

The Materialist Tendency

in the Islamic World

A Critique of the Writings of

Jawdat Said · Muhammad Iqbal · Muhammad Shahrur

in the Light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah



Adel al-Tal

May Allah have mercy on him.

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Translation Note

This translation follows the prepared Arabic edition and preserves the author's arguments, headings, quotations and footnotes. English pagination is independent of the Arabic edition.

Qur'anic quotations reproduce a published reference translation of the meanings. Verse references follow the quoted text, including its full range where needed. Other quotations are translated from the author's Arabic. Bracketed English book titles explain Arabic titles; they do not identify published English editions.

Names and references use ordinary Latin letters. The terms *ilm* and *ma'rifah* remain distinct where the argument requires it. References to the present retain the author's original historical setting.

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“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.”

Qur'an 1:1

“Nay, but We hurl the true against the false, and it doth break its head and lo! it vanisheth. And yours will be woe for that which ye ascribe (unto Him).”

Qur'an 21:18

All praise belongs to Allah. We praise Him and seek His assistance. We seek refuge in Allah from the evils of our souls and our bad deeds. Whomever Allah guides, no one can lead astray; whomever He leads astray, no one can guide. I testify that there is no deity but Allah alone, without partner, and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger.

“O ye who believe! Observe your duty to Allah with right observance, and die not save as those who have surrendered (unto Him)”

Qur'an 3:102

“O mankind! Fear your Lord. Lo! the earthquake of the Hour (of Doom) is a tremendous thing.”

Qur'an 22:1

“O ye who believe! If ye keep your duty to Allah, He will give you discrimination (between right and wrong) and will rid you of your evil thoughts and deeds, and will forgive you. Allah is of Infinite Bounty.”

Qur'an 8:29

Contents

Author's Introduction	1
Aims of the Study	1
A Note on Method	2
Chapter One	
The Islamic Approach	4
A. The Relationship between Allah and the Human Being	5
B. Relationships between Human Beings	7
C. The Human Relationship with the Universe	13
The Characteristics and Governing Principles of the Islamic Approach	14
The Method of Islamic Thought	16
Principles for Approaching Scriptural Texts: Criteria of Discernment	17
1. Affirmation	18
2. Denial and Invalidity (Ta'til)	19
3. Reinterpretation: Distortion (Ta'wil)	24
4. Likening Allah to Creation (Tashbih)	29
5. Consigning the Meaning to Allah (Tafwid)	29
Chapter Two	
The Principle of Causality in Islam	32
The Meaning of Divine Decree	32

Contents continued

The Degrees of Divine Decree	33
1. The Qadariyyah Who Deny Divine Decree	45
2. The Determinist Qadariyyah	47
3. The Sunni Approach to Divine Decree	47
The Will Concerning What Occurs in the Universe	49
The Effects of Belief in Divine Decree	50
How the Believer Responds to Divine Decree	53
Hidden and Disclosed Decree	55
Misguided Sects	58
 Chapter Three	
Philosophical Approaches	63
1. The Materialist Approach	63
A Comparison of the Rationalist and Materialist Approaches to Thinking	65
2. The "Rationalist" Philosophical Approach	68
Refuting the Philosophical Rule	68
The Source of Knowledge	72
 Chapter Four	
Ideas and Individuals	84
Jawdat Said	84

Contents continued

The Critic's Task	87
What Materialist Thinkers Have in Common	88
Chapter Five	
The Human Sciences	96
Positivist Sociology	97
Chapter Six	
Materialism	104
Dialectical Materialism	112
Historical Materialism	113
Chapter Seven	
The Approach to Change	125
The Historical Roots of the Principle of Change	129
The Principle of Change	130
Chapter Eight	
Regularities	141

Contents continued

Chapter Nine

Sources of Evidence 152

Returning to the Book of Allah 163

3. The New Revelation 167

4. Replacing Scriptural Texts 168

Casting Aspersions on Scriptural Texts 176

Chapter Ten

The End of Prophethood 178

First: The End of Prophethood 180

Substitutes for Prophethood 184

The First Substitute: Regularities 185

The Second Substitute: Reality 186

The Conception of Symbolism 189

The Third Substitute: History 190

The Fourth Substitute: Events in the Universe 194

The True Nature of Prophethood 197

Shahrur's Conception of Prophethood 202

Contents continued

Chapter Eleven

The Conception of Belief 204

The Terminology of Belief 207

Change in Belief 213

How Did Allah Create Humanity? 215

How Did Humanity Grasp Divinity? 217

Jawdat's Conception of Unbelief 218

Chapter Twelve

Will 221

Who Possesses Humanity's Destiny? 225

Chapter Thirteen

The Creation of Human Acts 231

Chapter Fourteen

Evolution 236

The Origin of Human Life 238

How Does Creation Begin? 240

1. The Development of the Conception of Divinity 248

How Did Human Creation Begin? 253

Contents continued

The Theory of Evolution	257
The Theory of Acquired Characteristics	258
The Theory of the Survival of the Fittest	258
Jawdat Said's Conception of the Environment	260
The Development of Qur'anic Embryos	267
Human Origins	273
Evolution in Shahrur's Thought	279
Chapter Fifteen	
Jawdat's Materialist Interpretation of the Noble Qur'an	288
First: Knowledge	288
Second: Reading	298
Third: Fighting	303
Fourth: The Purpose of Creation	308
Chapter Sixteen	
The Conception of Western Democracy	312
The Meaning of Democracy	313
The Conception of Violence	321
The Emergence and Development of Individualism	328

Contents continued

Chapter Seventeen

The Companions and the Early Generations 335

Taking the First Community as a Model 340

Mocking Muslims 346

Chapter Eighteen

1. Doctrinal Affiliation 351

Chapter Nineteen

The Materialist Tendency in Muhammad Iqbal 361

Biographical Profile 361

The Conception of the Self 363

Iqbal's Conception of Symbolism 374

Chapter Twenty

The Materialist Tendency in Muhammad Shahrur 386

Biographical Profile 386

Section One: The Particular Objectives of The Contemporary Reading 388

Section Two: Shahrur's Approach to Materialist Thinking 398

The Term al-Rahman 410

Section Three: Denial of the Names: Allah's Knowledge 421

Contents continued

The New Ghaylan al-Dimashqi	425
Section Four: Denial of the Attributes: Allah's Speech	428
Section Five: Denial of Divine Determination: Lifespans and Sustenance	433
Lifespans	434
Sustenance	446
Section Six: Divine Deputyship	449
Section Seven: The Materialist Interpretation of Events	456
1. Loss of Consciousness	457
2. Corruption	459
Section Eight: Synonymy in the Language	463
Section Nine: Shahrur's Knowledge and Culture	471
A Principle of Criticism and Accreditation	475
About This Book	479

Author's Introduction

Aims of the Study

This study seeks to achieve the following aims:

First, to establish firm criteria and precise standards for identifying writers and thinkers who hold materialist ideas, present them to the public and promote them through Islamic discourse, while professing to work in the field of Islamic outreach. More precisely, these are writers whose treatment of scriptural texts reveals a materialist tendency.¹ They begin from a materialist way of thinking, yet still raise the banner of Islam.

Second, to critique contemporary materialist thought and trace its philosophical roots in both Greek philosophy and the Islamic period; to expose the contradictions in the philosophical approach, demonstrate its limitations and the unsoundness of its foundations, and explain certain specialised philosophical terms.

Third, to offer, through a contemporary perspective,² a comprehensive presentation of the approach of Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah (the Sunni

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1. On the meaning of naz'ah (tendency): *Maqayis al-lughah* [Measures of the language] gives pulling something out as the basic meaning of the root n-z-ayn. *Lisan al-Arab* [The language of the Arabs] describes a person who desires something and is inwardly drawn towards it as tending towards it; the same root describes someone taking after his father in resemblance. *Tahdhib al-lughah* [The refinement of the language] likewise uses it for someone hastening towards, or drawn to, something, and for a camel longing for its homeland.
 2. The contemporary perspective concerns the manner of presentation. Our understanding today of the Sunni approach should remain consistent with the understanding of it in the first century of the Hijrah. The difference is like that between writing out the Qur'an then and doing so today: we benefit from advances in scholarship and available research resources, drawing on the full range of fields of knowledge in the present century.

tradition), and to set out the method of the righteous early generations for confronting the contemporary challenges to belief and thought.³

Fourth, to compare the Islamic approach with non-Islamic approaches through a comprehensive Islamic method of criticism, in the light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

This study does not extend to materialist thinkers outside Islamic intellectual and activist circles who openly affirm their materialist approach and make no claim to an Islamic identity or to work within the Islamic field. Their ideas will be considered only insofar as the inquiry requires.

A Note on Method

Before identifying the materialist approach, its foundations and the thinkers who follow it, we need a brief comparison of contemporary intellectual currents concerned with the sources of knowledge.

We can distinguish three contemporary approaches competing for predominance in the cultural life of the Islamic world. Although they bear the marks of the present age, their roots reach far into the past!

3. This concerns materialist writings on Islamic belief and the effort to offer a systematic response to them. Such work falls within the concept of religious renewal (tajdid).

