

Mahmoud Muhammad Taha

Calls To

The Path of Muhammad



Eighth Edition

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**The Path of
Muhammad**

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By emulating Muhammad,
the nation becomes united,
and its religion is renewed.

Dedication

To those who seek God knowingly,
and to those who turn away from Him unknowingly.
For there is no escaping God.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

“O mankind! There has come to you an admonition from your Lord, and a healing for what is in the hearts, and a guidance and a mercy for the believers. *Say: In the bounty of Allah, and in His mercy - in that let them rejoice. It is better than what they accumulate.*” (10:57-58)

Allah Almighty has spoken the truth.

Introduction

This is the introduction to the eighth edition of *The Path of Muhammad*. The earlier editions of this book were warmly received by our readers, which has encouraged us to release this eighth edition. Additionally, we decided to dedicate this specific edition to addressing certain mystical matters, which will assist in the complete realization of *The Path of Muhammad*.

The Compounded Testimony

The compounded testimony (*Al-Shahada Al-Muthannaya*) is: “There is no deity but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.” The singular testimony (*Al-Shahada Al-Mufrada*) is: “There is no deity but Allah.” The singular testimony represents monotheism (*tawhid*), while the compounded testimony represents affirmation (*tasdiq*).

The testimony of affirmation is required once in a lifetime, and it mandates following these teachings: “And whatever the Messenger has given you - take it, and whatever he has forbidden you - refrain from it; and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is severe in punishment.” (59:7). This is the support for the singular testimony from the Quran. Its foundation in the Hadith is: “Pray as you have seen me praying” and also: “Take your rituals from me.” These sayings apply to prayer and pilgrimage and extend to all other acts of worship and obedience.

As for the testimony of monotheism, it is to be uttered continuously - both in this life and in the Hereafter. It is the best remembrance for the people of this world in their worldly lives, the best remembrance for the people of the grave in the intermediate realm (*Al-Barzakh*), the best remembrance for the people of Paradise in Paradise, and the best remembrance for the people of Hellfire in Hellfire. Those who remember it seek, through their remembrance, to realize its meaning in their lives so that its utterance moves from being spoken merely with the tongue of speech to being expressed through both the tongue of speech and the tongue of being. This occurs when, by the grace of Allah and through the refinement of its practice, the unity of the human being is achieved within every person.

The foundation for the singular testimony in the Quran is: "So know, that there is no deity except Allah and ask forgiveness for your sins and for the believing men and believing women. And Allah knows your movements and your resting place." (47:19)

Its foundation in the Hadith is: "The best thing that I and the Prophets before me have said is: There is no deity but Allah."

There is a difference in degree between the compounded testimony - "There is no deity but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah" - and the singular testimony - "There is no deity but Allah." The compounded testimony represents the foundation on earth, while the singular testimony represents the pinnacle in the absolute.

This distinction is evidenced in the Quran: "Allah bears witness that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge - standing firm on justice. There is no deity except Him, the Mighty, the Wise. Indeed, religion with Allah is Islam." (3:18-19)

The pinnacle of the singular testimony is in the absolute, where God bears witness to Himself of His Oneness, while its foundation lies in the finite realm, on earth, among those who believe in it. This is the compounded testimony: "There is no deity but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

To say: "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah," is to enter into "There is no deity but Allah." It serves as the gateway, without which entry into the Divine Presence is impossible. By applying it - which we call "the perfection of imitation" (*tajweed al-taqlid*) - one progresses through the stages of monotheism. This is the journey of realizing "There is no deity

but Allah” - ascending from its level as it is spoken on earth by believers, people of knowledge, and angels, to its level as it is spoken in the heavens by angels and the angels of the highest assembly, and then to its level in the absolute, where it is spoken by the Divine Essence. And how distant, how distant this is!

This is a matter that is achieved anew every day and is never completed, for the journey is one to infinity. It suffices for the people of knowledge to know that their realization of “There is no deity but Allah,” no matter how far it reaches, is insignificant when compared to God’s testimony of His own Oneness in His words: “Allah bears witness that there is no deity except Him.” (3:18)

Two Circles

When elaborated, the previously summarized ideas yield two circles: an outer circle and an inner circle. Each circle has a *center* or, if you prefer, a *heart*. Each circle also has an entry point or a gateway leading from its outer structure to its interior - its heart.

The outer circle is composed of the statement “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah”, which is part of the compounded testimony (*Al-Shahada Al-Muthannaya*). The gate to this circle is Muhammad, through whom one enters its heart. The heart of this circle is the statement “There is no deity but Allah,” the other part of the compounded testimony.

The inner circle is composed of the statement “There is no deity but Allah,” and its heart is “Allah.” Its gate is “The Deity” (*Al-Ilah*). Thus, Muhammad is the gateway to the entirety of “There is no deity but Allah,” while “The Deity” is the gate to its essence. Between the whole statement and its essence lies a vast expanse, as vast as the difference between worship (*‘Ibadah*) and servitude (*‘Ubudiyyah*). It is an expanse where hearts soar with featherless wings in their infinite flight (*Al-Tayran As-Sarmadi*). This infinite flight is referenced in the verse: “And We sent down to you the Reminder that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them, so that they might reflect.” (16:44)

The compounded testimony is not a testimony of monotheism (*Tawhid*) but rather a testimony of duplication (*Tathniya*). Duplication is the lowest form of plurality, lower than the station of monotheism. The journey from duplication to monotheism involves abstraction (*Tajrid*), which is the

understanding of the station of Allah relative to that of Muhammad. Abstraction is only achieved by those who perfect imitation (*Taqleed*). Those who master imitation perceive the subtle meaning of the verse: "And when Allah alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter shrink with aversion, but when those [worshipped] other than Him are mentioned, immediately they rejoice." (39:45)

Similarly, the singular testimony (*Al-Shahada Al-Mufrada*) is not a testimony of monotheism either, unless individualization (*Tafriid*) occurs. Individualization is the understanding of the station of The Deity (*Al-Ilah*) relative to Allah. This knowledge is veiled and unattainable - it can only be glimpsed but never fully realized. Those who achieve a high rank in individualization are granted insight into the verse: "Say, if the Most Merciful had a son, then I would be the first of His worshippers." (43:81)

The singular testimony is not considered monotheistic because it is based on both negation and affirmation. It represents a movement between two poles, where thought traverses the straight path (*Sirat Al-Mustaqim*). In that fleeting moment of traversal, monotheism is realized, for it is on the straight path that God is found. This is alluded to in the words of [the Prophet] Hud: "Indeed, I have relied upon Allah, my Lord and your Lord. There is no creature but that He holds its forelock. Indeed, my Lord is on a straight path." (11:56)

The testimony of monotheism within individualization belongs solely to Allah. This is indicated in the verse: "Say, Allah! Then leave them to frolic in their vain discourse." (6:91)

Here, the statement must be expressed through the tongue of being (*Lisan Al-Hal*), where thought, speech, and action become unified. In this sense, "Say, Allah!" becomes akin to "Be Allah!" Achieving this state of being, is the function of the statement "There is no deity but Allah," supported by righteous deeds, the highest of which is pure prayer (*Salat Zakiyya*). This is referenced in the verse: "To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work uplifts it." (35:10)

Every person, no matter how elevated, has a "deity" (*Ilah*) other than Allah. That deity is their perception of Allah. No perception of Allah can encompass His Supreme Essence (*Dhat*). Thus, a gap inevitably exists between perception and reality. All acts of worship aim to align the individual's perception with the reality of Allah, so that their deity becomes Allah - and how distant, how distant this goal remains! This lofty aim is

referenced in the verse: “And establish weight through justice, and do not make deficient the balance.” (55:9)

It is as though one side of the scale holds Allah - the Ultimate Reality - while the other side holds The Deity, our perception of Him. The idea of the deity begins with falsehood and progresses into truth. Truth seeks to align perfectly with reality. The Deity, in another sense, is our perception of Allah, and this perception, no matter how refined, remains woefully inadequate. Even the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: “The most learned scholar, compared to Allah, is more ignorant than a camel.”

Practically speaking, every person’s deity (*Ilah*) is their self (*nafs*). Since our selves act as veils between our intellects and the Ultimate Reality - Allah - the Infallible [Prophet] said: “Your greatest enemy is your own self, which lies between your sides.” One of the mystics similarly said: “Your existence is a sin with no equal.”

This self is the lower self (*Al-Nafs Al-Sufila*), also called the commanding self (*Al-Nafs Al-Ammara*). It descends from the perfect self (*Al-Nafs Al-Kamila*) - a relative perfection represented by the perfect human (*Al-Insan Al-Kamil*). This, in turn, descends from the Absolute Perfect Self, which is the Self of Allah.

The entire journey of worshippers is a struggle to ascend from the commanding self to the perfect self - to the Self of Allah. This is an infinite journey, with a beginning but no end. It is referenced in the verse: “Say, O mankind, the truth has come to you from your Lord. So, whoever is guided is only guided for his self, and whoever goes astray only goes astray against it. And I am not a guardian over you.” (10:108)

Whoever is guided, guides themselves to their “higher self” (*Al-Nafs Al-Ulya*) - their “perfect self” (*Al-Nafs Al-Kamila*). Conversely, whoever strays becomes lost in the mazes of their lower self (*Al-Nafs Al-Ammaara*).

The Path of Muhammad is the *Sunnah*. Initially, it is the *Sunnah* of Muhammad, but ultimately, it becomes the *Sunnah* of Allah. This *Sunnah* is the straight path (*As-Sirat Al-Mustaqim*), which extends vertically between the lower self (*An-Nafs As-Sufila*) at the base and the higher self (*An-Nafs Al-Ulya*) at the summit. Horizontally, it is represented by the point of intersection between the extremes of excess (*Ifraat*) and negligence (*Tafreet*) as the lower self (here referring especially to *An-Nafs Al-*

Lawwama, though *An-Nafs Al-Ammara* is also present) oscillates between these two opposites.

