if we will be thankful and tested by hardship to prove if we will grow in patience and we make sins and mistakes to prove if we will learn and repent. The one who had the most difficulty in this life will be a believer and Allah will put that believer into the Paradise for the blink of an eye. When Allah then asks that believer to recall any pain, the believer will not remember ever having suffered at all in this short life. The taste of the good end will have wiped it out.

“Indeed, Allah ordains what He intends” (al-Qur’an 5:1).

"But you cannot will unless Allah wills; Allah is Knowing, Wise" (al-Qur'an 76:30).

"Allah eliminates what He wills or confirms, and with Him is the Mother of the Book" (al-Qur'an 13:39).

"Did they then feel secure against the Plan of Allah? None feels secure from the Plan of Allah except the people who are the losers." (al-Qur'an 7:99)

"If the whole *'Ummah* (nation) were to unite and try to benefit you in something, they would never benefit you except by that which Allah has written for you. And if the whole *'Ummah* were to unite and try to harm you in something, they would never be able to harm you except that Allah had written it upon you" (Narrated in *Sahih at-Tirmidhi*, and in *Musnad Ahmad* (with a different wording). Authenticated by *Shaykh al-Albani*).

Allah loves or wants mankind and jinn to believe and take safety, and is never unjust to them—Though everything is by the Will and Decree of Allah, including the creation of ash-Shaytaan, our sins, accidents, etc., humans still receive attribution for harms and evil due to their intentionally earning it with disobedience to Allah's legal will. Further, though Allah created ash-Shaytaan and evil in His Wisdom, He "likes not kufr for His slaves" (al-Qur'an 40:7).

"What comes to you of good is from Allah, but what comes to you of evil, is from yourself" (an-Nisaa' 4:79). As made even more explicit in the next ayah, this means that while everything is decreed by Allah, the calamities are in response to our sins, such that we have to means to blame Allah for them. And this is so that we would repent and go back to Allah and safety.

"And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons much" (al-Qur'an 42:30). Compare to ash-Shaytan saying, "Because you have put me in error . . ." [al-Qur'an 7:16]. Ash-Shaytaan arrogantly blamed Allah for making it possible to sin and reject Allah, though ash-Shaytaan did that intentionally while knowing the result would be disastrous for himself.

Similar to ash-Shaytaan, are those about whom Allah says, "But whenever good came to them, they said: 'Ours is this.' And if evil afflicted them, they ascribed it to evil omens connected with Moosa (Moses) and those with him" (al-A'raaf 7:131).

The guardian angels—We each have an angel on the right and an angel on the left writing our good deeds and bad deeds, respectively. As well, we will each receive a book of deeds on the Last Day. This is the writing Allah will judge us by, even though it matches what Allah wrote aforetime in the Preserved Tablet. That is, we are not judged based on what Allah knew we would do, but based on what we did (according to our intentions), even though they match 100%. Allah is The Just.

The qadr that can change—No supplication, no action—*nothing*—changes what Allah has already written, and the knowledge of what is written is with Allah until it has happened and become evident. However, supplication (du'aa`) and actions can change the periodic decrees Allah reveals to the angels, such as the yearly decree Allah sends down on the Night of Decree (Laylatul-Qadar) during the last ten days of Ramadan. However, both the action and the result of that action are already written aforetime in the Preserved Tablet (al-Lawhal-Mahfoodh), which Allah wrote before the rest of creation.

Besides du'aa`, as another example, the Prophet, peace on him, said, "Whoever would like his provision to be increased and his lifespan to be extended, let him uphold the ties of kinship." In this case, Allah may change the periodic decree He had revealed to the angels by adding provision and extending the lifespan due to a person's effort to keep close ties with family. However, Allah already knew the person would keep close ties and already knew the blessings He would give that person in response, both of which He would have written fifty thousand years before the creation of the earth and skies. Perhaps the wisdom of the periodic qadr and its alterability is as a sign to us that while Allah, the All-Knowing, knew and wrote everything aforetime, Allah is responsive to our begging and our good deeds.

Intellectual limits—Believing in al-Qadar, even conceptually, is a test and requires trust in Allah because it raises many questions to which none has the answer but Allah. We must recognize the limits of what

Allah has revealed to mankind as well as our personal limits by not delving too deeply into the issue beyond what is necessary and useful for us to live our lives as Muslims. Further, we should not argue with others on the issue of al-Qadar, nor make it a matter of rational philosophy.

Acceptance of what happens—Do not say something like, “If I had only done such and such, then things would not be as they are,” or, “if it hadn’t been for such and such, then . . .” This is a form of kufr (disbelief) because it denies what Allah revealed regard al-Qadaa` wal-Qadar. Further, it ventures to elevate the power of the self or (humans in general) while venturing to lower the Power of Allah over His Creation.

Rather, we must believe in Allah’s Justice and Wisdom and readily accept whatever Allah has ordained for us, whether it contains what we like or what we dislike, without arguing or disagreeing with Allah regarding His actions. We should not protest what befalls us or say such as, “Why me!” The alternation of ease and difficulty are tests for us. We must worship Allah in all circumstances, in part by being thankful in ease and bounty and in part by having patience in difficulty. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for all his affairs are good, and that is for no one except the believer. If something good happens to him, he gives thanks, and that is good for him, and if something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience and that is good for him.” (Muslim, 2999) Note, however, that patience with Allah’s Decree does not mean being void of emotion, but rather maintaining self-control and confidence in Allah.

- “Whoever remains patient, Allah will make him patient” (from Sahih Al-Bukhari – Book 24 Hadith 548). If we strive to control ourselves and our behaviors, Allah will grant us the real patience, which is inner peace in the midst of difficulty.
- Difficulties in life are a means of teaching us things and exposing our faults so we can fix them and elevate ourselves:
 - Allah says, “And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient, Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah , and indeed to Him we will return." Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided” (al-Qur’an 2:155-157).
 - Narrated Anas bin Malik: The Prophet (peace be upon him) passed by a woman who was weeping beside a grave. He told her to fear Allah and be patient. She said to him, “Go away, for you have not been afflicted with a calamity like mine.” And she did not recognize him. Then she was informed that he was the Prophet. So she went to the house of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and there she did not find any guard. Then she said to him, “I did not recognize you.” He said, “Verily, the patience is at the first stroke of a calamity” (Sahih Al-Bukhari – Book 23 Hadith 372).
 - Narrated Anas bin Malik Abu Talha had a child who was sick. Once, while Abu Talha was out, the child died. When Abu Talha returned home, he asked, "How does my son fare?" Um Sulaim (his wife) replied, "He is quieter than he has ever been." Then she brought supper for him and he took his supper and slept with her. When he had finished, she said (to him), "Bury the child (as he's dead)." Next morning Abu Talha came to Allah's Apostle and told him about that. The Prophet said (to him), "Did you sleep with your wife last night?" Abu Talha said, "Yes". The Prophet said, "O Allah! Bestow your blessing on them as regards that night of theirs." Um Sulaim gave birth to a boy. Abu Talha told me to take care of the child till it was taken to the Prophet. Then Abu Talha took the child to the Prophet and Um Sulaim sent some dates along with the child. The Prophet took the child (on his lap) and asked if there was something with him. The people replied, "Yes, a few dates." The Prophet took a date, chewed it, took some of it out of his mouth, put it into the child's mouth and did Tahniki for him with that, and named him 'Abdullah (Bukhari-7.66.379a).

What Not to Do: “And among mankind is he who worships Allah as it were upon the edge (i.e. in doubt): if good befalls him, he is content therewith; but if a trial befalls him he turns back on his face (i.e., reverts to disbelief after embracing Islam). He loses both this world and the Hereafter” (al-Qur’an 22:11).

What to Do: “Only those who are patient shall receive their reward in full, without reckoning” (al-Qur’an 39:10).

“Say: ‘Nothing shall ever happen to us except what Allah has ordained for us. He is our Mawlaa (Lord, Helper and Protector).’ And in Allah let the believers put their trust” (al-Tawbah 9:51).

Abu al-‘Abbas ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbas reported, “One day I was riding (a horse/camel) behind the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, when he said, ‘Young man, I will teach you some words. Be mindful of God, and He will take care of you. Be mindful of Him, and you shall find Him at your side. If you ask, ask of God. If you need help, seek it from God. Know that if the whole world were to gather together in order to help you, they would not be able to help you except if God had written so. And if the whole world were to gather together in order to harm you, they would not harm you except if God had written so. The pens have been lifted, and the pages are dry’” (at-Tirmidhi).