Examining their foundations allows us to identify them as follows:⁴

1. The Islamic approach.
2. The materialist philosophical approach.
3. The rationalist philosophical approach.

4. There are, of course, mixed approaches combining materialist and philosophical idealist approaches. Other approaches are widespread in India, China and Japan; most of these go back to European philosophical approaches, with certain differences. We have omitted them from this study because they do not constitute an active contest in our region. We may need to examine them and compare them with the Islamic approach in our separate study of the rationalist philosophical tendency.

CHAPTER ONE

The Islamic Approach

To compare the prevailing approaches, this study does not need to examine every foundation of the Islamic approach. We shall instead look more closely at certain questions of belief, identify the sources of knowledge,¹ explain how these sources relate to one another, and show the value of remaining faithful to them.

Concentrating on only one aspect deprives the Islamic approach of its authenticity and comprehensive character.

As a divinely grounded approach, it offers a comprehensive explanation of existence and orders the fundamental relationships of life, defining their nature. These relationships provide a precise measure of the approach's soundness and authenticity.

Failure to explain these relationships correctly and to put them into practice lies at the heart of the crisis facing the Muslim community in our time. It is not difficult to trace the divisions and conflicts that have arisen from this failure. To address the causes of division and fragmentation within the community, we must therefore examine the distinctive features of the Islamic approach and the relationships it establishes.

These relationships rest on the testimony that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. We can briefly set out this network of relationships as follows.

1. Contemporary studies commonly use ma'rifah in place of ilm, although ma'rifah does not convey the full range of meanings carried by ilm, nor does it provide the proper conceptual framework for interpreting the noble Qur'an or the Prophet's Sunnah. Its prominence comes from philosophers, speculative theology (kalam), and the writings of Orientalists and their followers.

A. The Relationship between Allah and the Human Being

The relationship between Allah, glorified and exalted is He, and the human being is that between the Creator and His creature. It makes clear the true meaning of divinity and of servanthood. This relationship is defined in the noble verse in which the Most High says:

“I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me.”

Qur'an 51:56

The same truth is explained in His words:

“And they are ordered naught else than to serve Allah, keeping religion pure for Him, as men by nature upright, and to establish worship and to pay the poor-due. That is true religion.”

Qur'an 98:5

The Islamic approach does not centre on proving Allah's existence, as philosophers and scholars of speculative theology (kalam) have done. His existence is regarded as self-evident to the innate human disposition (fitrah). The emphasis falls instead on the reality of His divinity: His unique possession of all the attributes of perfection and the most beautiful names. Understanding these truths leads the Muslim to recognise their effects throughout existence, both in creation and divine decree, and in the direction and governance of all things.

The Most High says:

“Naught is as His likeness; and He is the Hearer, the Seer.”

Qur'an 42:11, excerpt

“For those who believe not in the Hereafter is an evil similitude, and Allah's is the Sublime Similitude. He is the Mighty, the Wise.”

Qur'an 16:60

The effect is seen in the Muslim's belief and worship, and in his conduct and actions. He surrenders to Allah and follows His guidance; his heart is humbled, and he submits to His command. He turns to Him in supplication, knowing that the Lord he addresses is All-Hearing and All-Seeing. He worships Allah, knowing that his Lord is All-Knowing and Wise.

Ibn Abbas relates: One day I was behind the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, when he said:

“Young man, let me teach you a few words. Heed Allah's commands, and He will protect you. Heed His commands, and you will find Him before you. When you ask, ask Allah; when you need help, seek it from Allah. Know that even if the whole community joined together to benefit you, it could benefit you only in something Allah had already decreed for you. And if they joined together to harm you, they could harm you only in something Allah had already decreed against you. The pens have been lifted, and the ink on the pages has dried.”²

“In the Islamic worldview, divinity requires that Allah alone, glorified is He, possess the prerogatives of divinity in directing human life: in people's beliefs and conceptions, and equally in their consciences and acts of worship.

The Muslim believes that there is no god but Allah, that none but Allah is to be worshipped, that there is no creator or provider but Allah, that none but Allah can bring benefit or harm, and that none but Allah directs his affairs and the affairs of the whole universe. He therefore turns to Allah alone in acts of worship, turns to Him alone in asking and in hope, and turns to Him alone in reverent fear and supplication.

2. Al-Tirmidhi, *al-Jami'*, 4:667, hadith no. 2516. The author identifies the report as sahih (authentic).

In the same way, the Muslim believes that there is no legislator but Allah, no ruler but Allah, and none but Allah to order human life and human relationships with the universe, with other living creatures and with fellow human beings. Accordingly, he receives from Allah alone guidance and legislation, the way of life and its practical organisation, the principles governing relationships, and the standard by which values and judgements are measured.”³

B. Relationships between Human Beings

1. The Relationship between Muslims

The relationship between Muslims rests on mutual loyalty among believers. The Most High says:

“And the believers, men and women, are protecting friends one of another;”

Qur'an 9:71, excerpt

It is founded on brotherhood in religion, as the Most High says:

“The believers are naught else than brothers.”

Qur'an 49:10, excerpt

This brotherhood is sustained by love and harmony, mutual support and solidarity. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

“You see the believers, in their compassion, love and sympathy for one another, as a single body: when one part suffers, the rest of the body shares its sleeplessness and fever.”⁴

3. Sayyid Qutb, *Khasa'is al-tasawwur al-islami wa-muqawwimatuha* [The characteristics and foundations of the Islamic worldview], 190.

4. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, on the authority of al-Nu'man ibn Bashir.

The proponents of materialist thought call for brotherhood in “humanity,”⁵ without Islam being the religion on which it rests. This is false in every respect.

The Most High says: “*Lo! religion with Allah (is) the Surrender (to His Will and Guidance).*” (Qur'an 3:19).

People are distinguished by their piety, rather than their lineage or social standing. The Most High says:

“O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware.”

Qur'an 49:13

As for the relationship between a Muslim and others, the scriptural texts have defined its nature.⁶

Here it is enough to indicate the scriptural evidence governing these relationships.

1. The Need to Distinguish Muslims from Non-Muslims

The Most High says: “*Thus do We expound the revelations that the way of the unrighteous may be manifest.*” (Qur'an 6:55). This distinction underlies the disavowal of polytheism and its adherents.

5. Auguste Comte, the positivist sociologist, called for a religion of humanity to replace the religion of Allah. We shall see Jawdat's concern with human relationships and rapprochement between religions.

6. For detailed rulings, consult the works of Islamic jurisprudence.

2. The Nature of Relations between Muslims and Non-Muslims

These relations differ according to the Muslims' situation: the stage of outreach before an Islamic state exists, or the situation in which such a state has been established.

A. Before the State Exists: Outreach

The Most High says:

“Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way. Lo! thy Lord is Best Aware of him who strayeth from His way, and He is Best Aware of those who go aright.”

Qur'an 16:125

He also says:

“And who is better in speech than him who prayeth unto his Lord and doeth right, and saith: Lo! I am of those who are muslims (surrender unto Him). The good deed and the evil deed are not alike. Repel the evil deed with one which is better, then lo! he, between whom and thee there was enmity (will become) as though he was a bosom friend.”

Qur'an 41:33-34

In *Zad al-ma'ad*, Ibn al-Qayyim devotes a chapter to the conduct of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in conveying the message. He writes:

“The first revelation that his Lord, blessed and exalted is He, sent to him was to read in the name of his Lord who created. This marked the

beginning of his prophethood. He was commanded to read for himself; at that point he was not commanded to convey the message. Then the words '*O thou enveloped in thy cloak, Arise and warn!*' (Qur'an 74:1-2) were revealed to him. He was made a prophet through '*Read:*' and sent as a messenger through '*O thou enveloped in thy cloak,*'. He was then commanded to warn his nearest relatives, after which he warned his own people, the Arabs around them, all the Arabs, and finally the whole world. For more than ten years after the beginning of his prophethood, he warned through outreach, without fighting or collecting jizyah, and was commanded to refrain from fighting, to be patient, and to pardon."⁷

2. Relations with Non-Muslims When the State Exists

This relationship took its defined form after the Hijrah, when the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, undertook the responsibilities of government.

He was first commanded to defend against those who attacked the Muslims, and was later commanded to fight all the polytheists.

Ibn al-Qayyim describes these stages as follows:

“He was then permitted to migrate, and permitted to fight. Next he was commanded to fight those who fought him, and to leave alone those who withdrew and did not fight him. He was then commanded to fight the polytheists until all religion was for Allah alone. After the command to undertake jihad, the unbelievers in relation to him fell into three groups: those bound by a peace agreement or truce, those at war, and those under a covenant of protection. He was commanded to honour the agreements of those bound by treaties and peace agreements for as long as they remained faithful to them. If he feared treachery from them, he was to

7. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zad al-ma'ad* [Provisions for the journey to the Hereafter], 3:158, Mu'assasat al-Risalah edition.

renounce their treaty openly, and not fight them until he had informed them of its termination. He was commanded to fight those who broke their agreements. When Surat Bara'ah was revealed, it set out the rulings for all these groups. In it, he was commanded to fight his enemies among the People of the Book until they paid jizyah or entered Islam. He was also commanded to strive against the unbelievers and the hypocrites and to be stern with them. He fought the unbelievers with sword and spear, and strove against the hypocrites through argument and speech.