The point of intersection of these opposites, at this level, is the truth (*Al-Haqq*). And the truth evolves as it seeks The Ultimate Reality (*Al-Haqiqah*).

This prophetic *Sunnah* is referenced in the verse: "The truth has come to you from your Lord." (10:108). The spirit of this verse lies in its concluding statement: "And I am not a guardian over you."

This concluding phrase is the essence of the verse due to its profound significance in refinement - refinement of the Prophet and refinement of the individuals within the nation. It refines both the educator (*Al-Murabbi*) and the one being educated (*Al-Mutarabbi*). Through it, the one being educated is made responsible for their actions as they journey toward achieving their individuality. At the same time, it imposes on the educator the duty of removing themselves from being in between the servants and their Lord, so as not to obstruct their path to God. This ensures that the educator perfects their own servitude, leaving no trace of lordship over any of creation.

In this refinement lies a gentleness in guiding the human self, reaching a level that borders on the miraculous. Indeed, this is the true miracle of the Quran.

This concluding phrase encapsulates in miraculous brevity the detailed meanings found in two well-known verses often discussed in our writings: "So remind, you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller." (88:21-22)

It is worth noting here that the concluding phrase represents the *Sunnah* of Allah, whereas: "Say, O mankind, the truth has come to you from your Lord" (10:108) represents the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. And only those with true knowledge comprehend this distinction.

Is There Any Doubt About Allah?

In our present time, there are not merely those who entertain doubt about the existence of Allah, but rather individuals who outright deny His existence with full confidence in their claims. Beyond that, they even assert the scientific validity of their position.

We have received a comment regarding our writings from one of the friends of the *New Islamic Mission*. The commenter remarked that we write as though the existence of Allah is a settled matter, whereas for many intellectuals, both locally and abroad, His existence still requires proof.

The Quran states: “Has the story not reached you of those before you - the people of Noah, ‘Aad, Thamud, (who appeared generations after the Prophet Noah), and those after them - none knows them but Allah? Their messengers came to them with clear proofs, but they put their hands in their mouths and said: ‘We disbelieve in what you were sent with, and we are in grave doubt about that to which you invite us.’ Their messengers said: ‘Is there any doubt about Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth? He invites you to forgive you of your sins and delay your end for a specified term.’” (14:9–10)

Some might object, asking: How can someone cite the Quran to prove Allah’s existence to those who deny it outright? The answer is simple: the argument is not made *through* the Quran itself but through the phrase it contains, which appeals to an innate, lived certainty: “Is there any doubt about Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth?”

This phrase points to a deeply ingrained truth, established over the long course of human life: every creation has a creator. This principle has never failed, not even for a moment. When asked about his proof of Allah’s existence, it is said that a Bedouin replied: “Camel droppings indicate the presence of a camel.”

This is such a self-evident truth that it requires no special intelligence. If something could create itself, it would introduce ambiguity, providing some excuse for those who deny Allah’s existence.

In another instance, the Quran states: “Were they created from nothing, or are they the creators? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are uncertain.” (52:35–36)

The phrase “Were they created from nothing?” implies: Were they created without a creator? The phrase “Or are they the creators?” asks: Did they create themselves? Both propositions are so absurd that they are rejected by innate reason.

A similar argument applies to the second verse: “Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are uncertain.” Here, the claim of those who deny is brought to an end.

Consider how the Quran presents this point through the story of Abraham when the arguments of his opponent reached a deadlock: “Have you not considered the one who argued with Abraham about his Lord because Allah had given him kingship? When Abraham said: ‘My Lord is the one who gives life and causes death,’ he said: ‘I give life and cause death.’ Abraham said: ‘Indeed, Allah brings the sun from the east, so bring it from the west.’ So, the disbeliever was confounded, and Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.” (2:258)

In another verse, the Quran states: “He created the heavens without pillars that you see, and placed firm mountains on the earth so it does not shake with you, and scattered therein every kind of creature. And We sent down water from the sky, causing every noble kind of plant to grow therein. This is the creation of Allah, so show Me what those besides Him have created. Rather, the wrongdoers are in clear error.” (31:10–11)

Once Again: Is This Argumentation Using the Quran to Prove Allah's Existence to Those Who Deny Him?

No! Absolutely not. This is not an argument using the Quran to convince those who deny Allah's existence. Rather, it is an adoption of the Quran's methodology - the methodology of appealing to lived certainty (*badaha ma'asha*).

Through hundreds of millions of years of lived experience, we have never observed a craft without a craftsman or an effect without a cause. As previously mentioned, consider the reply of the Bedouin who, when asked how he knew of Allah's existence, said: "Camel droppings indicate the presence of a camel."

The Quran is a book for the unlettered. Its Prophet was unlettered, and its community was unlettered. The Quran adopts a straightforward and simple - some may even say naïve - approach in addressing the greatest intellectual issue of modern times.

We are not, therefore, arguing *with the Quran* against atheists. Instead, we are appealing to a method that innate reason (*badaha*) finds undeniable. Innate reason confirms self-evident truths - those truths that are necessary from the perspective of the intellect. As the saying goes: "Nothing in the mind can be accepted as valid if the daylight itself requires proof."

From these self-evident truths, Gnostics, thinkers, and scholars have advanced. One such gnostic, Al-Nabulsi, remarked: "Behind the veil of creation lies the sought-after, and from the word 'subjugated' arises the necessity of a 'subjugator.'"

Reflect deeply on his phrase: "From the word 'subjugated' arises the necessity of a 'subjugator,'" and you will find it self-evidently true.

It is also said that a Bedouin was once asked: "How did you come to know Allah?" He replied: "I came to know Him through the failure of intentions."

A few years ago, the well-known Marxist philosopher Roger Garaudy visited Egypt to deliver public lectures to intellectual audiences. His visit was celebrated extensively, and his lectures were met with acclaim and praise. In one of his lectures, as reported by the magazine *At-Tali'a*, Garaudy said: "Of course, I am an atheist."

I paused for a long time at this bold statement. It occurred to me that a man who declares such a thing about himself is fundamentally unqualified to lecture to people - at any level of society. Such a man has a problem that he must resolve within himself before presuming to lecture others.

The Atheist: Who Is He?

The atheist is a person who rejects belief in Allah, the unseen, spirits, and the afterlife. He denies the foundation of religions and their interpretations of the universe - rejecting them in totality and detail. Instead, he bases his convictions on what he calls a scientific view of the universe, derived from theories and findings of material experimental science. The atheist's philosophy is a "materialist philosophy", which seeks to undermine religious values, dismantle them, and divert people from living by or believing in those values.

What Is Materialism?

Materialist philosophy is a perspective rooted in experimental science. It claims that the universe is purely matter. (Matter is defined as what is perceivable by the senses or the mind within this tangible universe in which we live.)

Materialism posits that the universe consists solely of matter and the laws governing its motion and transformation. This philosophy is in open and unrelenting conflict with all spiritual concepts that transcend matter, whether these concepts appear in the guise of religious doctrines or as idealist philosophies (as materialists often mockingly and dismissively label them).

According to the materialist perspective, nature (matter) evolves to reach its highest forms - including life and the thinking mind - through inherent causes within it and its laws, without any external forces or causes beyond it.

Materialist philosophy has existed for a long time, but it reached its peak under Marx and Engels, who developed what is known as “dialectical materialism.”

This is atheism, and the following is its materialist philosophy, summarized briefly but hopefully without losing its essence.

In materialist philosophy, matter, as perceived by the senses and understood by the mind, is considered the origin, while the mind is its effect - matter precedes, and minds follow. Naturally, this is correct to some extent; matter did emerge into existence long before the human mind. However, what would materialists think if we informed them that matter is preceded by the Grand Intellect (Al-'Aql Al-Kulli) - The Ultimate, Divine Mind, of which the human mind is merely an imitation, striving to follow its path to transcend its limitations and approach the infinite comprehension of that Grand Intellect?

Materialists often discuss the laws governing the motion and transformation of matter. But are not laws, in essence, products of

intellects? Did not Aristotle define law as “reason untouched by desire”? Or would they dismiss this as merely an idealist philosophy?

Is Materialism Scientific?

No, definitively not! Materialism is not scientific, even by the standards of contemporary experimental material science. This science has loudly proclaimed that matter, as perceived by the senses and the intellect, does not exist in its tangible form. Upon deeper analysis, matter is revealed to be energy, whose properties may be known, but whose essence remains elusive.

Moreover, the scientific nature of contemporary experimental material science itself is not fully “scientific.” We discussed this in concise yet sufficient detail in the introduction to our book *Religion and Social Development*, which negates the need to repeat it here. For further exploration, readers may refer to that text.

The simplest critique of materialist philosophy is that, when confronted with its inability to comprehend the unseen, it turned this incapacity into a virtue by outright denying the unseen. However, denying the existence of what one does not understand has never been - and will never be - a scientific approach. Instead, such denial is rooted in ignorance, coupled with an arrogance that dishonors any rational mind.

A truly scientific intellect does not deny what it cannot comprehend. Rather, it suspends judgment while continuing to investigate, believe provisionally, while exercising patience. It researches and examines until its denial or affirmation is built upon knowledge gained through humility, discipline, persistence, and the patience required for thorough inquiry.

It is astonishing that materialists assert the precedence of matter and the recent emergence of intellect, yet they have proceeded to pass judgment on the timeless use of the newly emergent. They make these judgments with unshaken confidence, applying them universally without hesitation.

Is this, in itself, a scientific approach?

Objection

An objection may arise regarding the arguments we have presented to prove the existence of Allah, which are primarily based on lived certainty (*badaha ma'asha*). This objection asks: "If certainty through lived experience establishes that every creation has a creator and every existing thing has a maker, then who created Allah?"

At first glance, this objection may seem valid, but upon deeper reflection, it is fundamentally flawed. Materialists often base their argument on this objection, claiming that matter is uncreated and does not require an external force.

They argue: "If, at the end of the chain, you lead us to an uncreated being and ask us to accept this, then we may as well declare from the outset that matter is an uncreated entity, requiring no creator."