“No calamity befalls, but by the Leave [i.e. Decision and Qadar (Divine Preordainments)] of Allah, and whosoever believes in Allah, He guides his heart [to the true Faith with certainty, i.e. what has befallen him was already written for him by Allah from the Qadar (Divine Preordainments)]. And Allah is the All-Knower of everything” (al-Taghaabun 64:11).

“And their recompense shall be Paradise, and silken garments, because they were patient” (al-Insaan 76:12).

“Therefore be patient (O Muhammad) as did the Messengers of strong will” [al-Ahqaaf 46:35 – interpretation of the meaning]

“O you who believe! Seek help in patience and As-Salaah (the prayer). Truly, Allah is with As-Saabiroom (the patient)” [al-Baqarah 2:153 – interpretation of the meaning]

“Only those who are patient shall receive their reward in full, without reckoning” [al-Zumar 39:10]

“... but give glad tidings to As Saabiroom (the patient). Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: ‘Truly, to Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return’ (inaa lillaahi wa inaa ilayhi raji’oon)” [al-Baqarah 2:155-156]

CHAPTER 5: DEATH, THE GRAVE, & THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

Death: The believer should fear dying in a bad state, but need not fear death itself, because according to Abu Qatada bin Rib'i Al-Ansari, a funeral procession passed by Allah's Apostle who said, "Relieved or relieving?" The people asked, "O Allah's Apostle! What is relieved and relieving?" He said, "A believer is relieved (by death) from the troubles and hardships of the world and leaves for the Mercy of Allah, while (the death of) a wicked person relieves the people, the land, the trees, (and) the animals from him" (Bukhari 8:76:519).

For those who do not live to see the Day of Judgment, death is like a personal Day of Judgment because the recording of good deeds stops at that point with just limited exceptions. We will be resurrected according to our actions and religious standing at the time of death.

- Narrated by Anas bin Malik Allah's Apostle said, "When carried to his grave, a dead person is followed by three, two of which return (after his burial) and one remains with him: his relatives, his property, and his deeds follow him; relatives and his property go back while his deeds remain with him" (Al-Bukhari Hadith 8.521).

- What are the exceptions to our record of deeds that continue after death? The Messenger of Allah (sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam) said: “When a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three things: Sadaqah Jariyah (ceaseless charity); knowledge which is beneficial; or a virtuous descendant who prays for him (the deceased)” (Saheeh Muslim).
- We should hope for husnul khatimah (the best ending) and persevere in Islam all the way to death (and we cannot predict when that will be) so that we die in a good state, not a sinful one:
 - Narrated Abu Hurayrah, The Prophet (saws) said, "The angels are present with one who dies, and if a believer dies, they say, 'Come out, good soul, which was in the good body; come out praiseworthy and be happy with rest and provision and a Lord Who is not angry.' That continues to be said to it till it comes out. It is then taken up to Heaven and the door is opened for it. The angels are asked who this is and reply that he is so and so, whereupon these words are spoken: 'Welcome, good soul, which was in the good body; enter praiseworthy and be happy with rest and provision and a Lord Who is not angry.' That continues to be said to it till it comes to the Heaven where Allah is. But when it is a disbeliever it is said, 'Come out, wicked soul, which was in the wicked body; come out blameworthy and be grieved by a boiling liquid, one dark and intensely cold, and other kinds of its type.' That continues to be said to it till it comes out. It is then taken up to Heaven, and the door is asked to be opened for it. The question will be asked who this is and the reply given that it is so and so, whereupon these words are spoken: 'There is no welcome for the wicked soul which was in the wicked body; go back blameworthy, for the gates of Heaven will not be opened for you.' It will then be sent away from Heaven and come to the grave" (Al-Tirmidhi Hadith 1627).
 - The Prophet, peace on him, said, “And whoever fasts a day for the sake of Allah and dies in this state [i.e. this is his last deed], he will enter Paradise, and whoever gives a charity for the sake of Allah and dies in this state, he will enter Paradise” (Ahmad).
 - It was narrated from Thaabit ibn al-Dahhaak (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever kills himself with something in this world will be punished with it on the Day of Resurrection” (al-Bukhaari, 5700; Muslim, 110)

The Grave:

- Narrated Uthman ibn Affan, the Prophet (saws) said: “Verily the grave is the first step in the stages of the Hereafter. If one finds salvation at this stage, the succeeding stages become easy for him. And if he does not find salvation at this stage, what follows this stage is very hard upon him. I have never seen a site more horrible than that of the grave.” [Al-Tirmidhi Hadith 132]
- Narrated Abu Sa’id, the Prophet (saws) said: "The grave is one of the gardens of Paradise, or one of the pits of Hell." [Al-Tirmidhi Hadith 5352]

Three questions in the grave (from Islam Q&A):

Can you please tell me what are the trials of the grave that we ask Allah (saw) to save us from?

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

When the son of Adam dies and his soul departs and he is placed in his grave, then he is in the first stage of the Hereafter, because the grave is the first of the stages of the Hereafter.

It was narrated that Haani’ the freed slave of ‘Uthmaan ibn ‘Affaan said: when ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affaan stood by a grave he would weep until his beard became wet. It was said to him, “You remember Paradise and Hell and you do not weep, but you weep because of this?” He said, “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘The grave is the first of the stages of the Hereafter; whoever is saved from it, whatever comes afterwards will be easier for

him, but if he is not saved from it, what comes afterwards will be worse for him.” And the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “I have never seen any scene but the grave is more frightening than it.” (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 2308; Ibn Maajah, 4567; classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami’, 1684).

Secondly:

The two angels who are charged with questioning come to him and ask him what he used to believe in in this world, who was his Lord, what was his religion and who was his Prophet. If he gives a good answer, that is good, but if he does not answer them they inflict a severe and painful beating on him.

If he was one of the righteous, angels with white faces come to him, but if he was one of the evildoers, angels with dark faces come to him. This is the fitnah or tribulation that he suffers.

It was narrated from ‘Aa’ishah that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to say, ‘Allahumma inni a’oodhu bika min al-kasali wa’l-haram wa’l-maghram wa’l-ma’tam. Allahumma inni a’oodhu bika min ‘adhaab al-naar wa fitnat il-naar, wa fitnat il-qabri, wa ‘adhaab il-qabri, wa sharri fitnat il-ghina wa sharri fitnat il-faqair wa min sharri fitnat il-maseeh il-Dajjaal. Allahumma ighsil khataayaaya bi ma’ al-thalji wa’l-baradi wa naqqi qalbi min al-khataaya kama yunaqqa al-thawb al-abyad min al-danas, wa baa’id bayni wa bayna khataayaaya kama baa’adta bayna al-mashriqi wa’l-maghrib (O Allah! I seek refuge with You from laziness and old age, and from debts and sins; from the torment of the Fire and from the tribulation of the Fire, and from the tribulation of the grave and the torment of the grave, and from the evil of the tribulation of wealth, and from the evil of the tribulation of poverty, and from the evil of the tribulation of the Dajjaal (Antichrist). O Allah! Wash away my sins with the water of snow and hail, and cleanse my heart from sin as a white garment is cleansed from filth, and put a great distance between me and my sins, as great as the distance You have made between the East and the West).’

(Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 6014).

Ibn Hajar said:

The phrase “from the tribulation of the grave” means the questioning of the two angels.

Fath al-Baari, 11/177.

And al-Mubaarakfoori said:

“The tribulation of the grave” means confusion when answering the two angels.

Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi, 9/328

Thirdly:

With regard to the questions that the angels will ask in the grave, this is explained clearly in the following hadeeth:

It was narrated that al-Bara’ (may Allah be pleased with him) said: We went out with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for the funeral of a man from among the Ansaar. We came to the grave and when (the deceased) was placed in the lahd, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sat down and we sat around him, as if there were birds on our heads (i.e., quiet and still). In his hand he had a stick with which he was scratching the ground. Then he raised his head and said, “Seek refuge with Allah from the torment of the grave”, two or three times. Then he said, “When the believing slave is about to depart this world and enter the Hereafter, there come down to him from heaven angels with white faces like the sun, and they sit around him as far as the eye can see. They bring with them shrouds from Paradise and perfumes from Paradise. Then the Angel of Death comes and sits by his head,

and he says, ‘O good soul, come forth to forgiveness from Allah and His pleasure.’ Then it comes out easily like a drop of water from the the mouth of a waterskin. When he seizes it, they do not leave it in his hand for an instant before they take it and put it in that shroud with that perfume, and there comes from it a fragrance like the finest musk on the face of the earth. Then they ascend and they do not pass by any group of angels but they say, ‘Who is this good soul?’ and they say, ‘It is So and so the son of So and so, calling him by the best names by which he was known in this world, until they reach the lowest heaven. They ask for it to be opened to them and it is opened, and (the soul) is welcomed and accompanied to the next heaven by those who are closest to Allah, until they reach the seventh heaven. Then Allah says: ‘Record the book of My slave in ‘Illiyoona in the seventh heaven, and return him to the earth, for from it I created them, to it I will return them and from it I will bring them forth once again.’ So his soul is returned to his body and there come to him two angels who make him sit up and they say to him, ‘Who is your Lord?’ He says, ‘Allah.’ They say, ‘What is your religion?’ He says, ‘My religion is Islam.’ They say, ‘Who is this man who was sent among you?’ He says, ‘He is the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).’ They say, ‘What did you do?’ He says, ‘I read the Book of Allah and I believed in it.’ Then a voice calls out from heaven, ‘My slave has spoken the truth, so prepare for him a bed from Paradise and clothe him from Paradise, and open for him a gate to Paradise.’ Then there comes to him some of its fragrance, and his grave is made wide, as far as he can see. Then there comes to him a man with a handsome face and handsome clothes, and a good fragrance, who says, ‘Receive the glad tidings that will bring you joy this day.’ He says, ‘Who are you? Your face is a face which brings glad tidings.’ He says, ‘I am your righteous deeds.’ He says, ‘O Lord, hasten the Hour so that I may return to my family and my wealth.’ But when the disbelieving slave is about to depart this world and enter the Hereafter, there come down to him from heaven angels with black faces, bringing sackcloth, and they sit around him as far as the eye can see. Then the Angel of Death comes and sits by his head, and he says, ‘O evil soul, come forth to the wrath of Allah and His anger.’ Then his soul disperses inside his body, then comes out cutting the veins and nerves, like a skewer passing through wet wool. When he seizes it, they do not leave it in his hand for an instant before they take it and put it in that sackcloth, and there comes from it a stench like the foulest stench of a dead body on the face of the earth. Then they ascend and they do not pass by any group of angels but they say, ‘Who is this evil soul?’ and they say, ‘It is So and so the son of So and so, calling him by the worst names by which he was known in this world, until they reach the lowest heaven. They ask for it to be opened to them and it is not opened.’ Then the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) recited (interpretation of the meaning):

“for them the gates of heaven will not be opened, and they will not enter Paradise until the camel goes through the eye of the needle”

[al-A’raaf 7:40]

He said: “Then Allah says, ‘Record the book of My slave in Sijjeen in the lowest earth, and return him to the earth, for from it I created them, to it I will return them and from it I will bring them forth once again.’ So his soul is cast down.” Then the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) recited the verse (interpretation of the meaning):

“and whoever assigns partners to Allah, it is as if he had fallen from the sky, and the birds had snatched him, or the wind had thrown him to a far off place”

[al-Hajj 22:31]

He said: “Then his soul is returned to his body, and there come to him two angels who make him sit up and they say to him, ‘Who is your Lord?’ He says, ‘Oh, oh, I don’t know.’ They say, ‘What is your religion?’ He says, ‘Oh, oh, I don’t know.’ Then a voice calls out from heaven, ‘Prepare for him a bed from Hell and clothe him from Hell, and open for him a gate to Hell.’ Then there

comes to him some of its heat and hot winds, and his grave is constricted and compresses him until his ribs interlock. Then there comes to him a man with an ugly face and ugly clothes, and a foul stench, who says, 'Receive the bad news, this is the day that you were promised.' He says, 'Who are you? Your face is a face which forebodes evil.' He says, 'I am your evil deeds.' He says, 'O Lord, do not let the Hour come, do not let the Hour come.'"

Narrated by Abu Dawood, 4753; Ahmad, 18063 – this version was narrated by him. Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami', 1676.

The correct view is that the two angels will only question the deceased in his grave about matters of Tawheed (monotheism) and 'aqeedah (belief). This is quite clear.

And Allah knows best.

Islam Q&A

Resurrection (explanation from Islam Q&A):

After death, until Yaum Al-Qiyama, are the human beings reborn in any other form?

Praise be to Allah.

When the son of Adam dies, his body disintegrates and vanishes apart from the tailbone, which is a bone at the base of the spine. When the Resurrection begins, Allah will cause the bodies to grow by means of rain from the earth which will make these bones grow until each person's body is restored to the way it was before he died.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'What is between the two Trumpet-blasts will be forty.' Somebody asked, 'Forty days?' But I could not answer. Then he asked, 'Forty months?' But I could not answer. Then he asked, 'Forty years?' But I could not answer." Abu Hurayrah added, "Then (after this period) Allah will send water from the sky and then the dead bodies will grow like vegetation grows. There is nothing of the human body that does not decay except one bone; that is the little bone at the end of the coccyx from which the human body will be recreated on the Day of Resurrection."

(Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4651; Muslim, 2955).

Al-Nawawi said:

"The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'What is between the two Trumpet-blasts will be forty.' Somebody asked, 'Forty days?' But I could not answer..." What is meant is that he refused to specify whether it would be forty days, or years, or months. Rather what he was sure of was that it would be just forty. It is explained in another report narrated by someone other than Muslim, which says that it will be forty years.

The phrase "the little bone at the end of the coccyx" refers to the small bone at the base of the spine, which is the end of the coccyx. This is the first part of a person that is created, and it is what will be left of him so that he will be created anew from it.

Sharh Muslim, 18/92

When a person comes forth from his grave and is gathered and brought to account, his body will remain the same as it was before he died. Then when the people of Paradise enter Paradise and the people of Hell enter Hell, Allah will change their forms.

Description of the people of Hell:

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The distance between the shoulders of the kaafir [in Hell] will be that of three days’ swift travelling.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 6186; Muslim, 2852).

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The molar of the kaafir – or the eyetooth of the kaafir – will be like Uhud, and his skin will be as thick as three days’ travelling.” (Narrated by Muslim, 2851).

Description of the people of Paradise:

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The first group to enter Paradise will look like the moon when it is full; then those who follow them will look like the brightest star in the sky. They will not urinate or defecate, spit or blow their noses. Their combs will be of gold, their sweat will be musk, their incense burners will be of aloes-wood. Their wives will be al-hoor al-‘iyn and they will all look alike, like their father Adam, sixty cubits tall.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 3149; Muslim, 2834)

It was narrated from Mu’aadh ibn Jabal that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The people of Paradise will enter Paradise hairless and beardless, with kohl-rimmed eyes, all thirty or thirty-three years old.” (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 2545).

This hadeeth was classed as saheeh by Shaykh al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami’, 8072.

And Allah knows best.

Islam Q&A

Signs of Day of Judgment (explanation from Islam Q&A):

What are the lesser and greater signs of the Day of Resurrection?.

Praise be to Allah.

The signs and portents of the Day of Resurrection are the things that will happen before the Resurrection takes place and will indicate that it is close at hand. They have been divided into lesser and greater signs. The lesser signs, for the most part, will occur a long time before the Resurrection begins. Some of them have happened and ended – although they may be repeated – and some of them have appeared and are ongoing, and some have not yet happened, but they will happen as the truthful one (the Prophet) (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has told us.

The major signs are serious matters, the appearance of which will indicate that the Day of Resurrection is at hand and that there is only a short time until that great Day comes.

The lesser signs of the Hour are many, and are mentioned in many saheeh ahaadeeth. We will list them together without quoting the ahaadeeth, because there is not enough room to do so here. We will provide references to trustworthy books on the topic for those who wish to know more about this matter and the evidence for these signs. These include al-Qiyaamah al-Sughra by Shaykh ‘Umar Sulaymaan al-Ashqar [this book is available in English translation under the title The Minor Resurrection, published by International Islamic Publishing House, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia] and Ashraat al-Saa’ah by Shaykh Yoosuf al-Waabil.