In that surah, he was commanded to declare himself released from the unbelievers' treaties and to renounce those treaties openly. The people bound by treaties were divided into three groups. The first were those he was commanded to fight: those who had broken their agreements and failed to remain faithful to him. He fought them and prevailed over them.

The second group had agreements for a fixed term, had not broken them, and had not supported others against him. He was commanded to honour their agreements until their terms expired. The third group had no agreement and had not fought him, or had an agreement without a fixed term. He was commanded to allow them four months, and then fight them when that period had ended. These are the four months referred to in '*Travel freely in the land four months,*' (Qur'an 9:2), and the sacred months referred to in '*Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters*' (Qur'an 9:5). The sacred months here are the months during which they were allowed to travel freely. They began on the day of the proclamation, the tenth of Dhu al-Hijjah, the day of the greater pilgrimage on which the proclamation was made, and ended on the tenth of Rabi' al-Akhir. They are not the four months referred to in '*Lo! the number of the months with Allah is twelve months by Allah's ordinance in the day that He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are sacred:*' (Qur'an 9:36). Those consist of one separate month and three consecutive months: Rajab, Dhu al-Qa'dah, Dhu al-Hijjah, and Muharram. The polytheists were not given freedom to travel during those

particular four months: that would have been impossible, since the four are not consecutive. Rather, he granted them four months and was commanded to fight them once those months had passed. Thus he fought those who broke their treaties, granted four months to those without a treaty or with an agreement of indefinite duration, and was commanded to honour the agreements of those who remained faithful until their terms expired. All of these people accepted Islam, rather than remaining unbelievers until the expiry of their agreements. Jizyah was imposed on those under a covenant of protection.

After the revelation of Bara'ah, the unbelievers in relation to him therefore fell into three groups: those at war with him, those bound by a treaty, and those under a covenant of protection. In time, those bound by treaties and peace agreements accepted Islam, leaving two groups: those at war and those under protection. Those at war feared him. The people of the world thus fell into three groups in relation to him: Muslims who believed in him, people at peace with him who enjoyed security, and enemies at war who lived in fear.

As for his conduct towards the hypocrites, he was commanded to accept what they professed outwardly, leave their inner intentions to Allah, and strive against them through knowledge and argument. He was commanded to turn away from them, to be stern with them, and to address them in words that would reach their hearts. He was forbidden to pray over them or stand at their graves, and was told that even if he sought forgiveness for them, Allah would not forgive them. Such was his conduct towards his enemies among the unbelievers and the hypocrites.”⁸

8. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zad al-ma'ad*, 3:160-161.

C. The Human Relationship with the Universe

By the universe, we mean the world made of service to the human being, as expressed in the words of the Most High:

“And hath made of service unto you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; it is all from Him. Lo! herein verily are portents for a people who reflect.”

Qur'an 45:13

This universe is created and has a beginning, because Allah is the Creator of everything. It is not eternal and beginningless, as the philosophers maintain. The relationship between the created human being and the created universe rests on the principle that the universe has been made of service to humanity, and on recognition of a fundamental truth: Allah is the One who made it so. He determined and created it after it had not existed. Just as Allah alone creates and determines, He alone legislates. He orders the human relationship with this universe, just as He orders relationships between human beings. The Most High says:

“And He hath constrained the night and the day and the sun and the moon to be of service unto you, and the stars are made subservient by His command. Lo! herein indeed are portents for people who have sense.”

Qur'an 16:12

Those who do not know Allah's approach turn instead to worshipping the creatures that have been made of service to them. The Most High says:

“Do not prostrate to the sun or the moon; but prostrate to Allah Who created them, if it is in truth Him Whom ye worship.”

Qur'an 41:37, excerpt

In the course of this study we shall encounter those who exalt nature, make the universe a source of thought and inspiration, and treat natural laws and cosmic regularities as the authority to which disagreements are referred. They treat these regularities as a source of knowledge and legislation for human life.

This orientation amounts to the “worship of nature,” but in a new form and under illusory slogans. Positivist schools deny revelation and recognise matter alone. From this conception, which makes matter the fundamental reality, arose the schools of realism and utilitarianism. These schools esteem, respect and sacralise nature, just as the peoples of the pre-Islamic age worshipped and sacralised the sun.

The Characteristics and Governing Principles of the Islamic Approach

First: Submission to Allah's Command

This submission consists in complete surrender to the Lord of all worlds, and obedience to His commands and prohibitions. The Most High says:

“Turn unto your Lord repentant, and surrender unto Him,”

Qur'an 39:54, excerpt

He also says: *“And those who put away false gods lest they should worship them and turn to Allah in repentance, for them there are glad tidings.”* (Qur'an 39:17).

The believers pray:

“Our Lord! In Thee we put our trust, and unto Thee we turn repentant, and unto Thee is the journeying.”

Qur'an 60:4, excerpt

Second: Allah as the Sole Source of Guidance

The Most High says:

“And whoso seeketh as religion other than the Surrender (to Allah) it will not be accepted from him, and he will be a loser in the Hereafter.”

Qur'an 3:85

Following Allah's approach alone also entails disavowing every other approach. What determines the nature of an approach and whether it can be considered Islamic is the authority that establishes it. If it comes from Allah, it is Islamic, and adherence and submission to it are obligatory. If it comes from anyone other than Allah, or is devised and made by human beings, it is not Islamic, and acting on its basis is impermissible. We describe such an approach as man-made.

The Most High says:

“And (He commandeth you, saying): This is My straight path, so follow it. Follow not other ways, lest ye be parted from His way. This hath He ordained for you, that ye may ward off (evil).”

Qur'an 6:153

The Qur'an and the Sunnah are the sources from which guidance is received: *“And whatsoever the messenger giveth you, take it. And whatsoever he forbiddeth, abstain (from it). And keep your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is stern in reprisal.”* (Qur'an 59:7).

Following the Messenger is obligatory. The Most High says:

“Whoso obeyeth the messenger hath obeyed Allah, and whoso turneth away: We have not sent thee as a warder over them.”

Qur'an 4:80

Third: Using the authentic Prophetic Sunnah as authoritative evidence, whether transmitted through numerous independent chains (mutawatir) or through reports that do not reach that level (ahad). Whenever a report is established as authentically transmitted from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, it must be put into practice.⁹

Fourth: Exclusion of speculative theology built on philosophy, disputation and formal logic, in which truth and falsehood are mixed together.

Fifth: Bringing together all the scriptural texts concerning a particular question, so that its ruling under the Shari'ah is derived from a comprehensive view of those texts.¹⁰

The Method of Islamic Thought

Islamic thinking begins with the Qur'an and the Sunnah, giving them priority when they conflict with other sources. Some Muslim writers, however, confuse the sources of knowledge with the sources of the Shari'ah.

Scriptural terminology therefore requires care and precision, so that its correct meanings can be made clear.

In our discussion of the foundations of knowledge, we have explained that its sources are sense perception, reason, and transmitted reports drawing on both; revelation is a report received from heaven.

9. Ahad reports are contrasted with mutawatir reports. The term ahad applies to any report that does not reach the level of mutawatir transmission, even when more than four or five people transmit it. This reveals Muhammad Shahrur's error in claiming that ahad reports are transmitted by one person and must be removed. Such is the extent of his knowledge in this field.

10. Muslim scholars gave attention to reconciling apparently conflicting hadiths. Numerous works appeared, including Ibn Qutaybah's *Ta'wil mukhtalif al-hadith* [Interpreting apparently conflicting hadiths] and others of its kind.

The sources of the Shari'ah are the Qur'an and the Sunnah, together with what is derived from them through consensus (ijma') and analogical reasoning (qiyas).

We can therefore see that substituting one set of sources for the other creates confusion in concepts, undermines values, and gives rise to the belief that Muslims deny clear truths and evident facts. The enemies of Islam, recognising this opening, work to widen the gap between Islam and the sources of knowledge, and accuse Muslims of rigidity and backwardness.

The materialists turn the sources of knowledge into sources of legislation, producing confusion and distorting the standards of judgement.

Principles for Approaching Scriptural Texts: Criteria of Discernment

Scriptural texts must be believed and accepted, and their rulings obeyed.

In matters of belief, these texts are affirmed as they stand, without reinterpretation, denial, likening Allah to creation, consigning their meanings to Allah, or nullifying them. They are understood as the Companions understood them: the Companions witnessed revelation and received them from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. The best of the Successors then received them from the Companions and understood them accordingly, as does everyone who follows the Companions' approach and receives it from them until the Day of Judgement.

This is a fundamental principle of Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah, the Sunni tradition, and of the righteous early generations. Indeed, renewing religion on this basis is the task of the victorious group. It is the method of the school of religious renewal that calls for the renewed application of Islamic

rulings, the resumption of Islamic life, and the revival of neglected practice based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

What It Means to Affirm Scriptural Texts

We need to explain more fully what it means to affirm these texts without denying them, reinterpreting them, specifying how the realities they describe exist, consigning their meanings to Allah, or cancelling them.