This reasoning, however, is clearly flawed. Matters of existence are not resolved so simplistically. They cannot be determined arbitrarily or randomly.

Existence comprises two aspects: the imperfect (*an-naqis*) and the perfect (*al-kamil*). The intellect can comprehend and define the imperfect, and

through comparison, it can recognize something more perfect than the imperfect. It also observes that the imperfect evolves toward perfection.

Thus, the intellect comprehends the imperfect, recognizes relative perfection, and can conceive of absolute perfection (*al-kamal al-mutlaq*).

We observe imperfection in the world and witness its progression toward relative perfection. It is clear to us that every level of perfection is surpassed by an even greater level of perfection. From this, our imagination allows us to extend the concept of perfection endlessly. Hence, there must be a perfection without limit, which we can conceptualize as existing, even if we cannot fully comprehend its nature.

This infinite perfection can be termed "absolute perfection."

Our inability to grasp the nature of absolute perfection stems from the fact that our intellects are bound by sensory inputs. The absolute, however, is unbound (*ghayr ma'qul*, meaning "not confined"). The term "ma'qul" itself comes from the root 'aql, which refers to a tether or restraint.

Scientific methodology requires that we do not deny the absolute simply because we cannot comprehend its nature. Instead, we must affirm its existence, believe in it, and patiently pursue understanding, knowing that we can never fully encompass it. If we could, it would cease to be absolute.

The existence of the absolute is the foundation of hope within the evolutionary perspective of life. Our lives evolve from imperfection toward relative perfection, striving for absolute perfection. This pursuit implies that there is no final limit to the perfection of our existence.

Inorganic matter is imperfect, while organic matter - living cells - is more perfect. For example, an ant is more perfect than the sun. Similarly, organic matter in lower life forms, such as ants and small creatures, is imperfect compared to the lives of mammals, which are more advanced. However, mammalian life is also imperfect, and human life surpasses it in perfection.

Among humans, the life of the ignorant person is imperfect, while the life of the knowledgeable person is more perfect. Furthermore, the more knowledgeable a person is, the more perfect they are compared to those with lesser knowledge: "Above every knowledgeable person, there is one more knowledgeable." (12:76)

However, even the life of the most knowledgeable individual falls short of absolute knowledge. Their perfection is therefore relative, limited by the relativity of their knowledge. Life evolves in stages, striving for absolute knowledge.

Absolute knowledge is an understanding that the intellect can recognize, conceive, and believe in, striving to attain it. This absolute knowledge is the knowledge of Allah - and it is Allah Himself.

The imperfect requires a creator, and its imperfection lies in its dependency on something beyond itself. Similarly, the relatively perfect also requires a creator, as its relative perfection is still marked by dependency.

In contrast, The Absolutely Perfect - that which possesses absolute perfection - requires no creator because its perfection is unbounded. It is neither preceded by non-existence nor followed by non-existence, and it is free from any dependency.

The Quran establishes this truth: “O mankind, you are those in need of Allah, while Allah is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy.” (35:15)

When we conclude that, at the end of the chain, there is an existent being that does not require a creator, we do so in a manner that the intellect not only accepts but cannot otherwise conceive. Thus, what is given by lived certainty (*badaha*) is, in its essence, profoundly precise.

It goes without saying that there is but one Creator for both the imperfect and the relatively perfect. This unity of the Creator establishes the unity of existence, reflecting the interconnectedness of all beings under the Absolute Perfection of Allah.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those with him are severe against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and prostrating, seeking bounty from Allah and His pleasure. Their mark is on their faces from the traces of prostration. That is their description in the Torah. And their description in the Gospel is like a seed that sends forth its shoot, strengthens it, as it grows stout and rises firmly upon its stalk, delighting the sowers, so that He may enrage the disbelievers through them. Allah has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds among them forgiveness and a great reward.” (48:29)

Allah Almighty has spoken the truth.

Introduction to the Fourth Edition

With this, we present to esteemed readers the fourth edition of the book *The Path of Muhammad*. The third edition sold out quickly, and the demand for the book continues to grow, heralding the imminent revival of the purified *Sunnah*. This will be the day when blessings will be completed, joy will encompass all the people of the earth, and delight will prevail: “Say: In the bounty of Allah and in His mercy, let them rejoice. It is better than what they accumulate.” (10:58)

The time has come; the era of the brethren (*Ikhwan*) has arrived, those whom the Prophet foretold and longed to meet, as mentioned in his hadiths. We previously included a narration of this longing in the introduction to the third edition of this book. Here, we provide another narration: Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah came to the

cemetery and said: “Peace be upon you, dwelling of believing people. If Allah wills, we will join you soon. I wish I could see my brethren. The companions asked, Are we not your brethren, O Messenger of Allah? He replied, You are my companions, but my brethren are those who have not yet come. They asked, How will you recognize those of your nation who have not yet come, O Messenger of Allah? He said, What do you think? If a man has horses with white foreheads and legs among horses that are all black, will he not recognize his own horses? They said, Certainly, O Messenger of Allah! He said, They will come with bright faces and limbs from ablution, and I will precede them at the Basin. Some men will be driven away from my Basin as a stray camel is driven away. I will call to them: Come here! It will be said: ‘They changed after you.’ ‘So I will say: Be gone! Be gone!’”

Just as the brethren are mentioned in the hadith cited in the introduction to the third edition, they are also referenced in the Quran: “And others among them who have not yet joined them. And He is the Mighty, the Wise.” (62:3)

We have already explained the hadith and this verse in previous discussions, rendering repetition here unnecessary.

We begin this introduction with a Quranic verse that supports the hadith about the brethren. This verse speaks of both the companions (*Ashab*) and the brethren (*Ikhwan*).

The phrase “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah” reflects the descent from the Ahmadian message to the Muhammadan message, which addresses people according to their capacity for understanding, as wisdom dictates.

The phrase “and those with him” refers to the companions, who were the initial and primary recipients of the Muhammadan message. The verse describes them as: “Severe against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and prostrating, seeking bounty from Allah and His pleasure. Their mark is on their faces from the traces of prostration.”

This refers to their description in the Torah (*Old Testament*), representing the first community - the community of believers, the companions.

The phrase “their mark is on their faces from the traces of prostration” can refer to the light on their faces, a blessing of ablution and prayer. It may also include a physical mark on their foreheads, resembling the callus on a camel’s knee, from frequent prostration.

The verse continues: “And their description in the Gospel”, referring to the New Testament, meaning the second resurrection, which signifies the Muslim nation.

The phrase “like a seed that sends forth its shoot, strengthens it, and it grows stout and rises firmly upon its stalk” refers to growth and multiplication, much like the increase in rewards through acts of worship. These rewards are described in terms of knowledge of Allah and nearness to Him, as highlighted in the verse: “The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed of grain that grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. Allah multiplies for whom He wills. And Allah is All-Encompassing and All-Knowing.” (2:261)

This rapid multiplication of knowledge of Allah is achieved through contemplation during worship, not merely by performing acts of worship.

The Prophet said: “Contemplation for an hour is better than seventy years of worship.”

The capacity for contemplation in worship is the defining characteristic of the brethren (*Ikhwan*), whereas the capacity for worship itself was the hallmark of the companions (*Ashab*).

In the path of ascension (*al-mi'raj*), the subtle emerges from the dense, while in the path of descent, the dense emerges from the subtle. Based on this universal principle, the Gospel emerged from the Torah, just as the Muslim nation (*Ummat Al-Muslimeen*) will emerge from the believing nation (*Ummat Al-Mu'mineen*), the Ahmadian message will emerge from the Muhammadan message, and the brethren (*Ikhwan*) will emerge from the companions (*Ashab*). This is because the differences in existence are differences in degree, not kind. There are no differences in kind, as such differences would imply otherness, and there is no otherness in existence.

Moving through the degrees of differing magnitudes represents progression along the path of proximity to Allah. All creation continues its journey toward Allah, without ceasing, across all realms - this world, the intermediary realm (*Barzakh*), and the Hereafter. The dwellers of Hell progress toward Allah, as do the dwellers of Paradise. This journey persists eternally, beyond eternity, in the infinite (*as-sarmad*). There is no escape from Allah: “There is none in the heavens and the earth but will come to the Most Merciful as a servant. He has enumerated them and counted them precisely. And all of them will come to Him on the Day of Resurrection alone.” (19:93–95)

The journey toward Allah is an ascension - an elevation through degrees of proximity, a process of evolution. Evolution is harmony with the components of the environment, both its temporal and spatial aspects.

Based on this principle, the brethren (*Ikhwan*) represent an evolution from the companions (*Ashab*). While the companions are believers (*Mu'mineen*), the brethren are Muslims (*Muslimeen*). While the companions are people of faith (*'aqida*), the brethren are people of knowledge (*'ilm*). While the companions are in the stage of faith (*iman*), the brethren are in the stage of certainty (*yaqin*). While the companions are followers of the Muhammadan *Shari'ah*, the brethren are followers of the Ahmadian *Sunnah*. Each of these concepts has been elaborated upon within this book and may be referred to in its appropriate sections.

What concerns us most here is outlining the path for extracting the brethren from the companions, to clarify the way for the emergence of the human of tomorrow - a human capable of living a life that is both profound and expansive, a life of thought and feeling. This human is the ultimate goal of religion since the inception of religion. Indeed, this human is the purpose of life itself, preceding even religion.

The Path of Muhammad

It is the path because it is the path of fertile, creative love. The All-Wise, Almighty said about it: "Say: If you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you." (3:31)

Through the Path of Muhammad, religion becomes a way of life through which existence is guided, enabling progress toward the highest levels of fulfillment - a life of thought and a life of feeling.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

“Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorifies Allah, the Sovereign, the Holy, the Almighty, the Wise. It is He who has sent among the unlettered a messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and wisdom - although they were previously in clear error - and to others of them who have not yet joined them. And He is the Almighty, the Wise. That is the bounty of Allah; He gives it to whom He wills, and Allah is the possessor of great bounty.” (62:1–4)

Allah Almighty has spoken the truth.