The lesser signs of the Hour include the following:

1. The sending of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)
2. The death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).
3. The conquest of Jerusalem.
4. The plague of Amwaas (Emmaus), which is a city in Palestine.
5. Widespread wealth and lack of need for charity.
6. The appearance of fitan (tribulations). Among the tribulations that occurred in the early years of Islam were: the killing of 'Uthmaan (may Allah be pleased with him), the battle of the camel and the battle of Siffeen, the emergence of the Khawaarij, the battle of al-Harrah, and the opinion that the Qur'aan is a creation.
7. The emergence of claimants to Prophethood, such as the liar Musaylimah and al-Aswad al-'Anasi.
8. The appearance of fire in the Hijaaz, which appeared in the middle of the 7th century AH, in 654 AH. This was a great fire, which the scholars who were alive at the time of its appearance and those who came after them described in great detail. Al-Nawawi said: There appeared in our time a fire in Madeenah, in the year six hundred and fifty-four. It was a very great fire on the eastern side of Madeenah, beyond the Harrah, and knowledge of it was widespread throughout Syria and all lands. Those of the people of Madeenah who were present told me about it.
9. Loss of trust. One of the manifestations of loss of trust is people's affairs being entrusted to those who are not qualified or able for that.
10. The taking away of knowledge and the prevalence of ignorance; the taking away of knowledge will occur with the disappearance of the scholars, as it says in al-Saheehayn.
11. The spread of zina (adultery, fornication)
12. The spread of riba (usury, interest)
13. The prevalence of musical instruments.
14. Widespread drinking of alcohol.
15. Shepherds competing in the construction of tall buildings.
16. A slave woman giving birth to her mistress, as is stated in al-Saheehayn. There are several views among the scholars as to what this means. The view favoured by Ibn Hajar is that there will be widespread disobedience among children, so that a child will treat his mother as a master treats his slave woman, with negligence and insults.
17. Widespread killing.
18. Widespread earthquakes.
19. Appearance of landslides, transformations and stones from heaven.
20. Appearance of women who are clothed yet naked.
21. Believer's dreams coming true.
22. Widespread giving of false testimony and concealment of true testimony.
23. Large numbers of women.
24. The land of the Arabs becoming once again meadows and rivers.
25. The Euphrates will uncover a mountain of gold.

26. Wild animals and inanimate objects will speak to people.
27. The “Romans” will increase in number and fight the Muslims.
28. The conquest of Constantinople.

The major portents of the Hour are those which were mentioned by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the hadeeth of Hudhayfah ibn Aseed, and there are ten signs: The Dajjaal; the descent of ‘Eesa ibn Maryam (Jesus son of Mary); Ya’jooj and Ma’jooj (Gog and Magog); three landslides, one in the east, one in the west and one in the Arabian Peninsula; the smoke; the rising of the sun from its place of setting; the Beast; and the fire which will drive the people to their place of gathering. These signs will appear one after another, and when the first of these signs appear, the others will come soon after.

Muslim narrated that Hudhayfah ibn Aseed al-Ghifari (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came out to us when we were discussing. He said: “What are you discussing?” They said: “We are talking about the Hour.” He said: “It will never begin until you see ten signs before it.” He mentioned the smoke, the Dajjaal, the Beast, the rising of the sun from its place of setting, the descent of ‘Eesa ibn Maryam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Ya’jooj and Ma’jooj, and three landslides, one in the east, one in the west and one in the Arabian Peninsula, and the last of that is a fire which will emerge from Yemen and drive the people to their place of gathering.

There is no saheeh text which states the order in which these signs will occur, rather the order of some of them is to be understood from the context of the texts.

Shaykh Muhammad al-Saalih al-‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked:

Will the major portents of the Hour occur in a certain order?

He replied:

The order of some of the major portents is known, and in the case of others the order is not known. Among those whose order is known are the descent of ‘Eesa ibn Maryam, the emergence of Ya’jooj and Ma’jooj, and the Dajjaal, for the Dajjaal will be sent, then ‘Eesa ibn Maryam will come down and kill him, then Ya’jooj and Ma’jooj will emerge.

Al-Safareeni (may Allah have mercy on him) listed the order of these portents in his ‘Aqeedah, but some of the order is acceptable whilst some of it is not. But what matters is that there are major signs of the Hour and when they happen, the Hour has drawn nigh. Allah has decreed portents of the Hour, because it is a serious event and people need to know when it is about to happen. End quote.

Majmoo’ al-Fataawa (2/question no. 137)

And Allah knows best.

Islam Q&A

The Day of Judgement, itself:

The Prophet, peace on him, describes the Last Day—Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: If any owner of gold or silver does not pay what is due on him, when the Day of Resurrection would come, plates of fire would be beaten out for him; these would then be heated in the fire of Hell and his sides, his forehead and his back would be cauterized with them. Whenever these cool down, (the process is) repeated during a day the extent of which would be fifty thousand years, until judgment is pronounced among servants, and he sees whether his path is to take him to Paradise or to Hell. It was said: Messenger of Allah, what about the camel? He (the Holy Prophet) said: If any owner of the camel does not pay what is due on him, and of his due in that (camel) is (also) to milk it on the day

when it comes down to water. When the Day of Resurrection comes a soft sandy plain would be set for him, as extensive as possible, (he will find) that not a single young one is missing, and they will trample him with their hoofs and bite him with their mouths. As often as the first of them passes him, the last of them would be made to return during a day the extent of which would be fifty thousand years, until judgment is pronounced among servants and he sees whether his path is to take him to Paradise or to Hell. It was (again) said: Messenger of Allah, what about cows (cattle) and sheep? He said: If any owner of the cattle and sheep does not pay what is due on them, when the Day of Resurrection comes a soft sandy plain would be spread for them, he will find none of them missing, with twisted horns, without horns or with a broken horn, and they will gore him with their horns and trample him with their hoofs. As often as the first of them passes him the last of them would be made to return to him during a day the extent of which would be fifty thousand years, until judgment would be pronounced among the servants. And he would be shown his path-path leading him to Paradise or to Hell. It was said: Messenger of Allah, what about the horse? Upon this he said: The horses are of three types. To one man (these are) a burden, and to another man (these are) a covering, and still to another man (these are) a source of reward. The one for whom these are a burden is the person who rears them in order to show off, for vainglory and for opposing the Muslims; so they are a burden for him. The one for whom these are a covering is the person who rears them for the sake of Allah but does not forget the right of Allah concerning their backs and their necks, and so they are a covering for him. As for those which bring reward (these refer to) the person who rears them for the sake of Allah to be used for Muslims and he puts them in meadow and field. And whatever thing do these eat from that meadow and field would be recorded on his behalf as good deeds, as would also the amount of their dung and urine. And these would not break their halter and prance a course or two without having got recorded the amount of their hoof marks and their dung as a good deed on his behalf (on behalf of their owner). And their master does not bring them past a river from which they drink, though he did not intend to quench their thirst, but Allah would record for him the amount of what they drink on his behalf as deeds. It was said: Messenger of Allah, what about the asses?, Upon this he said: Nothing has been revealed to me in regard to the asses (in particular) except this one verse of a comprehensive nature: "He who does an atom's weight of good will see it, and he who does an atom's weight of evil will see it" (Muslim xcix. 7, Book #005, Hadith #2161).

Seven privileged groups—Narrated Abu Hurayrah, the Prophet, peace on him said: "There are seven (groups) whom Allah will shade in His Shade on the Day when there is no shade except His Shade: a just ruler; a youth who grew up in the worship of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic; a man whose heart is attached to the mosques; two men who love each other for Allah's sake, meeting for that and parting upon that; a man who is called by a woman of beauty and position [for illegal intercourse], but he says: 'I fear Allah', a man who gives in charity and hides it, such that his left hand does not know what his right hand gives in charity; and a man who remembered Allah in private and so his eyes shed tears" (al-Bukhari vol.1, p.356, no.629 & Muslim vol.2, p.493, no.2248).

Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Umar The Prophet said, "A man keeps on asking others for something till he comes on the Day of Resurrection without any piece of flesh on his face." The Prophet added, "On the Day of Resurrection, the Sun will come near (to, the people) to such an extent that the **sweat** will reach up to the middle of the ears, so, when all the people are in that state, they will ask Adam for help, and then Moses, and then Muhammad (p.b.u.h) ." The sub-narrator added "Muhammad will intercede with Allah to judge amongst the people. He will proceed on till he will hold the ring of the door (of Paradise) and then Allah will exalt him to Maqam Mahmud (the privilege of intercession, etc.). And all the people of the gathering will send their praises to Allah (Book #24, Hadith #553).

Weighing of deeds and distribution of the books of deeds (from Islam Q&A):

How will the books of people's deeds be distributed to the people on the Day of Resurrection?
How will their deeds be weighed?

Praise be to Allah.