1. Affirmation

Affirmation means accepting the intended meaning and purpose of a text, and the ruling established by its wording. It requires interpreting the text in accordance with the principles of the Prophet and his Companions. When Malik was asked about the verse:

“The Beneficent One, Who is established on the Throne.” (Qur'an 20:5), and about how Allah was established on the Throne (istiwa), he did not say that this was an allegorical verse whose meaning we do not know. Rather, he replied: “Istiwa is known; how it is so is unknown. Belief in it is obligatory, and asking about how it is so is an innovation.”¹¹

The manner is unknown, but the meaning of istiwa is known through the recognised principles of interpretation.

11. Al-Lalaka'i reports from Ibn Uyaynah: “Rabi'ah was asked about the meaning of this verse. He replied: ‘Istiwa is not unknown; its manner cannot be grasped by reason. The message is from Allah, conveying it is the Messenger's duty, and believing it is ours.’”

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, interpreted verses of the Qur'an, as did the Companions. Allah's speech is supremely clear and fully fulfils its purpose of disclosure and explanation. Allah commands us to reflect on the Qur'an. He would not command this reflection unless the Speaker had made His intended meaning clear. He also tells us that He revealed it so that we might understand it and use our reason.

“And they say: Had we been wont to listen or have sense, we had not been among the dwellers in the flames.”

Qur'an 67:10

He also says: *“This is a declaration for mankind, a guidance and an admonition unto those who ward off (evil)”* (Qur'an 3:138).

2. Denial and Invalidation (Ta'til)

Ta'til means disabling the texts: cancelling their meaning or declaring them unsuitable as a basis for belief and action.

The first such invalidation is attributed to Iblis, may Allah curse him. Al-Shahrastani writes:

“Know that the first specious argument to arise among created beings was the ‘argument of Iblis,’ may Allah curse him. Its source was his insistence on his own opinion against the text, his choice of desire in opposition to the command, and his pride in the material from which he was created, fire, over the material from which Adam was created, clay.”¹²

In Islamic history, those who denied the divine attributes became known as the Jahmiyyah, after Jahm ibn Safwan. He denied the attributes with which the Creator, glorified is He, describes Himself in His Book, and those with

12. Al-Shahrastani, *al-Milal wa-l-nihal* [Religions and sects], 1:6, Dar al-Surur edition.

which His Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, describes Him.

The Jahmiyyah's reinterpretation differs from that of others. Jahm claimed that anyone who described Allah by any attribute with which He describes Himself in His Book, or which His Messenger reports of Him, was an unbeliever and one who likened Him to creation. He misled many people through these claims.

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal relates Jahm's debate with the Sumaniyyah.¹³ They asked him about the One he worshipped: had he come to know Him through any of the five senses? He replied that he had not. They asked: "How, then, do you know that He is a god?" They recognised only what could be sensed, and affirmed only what people could perceive through the senses in this world.

After remaining bewildered for forty days, Jahm answered them by denying the Creator's attributes, including speech, hearing and sight. Our concern here is not to survey all the discussions of speculative theology concerning the divine names and attributes. Rather, I wish to highlight the agreement between materialist thinkers who present themselves as working within the Islamic field and these contemporary Qadariyyah in denying the attributes. Jawdat, Shahrur and Iqbal, the examples chosen for this study, have stated such denials openly. Although these contemporary writers do not follow the earlier thinkers' methods, the result is the same: the invalidation of the texts and the cancellation of their application. Jawdat states this explicitly: "What I want us to understand from this is that the significance of the Book can be cancelled altogether, as though it did not exist. What will alert Muslims to this is the Book's own concern with history, human conditions and historical events. In other words, what will

13. It is reported that they denied all knowledge beyond what is apprehended by the senses.

teach us is not the Qur'an, but the events of the universe and history themselves.”¹⁴ These writers go so far as to claim that what is sacred in the Book is the spirit of the text rather than its wording.

These contemporary writers also claim that Allah deals with human beings only through laws and regular patterns. This cancels the attribute of speech, among others, although these attributes are firmly established in scriptural texts that leave no room for the doubts raised by the Qadariyyah, past and present.

Ibn Taymiyyah's clear response to the deniers of the divine attributes in earlier times also answers the materialist deniers of our own time:

“Allah, glorified is He, sent His prophets with detailed affirmation and general negation. They affirmed His names and attributes, and denied that He resembles created beings. Those who opposed them, whether philosophers who denied the attributes or others, reversed this: they offered detailed negation and general affirmation.

Allah tells us in His Book that He is Living, Self-Subsisting, All-Knowing, All-Powerful, All-Hearing and All-Seeing; that He is pleased, becomes angry, loves and is displeased. In negation, He says, ‘*Naught is as His likeness;*’, and ‘*And there is none comparable unto Him.*’. Thus the approach of the righteous early generations and the imams is to affirm His attributes without likening them to those of creation. They neither deny His attributes nor make them resemble the attributes of created beings. The deniers, by contrast, offer detailed negation, saying, for example: ‘He resembles none of the things that exist; He is beneath the seven earths just as He is above the Throne; no place is without Him, and He is not in one place rather than another; He has not spoken and does not speak; He is not

14. The pamphlet *Unzuru* [Look], 40, 8.

known by an attribute, is not grasped by reason, and has no limit, end or terminus; He cannot be apprehended by reason; He is entirely face, entirely knowledge, entirely hearing, and entirely sight ...”¹⁵

The approach of the earlier Qadariyyah who denied the attributes meets that of their modern counterparts in such systems as the positivist approach established by Descartes, Bacon, Newton and their followers. This became known as the mechanistic doctrine, which views the universe as a machine governed by eternal laws. They illustrate this with a clock whose maker has wound its regulating spring for all eternity, so that it runs without further intervention from its maker or anyone else.

We shall see how Jawdat Said¹⁶ and Shahrur deny the Creator's attribute of speech, just as the earlier Qadariyyah did.

If we examine the causes of departure from the Islamic approach, we find them in errors of handling scriptural texts and in excessive reinterpretation. Al-Juwayni says:

“Discussion of this question concerns one of the greatest foundations of religion. One group went to excess in negation and denied the attributes, while another went to excess in affirmation and likened Allah to creation.” He also says: “One of the attributes of the Eternal is that He differs from things that have come into existence. The Lord resembles none of these things, and none of them resembles Him.”¹⁷

15. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar' ta'arud al-aql wa-l-naql* [Averting conflict between reason and revelation], 5:164-176; and *Iqtida' al-sirat al-mustaqim* [Following the straight path], 465.

16. See Chapter Eleven, “The Concept of Belief,” in this study.

17. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar' ta'arud al-aql wa-l-naql*, 5:186. The editor directs the reader to al-Juwayni's *al-Shamil fi usul al-din* [The comprehensive work on the foundations of religion].

The righteous early generations recognised the approach of the Jahmiyyah and other deniers of the attributes and warned against them: “These people take two approaches to the texts of the prophets: substitution, and the claim that their meanings were unknown. Substitution is of two kinds:

The first is that of those who appeal to illusion and imagination.¹⁸ They maintain that the prophets spoke about Allah, the Last Day, Paradise and Hell, and even the angels, in ways that do not correspond to reality. Rather, they addressed people in terms that led them to imagine Allah as a great body, the resurrection of physical bodies, and tangible pleasure and punishment, although none of this is true in itself. They held that the interests of the masses required addressing them in terms that made them imagine things in this way. Even if it was false, it was a falsehood for the benefit of the masses, since their instruction and welfare could be achieved only by this method.

Ibn Sina and others formulated their rule on this basis, as in the rule he sets out in his *al-Risalah al-adhawiyyah*. These thinkers maintain that the prophets intended the apparent meanings of their words and intended the masses to understand them in that way, even though those apparent meanings were themselves false, invalid and contrary to the truth. They thus intended the masses to understand falsehood as a matter of expediency.

Some of them say that the prophet knew the truth but presented the opposite for the sake of people's welfare. Others say that the prophet did not know the truth as speculative philosophers and others knew it. These prefer the perfected philosopher to the prophet, and the perfected saint who has attained this vision to the prophet. Thus Ibn Arabi al-Ta'i prefers

18. This description agrees with Iqbal's symbolic interpretation of Paradise and Hell as states rather than places, and with Jawdat Said's symbolic treatment of the story of Adam, as his student Khalis Jalabi declares.

the one he calls the Seal of the Saints to the prophets, just as al-Farabi, Mubashshir ibn Fatik and others prefer the philosopher to the prophet.

Those who maintain that the prophet did know the truth may nevertheless say that he was superior to the philosopher, because he could address the masses by a method beyond the philosopher's ability.

Broadly speaking, this is the position of the philosophers and the esoteric schools,¹⁹ such as the Isma'ili heretics, the authors of the Epistles of the Brethren of Purity, al-Farabi, al-Suhrawardi who was put to death, Ibn Rushd the grandson, and others.”²⁰

3. Reinterpretation: Distortion (Ta'wil)

In the Qur'an, ta'wil can mean the outcome to which a matter leads, even when that outcome accords with the wording and its apparent meaning. It can also mean explaining speech and making its meaning clear, again without departing from that meaning. This is the usage of earlier commentators such as Mujahid and others. It is the sense of ta'wil practised by the Companions, those who faithfully followed them, and the imams of the Muslims, including the four imams.