Introduction to the Third Edition

This is the third edition of the booklet *The Path of Muhammad*. The first edition was published in March 1966, followed by the second edition in April 1968. At the time, certain distractions prevented us from including a special introduction to the second edition.

Today, we are reissuing it in its third edition without adding or altering anything. This is because the primary intent of this booklet was not to provide detailed discussions, but rather to call for a return to the Path of Muhammad - a path that has been neglected over time, becoming distant from the lives of people, fading away as its travelers have diminished and its guides have become scarce.

What Is the Path?

The path is the practical method that, when followed, leads to Allah, the Exalted. However, reaching Allah does not imply a literal arrival as the

word might suggest. Rather, it means that the traveler's awareness of Allah becomes greater than their heedlessness of Him.

The path is the *Shari'ah* (*Islamic law*), with an addition. It is a heightened form of *Shari'ah*. While an ordinary Muslim adheres to the *Shari'ah*, a devout Muslim who practices the path follows an enhanced version of it.

This distinction can be observed through a simple comparison. For instance, when an ordinary Muslim prays Maghrib, they typically count their *tasbihat*, *tahmidat*, and *takbirat* (glorifications, praises, and exaltations) thirty-three times each on a prayer bead and then leave their prayer space. However, a person of the path will often withdraw to a separate place after their prayer to perform foundational *awrad* (litanies) that constitute the minimum requirement for any path.

It is as though the person of the path has made a personal commitment, a pledge, upon taking the covenant of the path. This commitment distinguishes them and elevates them above an ordinary adherent of the *Shari'ah*. Thus, we say that the path is a heightened *Shari'ah*.

The Prophet said: "My words are *Shari'ah*, my actions are the path, and my state [of being] is reality." His actions are his *Sunnah*, which is the *Shari'ah* plus an enhancement - a heightened *Shari'ah*.

This explains why the Prophet committed to certain acts of worship and conduct that his companions did not. This was not because the companions were exempt from these acts, but because they lacked the capacity to attain them. They adhered to the *Shari'ah*, while the Prophet adhered to the path.

It is a significant error to assume that the Prophet's actions were exclusive to him and that we are not required to follow them. The truth is that we are called to emulate him when we are capable. What was left non-obligatory for us is only due to our limitations. If we become certain of this truth, we will strive to rise above our limitations to emulate the Prophet in the completeness of his actions and the perfection of his state. Allah said: "Say: If you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you." (3:31)

True following can only occur through the completeness of actions and the perfection of states [of being].

Who Is Muhammad?

Muhammad, son of Abdullah, son of Abdul Muttalib, was the unlettered Prophet sent from the [tribe of] Quraysh among the unlettered people in the seventh century. Allah sealed prophethood with him and revealed to him the Quran, which is recited today and preserved within the covers of the *Mushaf* [Holy Book]. Despite what they may mistakenly believe, Muslims do not truly know Muhammad.

This call to follow him and emulate him faithfully, as presented in this booklet *The Path of Muhammad*, cannot succeed in its highest form unless it provides a comprehensive understanding of Muhammad. Such an understanding makes following him a rational, evidence-based practice that appeals to and convinces even the most sophisticated contemporary minds of its value and necessity.

Apostleship, Prophethood, and Sainthood

To truly understand Muhammad, one must carefully examine his statement: "My words are *Shari'ah*, my actions are the path, and my state

[of being] is reality.” This statement highlights the three ranks of his station: the rank of the apostleship (*risalah*), the rank of prophethood (*nubuwwah*), and the rank of sainthood (*wilayah*).

Prophethood is the foundation, situated between two poles: above it is sainthood, and below it is the apostleship. When prophethood reaches full maturity, it emanates the [apostolic] message as a function. As it further matures, it occasionally ascends into the ranks of sainthood. This is why we assert that prophethood is the root.

Revelation began with prophethood. The first verses of the Quran revealed in an absolute sense were the verses of prophethood: “Read in the name of your Lord who created, created man from a clinging substance. Read, and your Lord is the most Generous - Who taught by the pen, taught man that which he knew not.” (96:1–5)

Once the Prophet became ready and his prophecy matured, the verses of apostleship were revealed: “O you who covers himself, arise and warn, and glorify your Lord, and purify your garments, and abandon defilement, and do not confer favor to seek gain, and for your Lord be patient.” (74:1–7)

The Prophet explained this process, saying: “My Lord disciplined me, and so made my discipline most excellent, and then He said: ‘Take what is pardoned, enjoin what is right, and turn away from the ignorant.’” (7:199)

The opening part of this saying reflects prophethood, while the latter part reflects apostleship. Though this statement is read in one instance, the events it describes unfolded over a much longer period.

The phrase “My Lord disciplined me, and so made my discipline most excellent” reflects a process that spanned forty years - the time it took for prophethood to fully mature, from birth to the prophetic mission. This considers prophethood as beginning with birth, but in truth, the prophethood of our Prophet is eternal.

It began to manifest in the physical realm while he was in the solitude of the womb. This manifestation grew more evident throughout the various stages of his youth. By the time he withdrew from society to the cave of Hira, the early stages of its maturity had begun. After fifteen years of seclusion and devotion, its dawn broke with the commencement of Quranic revelation.

Regarding the eternal nature of his prophethood, the Prophet said: “I was a prophet while Adam was between water and clay.” This statement means he was a prophet, aware of his prophethood, in eternity.

This truth became apparent when he entered the physical world. While still a fetus in his mother’s womb, he was distinct from other fetuses. His mother experienced none of the nausea, aversion, or unease typically associated with pregnancy. Instead, his presence brought her health, joy, and enduring happiness during her waking hours. Even in her sleep, she experienced comforting and uplifting visions.

Similarly, his childhood, adolescence, and youth were unlike those of others. He became certain that he was created for a purpose far beyond that of his peers. This certainty grew so strong that it led him to withdraw from society and seek solitude in the cave.

Regarding the three ranks of his station, the Prophet said on the night of his ascension:

“My Lord asked me, ‘O Muhammad, do you know what the Exalted Assembly disputes about?’ I replied, ‘You, my Lord, know best.’ He then placed His hand on my shoulder, and I felt its coolness between my chest, which granted me the knowledge of the first and the last. He taught me various forms of knowledge: knowledge that He commanded me to keep secret, knowing that no one but me could bear it; knowledge that He gave me the choice to share; and knowledge that He commanded me to convey to the general and specific members of my community - human and jinn [creatures made from fire] alike.”

The knowledge he was commanded to convey to the general and specific members of his community pertains to the knowledge of apostleship (*risalah*), which includes the Quran preserved between the covers of the *Mushaf*, as well as its clarification. This clarification encompasses legislation suited to the community’s needs and interpretation aligned with the community’s capacity. The Prophet said: “We, the group of prophets, were commanded to speak to people according to their level of understanding.”

Thus, the message [of apostleship] does not encompass the full clarification of the Quran, as some may think, neither in legislation nor in interpretation. This is for a variety of reasons, which make it impossible.

The knowledge he was given the choice to share falls partially within the domain of sainthood (*wilayah*) and partially within the domain of prophethood (*nubuwwah*). Some assume that the Prophet was obligated to convey everything he received from his Lord. Such an assumption reflects a lack of understanding of the true nature of religion.

In his station of sainthood, the Prophet is greater than in his station of prophethood. This is because, in prophethood, he received revelation through Gabriel, while in sainthood, he received directly from Allah without an intermediary. He referenced this during the night of ascension when Gabriel accompanied him to the utmost limit at the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary (*Sidrat al-Muntaha*) and said to him: "Here you are with your Lord, and I must remain behind."

The Prophet responded, "Is this a station where the beloved abandons his beloved?" Gabriel replied, "This is my limit. If I were to advance a single step, I would be incinerated."

The Prophet then said, "I was thrust into the light," referring to the light of the Divine Essence. Gabriel could not withstand the light of the Divine Essence because he lacks a self (*nafs*). This moment marked the beginning of the Prophet's sainthood.

The apostolic message is the revelation of the Quran, along with a body of legislation that the Prophet was commanded to convey to all people. Prophethood includes the revelation of the Quran and a body of legislation that the Prophet was commanded to practice for himself.

Thus, through apostleship, he is the bearer of *Shari'ah*, and through prophethood, he is the bearer of the path, or what may be called his *Sunnah*. There is overlap between his *Shari'ah* and his *Sunnah*, and they share common ground. Here, however, we refer specifically to the obligations that distinguished the Prophet from the rest of his community in terms of worship and conduct.

For example, while his *Shari'ah* is binding on his community, certain aspects of his *Sunnah* were obligations unique to him. These aspects were

part of his personal *Shari'ah* and are not obligatory for his followers unless they voluntarily commit to them as part of their spiritual journey, striving to emulate him through devotion, practice, and perfect imitation, in accordance with the verse: "Say: If you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you." (3:31)

The decisive conclusion regarding the three ranks is that prophethood represents a unique form of *Shari'ah* to which the Prophet was prepared through Allah's grace and by long practice of a life of seclusion. This practice granted him heightened awareness and clarity of thought. Through continued striving in this unique *Shari'ah* - through knowledge and actions based on that knowledge, in both worship and conduct - the Prophet's awareness and clarity of thought grew continually. This ongoing refinement increasingly prepared him to shoulder the responsibilities of apostleship, guiding, teaching, and leading with ever-growing excellence.

At the higher end of prophethood lies sainthood (*wilayah*), representing the refined and subtle aspect of prophethood, while apostleship (*risalah*) represents its denser and more tangible aspect. Regarding the ongoing alertness of his thought and awareness, the Prophet said: "A veil comes over my heart, so I seek Allah's forgiveness seventy times a day and night."

And the veil here is the veil of light, which refers to the veil of thought. Whenever his thought about Allah becomes clouded by the inclinations of his natural disposition, he seeks forgiveness from Allah, and his thought returns to clarity. Through this clarity, the life of feeling expands, as the heart receives the emanations of relief (*tarawih*) - the relief of nearness.