The distribution of the books of deeds:

When people have been brought to account for their deeds, each person will be given the book that contains the record of all his deeds. The believer will be given his book in his right hand, as a sign of honour. He will be the one who is saved and happy on the Day of Resurrection. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Then as for him who will be given his Record in his right hand,

He surely, will receive an easy reckoning,

And will return to his family in joy!”

[al-Inshiqaaq 84:7-9]

“Then as for him who will be given his Record in his right hand will say: ‘Here! read my Record!

Surely, I did believe that I shall meet my Account!’

So he shall be in a life, well-pleasing.

In a lofty Paradise,

The fruits in bunches whereof will be low and near at hand.

Eat and drink at ease for that which you have sent on before you in days past!”

[al-Haaqqah 69:19-24]

But the kaafirs, hypocrites and followers of misguidance will be given their books in their left hands, from behind their backs. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“But whosoever is given his Record behind his back,

He will invoke (for his) destruction,

And he shall enter a blazing Fire”

[al-Inshiqaaq 84:10-12]

“But as for him who will be given his Record in his left hand, will say: ‘I wish that I had not been given my Record!

And that I had never known how my Account is!

Would that it had been my end (death)!

My wealth has not availed me;

My power (and arguments to defend myself) have gone from me!’

(It will be said): ‘Seize him and fetter him;

Then throw him in the blazing Fire.

Then fasten him with a chain whereof the length is seventy cubits!”

[al-Haaqqah 69:25-32]

When the people have been given their books, it will be said to them:

“This Our Record speaks about you with truth. Verily, We were recording what you used to do (i.e. Our angels used to record your deeds)”

[al-Jaathiyah 45:29]

“Read your book. You yourself are sufficient as a reckoner against you this Day”

[al-Isra’ 17:14]

With regard to the Balance:

The Balance will be set up to weigh people’s deeds. Al-Qurtubi said: “When the Reckoning is completed, then people’s deeds will be weighed, because the weighing has to do with reward and punishment. So it is apt that it should come after the Reckoning. The Reckoning is to evaluate the deeds, and the weighing is to determine the amount of reward or punishment.”

The texts indicate that the Balance is a real Balance, with two pans, in which people’s deeds will be weighed. It is a huge Balance, the size of which is known only to Allah. The scholars differed as to whether it is one Balance in which people’s deeds will be weighed, or whether there are numerous Balances, so that each person will have his own Balance. Those who said that there will be numerous balances quote as evidence the fact that the word appears in plural form in some verses, for example (interpretation of the meaning):

“And We shall set up Balances of justice on the Day of Resurrection, then none will be dealt with unjustly in anything. And if there be the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it. And Sufficient are We to take account”

[al-Anbiya’ 21:47]

Those who say that it will be one Balance quote as evidence the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): “The Balance will be set up on the Day of Resurrection, and if the heavens and the earth were to be weighed in it, it would be sufficient to carry them. And the angels will say, ‘O Lord, who is this for?’ Allah will say, ‘For whomsoever I will from among My slaves.’” (al-Silsilat al-Saheehah, 941). They interpret the verse in which the plural form is mentioned as referring to the large number of things to be weighed, namely words, deeds, records and people.

One of the things that indicate that words will also be weighed is the hadeeth narrated by Abu Hurayrah, according to which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Two words which are light on the tongue but will weigh heavily in the Balance and are beloved to the Most Merciful: Subhaan Allah il-‘Azeem, Subhaan Allahi wa bi Hamdihi (Glory be to Allah the Almighty, Glory and praise be to Allah).” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 6406).

The fact that deeds will be weighed is indicated by the saheeh hadeeth narrated from Abu’l-Darda’ who said: “I heard the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say, ‘There is nothing that will be placed in the Balance that will weigh more heavily than a good attitude. The one who has a good attitude will attain thereby the status of one who fasts and prays (a great deal).’” (Saheeh Sunan al-Tirmidhi, 1629)

Another thing that indicates that the books of deeds will be weighed is the hadeeth of al-Bitaaqah from ‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas who said, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Allah will separate a man belonging to my ummah in the presence of all creatures and will spread ninety-nine scrolls for him, each scroll extending as far as the eye can see. Then He will say, ‘Do you object to anything in this? Have my scribes who keep note wronged you?’ He will say, ‘No, my Lord.’ He will ask him, ‘Do you have any excuse?’ He will say, ‘No my Lord.’ Allah will say, ‘On the contrary, you have with Us a good deed, and you will not be wronged this Day.’ A slip of paper will then be brought out, on which are the words ‘Ashhadu an laa ilaaha ill-Allah wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhu wa rasooluhu (I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and His Messenger).’ Allah will say, ‘Bring your weight (i.e., the scrolls).’ The man will say, ‘O Lord, what is this slip of paper in comparison to these scrolls?’ And He will reply, ‘You will not be

wronged.’ The scrolls will then be put in one side of the Balance and the slip of paper in the other, and the scrolls will become light and the slip of paper heavy, for nothing could compare in weight to the name of Allah.” (Saheeh Sunan al-Tirmidhi, 2127)

One of the things that indicate that people will be weighed is the hadeeth narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), according to which the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “A huge fat man will be brought on the Day of Resurrection, and he will not weigh more before Allah than the wing of a gnat. Recite: ‘and on the Day of Resurrection, We shall assign no weight for them’ [al-Kahf 18:105 – interpretation of the meaning].” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4729). It is also indicated by the fact that Ibn Mas’ood was trying to break a siwaak branch from an araaq tree and he had thin legs and the wind started to buffet him, so the people laughed at him. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “What are you laughing at?” They said, “O Prophet of Allah, because his legs are so thin.” He said, “By the One in Whose hand is my soul, they will weigh more heavily in the Balance than Mount Uhud.” Its isnaad was classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Sharh al-Tahhaawiyah, no. 571, p. 418

We ask Allah to make us weigh heavily in the Balance.

And Allah knows best. Islam Q&A

A Hint about the Paradise (al-Jannah)—Allah says, “[They will be] reclining therein on adorned couches. They will not see therein any [burning] sun or [freezing] cold.” [al-Qur’an 73:13]

A Hint about the Hellfire (Jahannam)—A n-Nu’mān ibn Al-Basheer narrated that the Prophet, peace on him, said: “The least in punishment among the people of Hellfire is one whose sandals or shoelaces will be of fire, which will make his brain boil as a pot of water boils. He will not think that there is anyone being punished more than him, but in fact, he will be the least in punishment.” [Al-Bukhaari & Muslim]

Al Haafidh stated: Allah the Elevated rendered what is in this world, in terms of heat and cold, related to the heat and cold of the Hell fire, and an evidence for it, and this is why it is recommend to seek refuge from the Hell fire when one experiences this [i.e. the heat and cold]. As was narrated by ‘Uthmaan ad-Daarimee and others, the Hadeeth of Daraaj, on the authority of Abu Haytham... that Abu Hurayrah narrated to him that the Prophet- صلى الله عليه وسلم - said: If a man says on a hot day; ‘There is no deity worthy of worship in truth but Allah, how hot it is today! O Allah! Save me from the heat of Jahannam [the Hell fire].’ Allah would say to Jahannam; “Indeed a servant of Mine has asked Me for salvation from your heat, indeed I hold you as a witness that I have granted him salvation.” And if a servant says on an extremely cold day; ‘There is no deity worthy of worship in truth but Allah, how cold it is today! O Allah! Save me from the Zamhareer of Jahannam.’ Allah would say to Jahannam; “Indeed a servant of Mine has sought refuge with me from your Zamhareer, indeed I hold you as a witness that I have granted him refuge.” The companions asked: “What is the Zamhareer of Jahannam? He replied: “It is an abode where the disbeliever is thrown, he would be torn apart by its extreme cold” (Fat-h al Baaree: 3/71).

CHAPTER 6: REPENTENCE, *AT-TAWBAH*, التوبة

“And verily, I am indeed forgiving to him who repents, believes (in My Oneness, and associates none in worship with Me) and does righteous good deeds, and then remains constant in doing them (till his death)” (al-Qur’an 20:82).

- The opportunity to repent remains until death or the Last Day, at which time it is too late.