By contrast, the definition of ta'wil as “diverting an expression from its more probable meaning to a less probable meaning on the basis of accompanying evidence” belongs to certain later writers.

These writers assumed that ta'wil in the Qur'an and hadith carried this later technical meaning. An example is the verse: “*None knoweth its explanation save Allah. And those who are of sound instruction say: We believe therein; the whole is from our Lord;*” (Qur'an 3:7). They believed that pausing after

19. The esoteric schools maintain that every outward meaning in the Book has an inward meaning, and every revealed text has an esoteric interpretation.

20. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar' ta'arud al-aql wa-l-naql*, 1:9-10.

“None knoweth its explanation save Allah.” required the belief that these verses and hadiths have meanings contrary to what their wording conveys, and that Allah alone knows their true meanings. This misunderstanding led them to imagine that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, did not know the meaning of *“The Beneficent One, Who is established on the Throne.”*, or *“Nay, but both His hands are spread out wide”*, or other verses concerning the divine attributes whose meaning, they claimed, Allah alone knows. In this way, they confused the interpretation of the manner of a reality, known only to Allah, with interpreting meanings and explaining them.

Those who follow this reinterpretation assign these texts a meaning contrary to their apparent sense, without possessing contextual evidence that would justify it.

We may call this a distortion of the texts away from their intended meaning.

Practitioners of unsound reinterpretation may strive, through various interpretations, to make the Qur'an and the Sunnah conform to their own opinions. They may need to force language away from its ordinary usage and resort to unusual metaphors and figures of speech.

This reinterpretation, which contradicts the true meaning of scriptural texts, has led them to attribute false things to Allah, especially when interpreting the verses concerning His attributes. They claim that they are affirming His transcendence. Thus they interpret being established on the Throne as taking possession or assuming control, and assign every divine attribute mentioned in the Qur'an a description suited to the rules they have made the foundation of their interpretive method. Indeed, each group devises its own rule through which it interprets the verses and hadiths.

Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah, by contrast, believe these verses as they stand, without interpreting their meanings in a way that contradicts their

apparent sense or the intended meaning of the discourse. They describe Allah as He describes Himself in His Book, and as His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, describes Him in the Sunnah. They do not deny Him names or attributes that He has not denied in His Book and His Messenger has not denied of Him.

They also believe that this affirmation does not entail resemblance or likeness to creation, for the Most High says: “*Naught is as His likeness; and He is the Hearer, the Seer.*” (Qur'an 42:11).

“Sound interpretation accords with what the Sunnah teaches; unsound interpretation contradicts it. Any interpretation unsupported by the context or by evidence requiring it²¹ cannot be what the One who explains and guides intends by His words. Had He intended it, He would have surrounded the speech with indications of the meaning that differed from its apparent sense, so as not to leave the hearer in confusion and error. Interpretation reports the speaker's intention; it does not create it.

Many people err here. The purpose is to understand what the speaker intends by his words. To say that they mean such and such is to report what the speaker meant. If the report does not correspond to that meaning, it is a false attribution to the speaker.

The speaker's intention is known in several ways. He may state explicitly that he intends a particular meaning. Or he may use an expression with an established apparent meaning, without any accompanying indication that he does not intend that meaning. How much clearer, then, when he surrounds his speech with indications that he does intend its literal, established meaning, as in ‘*and Allah spake directly unto Moses;*’ (Qur'an 4:164).”²²

21. Scriptural evidence from the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

22. *Sharh al-aqidah al-Tahawiyyah* [Commentary on the creed of al-Tahawi], 198.

Sahih al-Bukhari records: “Some people in the time of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, asked: ‘Messenger of Allah, shall we see our Lord on the Day of Resurrection?’ The Prophet replied: ‘Yes. Do you have any difficulty seeing the sun at midday when it shines without cloud?’ They said: ‘No.’ He asked: ‘Do you have any difficulty seeing the full moon when it shines without cloud?’ They said: ‘No.’ The Prophet said: ‘You will have no more difficulty seeing Allah, mighty and majestic is He, on the Day of Resurrection than you have seeing either of them ...’”²³ This is something whose speaker's intention is unmistakable to anyone who hears it.

A person of reason knows that the Messenger is protected from error in what he reports about Allah. Error cannot be attributed to him in this matter, so his teaching must be accepted and his command obeyed.

What he brings cannot be opposed by opinion, analogy or a supposedly rational argument. The Most High says: “*It is no invented story but a confirmation of the existing (Scripture) and a detailed explanation of everything, and a guidance and a mercy for folk who believe.*” (Qur'an 12:111).

One factor contributing to the rise of the philosophical approach in the life of the Muslim community was the adoption of unsound reinterpretation, which leads to distortion.

In our own time, this approach has appeared through the philosophical reformist school, which interprets the texts through the findings of reason, and through the materialist school, which interprets them through matter.

It must be made clear that the texts of the Qur'an and the Sunnah are plain and intelligible. They contain no texts whose meaning may not be interpreted and understood according to the scriptural principles of

23. Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 4581; *Fath al-bari*, 8:249.

interpretation. There are, however, many verses whose unseen manner may not be interpreted, such as the verses concerning the divine attributes and matters of the unseen. The Most High says: *“But those in whose hearts is doubt pursue, forsooth, that which is allegorical ... by seeking to explain it. None knoweth its explanation save Allah.”* (Qur'an 3:7). Here ta'wil does not mean explaining the meaning; it means investigating how the reality described exists. The established rule is: “Istiwa is known; its manner is unknown.”

Ibn Taymiyyah says:

“By the agreement of the Muslims, one verse may be interpreted through the apparent meaning of another, and an expression may be understood in a sense other than its apparent meaning. No one among Ahl al-Sunnah regards this as objectionable. Even if it is called ta'wil or departure from the apparent meaning, it rests on the Qur'an's own evidence and accords with the Sunnah and the early generations. It is interpreting the Qur'an through the Qur'an, rather than through personal opinion. What is objectionable is diverting the Qur'an from its meaning without evidence from Allah and His Messenger.”²⁴

What Ibn Taymiyyah describes is the approach of the Companions and the early generations in interpreting the Qur'an. It does not correspond to the newly introduced definition devised by certain later writers: “diverting an expression from its more probable meaning to a less probable meaning on the basis of accompanying evidence.” This conception has been exploited in the worst ways. Expressions have been interpreted to carry merely possible meanings on the basis of speculative scientific or rational evidence, sometimes as soon as a theory is proposed and before its validity has been established. We shall see this when examining the views of Jawdat, Shahrur and others.

24. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatawa al-kubra* [The major fatwas], 6:21.

4. Likening Allah to Creation (Tashbih)

This consists in excessive affirmation that takes scriptural texts beyond their meaning. Such claims were made by those who likened Allah to creation, imagining that the mention of the Creator's attributes in the Qur'an and the Sunnah entailed their resemblance to created attributes. The Creator's attributes are not called organs, limbs, instruments or constituent parts. A constituent part is a portion of an essence, whereas Allah is One and Self-Sufficient. Organs imply division and partition, and all such meanings are excluded from Allah; this is why these terms are not used of His attributes. Scriptural expressions have sound meanings and are free of corrupt implications. We must therefore not abandon them, either in negation or in affirmation, lest we affirm a false meaning or deny a true one.²⁵ It has been said: one who likens Allah to creation worships an idol; one who denies His attributes worships nothingness.

Ibn Taymiyyah describes the approach of Ahl al-Sunnah and the imams of the Muslims:

“They describe Allah as He describes Himself and as His Messenger describes Him, without distortion,²⁶ denial, specifying a manner, or likening Him to creation. They declare Him free of deficiencies and faults, affirm His attributes of perfection, and know that none is comparable to Him in any attribute of perfection.”²⁷

5. Consigning the Meaning to Allah (Tafwid)

Some people claimed that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, did not know the meaning of certain Qur'anic verses, such as those

25. See *Sharh al-aqidah al-Tahawiyyah*, 220.

26. Distortion here means unsound reinterpretation.

27. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar' ta'arud al-aql wa-l-naql*, introduction, 39.

concerning the divine attributes: he spoke them without knowing what they meant. They therefore said that the meanings of these verses should be consigned to Allah, without interpreting or discussing them. This invalidates the verses.

They supposed that the words “*None knoweth its explanation save Allah.*” belonged to this category.

They assumed that the ta'wil known only to Allah was the kind of interpretation recognised by later writers. The truth is otherwise.

Ibn Taymiyyah says:

“The ta'wil of the attributes is the reality whose knowledge belongs to Allah alone. It is the unknown manner of which early authorities such as Malik said: ‘Istiwa is known; its manner is unknown.’

Istiwa is known: its meaning is understood, explained and translated into another language. This belongs to the ta'wil known to those firmly grounded in knowledge. But the manner of that istiwa belongs to the ta'wil known only to Allah.

Malik, Sufyan, al-Layth and al-Awza'i were asked about the reports concerning the attributes. They said: ‘Pass them on as they have come, without specifying a manner.’ ‘As they have come’ answers the deniers of the attributes; ‘without specifying a manner’ answers those who liken Allah to creation.”²⁸ It also answers those who claim that tafwid concerns meanings. We have seen that it concerns the manner, known only to Allah.