Regarding the peak of his ascent in witnessing this nearness - witnessings of sainthood (*wilayah*) - he said: "There is a moment I have with Allah that no close angel or sent messenger can contain."

Thus, the three ranks are interconnected: prophethood qualifies, from its lower extreme, for apostleship, and from its higher extreme, it produces sainthood. Prophethood is dynamic and ever-evolving, continually ascending through greater knowledge and the corresponding actions. Allah said to His Prophet: "Do not hasten with the Quran before its revelation is completed to you, and say, 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge.'" (20:114)

With each increase in the enlightenment of prophethood, the Prophet's qualification for bearing the responsibilities of apostleship grew on one hand, while the fruits of sainthood ripened with finer and deeper insights on the other. The fruits of sainthood are the ethereal insights into the Divine Essence. Through this knowledge of the subtleties and mysteries of the Eternal Essence (*al-dhat al-qadeema*), the created self (*al-dhat al-muhdatha*) becomes unified. This unification results from the harmony of the forces inherent in the human structure, leading to inner peace, which enables each individual to achieve their unique individuality, setting them apart from the rest of humanity.

Achieving this individuality through the unification of the human self is the ultimate purpose of Allah's command for us to worship Him through the creed of monotheism. For while Allah is not in need of monotheism, the human self, fractured by fear, is the one in dire need of unification.

The Ahmadian and Muhammadan Realms

It is time for people to distinguish precisely not only between prophethood (*nubuwwah*) and apostleship (*risalah*), but also between the Ahmadian and Muhammadan realms. The Ahmadian realm represents prophethood, while the Muhammadan realm represents apostleship. Our Prophet Muhammad ibn Abdullah combined both realms; he was Ahmadian in his prophethood and Muhammadan in his apostleship. In other words, as he relates to Allah, he is Ahmadian, and as he relates to people, he is Muhammadan. He is Ahmad in the heavens and Muhammad on earth.

The difference between the Ahmadian and Muhammadan realms is significant. The distance between them is vast because the Muhammadan realm descends from the Ahmadian, dictated by the requirements of the time and the needs and capacities of the seventh-century community. This distance represents the difference between *Sunnah* and *Shari'ah*, which, in turn, reflects the difference between the Prophet's level and the level of his community - a vast difference.

We have repeatedly said that the Prophet was not from the society of the seventh-century; rather, he came to them from the future - from the twentieth [present] century. While he lived among them, interacting and engaging with them, he was not one of them. He was the only Muslim among them, while they were believers (*Mu'minin*).

It is reported that the Prophet once said: "How I long to meet my brethren who have not yet come! They asked, Are we not your brethren, O Messenger of Allah? He replied, You are my companions; my brethren are those who have not yet come." He repeated his longing for his brethren three times, and when asked, "Who are your brethren, O Messenger of

Allah?" he said: "They are people who will come at the end of time. For one of them who acts righteously, the reward will be equal to seventy of you." They asked, From us or from them? He replied, From you. They asked, Why? He said, Because you find helpers for righteousness, but they will not find helpers for righteousness."

The essence of this hadith lies in distinguishing between the companions (Ashab) and the brethren (Ikhwan). The companions were the believers (*Mu'minun*), and they were not the Prophet's brethren. His brethren are the Muslims (*Muslimun*), who were not present during his time but for whom he was a forerunner. He described them as "those who have not yet come", borrowing the expression from the Quranic verse: "And others of them who have not yet joined them. And He is the Mighty, the Wise." (62:3)

After describing the unlettered ones among whom the Prophet was sent: "It is He who has sent among the unlettered a messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although they were previously in clear error" (62:2) - the Quran mentions: "And others of them who have not yet joined them."

The first group refers to the companions (*Ashab*), and the latter refers to the brethren (*Ikhwan*), whom the Prophet referred to in the hadith as "those who have not yet come." The Prophet's statement - "One of them who acts righteously will have the reward of seventy of you" - is derived from the Quranic verse: "That is the bounty of Allah; He gives it to whom He wills. And Allah is the possessor of great bounty." (62:4)

It is a subtle truth of religion that our Prophet is the messenger to two communities: the believing community - the companions - and the Muslim

community - the brethren. Thus, he is the bearer of two messages: the first is the Muhammadan message, and the second is the Ahmadian message.

The first message is the *Shari'ah*, which he detailed for his community. The second message is the *Sunnah*, which he exemplified through his life, though he did not expound on it fully except through his lived example, in flesh and blood.

The Prophet said: "Islam began as something strange, and it will return to being strange as it began. So blessed are the strangers!" They asked, Who are the strangers, O Messenger of Allah? He said, Those who revive my *Sunnah* after it has faded."

In this hadith, as we highlighted in our book *La Ilaha Illa Allah*, it is notable that the Prophet said "revive my *Sunnah*" and not "revive my *Shari'ah*."

Anyone seeking to understand the subtleties of religion must be able to distinguish between *Shari'ah* and *Sunnah*. This is something many - if not all - who speak about religion often fail to grasp.

In the words of Allah Almighty: "And when Jesus, the son of Mary, said, 'O Children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you, confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad.' But when he came to them with clear proofs, they said, 'This is obvious magic.' And who is more unjust than one who invents a lie about Allah while he is being invited to Islam? And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people." (61:6-7)

This verse subtly references the Ahmadian and Muhammadan realms. Muhammad came with an Ahmadian prophethood and a Muhammadan apostleship. Thus, he was "Ahmad" in one sense but not in another. He

called for faith in detail, but his call to Islam was general - both in terms of what the Quran conveyed and the way he lived his life. The community of believers responded to this call.

However, Muhammad will also come with an Ahmadian prophethood and an Ahmadian apostleship, calling not only the community of believers but all other nations to Islam. In this second call, he will elaborate, in both legislation and interpretation, on what was left general in the seventh century. This call will be widely heeded because Allah's warning will become evident, as in His words: "And whoever desires other than Islam as religion - it will never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers." (3:85)

Allah's promise will also be fulfilled: "Today I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as your religion." (5:3)

Since humanity, during the era of the first ignorance (*Jahiliyyah Al-awla*) - the ignorance of the seventh century - was primitive, simplistic, and uneducated, the dictate of the time necessitated a significant descent to the Muhammadan apostleship from the Ahmadi level. This was to address people in accordance with their level of understanding and to legislate for them at the level of their simple needs. This descent involved moving from the level of the foundational verses (*Ayat Al-Usul*) in the Quran to the subsidiary verses (*Ayat Al-Furu'*). As a result, the subsidiary verses became the relevant guidance for that time and were considered, in terms of legislation, to abrogate the foundational verses.

We have discussed this matter extensively in our book, *The Second Message of Islam*, the third edition of which was released just a few days ago. Those interested may refer to it.

Now, in the second half of the twentieth century, humanity is experiencing a second period of ignorance (*Al-Jahiliyyah Al-thaniya*) - the ignorance of the twentieth century. However, this modern ignorance is far more advanced than the ignorance of the seventh century. The world is now better prepared to receive the Ahmadian message and to comprehend far more than what earlier generations could. Thus, the time has come for the Ahmadian apostleship.

The Ahmadian message represents a development of the Muhammadan message. It involves reviving the foundational verses that were abrogated during the Muhammadan era, making them the prevailing focus for the twentieth century and the cornerstone of new legislation. All of this requires nothing but a renewed understanding of the Quran, through which the *Sunnah* can be revitalized after its decline.

The Muhammadan Essence

The Muhammadan essence is the first receptacle for the manifestations of the Divine Essence. This is referred to in the hadith narrated by Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari, who said: "I said, O Messenger of Allah, may my father and mother be sacrificed for you, tell me about the first thing Allah created. He said, 'The first thing Allah created was the light of your Prophet, O Jabir.'"

The Muhammadan essence is an Ahmadian reality, whose pinnacle is sainthood (*wilayah*), and whose foundation is prophethood (*nubuwwah*). Its station is the Praiseworthy Station (*al-maqam al-mahmud*), which the

Prophet reached on the night of his ascension after passing the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary (*Sidrat al-Muntaha*). At that station, he fulfilled the description: “The sight did not swerve, nor did it transgress.” (53:17)

This occurred in a moment of unity in which the Prophet’s human essence reached the summit, enabling it to witness the Divine Essence.

Following this luminous encounter, the Prophet returned to his ordinary life in Mecca. Allah had granted him a daily ascension and commanded him to persevere in it, promising that through this gradual process, he would attain the station he had briefly glimpsed during the night of ascension. Allah said: “And from [part of] the night, pray with it as additional worship for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a Praiseworthy Station.” (17:79)

This ascension is prayer, through which Muhammad, by performing the prescribed prayers (*salat maktuba*) and voluntary prayers (*nawafil*), day and night, constantly drew closer to Allah, ascending with each moment. Through this, he realized, in flesh and blood, the station Allah had shown him during the night of ascension. He expressed this by saying: “The coolness of my eyes has been placed in prayer.”

The “coolness of the eyes” refers to the tranquility of the heart, which can only occur when the self (*nafs*) achieves inner unity after being scattered. Muhammad realized this unity through his vision of the Oneness of the Divine Essence. As a result, his self found peace, his character sweetened, and his freedom was perfected.

The greatest evidence, in my view, of the Prophet’s complete inner freedom was his aversion to exercising control over others. It is well known that he disliked being distinguished from his companions and preferred to

be like one of them. He would forbid them from venerating him excessively, saying: "Do not extol me as the non-Arabs extol their kings." He also said: "Whoever loves for men to stand for him in reverence, let him prepare his seat in the Fire."

On one occasion, a man came to him and was overcome with awe, trembling and unable to express his need. The Prophet said to him: "Take it easy! I am not a king; I am but the son of a woman from Quraysh who used to eat dried meat." The man's anxiety eased, and he regained his composure and the dignity of his humanity.