- Halaal (permissible) v. haraam (impermissible or beyond the sacred line): Inside ritual worship everything for which there is no proof (from the Qur'an or the ahadith) that it is halaal is haraam. Outside ritual worship everything for which there is no proof it is haraam is halaal. This means that unless we are in prayer (or to an extent while fasting or performing hajj) we can do almost anything we conceive without earning Allah's punishment. Allah made a few things impermissible as a test for us. At the same time, we will NOT be perfect in avoiding Allah's limits, because the Prophet Muhammad, peace on him, said, "I swear by Him in whose hand is my soul, if you were a people who did not commit sin, Allah would take you away and replace you with a people who would sin and then seek Allah's forgiveness so He could forgive them" (Saheeh Muslim 2687). Further, Allah says, "Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves" (al-Baqarah 2:222).
- Allah already has angels who do not sin, yet, in His wisdom, he created mankind, who can err. Part of our duty to Allah and our test is to be among those who recognize their errors and correct themselves. The successful Muslim is not one who never makes mistakes, but the one who is honest with his or herself and honest with Allah so that he or she may improve and struggle *toward* perfection.
- The scholars name conditions for acceptability of repentance. When only Allah's rights are violated, the essential conditions are three:
 - Stop doing the bad action
 - Regret doing the bad action
 - Sincerely intend to never again do the bad action

When another person's rights are violated in addition to Allah's then there is a fourth:

- Make restitution and gain the forgiveness of the offended
- Abu Dawood (1521) narrated that Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: "There is no one who commits a sin then purifies himself well and stands and prays two rak'ahs, then asks Allah for forgiveness, but Allah will forgive him. Then he recited this verse: 'And those who, when they have committed Faahishah (illegal sexual intercourse) or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins; — and none can forgive sins but Allah — and do not persist in what (wrong) they have done, while they know' [Aal 'Imraan 3:135]." Classed as sahaah by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.
- Give in charity because Allah says, "If you disclose your charitable expenditures, they are good; but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, it is better for you, and He will forgive some of our sins. And Allah is fully acquainted with what you do" (al-Qur'an 2:271).
- Make supplications specifically for seeking forgiveness, such as those found in Fortress of the Muslim.
- Make supplication and prayer in the last third of the night (between two and eight prayer cycles by twos) because Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger, may peace be upon him, said, "Our Lord, the Blessed and the Exalted, descends every night to the lowest heaven when one-third of the latter part of the night is left, and says: Who supplicates Me so that I may answer him? Who asks Me so that I may give to him? Who asks Me forgiveness so that I may forgive him?" (Muslim, Book #004, Hadith #1656). [Note: Allah's attributes are for Him alone and He is not mingled or part of His creation; the correct belief is to affirm Allah's action (i.e., descent to the lowest heaven) and leaving the explanation of that with Allah. Allah is the Unique.]
- Other means of seeking Allah's Mercy may include begging Allah for forgiveness, having tawbah or a deep corrective regret (as opposed to a regret that harms or holds back the self), performing expiation when specified in Islam for a select few major sins (such as breaking fast during Ramadan without excuse), etc.

- And, in general, follow the bad deed with a good deed. On the authority of Abu Dhar Jundub bin Junadah, and Muadh bin Jabal, the messenger of Allah, peace on him, said, "Fear Allah wherever you are, and follow up a bad deed with a good one and it will wipe it out, and behave well towards people" (Tirmithi, an-Nawawi's 40 hadith #18). Also see al-Qur'an 5:39.
- Is there something so bad that a person should give up give up on Allah forgiving them? Allah says, "Say, 'O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah . Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful'" (al-Qur'an 39:53).
- Lastly, it is important to place hope in Allah's Mercy, not in our repentance or other deeds. We seek Allah's Mercy by our actions, but our actions are not sufficient to save us.
- For more visit <http://islamqa.com/en/ref/14289/repentance>.

CHAPTER 7: BRIEF NOTES ON ZAKAT, SIYAAM, AND HAJJ

All five pillars of Islam are of enormous importance in Islam. However, to keep the course compact, we have focused on the major issues of creed and the daily prayers, rather than the three remaining pillars which are practiced periodically or conditionally. Nonetheless, it would be remiss not to at least provide very brief introductions.

Zakah or zakat (obligatory charity for purification of wealth): Allah says, "And establish prayer and give zakah and bow with those who bow" (al-Qur'an 2:43). There are actually two types of zakah, both being obligatory, as opposed to sadaqah, which is general, voluntary charity). One type is zakatul-fitr, which is a small per-person donation to the poor made near the end of Ramadan. The second type is one of the five pillars of Islam and called Zakatul-Maal. It is set at 2.5% yearly on wealth in the form of money, commodities, merchandise, etc. However, only persons who have retained what is called a *nisaab* for one full year must pay zakat. The nisaab is savings equivalent to the value of approximately 85 grams of gold (around 3 ounces) or 595 grams of silver (around 21 ounces). For current values for ounce prices, "google" *kitco gold* or *kitco silver*, or use other similar websites; at the time of writing this (10/4/2016), the nisaab based on gold is almost \$4000 while the nisaab for silver is less than \$400. The prices of gold and silver vary with the market, but the *nisaab* for silver is consistently and substantially lower in this era; using it makes it far more likely a person will pay zakah, and that is best and safest, though using either measure is correct. For those who have met this requirement, then they should pay 2.5% of total wealth yearly. Whoever has less than the minimum does not have to pay zakah; it is sufficient for such persons to merely intend to in the case their wealth were increased. And if a person gains more than the *nisaab* but uses it for living expenses before a year has passed, then, also, no zakah is due.

The zakah is distributed to eight causes: 1) the exceedingly poor, 2) those who have some wealth, but are still in need, 3) those who expend their time and energy in distributing and administering the zakat, 4) new Muslims and those inclined toward Islam, 5) slaves and captives, 6) the debt-ridden, 7) in the way of Allah to establish the Islamic institutions, and 8) travelers.

Siyaam (fasting) in Ramadan: Allah says, "O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous" (al-Qur'an 2:183). The pillar is the obligatory fasting in Ramadan, which is a month in the Hijri calendar. Because the Hijri calendar is lunar based, the month of Ramadan moves back in the solar calendar about eleven days each year, thus moving through the seasons over the course of decades. Fasting in Ramadan comes with forgiveness and a huge reward.

Fasting means to completely avoid food, drink, and sexual relations while also lowering the gaze from the opposite sex (as usual, but more carefully) and avoiding backbiting and any other sins. The fast is from dawn until sunset.

Some aspects and points regarding the fasting in Ramadan:

- The Prophet, peace on him, said, “When Ramadan begins, the gates of Paradise are opened, and the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are chained up” (al-Bukhari 3277; Muslim 1079). As well, the fasting helps with self-control. The month is a perfect chance to free ourselves of bad habits and spiritual diseases. Part of the goal is then, also, to maintain those improvements throughout the year.
- Some will fast but fail to observe the five obligatory prayers. This is pointless.
- Besides the fast, night prayers, called taraweeh, are also performed during Ramadan.
- For those who know how to recite al-Qur’an, then it is highly meritorious to recite it at least once during the month of Ramadan.
- Allah says, “And eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night), then complete your Sawm (fast) till the nightfall” (al-Qur’an 2:187). There is a blessing in the meal just before dawn, which is called *suhoor*. The fast should be broken right away at sunset. The meal eating after a fast is called *iftar*.
- Eating, drinking, and sexual relations are permissible any time from sunset till dawn during Ramadan, but reserve is highly recommended.

We may also fast any other day—with much purification and reward—with a few exceptions: Friday unless it is accompanied by consecutive days before or after, Eid al-Fitr (the day after Ramadan), Eid al-Adha (the 10th of dhul-Hijjah), and the fifteen days preceding Ramadan except to keep up habitual fasts (no one being permitted to fast the day before Ramadan).

Hajj (pilgrimage): Allah says, “And complete the Hajj and 'umrah for Allah . But if you are prevented, then [offer] what can be obtained with ease of sacrificial animals” (al-Qur’an 2:196). The reward of hajj is the Paradise; the one whose hajj is accepted by Allah is like a newborn baby without any sin.

Hajj entails leaving the worldly life behind to be the guest of Allah by traveling to Makkah in order to perform several rituals—including visiting Masjid al-Haraam with al-Ka’bah at its center—in the same place where previous messengers were, including Muhammad and Ibraheem, peace on them both.