Allah commands us to reflect on the Qur'an and urges us to comprehend and understand it. How, then, could we be required to turn away from understanding and knowing it, or to cancel its meanings and disregard the significance of its words, as the proponents of materialism attempt to do?

28. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatawa al-kubra*, 5:34-38.

This discredits the Qur'an and the prophets. Allah revealed the Qur'an, declared it to be guidance and clarification for humanity, and commanded the Messenger to convey the message clearly and explain to people what had been revealed to them. It is inconceivable that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, did not know the meanings of its verses and asked that they be consigned to Allah.

On this assumption, every heretic and innovator could say: "The truth itself is what I have come to know through my opinion and reason. Nothing in the texts contradicts it, since these texts are obscure and ambiguous, and no one knows their meaning. What no one understands cannot be used as evidence."

We can thus understand the danger of consigning the meanings of the Qur'an and hadith to Allah: it leads to invalidating the texts and tampering with Allah's religion without knowledge. With such arguments, some followers of the materialist philosophical approach attempt to challenge the Islamic approach and introduce ideas contrary to the clear teaching of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, on the claim that Allah's verses cannot address contemporary questions.

Some sincere people may believe that discussion of denial, reinterpretation, likening Allah to creation, or consigning meanings to Him has had its day, and that its proponents have passed away with the disappearance of their sects from the scene. This study will show that the figures chosen here do not confine themselves to the position of any one of the earlier misguided sects, as was the case when those sects first appeared. Instead, they take from these sects whatever serves their purposes. Their aim, Allah knows best, may go beyond merely adopting an opinion or adhering to an approach. Adopting some of these positions may be an attempt to demolish the structure of other approaches.

CHAPTER TWO

The Principle of Causality in Islam

The Meaning of Divine Decree

Examining the principle of causality leads us to the question of divine decree, because the two are closely connected. It also brings to light the true relationship between the materialist approach and the Qadariyyah who deny divine decree.

Although investigating the meaning of divine decree is among the most difficult and treacherous paths, we need to pause briefly over this concept.

The linguistic meaning: Ibn Faris says: “The root q-d-r has a sound basic meaning indicating the extent of a thing, its essential nature, and its limit. Qadr is the measure of every thing. One says qadartu al-shay'a, aqdiruhu or aqduruhu, meaning to determine its measure.

Qadar is Allah's determination of things according to the measures and limits He intends; the same word is also pronounced qadr.”¹

“Al-Lihyani says: qadar is the noun and qadr the verbal noun. Ibn al-Athir says: among Allah's names are al-Qadir, al-Muqtadir and al-Qadeer. Al-Qadir is the active participle of the verb qadara, yaqdiru; al-Qadeer is an intensive adjective formed from it. Al-Muqtadir is the participle on the mufta'il pattern, formed from iqtadara, and is more emphatic still. Ibn Sidah says: qadar and qadr mean decree and judgement.”²

1. Ibn Faris, *Mu'jam maqayis al-lughah* [Dictionary of linguistic roots], 5:62.

2. *Lisan al-Arab* [The tongue of the Arabs], 3:30, Dar *Lisan al-Arab* edition.

The technical meaning: Ibn Hajar defines divine decree as follows:

“Allah knew the measures of things and their appointed times before bringing them into existence. He then brought into existence what His prior knowledge encompassed as coming to exist. Everything that comes into being therefore proceeds from His knowledge, power and will. This is established in religion by conclusive proofs, and was the position of the early generations: the Companions and the best of the Successors.”³

Divine decree includes specific aspects that a Muslim must believe and affirm. Anyone who does not believe them has not believed in divine decree. These are fundamental degrees⁴ of this important pillar of faith.

These degrees rest on a precise understanding of Allah's names and attributes.

The First Degree: Believing that Allah knows things before they come into being, before they exist. This follows from His names, including the All-Knowing. The Most High says:

“Such is the Knower of the Invisible and the Visible, the Mighty, the Merciful,”

Qur'an 32:6

He also says: *“And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth, they said: Wilt thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood, while we, we hymn Thy praise and sanctify Thee? He said: Surely I know that which ye know not.”* (Qur'an 2:30).

3. Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bari* [Commentary on Sahih al-Bukhari], 1:118.

4. Ibn al-Qayyim explains these degrees at length in *Shifa' al-alil* [Healing the ailing], 73, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah edition.

Mujahid says: He knew the disobedience of Iblis and created him for it, and knew that Iblis would not prostrate to Adam.⁵

Allah's knowledge is comprehensive: it encompasses the past, present and future, and surrounds everything.

The Most High says: “*and that Allah surroundeth all things in knowledge.*” (Qur'an 65:12).

He also says: “*My Lord includeth all things in His knowledge.*” (Qur'an 6:80).

Allah knows what has been and what will be. He knows lifespans, provisions and deeds, people's movements and circumstances, and those destined for bliss and those destined for misery.

The Most High says: “*Hast thou seen him who maketh his desire his god, and Allah sendeth him astray purposely,*” (Qur'an 45:23).

Ibn al-Qayyim says that Allah led him astray with knowledge of him, his statements, and what suited and befitted him, when nothing else would be appropriate for him, both before and after his creation. The verse therefore affirms divine decree and the wisdom for which his misguidance was decreed. Knowledge is mentioned because it discloses the realities of things and puts each thing in its proper place; this cannot occur without knowledge.

The Second Degree: Believing that Allah recorded things in a Book with Him before creating them.

The Most High says: “*Lo! We it is Who bring the dead to life. We record that which they send before (them), and their footprints. And all things We have kept in a clear Register.*” (Qur'an 36:12).

5. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Shifa' al-alil*, 55.

Here the two records are brought together: the earlier record of their deeds before they existed, and the record made alongside their deeds. The comprehensive recording refers to the Preserved Tablet, the Source of the Book, the record in which everything is written. It includes people's deeds before they perform them. Recording them comprehensively includes knowing them, preserving them, encompassing their number, and setting them down. The Most High says:

“There is not an animal in the earth, nor a flying creature flying on two wings, but they are peoples like unto you. We have neglected nothing in the Book (of Our decrees). Then unto their Lord they will be gathered.” (Qur'an 6:38). That is, all these things were written, determined and fully recorded before they existed.

The Most High says:

“And Lo! in the Source of Decrees, which We possess, it is indeed sublime, decisive.”

Qur'an 43:4

Muqatil says that its copy is in the Book, the Preserved Tablet. Umm al-kitab means the source of the Book: the umm of anything is its origin. Allah wrote the Qur'an in the Preserved Tablet before creating the heavens and the earth.

The Most High says: *“Nay, but it is a glorious Qur'an. On a guarded tablet.”* (Qur'an 85:21-22).

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: “Allah recorded the decrees of created beings fifty thousand years before creating the heavens and the earth, and His Throne was upon the water.”⁶

6. Muslim, *Sahih*, 4:2044, on the authority of Abd Allah ibn Amr.

The Third Degree: Believing that Allah's will is effective. This will is unrestricted, effective without limit. Whatever Allah wills comes to pass; what He does not will does not come to pass. Nothing occurs in heaven or on earth except by His permission.

The Most High says: *“And if Allah had so willed it, those who followed after them would not have fought one with another after the clear proofs had come unto them. But they differed, some of them believing and some disbelieving. And if Allah had so willed it, they would not have fought one with another; but Allah doeth what He will.”* (Qur'an 2:253).

This degree is established by the agreement of the messengers and revealed Books, the innate disposition with which Allah created His creatures, rational proofs, and direct observation. Nothing determines or brings about anything in existence except Allah's will alone. This is the comprehensive affirmation of His oneness, which cannot stand without it. Muslims, from the first to the last, agree that what Allah wills comes to pass and what He does not will does not come to pass. The Qadariyyah opposed them, allowing that things could exist which Allah did not will, such as human acts and absolute human freedom to act within this universe.

The Most High says: *“Yet ye will not, unless Allah willeth.”* (Qur'an 76:30). Human will is subordinate to Allah's will.⁷

Al-Shafi'i expressed the meaning of divine decree in verse:

What You will comes to pass, though I do not will it;
what I will, if You do not will it, does not come to pass.

You created Your servants according to Your knowledge;
within that knowledge move the young and the old.

7. I have devoted a complete chapter in this study to the meaning of divine will, in response to Jawdat and Shahrur.

Among them are the wretched and the blessed;
among them are the ugly and the beautiful.

To this one You gave favour; this one You forsook;
that one You helped, and this one You did not help.⁸

Allah's effective will follows from His complete and all-encompassing power. The Most High says: "*Had Allah willed He could have made you one community.*" (Qur'an 5:48).

He says: "*Whom Allah will sendeth astray, and whom He will He placeth on a straight path.*" (Qur'an 6:39), and: "*If Allah willed, He could have brought them all together to the guidance*" (Qur'an 6:35).