The Prophet was once given the choice: to be a Prophet-King or a Prophet-Servant, and he chose to be a Prophet-Servant. Servitude to Allah is the ultimate form of freedom. The more a person humbles himself before Allah, the greater his freedom becomes - and the reverse is also true. Kingship, by its nature, involves domination over others, which diminishes one's servitude to Allah and, consequently, one's freedom.

Thus, the Prophet chose freedom, in the sense that he chose servitude to Allah.

This was a self that had achieved perfect internal health, where all inner forces were harmonized, free from illusions and falsehoods, and untainted by anxiety or primitive, naïve, fears.

How desperately humanity today needs to emulate this self, which had attained the heights of internal health. Such emulation, done with precision, would allow every man and woman to achieve inner unity, mature individuality, and liberate their personality from the pervasive unrest and anxiety of the modern age. This unrest has corrupted the lives of men, women, and youth across the world.

What Has Become of the Muslims?

The Muslims today are in a state of misguidance. They live in the second period of ignorance - the ignorance of the twentieth century. Even those among them who practice religion limit their efforts to the superficial, without reaching its essence. There is no way for them to escape this disgrace except through the Path of Muhammad.

As we present this path to them in this booklet and call them to it, we also warn them of the consequences of delaying their adoption of it. Furthermore, beyond the Muslims and after the Muslims, we offer this path to all of humanity, for there is no other way to achieve perfect liberation and complete civilization.

For this reason, the dedication of this booklet reads: "To those who seek Allah knowingly and to those who turn away from Him unknowingly. For there is no escaping Allah."

The Return

Allah Almighty says: "It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religions. And sufficient is Allah as Witness." (48:28)

Islam has yet to prevail over all other religions, but its emergence as a dominant force lies ahead. This is a promise that cannot be denied. The Prophet said: "Islam began as something strange, and it will return to being strange as it began. So, blessed are the strangers!"

When asked, "Who are the strangers, O Messenger of Allah?" he replied: "They are those who revive my *Sunnah* after it has been abandoned."

The return of Islam is certain and beyond doubt. However, just as its emergence was accompanied by strangeness, so too will its return. This is because its revival will come through the rebirth of ‘*La ilaha illa Allah*’ (There is no god, but Allah) in its original strength and creative power within the hearts of men and women.

There will be one key difference: the pillar of monotheism (*tawhid*) will reach a new pinnacle, higher than it was during the first emergence. This is dictated by the requirements of the present time and the pure grace of Allah, as expressed in the verse: “Every day He is bringing about a matter.” (55:29)

To pave the way for this return, we have produced this booklet, *The Path of Muhammad*, and launched a call to it. For the same purpose, we have written this extended introduction to the third edition of this important booklet.

Imitation (*taqlid*) without awareness or complete understanding is of little value. It can become a mechanical act, devoid of spirit, yielding nothing but effort and fatigue. For imitation to bear the desired fruit, it must stem from trust in the one being emulated, as well as confidence, reverence, veneration, and love for them.

Reverence and Veneration

The simplest foundation for meaningful imitation is that the heart of the follower holds a great degree of reverence and veneration for the Prophet. For this reason, Allah commanded the companions to show respect for the Prophet and to send blessings upon him, saying:

“Indeed, Allah and His angels send blessings upon the Prophet. O you who have believed, ask [Allah to confer] blessing upon him and peace.” (33:56)

We have already established that the companions were believers (*Mu'minun*), while the brethren are Muslims (*Muslimun*). In our book *The Second Message of Islam*, we explained that we would gain a new understanding of the Quran if we distinguished between the stage of the believers and the stage of the Muslims. We discussed this matter in detail there, so we will not repeat it here. Those interested may refer to it.

Here, we suffice with stating that Muslims are closer to Allah than believers. Their prayer to Allah is more complete and more perfect than that of the believers, and their blessings upon the Prophet are fuller and more profound than those of the believers.

When the essence of a Muslim becomes complete, their individual *Shari'ah* emerges from this essence. They become someone who follows a personal path in their prayer to Allah and in their blessings upon the Prophet. They are no longer bound by the collective practices of the believers in these acts. This completeness of essence and the emergence of individual *Shari'ah* is achieved through Allah's grace and through the faithful imitation of the Prophet.

No Muslim reaches this stage without first passing through the stage of being a believer. Similarly, the Muslim community begins with the stage of the believing community.

The difference between Muslims, while in the stage of faith (*iman*), and the believers is that Muslims retain the potential for progress along the

sevenfold path (*as-sullam as-sab'i*), whereas this potential is closed off at the third stage for the believers.

Muhammad, as the Messenger to the Muslim community, held a greater message than he did as the Messenger to the believing community. In his message to the Muslims, he was Ahmadian, while in his message to the believers, he was Muhammadan. The difference between the two messages stems from the difference in the times: the time of the first message in the seventh century, and the time of the second message in the [present] twentieth century.

To signal these distinctions, this book has been presented without including verbal blessings upon the Prophet. Yet, the book in its entirety is a form of prayer upon him at a level higher than the verbal prayers commonly recited.

Our companions do not neglect verbal blessings upon the Prophet as they read this book or whenever the noble Prophet is mentioned. This is the appropriate conduct while journeying toward Islam and during the realization of Islam itself, as Allah said: "Say: Each works according to their manner." (17:84)

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

“Today I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as your religion.” (5:3)

Allah Almighty has spoken the truth.

Introduction

The age of the Quranic state has arrived, and humanity is both prepared for it and in dire need of it - it is inevitable. This places a significant responsibility on contemporary Muslims, a responsibility they cannot fulfill unless they make Muhammad alone their guide and their sole means to Allah.

The Sufi paths have rendered a great service in spreading the true religion. They have nurtured exceptional individuals who served as beacons of guidance and centers of wisdom for the nation throughout its history, whether in times of ascent or decline. From them, the nation sought its faith, ethics, and spiritual education.

However, today's challenges surpass the capacity of the paths and their *shaykhs*. The solutions lie solely with [the Prophet] Muhammad.

We invite all followers of Sufi paths to return to the Path of Paths - the Path of Muhammad. By emulating Muhammad, the nation becomes united and its religion renewed. As we present this example from the Path of Muhammad, we do so as an illustration, not as an exhaustive guide. It is a model that can suffice many seekers until the horizons of the Muhammadan reality open up for them.

We strongly recommend frequent engagement with the books of hadith and the Prophet's biography (*sirah*), with particular emphasis on Sahih al-Bukhari, for those who wish to expand their understanding of this model. And Allah is the source of success.

The Republicans have issued the following statement:

Tuesday, 25 Dhu al-Hijjah 1384 AH, corresponding to April 27, 1965

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

From the Republican Party

To all those seeking Allah, those journeying toward Him, from all paths and all creeds:

Peace and the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you.

Time has returned to its original state, as it was when Allah sent Muhammad to call people to Him, as a guide and a facilitator [of those] on His path. With this cyclical return of time, all paths that once led to Allah and connected people to Him have now been closed, except for the Path of Muhammad. From this day forward, the paths are no longer paths, and the creeds are no longer creeds.

We address this message to all people in general, to Muslims in particular, and to the followers of spiritual paths (*turuq*) among Muslims especially.

The best worship, without exception, is the recitation of the Quran, and the best recitation is what takes place within prayer. The Path of Muhammad involves praying with the Quran, both in the obligatory

prayers and during the last third of the night. He would pray three, five, seven, nine, eleven, or thirteen rak'as, never exceeding that. He would prolong his standing (*qiyam*) by reciting long surahs, or by repeating shorter ones, or even by repeating a single verse until his feet swelled.

Muhammad is the means to Allah, and there is no means other than him from this day forward. Whoever seeks a path to Allah that connects him and does not veil him from Allah, or cut him off before reaching Him, must abandon every form of worship they currently follow and emulate Muhammad - both in the manner of his worship and in what they are capable of adopting from his habits - a conscious emulation. Let them rest assured that by doing so, they have surrendered themselves to the guiding leader of all souls who is himself guided.

It is incumbent upon the *shaykhs* of the spiritual paths to remove themselves from between the people and Muhammad, and to focus their efforts on guiding people to the life of Muhammad - through both their actions and their words. For the life of Muhammad is the key to the religion, the key to the Quran, and the key to "*La ilaha illa Allah*", which is the ultimate purpose of the Quran. This is the secret behind the pairing in the testimony: "*La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammadun Rasul Allah*".

The life of Muhammad is preserved in the books of Hadith, especially Sahih al-Bukhari, and the Republican Party will release a bulletin detailing this life, by the Will of Allah.

This is what the Republicans announced on that date. Now, in fulfillment of the promise we made, we are releasing the bulletin we had pledged.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

“And as for the night, keep the vigil a part of it, as a work of supererogation for thee; it may be that thy Lord will raise thee up to a laudable station.”
(17:79)

“Say, If you love Allah, then follow me, so Allah will love you.” (3:31)

When Islam spread and came to dominate people’s lives, the Prophet was both their leader and their means to Allah. At that time, the worldly life was not their greatest concern; rather, the worldly life served as a means to the Hereafter, just as the Prophet had taught them. After the Prophet returned to his Lord, this remained the case during the caliphates of the first two Caliphs [Abu Bakr and Umar] and the early years of Uthman’s caliphate. However, toward the end of Uthman’s rule, the love of worldly possessions began to preoccupy people’s hearts.

When Ali assumed leadership following the assassination of Uthman and sought to restore matters to the way they were during the time of the first two Caliphs, people’s attachment to worldly matters led them to forsake him and support Mu’awiya against him. From that point, worldly concerns began to prevail over religious matters. The caliphate under Mu’awiya thus became a hereditary monarchy, as the Prophet had foretold. Mu’awiya entrusted the affairs of the believers to his son Yazid, establishing the succession as an inheritance among his descendants.

Ali ibn Abi Talib was killed during the era of Mu’awiya. Al-Hasan ibn Ali was also killed. Then Yazid’s followers killed al-Husein ibn Ali, along with many of the sons of Ali.