- Hajj (and the umrah done along with it) is performed only during the first ten days of dhul-Hijjah.
- It is conditionally obligatory to perform hajj once per lifetime, though it may be repeated. The conditions include that one has sufficient funds and a safe-route, and that there are no urgent calls on debts that should be paid before spending on hajj. The majority opinion is that the obligation should be fulfilled at the earliest opportunity. According only to Imam Shafi’i, Allah’s Mercy on him, it is permissible to put the hajj off, but he says that if an opportunity comes and goes without the person taking it and then the person dies without having performed hajj, the person will be accountable for that. The safest is to do it as soon as possible, and Allah makes that easy for the person he invites.
- The first ten days of dhul-Hijjah hold many unexpendable opportunities every year even for those not performing hajj that year:
 - Fasting on the day of ‘arafah (9th of dhul-Hijjah): The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was asked about fasting on the day of ‘Arafah for non-pilgrims and he said: “It expiates for the past and coming years” (Muslim 1162).
 - Extra good deeds: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "There are no days in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allah than these ten days." The people asked, "Not even jihaad for the sake of Allah?" He said, "Not even jihaad for the sake of Allah, except in the case of a man who went out to fight giving himself and his wealth up for the cause, and came back with nothing" (al-Bukhaari, 2/457).
 - Animal sacrifice: the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "When you see the new moon of Dhu'l-Hijjah, if any one of you wants to offer a sacrifice, then he should stop cutting his hair and nails until he has offered his sacrifice." According to

another report he said: "He should not remove (literally, touch) anything from his hair or skin" (reported by Muslim with four isnaads, 13/146).

Visiting Makkah is also possible any time of the year in order to perform umrah, an voluntary act which entails several of the same rituals as hajj. The Umrah forgives the sins from one to the next.

CHAPTER 8: BREIF NOTES ON SUPPLICATION AND REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH

Our sincere *du'aa'*, our sincere supplication is a recognition that Allah is the source and controller of all things—a recognition that He is The Loving, The Generous. It is recognition of our need and our dependence on Allah. So what does it mean to leave off the *du'aa'*? The prophet, peace on him, said, "Supplication is worship," or, in other words, "Supplication is the essence of worship."

"And your Lord says, 'Call upon Me; I will respond to you'" (al-Qur'an 40:60).

Some reminders on how to approach Allah with supplication:

1) The first recommendation is to not underestimate Allah and His Power and His Generosity nor to underestimate what Allah can do with you. If we imagine what is possible with our minds we will totally miss and limit what Allah can do with us and our condition. Allah says, "Whoever fears Allah, He will make for him a way out and will provide for him from where He could never imagine." Don't ever fret in life without turning to Allaah, begging Allaah for His Help, and then patiently trusting the Lord of the Worlds. At the same time, in times of ease, do not forget Allah. Thank him, continue to ask from Him, and continually remember Him.

2) Make part of our supplications from those embedded in al-Qur'an and those the Prophet Muhammad, peace on him, said himself. Even the very words of these *du'aa'* automatically contain wisdoms, reminders, and blessings because of their source. Further, what *du'aa'* will be more pleasing to Allah than those found in His Own Speech and from the tongue of His Messenger, peace on him? A large number of authentic *du'aa'* and remembrances of Allah are available in the book *Hisnul Muslim* or *Fortress of the Muslim*. Printed pocket size books are cheap and the contents are also listed at <http://www.islamawareness.net/Dua/Fortress/>.

3) Make *du'aa'* in Arabic from al-Qur'an and as-Sunnah as well as our own *du'aa'* in any language with belief in Allah, with purity of intention, and with certainty that Allah hears us.

4) We have to do our part. For starters, we have to obey Allah and live by halal means while worshiping Him, alone, sincerely, and seeking His forgiveness when we err. Then, on that base, we have to strive to attain that for which we ask Him. And Allah says, "Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves" (al-Qur'an 13:11). As well, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Call upon Allah when you are certain of a response, and remember that Allaah will not answer a *du'aa'* that comes from a negligent and heedless heart" (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 3479; classed as hasan by Shaykh al-Albaani in *Saheeh al-Tirmidhi*, 2766).

5) Praise Allah and send His Peace and Prayers upon the Prophet, *sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam*, before you ask what you want to ask. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Every *du'aa'* is kept back until you send blessings upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)" (Narrated by al-Tabaraani in *al-Awsat*, 1/220; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *Saheeh al-Jaami'*, 4399).

6) We must remain open and submissive with Allah's reply. Allah knows us better and knows what is good for us better than our own selves. He Created us. *Allaahu akbar*. Allah says, "But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah Knows, while you know not" (2:216). Allah will respond quickly, after a time, or on the Day of Judgement. Another possibility is the a *du'aa'* will stop a calamity. So often we see the result of the *du'aa'*, but the

best is actually when Allah saves the answer till the hereafter. There will be people so happy and surprised to find heaps of eternal reward awaiting them in the hereafter as delayed but full and mind-boggling replies from Allah to the du'aa` they made in this life.

7) Besides making supplications remember Allah by doing good, avoiding evil, and keeping his praises on the tongue. This is call *dhikr*. Abu Ad-Darda' (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet said: "Shall I not inform you of the best of your actions, the purest in the sight of your Lord, which raises your rank to the highest, which is better for you than spending gold and silver, better than meeting your enemy so that you strike at their necks and they strike at yours?" They replied: 'Yes, indeed,' and he said: 'It is the remembrance of Allah' (At-Tirmidhi). There are so many things we can say, but many are very light on the tongue while they are heavy on the scale of good deeds: *laa ilaaha illallaah*, *subhaanallahi wa bihamdi*, *allaahu akbar*, *alhamdulillaah*, etc. Another very easy way to remember Allah on the tongue is to say *bismillaah* at the start of any action.

CHAPTER 9: ABLUTION, *AL- WUDOO*, الوضوء

Note: Below are both compulsory and voluntary elements. The minimum wudoo' does not require steps 2, 3, or 9 and the steps calling for triple application (4, 5, 6, and 8) only require single application.

1. Have the intention of purifying yourself and removing impurity for the Sake of Allah. As usual, the intention need not be spoken out loud for its place is in the heart.
2. Say, "*Bismillaah*," meaning, "In the name of Allah."
3. Wash your hands three times, including the spaces between fingers.
4. Use your right hand to scoop water into your mouth and rinse it three times, swirling the water around inside your mouth. Similarly, rinse your nostrils three times, blowing the water out while pinching the bridge of the nose to open the nostrils.
5. Wash your face three times, from the usual hairline to the jawbone and chin, and from ear to ear. A man should wash the hair of his beard because it is part of the face. If his beard is thin he has to wash it inside and out, and if it is thick and covers the skin, he should wash the surface of it only and run his wet fingers through it.
6. Wash your arms from the tips of the fingers to or above the elbows three times. It is essential to remove anything stuck to the hands before washing them, such as dough, mud, paint, nail polish, etc., that could prevent the water from reaching the skin.
7. Wipe your head and ears once with fresh water, not the water left on the hands from washing your arms. The way in which the head is to be wiped is that you put your wet hands at the front of your head and bring them to the back of your head, then bring them back to the place where you started. Then put your index fingers in your ears and wipe the back of the ears with your thumbs. With regard to a woman's hair, she should wipe it whether it is loose or braided from the front of her head to the roots of the hair at the nape of her neck, but she does not have to wipe the entire length of her hair. As well, a person may wipe over a head covering so long as the person had *wudoo*' at the time the head covering was put on.
8. Wash your feet three times up to or over the ankles, including the spaces between toes. If desired, shoes or socks that cover the angles (as would be the case with the *khufayn* or leather socks the companions wore) may be wiped over on the condition that you had *wudoo*' at the time of putting the socks on, but only for one day and one night after the first wipe (three days and three nights when traveling). Once that time period has elapsed the socks must be removed and the feet washed normally in order to complete *wudoo*'.
9. If you are able, say, "*Ash-hadu an laa ilaaha illAllah, wahdahu, laa sharika lahu, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa Rasooluhu*," which means, "I testify that none has the right to be worshiped except Allah alone, Who has no partner, and Muhammad is His slave and messenger."

Extra notes: While washing, make sure to cover the *entire* surface of each area. As well, it is usually good to rinse the mouth and nose vigorously and deeply, but while fasting this should be done more conservatively to prevent water going down the throat.

Evidence: There are many *ahadith* regarding *wudoo*'. One such hadith is narrated by Humraan, who said that 'Uthmaan ibn 'Affaan (may Allah be pleased with him) called for water to do *wudoo*'. He washed his hands three times, then he rinsed his mouth and nose, then he washed his face three times, then he washed his right arm up to the elbow three times, then he washed his left arm likewise. Then he wiped his head, then he washed his right foot up to the ankle three times, then he washed his left foot likewise. Then he said, "I saw the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) doing *wudoo*' as I have done it, then the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'Whoever does *wudoo*' as I have done it, then prays two *rak'ahs* in which he focuses completely on his prayer, his previous sins will be forgiven'" (Narrated by Muslim, al-Tahaarah, 331).