From that time onward, worldly matters dominated, and religion declined among the people. Whenever a descendant of Ali rose to restore religion,

people abandoned him and supported his enemies - first the Umayyads and then the Abbasids. This continued until the supporters of religion despaired of reforming the people. They withdrew with their religion to caves, wildernesses, and remote areas, establishing it within themselves and spreading it among those around them who sought it, without challenging the worldly authorities.

Thus, Islamic Sufism emerged. Its leaders (*shaykhs*) modeled their lives after the Prophetic way - both his seclusion in the Cave of Hira before his mission and his life after he was sent as a prophet. Through them, the inner knowledge of religion, its secrets, and its lights became manifest to them and their disciples. These Sufis became the preservers of religion, its scholars, and the guides who directed people to Allah. They carried out this great role through the ages, the remnants of which still appear today in some blessed places where the Quran is preserved, and disciples are trained in the spiritual path.

Islamic Sufism, in its essence, is the imitation of the Prophet's life. The Prophet's personal practices - both before and after prophethood - are the foundation of Sufism, even though the term "Sufism" emerged later. In truth, Sufism represents the adherents to the Muhammadan *Sunnah*.

Sufism flourished for seven centuries following the third century, reaching its peak during the sixth and seventh centuries. However, like other aspects of religion, it eventually suffered from distortion, weakening, and deviation, resulting in its present state. Despite its current weaknesses and divergence from the practices of its early adherents, Sufism remains closer to the essence of religion than many false manifestations that claim religiosity while exploiting it.

This is the story of the people of faith - Ali ibn Abi Talib's followers and his descendants.

Conversely, the people of the world (*Dunia*) - Muawiyah's followers - began their dominance with the victory of Muawiyah over Ali. They organized their worldly affairs according to Islamic *Shari'ah*. However, as their worldly ambitions grew, their needs became more complex, giving rise to Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Jurists engaged in reasoning, analogy, and interpretation, but eventually, they overextended, focusing on superficial matters while neglecting the core of the religion. This resulted in practices that imitated religion without embodying its spirit, and jurists who emerged have pursued worldly gains in the name of religion.

Today, both the jurists and the followers of Sufi paths have lost their way, though to varying degrees. Humanity now lives in the second period of ignorance (*jahiliyyah*), subtly referenced in the Quran: "And do not display yourselves as [was] the display during the former period of ignorance." (33:33)

The sun of Islamic *Shari'ah* set long ago, and its night has been long. Yet the dawn of a new day is near, and the light of a new morning approaches.

Muhammad, with Allah's grace, led humanity out of the darkness of the first era of ignorance (*jahiliyyah*) into the light of faith. Similarly, with Allah's grace, he will guide humanity out of the darkness of the second era of ignorance into the radiance of Islam. Our present will surpass our past, and our future will be one of unparalleled blessings - "what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and what has not crossed the mind of any human being."

This anticipated future - one that belongs to all humanity - requires no less of a guide than Muhammad, the infallible. The Sufi paths have served a noble purpose and played a significant role in preserving the religion and guiding people. However, they are not sufficient to shoulder the burdens of this future. What is needed is the comprehensive path that encompasses all others - the Path of Muhammad. He said: “My words are *Shari’ah*, my actions are the path (*Tariqah*), and my state of being is reality (*Haqiqah*).”

This is the essence of what we declared in our first proclamation: “Muhammad is the means to Allah, and from this day forward, there is no other means.”

The second era of ignorance that contemporary humanity is experiencing, when compared to the first era of ignorance fourteen centuries ago, underscores the necessity of the first Muhammadan mission and the inevitability of the second Muhammadan mission. This is what we intended in the same proclamation when we stated:

“Time has returned to its original state, as it was when Allah sent Muhammad to call people to Him, as a guide and a facilitator of those on His path. With this cyclical return of time, all paths that once led to Allah and connected people to Him have now been closed, except for the Path of Muhammad. From this day forward, the paths are no longer paths, and the creeds are no longer creeds.”

This applies specifically to the paths (*Turuq*), and also to the creeds (*Millal*), as today marks the beginning of the fulfillment of Allah’s warning: “And whoever desires other than Islam as religion - it will never be

accepted from him, and in the Hereafter, he will be among the losers.”
(3:85)

Muhammad is not absent today; rather, we are heedless of him due to our ignorance of his true essence. For this reason, we have called upon contemporary Sufi *shaykhs* to guide their followers to emulate the Prophet's life - his worship and his daily practices - through their actions and words. We said: “The *shaykhs* of the paths must remove themselves from between the people and Muhammad.”

By this, we meant to invite them to direct their followers to Muhammad so that he may become the *shaykh* and guide for all. Between these individuals, mutual love and respect should develop - bonds akin to those between companions on the shared journey to the greater pilgrimage.

This call to return to Muhammad, as we present it, will initially achieve the unity of the nation and liberate it from sectarianism, which is its greatest affliction. This unity will be achieved by gathering the nation around the imitation of a single individual, our supreme example.

Ultimately, this call will transform “*La ilaha illa Allah*” into a powerful revolution within the hearts of men and women, as it was during the first era when Muhammad proclaimed it in Meccan society. This time, the nation will achieve unity through the collective knowledge and certainty of Allah.

We are firmly convinced that through emulating Muhammad, the nation will achieve unity, and its religion will be revitalized. Therefore, we have dedicated ourselves to deepening this call and now present a model to assist all who wish to find a way to Allah.

Muhammad's Prayer

The worship practices of the Prophet centered on praying by reciting the Quran, both for the prescribed prayers (*maktuba*) and during the last third of the night (*tahajjud*). Alongside the obligatory prayers, he would regularly observe ten additional *rak'as* (the prescribed movements with Quranic recitation): two before *Dhuhr* (the afternoon prayer) and two after it, two after *Maghrib* (the sunset prayer), two after *'Isha* (the last prayer in the evening before going to bed), and two before *Fajr* (the early morning prayer before sunrise). He also maintained a habit of praying four *rak'as* at the time the sun begins to decline from its zenith. His preference was to pray in his home except for the obligatory prayers, as he said: "Do not make your houses into graves."

He would sleep in a state of remembrance (*dhikr*) and reflection (*fikr*), and wake in the same manner. Each time he awoke from sleep, he would engage in seeking forgiveness (*istighfar*) and recitation. The first thing he did was use the siwak [to brush his teeth], after which he would pray the night prayer in the final third of the night. It is narrated that he would wake up around midnight, sometimes a little before or after, wipe sleep from his face, and recite the concluding ten verses of Surah Al Imran: "Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth... [until the end of the verses]" (3:190–200). He would then perform ablution meticulously and stand for prayer.

He prayed two *rak'as*, followed by another two, then another two-[up to]six times in total - before praying *Witr*. Afterward, he would lie down until the call to prayer came, at which point he would stand, pray two light *rak'as*, and proceed to lead the *Fajr* prayer. This is one form of his night prayer (*tahajjud*). In another variation, he would pray two light *rak'as*, followed by

two long *rak'as*, then two slightly shorter, and so on, until he had completed twelve *rak'as*, concluding with a single (*Witr*) *rak'a*.

Aisha narrated another variation: "He prayed four *rak'as*, - do not ask about their beauty and length, then another four of similar nature, before finishing with three *rak'as*."

It is also reported that when he began his *tahajjud* prayer, he said: "Allahu Akbar, Possessor of Sovereignty, Might, Majesty, and Grandeur." He then recited *Surah al-Baqarah*, then he bowed (*raka'a*), and his bowing (*ruku'*) was nearly as long as his standing. During the bowing, he would repeat: "Glory be to my Lord, the Magnificent. Glory be to my Lord, the Magnificent." (*Subhana Rabbiya Al-Azim. Subhana Rabbiya Al-Azim*) Then he raised his head and stood upright, and this standing was nearly as long as his bowing. He would say: "To my Lord belongs all praise. To my Lord belongs all praise." (*Le Rabbiya Al-Hamd. Le Rabbiya Al-Hamd*).

Then he prostrated (*sajada*), and his prostration (*sujud*) was as lengthy as his standing, and during it, he said: "Glory be to my Lord, the Most High. Glory be to my Lord, the Most High." (*Subhana Rabbiya Al-'la. Subhana Rabbiya Al-'la*) Then he raised his head from prostration, and his sitting between the two prostrations was almost as long as the prostration itself, and he would supplicate: "My Lord, forgive me. My Lord, forgive me." (*Rabbi Aghfir Lee. Rabbi Aghfir Lee.*)

In this prayer, he recited *Surah al-Baqarah*, *Aal Imran*, *Al-Nisa*, and either *Al-Ma'idah* or *Al-An'am*.

Among the supplications he made during *tahajjud* was: "O Allah, to You belongs all praise; You are the Sustainer of the heavens and the earth and all within them. To You belongs all praise; You are the Light of the heavens

and the earth and all within them. To You belongs all praise; You are the Sovereign of the heavens and the earth and all within them. To You belongs all praise; You are the Truth, and Your promise is truth, and the meeting with You is truth, and Your words are truth, and Paradise is truth, and the Fire is truth, and the Prophets are truth, and Muhammad is truth, and the Hour is truth. O Allah, to You I have submitted, in You I have believed, upon You I have relied, to You I have turned, and by You I have argued, and to You I have brought my case. So, forgive me for what I have done and what I have delayed, what I have concealed and what I have disclosed. You are the One who brings forward, and You are the One who defers; there is no god but You, and there is no power or strength except with Allah.” He would then resume recitation.

During his prostration, he made supplications and prolonged his position, sometimes for the duration of reciting fifty verses. He would pause to seek mercy when reciting a verse about mercy and to seek refuge when reciting a verse about punishment.

After *witr*, he would say: “Most Holy, Most Holy, Lord of the angels and the spirit” (*Subbuh, Quddus, Rabb al-mala’ikah wal-ruh*), repeating it twice, and on the third occasion, raising his voice.

He would never abandon the night prayer, whether at home or while traveling, nor would he alter it during Ramadan or at any other time. If something prevented him from performing it at night, he would pray twelve *rak’as* during the day. If he was unable to pray standing, he prayed seated, standing only for the final thirty or forty verses before bowing and prostrating. Toward the end of his life, most of his prayer was performed while seated.

He recited the Quran with deliberate pacing, pausing at the end of each verse to prolong the surah, and he recited with clear enunciation, letter by letter. His voice was audible but soft, not exceeding the rooms around him. He would stand for such a long time that his feet would swell. His prayer varied between three and thirteen *rak'as*, in multiple forms, to accommodate his body's condition and energy [level]. This ensured that prayer did not become a habitual, mechanical act devoid of presence. As it is said, "The bane of every act of worship is that it becomes a [mindless] habit."

Such variation enables the follower to nurture their self, protect themselves from the routine of habit, and diversify his [or her] worship. Praying in any of these forms is sufficient, but performing all of these forms at different times achieves completeness. This flexibility allows one to train the self gradually, draw strength from discipline within limits, and combat the stagnation from habitual actions by using variety.

The Movements of Muhammad's Prayer

The movements of Muhammad's prayer were narrated as follows: When he began his prayer by saying the *takbir* ("Allahu Akbar"), he would raise his hands to the level of his shoulders. During bowing (*ruku'*), he would firmly place his hands on his knees, straighten his back, and maintain it in a way that each vertebra returned to its natural position. When he rose from *ruku'*, he would stand upright until all the bones were properly aligned.

In prostration (*sujud*), he placed his hands neither spread wide nor clenched in close and directed the tips of his toes towards the *qibla*. When sitting for two *rak'as*, he would sit on his left leg while extending his right

leg [backwards]. In the final sitting, he would advance his left leg, extend the other, and sit on his buttocks. If he was on the odd number of his prayers (such as after the first *rak'a* of a *two-rak'a*, or after the third *rak'a* of a *four-rak'a* prayer), he would not rise until he had fully settled in a sitting posture.

It was also reported that he would initially clasp his hands and place them on his chest (*qabḍ*) in prayer, then later let them rest by his sides (*saddl*).

As for his ablution (*wudu'*), it was not a rigidly repeated routine. At times, he would perform it once for each body part, at other times twice, or three times. Initially, he would renew his ablution for each obligatory prayer.

Muhammad's Fasting

The Prophet used fasting to perfect his prayer, just as he used prayer to maintain his contentment and submission to Allah's will. This aligns with Allah's command: "Seek help through patience and prayer." (2:45)

Fasting purifies thoughts, reduces sleep, and enhances the transparency of one's self, so that it will be illuminated by the spirit during prayer, it also strengthens the illumination of the spirit, as the Prophet said: "Fasting is radiant light, and prayer is illumination."

His fasting was not habitual or repetitive in a rigid way; instead, he varied its forms. He frequently observed fasting on Mondays and Thursdays. Much of his fasting fell on Saturdays and Sundays, while at other times, he fasted Saturday, Sunday, and Monday of one month, and Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of the next. He would not miss fasting the white days (*ayyam al-beed*) – [during the full moon phase, the 13th, 14th, and 15th day of the lunar month], whether he was traveling or at home. It is

also narrated that he would fast three days of every month, and he did not concern himself with whether these were at the beginning, middle, or end of the month.

Beyond fasting, the Prophet minimized his food intake, saying: “We are a people who do not eat until we feel hungry, and when we eat, we do not fill ourselves to capacity.”

These practices formed the core of the Prophet’s worship. However, what he prescribed for others in terms of acts of worship or supplications constituted the *Shari’ah* and not his personal *Sunnah*, which were his distinctive [personal] habits and practices in both worship and daily life from the time of his mission until his passing.

He commanded us to follow his example, saying: “Pray as you have seen me pray.”

His prayer combined form and presence. Those who adopt the form of his prayer without achieving the presence of heart have neither truly seen the Prophet nor prayed, as it is said: “There may be a person who prays but has not truly established their prayer.”

The Prophet would free his heart of all distractions during prayer. It is narrated that he once removed the straps from his new sandals because they occupied his thoughts. Similarly, he once removed his shirt for the same reason.

His prayer was a ladder of ascent (*mi’raj*) that he would turn to whenever an affliction or difficulty befell him. Through it, he found rest, and in it he found tranquility within himself]. The mark of one who establishes prayer

is its reflection in their character, conduct, and dealings with others, for prayer influences the heart, corrects the self, and refines one's manners.

The true sign of establishing prayer is its reflection in the worshiper's life, conduct, and inner self. It should influence all interactions with people and manifest in one's character. This is the essence of the Prophet's prayer and the standard for those who seek to emulate him.

The Characteristics of Muhammad

The Prophet said: "I was sent to perfect noble character." He also said: "Religion is [good and proper] interaction."

The life of the Prophet was an embodiment of goodness, mindfulness, and thoughtful contemplation in everything he did and refrained from doing. Just as his worship was rooted in thoughtful renewal, free of routine, so were his [daily] habits guided by mindfulness, turning them into acts of devotion measured by fairness and justice.

He preferred the right over the left in his actions and loved to begin [actions] with the right hand or side. Whenever he had to choose between two options, he would choose the simpler one, as long as it was not sinful. In all his activities, he remained in a state of remembrance (*dhikr*) and reflection (*fikr*). He would not rise or sit without remembering Allah, and his mindfulness extended to his sleep, eating, and dressing. His movements reflected the meanings of the Quran, and the result of his constant prayer, reflection, and remembrance was the sweetness of his character, which endeared him to people and established him as an example to follow.

The Prophet was compassionate and merciful to all believers, comforting and caring for them. He was forgiving, never becoming angry for personal

reasons, and was always cheerful and easygoing. He was the kindest, most beneficial, and best of people to others.

The Prophet took care of his companions' feelings and checked on those who were absent from gatherings. He would often ask, "My brother, have you felt offended by me or by any of our companions?"

He would engage with his companions in a way that made each one feel as though they were the most beloved to him. He shared his warmth with everyone who came to him, making them feel that they were the most honored in his sight. He never confronted anyone with something they disliked, never acted harshly toward anyone, and always accepted excuses, no matter the offense.

Anas, his servant, said: "I served the Messenger of Allah for ten years, and not once did he say to me because of something I did, 'Why did you do it?' or for something I left undone, 'Why didn't you do it?'" Anas also reported, "If a member of his household blamed me, he would say, 'Leave him alone, for if it were decreed, it would have happened.'"

The Prophet said of himself: "I am but a servant. I eat as a servant eats, and I sit as a servant sits." He never distinguished himself above his companions or used them for personal service. Even when they volunteered, he refused to let them serve him exclusively.

The Prophet participated with his companions in building a mosque, digging a trench, and other tasks. During the Battle of Badr, he took turns walking while sharing a camel with his companions. When preparing food, he helped gather firewood. When his companions offered to spare him the task, saying, "We will take care of it for you," he replied: "I know you will handle it, but I dislike setting myself apart from you."

He once carried goods from the market for his family, and when someone offered to carry them for him, he said: "The man is most deserving of serving himself." He remarked: "Allah dislikes that a servant of His distinguishes himself above his companions."

On one occasion, a man came to him, overwhelmed with awe, and began to stammer. The Prophet comforted him, saying: "Take it easy. I am not a king; I am the son of a woman from Quraysh who used to eat dried meat." The man's nerves settled, and he expressed his needs clearly.

The Prophet further emphasized humility, saying: "O people, I have been instructed through revelation to practice humility. So, humble yourselves, that no one may oppress another or boast over another. Be servants of Allah, as brothers."

This is how he conducted himself among his companions, affirming their worth and dignity, and nurturing them as free individuals. Muslims today must reclaim their dignity, respect their intellect, and free themselves from the chains of sectarianism and restrictive practices by returning to the expansive path of the compassionate and merciful Prophet.

By adhering to his example and worship [practices] - praying with the Quran during obligatory prayers and in the last third of the night - Muslims can replace the innovations (*bid'ah hasanah*), excessive forms of worship, and [overt] practices like the use of prayer beads with the simplicity of the Prophet's way.

If Muslims were to follow the Prophet's clear example, they would liberate millions of idle minds, exploited hands, and subjugated human beings. "La ilaha illa Allah" would once again become vibrant and powerful in the hearts of men and women, rekindling dignity, honor, and freedom.

Conclusion

This is the *Path of Muhammad* - the path of all paths. It is the great river into which all streams flow; the vast sea where all rivers meet.

The Path of Muhammad was a life of worship by night and service by day - worship of Allah during the night, secluded in devotion and intimate conversation with Him while standing and in prostration.

During the day, it was a life of service to Allah's creation, showing kindness and striving to bring goodness to them with love, sincerity, and selflessness.

Through both worship and service, life in its entirety becomes an act of worship. This is the ultimate purpose of creation as stated by Allah: "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me." (51:56)

The essence of the Path of Muhammad is summarized in these verses: "Say, 'Indeed, my Lord has guided me to a straight path - a correct religion - the way of Abraham, inclining toward truth. And he was not among those who associated others with Allah. Say, 'Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds. No partner has He. And this I have been commanded, and I am the first [among you] of the Muslims.'" (6:161-163)

Everything along this path is for Allah - interaction with the Truth as the Truth and interaction with the Truth [found] in His creation. This is the meaning of the Prophet's saying: "Religion is proper and good interaction."

This is an invitation to Allah, issued by Muhammad, and guided by Muhammad. It is a call that demanded a response yesterday, and it

demands a response today with even greater urgency, as its argument is more compelling now than before. “Say, if you should love Allah, then follow me, so Allah will love you.” (3:31) If not, then nothing else will suffice.

O people of the Quran, you are not about anything until you establish the Quran. Establishing the Quran is like establishing the prayer: it requires knowledge and action based on that knowledge. The first step in both is to follow, with excellence, the example of the infallible Prophet who embodied the Quran and perfected prayer.

May Allah establish the Quran, establish the prayer, and guide hearts and minds to this truth. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Responding.