CHAPTER 10: FORMAL PRAYER, AS-SALAAH, الصلاة

Make the **intention** to perform a particular prayer solely for Allah's Pleasure.

Stand facing the qiblah (al-Ka'bah in Makkah), raise hands palms up to shoulders or ears—*Allahu akbar*¹—fold arms over chest, perform prayer smoothly with concentration coming to a full stop in each position

*a'oothu billaahi minash-shaytaanir-rajeem*²

*bismillaahir-rahmaanir-raheem*³ ←this line silent even at al-Fajr, al-Maghrib, and al-Ishaa'

alhamdu lillaahi rabbil 'aalameen

ar-rahmaanir-raheem

maaliki yaumid-deen

iyyaaka na'-budu wa iyyaaka nasta'een

ihdinas-siraatal-mustaqeem

siraatal latheena an'amta 'alayhim ghayril maghdoobi 'alayhim walaq-daaleen.

aameen. [recite additional verses of al-Qur'an if you know them and then briefly pause]

Allahu akbar—raise hands palms up to shoulders or ears, **bow**, straighten the back with hands at knees—*subhaana rabbiyyal- 'azeem*⁴ X3

*sami' Allahu liman hamida*⁵—**stand**, raise hands palms up to shoulders or ears, fold arms over chest—*rabbanaa wa lakal-hamd*⁶

Allahu akbar—**prostrate** on hands, knees, toes, and head/nose—*subhaana rabbiyyal-a'la*⁷ X3

Allahu akbar—**sit**—*rabbee ighfir lee, rabbee ighfir lee*⁸

Allahu akbar—**prostrate** on hands, knees, toes, and head/nose—*subhaana rabbiyyal-a'la*⁷ X3

option 1 (any first cycle or the third cycle of ad-Dhuhr, al-'Asr, and al-Ishaa'): raise head, briefly sit—*Allahu akbar*—**stand**—*bismillaahir-rahmaanir-raheem* . . . (see top)

option 2 (second cycle of ad-Dhuhr, al-'Asr, al-Maghrib, and al-Ishaa'): raise head—*Allahu akbar*—**sit**, say the tashahhud*—*Allahu akbar*—**stand**—*bismillaahir-rahmaanir-raheem* . . . (see top)

option 3 (any final cycle): raise head—*Allahu akbar*—**sit**, say the tashahhud* and salawaat[#], do tasleem (below)

Turn head to say *as-salaamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullaah* to the angel on the right and then the left shoulder. When following an imam, wait to do this until the imam has completed both sides.

*Available at <http://www.islamawareness.net/Dua/Fortress/022.html>

[#]Available at <http://www.islamawareness.net/Dua/Fortress/023.html>

¹ Allah is greater

² I take refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan

³ [See al-Qur'an 1:1-7]

⁴ How glorious is my Lord, the Great

⁵ Allah has listened to him who has praised him

⁶ Our Lord, praise be to Thee (When this is said by the imam out loud, then only say #6)

⁷ All glory be to my Lord, the Most High

⁸ My Lord, forgive me; my Lord, forgive me

Tashahhud:

التَّحِيَّاتُ لِلَّهِ، وَالصَّلَوَاتُ، وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ،
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ،
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ. أَشْهَدُ
أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ

Attahiyyaatu lillaahi was-salawaatu , wat-tayyibaatu , assalaamu 'alayka 'ayyuhan-Nabiyyu wa rahmatullaahi wa barakaatuhu, assalaamu 'alaynaa wa 'alaa 'ibaadillaahis-saaliheen. 'Ash-hadu 'an laa 'ilaaha 'illAllahu wa 'ash-hadu 'anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa Rasooluhu.

All greetings of humility are for Allah, and all prayers and goodness. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. Peace be upon us and upon the righteous slaves of Allah. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and His Messenger. [Al-Bukhari, Muslim 1/301. See also Al-Asqalani, Fathul-Bal 1/13]

Salawaat:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ، اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ

Allahumma salli 'alaa Muhammadin wa 'alaa 'aali Muhammadin, kamaa sallayta 'alaa 'Ibraaheema wa 'alaa 'aali 'Ibraaheema, 'innaka Hameedun Majeed. Allahumma baarik 'alaa Muhammadin wa 'alaa 'aali Muhammadin, kamaa baarakta 'alaa 'Ibraaheema wa 'alaa 'aali 'Ibraaheema, 'innaka Hameedun Majeed.

O Allah, bestow Your favor on Muhammad and on the family of Muhammad as You have bestowed Your favor on Ibrahim and on the family of Ibrahim, You are Praiseworthy, Most Glorious. O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You have blessed Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim, You are Praiseworthy, Most Glorious. [Al-Bukhari, cf. Al-Asqalani, Fathul-Bari 6/408.]

CHAPTER 11: GENERAL PURIFICATION

Causes of minor impurity: sleeping, fainting, using the toilet, breaking wind, eating camel meat

Minor impurity breaks wudoo' and disqualifies a person from praying until wudoo' is made again. There are benefits to making wudoo' apart from preparation to pray, but remaining in a state of minor impurity is perfectly acceptable. The description of wudoo' has already been distributed.

Causes of major impurity: menses, intercourse or any orgasm (e.g., a wet dream)

Major impurity breaks wudoo', disqualifies a person from praying, and requires ghusl to remove. It is not preferable to needlessly remain in major impurity for an extended period or to go out of the home in that state.

Basic ghusl: removes both major and minor impurity but does NOT qualify a person to pray until wudoo' is also performed. Description of basic ghusl:

1. Make intention in the heart to purify yourself
2. Say, "*Bismillaah*."
3. Wash the entire body with water, including the mouth, nose, and ears.

Complete ghusl: combines the ghusl with wudoo', so besides removing major and minor impurity, it also qualifies a person to pray without making a subsequent wudoo'. Description of Complete Ghusl:

1. Follow steps 1-3 of the wudoo' handout (intention, saying bismillaah, and washing hands)
2. Wash private parts (with left hand)
3. Follow steps 4-6 of the wudoo' handout (mouth/nose, face, and arms)
4. Wash the hair (and skin of the head and ears) three times
5. Wash the right side of the body three times from shoulder to ankle
6. Wash the left side of the body three times from shoulder to ankle
7. Follow steps 8-9 of the wudoo' handout

Tayammum: Purification with clean soil, done in the absence of water. Description of Tayammum:

In several hadith, the Prophet Muhammad, peace on him, explained tayammum as a means of purification in the absence of water, including one which reads, "... 'It would have been sufficient for you to do this'—then he struck the palms of his hands on the ground, then dusted them off, then wiped the back of each hand with the other, then wiped his face with his hands" (al-Bukhari no. 347; 1/455 of Fath al-Baari). And in al-Fath (1/457) comes the description, "... Then wipe your right hand over your left and your left over your right . . ."

Shaykh al-Munajjid's summary of such hadith is as follows: "The way in which tayammum is done is to say *Bismillaah* with the intention of doing tayammum, then strike the ground once with the palms of the hands, then wipe the back of the right hand with the palm of the left, and the back of the left hand with the palm of the right, then wipe the face with both hands. Then the same du'aa's that are recited after wudoo' should be recited after tayammum. And Allah knows best."

Istinja: purification when using the bathroom. Description of istinja:

Any time the toilet is used, it is better to apply water for cleanliness (Istinga) rather than only wiping (istijmaar) because of, for example, the report narrated by Muslim (271) and al-Nasaa'i (45) from Anas ibn Maalik, may Allah be pleased with him, who said: "When I was a boy, when the Messenger of Allah, peace on him, entered the toilet I would carry a small vessel of leather filled with water, and he would clean himself with water."

Muslim facilities and homes often have sprayers or bidets for this purpose. Vessels similar or identical to watering cans are also commonly used. In the absence of such devices water bottles or soaked toilet paper suffice.

Additional notes on purification:

In addition to purification of the self for prayer, clothes should be clean.

While in the bathroom, the name of Allah, supplications, and al-Qur'an should not be uttered and talking in general should be strictly minimized because the Prophet Muhammad, peace on him, said, "No two men should go out to answer the call of nature . . . talking to each other, for Allah abhors that" (narrated by Abu Dawood). While our places of worship often separate bathrooms and wudoo' areas, the place of wudoo' is often a bathroom. When making wudoo' or ghusl in a bathroom, saying *bismillaah* internally rather than physically with the mouth is sufficient.