Sunan al-Tirmidhi records from Abd al-Wahid ibn Sulaym, who relates: I came to Makkah and met Ata' ibn Abi Rabah. I said to him: "Abu Muhammad, the people of Basrah are speaking about divine decree." He asked: "My son, do you read the Qur'an?" I said: "Yes." He said: "Then read Surat al-Zukhruf." I read:

"*Ha. Mim. By the Scripture which maketh plain, Lo! We have appointed it a Lecture, in Arabic that haply ye may understand. And Lo! in the Source of Decrees, which We possess, it is indeed sublime, decisive.*" (Qur'an 43:1-4). He asked: "Do you know what the Source of the Book is?" I replied: "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said: "It is a Book that Allah wrote before creating heaven and earth. It records that Pharaoh is among the people of the Fire, and it contains: '*The power of Abu Lahab will perish, and he will perish.*'" Ata' continued: I met al-Walid ibn Ubadah ibn al-Samit, whose father was a Companion of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and asked him: "What did your father counsel you when he was dying?" He replied that his father had called him and said: "My son, fear Allah, and know that you will not truly

8. Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa-l-nihayah* [The beginning and the end], 10:251.

fear Him until you believe in Allah and in the whole of divine decree, its good and its evil. If you die believing otherwise, you will enter the Fire. I heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, say:

‘The first thing Allah created was the Pen. He said: “Write.” It asked: “What shall I write?” He said: “Write the decree: what has been and what will be for all eternity.”’⁹

The Fourth Degree: Believing that Allah creates everything according to a decree.

The Most High says: “*Lo! We have created every thing by measure.*” (Qur'an 54:49).

Al-Tabari says: We created everything according to a measure that We determined and decreed.¹⁰

Al-Qurtubi explains the meaning of divine decree:

“The position of Ahl al-Sunnah is that Allah, glorified is He, determined things: He knew their measures, circumstances and times before bringing them into existence. He then brought into existence what His prior knowledge encompassed as existing, in accordance with that knowledge. Nothing occurs in the higher or lower worlds except as a result of His knowledge, power and will, rather than those of His creatures.”¹¹

This is a matter on which the messengers, the divine Books, reason and the innate disposition agree. The Qadariyyah opposed it. They maintain that living beings create their own voluntary acts, and that Allah cannot guide one who is astray or lead astray one who is guided: these conditions come

9. Al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, 5:215; see also *Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, 3:228, hadith no. 1748.

10. Al-Tabari, *Tafsir*, 27:110.

11. Al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir*, 17:148.

about through what people themselves do, not through what He does. The Qur'an, the Sunnah and the imams of Islam have proclaimed the response to them, refuting their arguments and establishing the Sunni approach: Allah creates the acts of those accountable to Him, and their acts fall within His knowledge and His recorded decree. The Most High says: “*Allah is Creator of all things, and He is Guardian over all things.*” (Qur'an 39:62).

Allah tells us that He made the leaders of good who call to guidance, and made the leaders of evil who call to the Fire. Their leadership and call come about through His making: they are created by Him and performed by them. Of Pharaoh's people, He says: “*And We made them patterns that invite unto the Fire,*” (Qur'an 28:41). Of the leaders of guidance, He says: “*And We made them chiefs who guide by Our command,*” (Qur'an 21:73). He tells us that both come about through His making, while remaining the leaders' own acquired actions. Similarly, Abraham, Allah's intimate friend, says: “*Our Lord! And make us submissive unto Thee*” (Qur'an 2:128). Abraham thus states that Allah makes a Muslim submissive to Him. According to the Qadariyyah, however, a person makes himself Muslim.

The Most High says: “*Who measureth, then guideth,*” (Qur'an 87:3). Mujahid says: He determined misery and bliss for human beings, and guided livestock to their pastures.

Al-Raghib says: “Allah's guidance of the human being takes four forms:

The first is the kind of guidance generally granted to everyone accountable to Allah: reason, understanding, and necessary knowledge. This guidance extends to all things in a measure appropriate to their capacity, as the Most High says: ‘*Our Lord is He Who gave unto everything its nature, then guided it aright.*’ (Qur'an 20:50).

The second is the guidance He gives people by calling them through the prophets, revealing the Qur'an, and similar means. This is what is meant by

‘We appointed from among them leaders who guided by Our command.’ (Qur'an 32:24).

The third is the enabling grace granted specifically to those who follow guidance. It is meant in *‘And whosoever believeth in Allah, He guideth his heart.’* (Qur'an 64:11), *‘Lo! those who believe and do good works, their Lord guideth them by their faith.’* (Qur'an 10:9), *‘As for those who strive in Us, We surely guide them to Our paths,’* (Qur'an 29:69), and *‘Allah guideth whom He will unto a straight path.’* (Qur'an 2:213).

The fourth is guidance to Paradise in the Hereafter, meant in His words:

“The praise to Allah, Who hath guided us to this. We could not truly have been led aright if Allah had not guided us.”

Qur'an 7:43, excerpt

These four forms of guidance follow an order. Someone who does not receive the first cannot receive the second, and cannot even be held accountable. Someone who does not receive the second cannot receive the third or the fourth.

A human being can guide another only by calling him¹² and showing him the paths, not by granting the other forms of guidance. The first is indicated in:

‘And lo! thou verily dost guide unto a right path,’ (Qur'an 42:52). The other forms of guidance, apart from the third, are indicated in *‘Lo! thou (O Muhammad) guidest not whom thou lovest, but Allah guideth whom He will.’* (Qur'an 28:56).¹³

12. Calling here means inviting people to the faith and conveying the message.

13. Al-Raghib al-Isfahani, *al-Mufradat fi gharib al-Qur'an* [Vocabulary of the Qur'an], 538, entry “hada”; see also *Fath al-bari*, 11:515.

Those who follow the truth believe in divine decree, its good and its evil, in accordance with His words:

“The guiding of them is not thy duty (O Muhammad), but Allah guideth whom He will.”

Qur'an 2:272, excerpt

The Qadariyyah maintain that a person has the power to guide himself or lead himself astray. In his commentary on Muslim, al-Nawawi cites Ibn Qutaybah: this is deception, brazen falsehood and insolence on the part of these ignorant people. Those who follow the truth entrust their affairs to Allah and attribute decree and acts to Him; these ignorant people attribute them to themselves.

The scholars of the Muslim community took care to transmit the positions of their predecessors among the righteous early generations on divine decree.

Ibn Hajar says:

“The position of all the early generations was that affairs occur according to Allah's determination.”¹⁴

This is the position of the prophets. Joseph, peace be upon him, says, as recorded in the words of the Most High:

“He said: O my Lord! Prison is more dear than that unto which they urge me, and if Thou fend not off their wiles from me I shall incline unto them and become of the foolish. So his Lord heard his prayer and fended off their wiles from him. Lo! He is Hearer, Knower.”

Qur'an 12:33-34

14. Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bari*, 11:478.

Our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, prayed to his Lord for victory at Badr. Jonah likewise prayed to his Lord for deliverance from the belly of the great fish.

Despite their belief in the recorded decree, Muslims do not neglect human effort or the use of customary means. As we explained in discussing the sensory, rational and transmitted foundations of knowledge, these form a coherent whole without contradiction.

The Fifth Degree: Facilitation. Believing that every person is enabled to pursue that for which he was created.

This is clear in the words of the Most High:

“As for him who giveth and is dutiful (toward Allah) And believeth in goodness; Surely We will ease his way unto the state of ease. But as for him who hoardeth and deemeth himself independent, And disbelieveth in goodness; Surely We will ease his way unto adversity.” (Qur'an 92:5-10). Al-Qurtubi says: “We direct him to the means of goodness and righteousness, until performing them becomes easy for him.”¹⁵

Facilitation is expressed still more clearly in His words:

“And whomsoever it is Allah's will to guide, He expandeth his bosom unto the Surrender, and whomsoever it is His Will to send astray, He maketh his bosom close and narrow as if he were engaged in sheer ascent.”

Qur'an 6:125, excerpt

Al-Bukhari reports from Imran ibn Husayn: a man asked: “Messenger of Allah, are the people of Paradise distinguished from the people of the Fire?” He replied: “Yes.”

15. Al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir*, 20:83.

The man asked: “Why, then, do people act?” He replied: “Everyone acts towards that for which he was created, or that which is made easy for him.”¹⁶

Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud relates: “The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, who is truthful and whose truth is confirmed, told us: ‘The creation of each of you is brought together in his mother's womb for forty days. He is then a clinging substance for a similar period, and then a small mass of flesh for a similar period. The angel is then sent, breathes the spirit into him, and is commanded to record four things: his provision, his lifespan, his deeds, and whether he will be wretched or blessed. By the One besides whom there is no god, one of you may perform the deeds of the people of Paradise until only a cubit separates him from it; then the written decree overtakes him, he performs the deeds of the people of the Fire, and enters it. And one of you may perform the deeds of the people of the Fire until only a cubit separates him from it; then the written decree overtakes him, he performs the deeds of the people of Paradise, and enters it.’”¹⁷

In his *Sahih*, Muslim reports from Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, the Prophet's hadith at the cemetery of Baqi' al-Gharqad. He said: “There is not one of you, not one soul brought into existence, whose place in Paradise or the Fire has not been recorded by Allah, and whose wretchedness or blessedness has not been recorded.” A man asked: “Messenger of Allah, should we not rely on what has been written and give up acting?” He replied: “Those destined for bliss will come to perform the deeds of those destined for bliss; those destined for misery will come to

16. Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 6596; *Fath al-bari*, 11:496.

17. Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 6594; *Fath al-bari*, 11:477; Muslim, *Sahih*, 4:2036. The wording quoted is Muslim's.

perform the deeds of those destined for misery.” He said: “Act, for everyone is enabled. Those destined for bliss are enabled to perform the deeds of the blessed, and those destined for misery are enabled to perform the deeds of the wretched.” He then recited: *“As for him who giveth and is dutiful (toward Allah) And believeth in goodness; Surely We will ease his way unto the state of ease. But as for him who hoardeth and deemeth himself independent, And disbelieveth in goodness; Surely We will ease his way unto adversity.”*¹⁸

Ali also reports that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: “There is not one soul among you whose dwelling in Paradise or the Fire is not already known.” They asked: “Messenger of Allah, why should we act? Should we not rely on that?” He replied: “No. Act, for everyone is enabled to pursue that for which he was created.”¹⁹

We shall not prolong the recital of hadiths that abound in this meaning. We need instead to identify why numerous groups have strayed from these clear truths and decisive proofs.

The scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah have established that the cause lies in failing to consider the Qur'anic verses and Prophetic hadiths together, and to reconcile them in order to understand the purposes of the Shari'ah. Instead, these groups adopted unsound interpretation and distorted words from their proper meanings. Each group considered one set of verses and disregarded others, without examining the Prophetic hadiths that explain those verses and clarify their meanings. The doctrines of compulsion and unrestricted choice arose through this unsound interpretation and departure from the approach of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, his Companions, the Successors and all the righteous early generations. I shall

18. Muslim, hadith no. 2647, in the wording given here. Also reported by al-Bukhari, Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi and others.

19. Muslim, *Sahih*, 4:2040.

set out some principles through which Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah avoided the deviations of misguided sects, without excess or neglect, by comparing these sects' approaches.

1. The Qadariyyah Who Deny Divine Decree

The proponents of this doctrine denied divine decree. Some denied Allah's prior knowledge and His recording of the decrees of created beings in the Preserved Tablet before creating the heavens, the earth and humanity. They claimed that a person possesses unrestricted choice in life and creates his own acts. They say that good comes from Allah and evil from another source. This resembles the doctrine of the Magians, who believe in two gods: a god of light and a god of darkness. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, condemned this sect, saying: "The Qadariyyah are the Magians of this community. If they fall ill, do not visit them; if they die, do not attend their funerals."²⁰ Among the earliest Qadariyyah were al-Ja'd ibn Dirham and Ma'bad al-Juhani. The Mu'tazilah later adopted these views and incorporated them into their approach.

Ibn Taymiyyah says of the Qadariyyah who deny divine decree:

A. One group makes people themselves the creators and originators of good and evil deeds. They maintain that Allah's religious favour towards the believer and the unbeliever is the same, and that He grants a person only a single capacity that can be used for either of two opposites. They deny that Allah possesses a guidance bestowed specifically on the believer, or a guidance sought by a person's prayer, "*Show us the straight path,*" (Qur'an 1:6). They maintain that He cannot guide one who is astray or lead astray one who is guided. These are the Magian Qadariyyah.

20. *Mishkat al-masabih* [The niche of lamps], edited by Shaykh Nasir al-Din al-Albani, 1:38. Its chain of transmission is hasan (good). Similar wording appears in *Sahih al-Jami' al-saghir*, 5:37.

We shall see that materialist thinkers who identify with Islam follow this misguided sect. They place human destiny in people's own hands, whereas a fundamental principle of the Islamic approach places human destiny decisively in Allah's hands.

It will become clear that Jawdat Said, Muhammad Shahrur and Iqbal follow the materialist approach,²¹ and likewise adopt the ideas of the Qadariyyah who deny divine decree and place human destiny in human hands. Jawdat says: "Allah's will does not deprive human beings of their capacity to change and shape their destinies. Rather, Allah's will is: '*Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts;*'. Their destinies are in their own hands." He then speaks of "this belief and outlook that deprives the human being of choice and the ability to determine his destiny, and makes the human being and his destiny inaccessible to scientific knowledge, control and prediction."²²

After citing the verse "*nor wilt thou find for Allah's way of treatment aught of power to change.*", he says: "These verses, which affirm the inevitability of Allah's law and established way, must not be understood as denying human authority to control the course of societies ... This principle places human destiny in human hands, as the fruit of people's actions."²³ He likewise makes the human being master of the universe, saying:

"Nevertheless, the aspect to which Ibn Khaldun gave attention is what ultimately enabled the human being to seize the reins of time."²⁴

21. For a fuller discussion, see the chapter on the approach to change in this study.

22. Jawdat Said, *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], 88.

23. Said, *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram*, 133.

24. Jawdat Said, *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until they change what is within themselves], 52.

He also praises the Marxist approach for establishing this principle of control over the regular patterns of social change: “Marxist thought has its flashes of insight and its achievement in grasping the content of this verse,²⁵ with its emphasis on the human capacity to make history and bring about change. The clamour that Marxist thought has raised over more than a century came from drawing attention to this idea and understanding it.”²⁶

2. The Determinist Qadariyyah

These deny that a human being has the capacity to act, maintaining that he is compelled in his conduct. Ibn Taymiyyah says:

“Another group deprives the servant of choice and ability, and makes him compelled in his movements, like the movements of inanimate objects. They place voluntary and involuntary acts in the same category. One of them may even say that everything Allah and His Messenger command is beyond the person's ability and endurance. They deny him ability altogether, recognising only a single capacity that coincides with the act, and grant the disobedient person no capacity at all.”²⁷ Jahm ibn Safwan was prominent among these Qadariyyah.

3. The Sunni Approach to Divine Decree

This approach rejects both doctrines: compulsion and unrestricted choice, or the Qadariyyah who deny decree and the Qadariyyah who assert compulsion. Ahl al-Sunnah hold a middle position, expressed by the scholars of the community through clear evidence from the Qur'an and the

25. The verse is: “*Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts;*” (Qur'an 13:11).

26. Said, *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram*, 219.

27. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatawa al-kubra*, 8:444.

Sunnah, some of which I cited at the beginning of this chapter. Ibn Taymiyyah says:

“The approach of Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah in this matter is what the Qur'an and the Sunnah indicate, and what was held by the earliest Emigrants and Helpers and those who faithfully followed them: Allah is the Creator and Sovereign of everything. This includes all independently existing entities and the attributes belonging to them, whether human acts or anything else. Whatever He wills comes to pass; what He does not will does not come to pass. Nothing exists except through His will and power. Nothing He wills can resist Him: He has power over everything, and wills nothing that He is not able to bring about. He knows what has been, what will be, and how what has not occurred would be if it did occur. This includes human acts and all other things. Allah determined the decrees of created beings before creating them: their lifespans, provisions and deeds. He recorded these, and recorded the bliss or misery to which they would come. They therefore believe in His creation of everything, His power over everything, and His willing of everything that has occurred.”²⁸

We can identify why the sects strayed from this approach: as explained earlier, they considered the matter from only one side. They did not distinguish Allah's will concerning what occurs in the universe from His will expressed in the Shari'ah. Instead, they equated will with love, or, in other words, willing with being pleased. The Qadariyyah who denied decree claimed that Allah does not will unbelief or disobedience, does not love them, and is not pleased with them in His servants. How, they asked, could He create human acts that include unbelief and sin? They claimed that this absolved Allah of injustice. Yet we have already seen that Allah is the Creator and Sovereign of everything, and that nothing occurs in His dominion except what He wills.

28. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatawa al-kubra*, 8:449.

The determinist Qadariyyah, on the other hand, claimed that the human being is deprived of will, that Allah creates everything, and that He loves and is pleased with everything He brings into existence. Ahl al-Sunnah accepted the truth held by each group, and therefore distinguished willing from loving.

The Will Concerning What Occurs in the Universe

This is Allah's all-encompassing will. Nothing occurs contrary to it, whether obedience or disobedience; everything happens in accordance with it. Love and approval are not at issue here, since every occurrence proceeds from His will. This is the pillar of divine decree that every believer is required to affirm, as in Gabriel's hadith with the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. When enumerating the pillars of faith, Gabriel asked: "Tell me about faith." He replied: "That you believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His messengers and the Last Day, and that you believe in divine decree, its good and its evil." Gabriel said: "You have spoken the truth."²⁹ Another version in Muslim has: "And that you believe in divine decree in its entirety."³⁰

This concerns what Allah wills to happen to us, and we believe in it.

The Will Expressed in the Shari'ah

This is the will concerning religious obligations: commands and prohibitions. Here willing is accompanied by love. The Most High says: "*Allah desireth for you ease; He desireth not hardship for you;*" (Qur'an 2:185), and: "*Allah would explain to you and guide you by the examples of those who were before you,*" (Qur'an 4:26). He also says: "*and Allah loveth*

29. Muslim, *Sahih*, 1:37, on the authority of Umar ibn al-Khattab. This is part of a longer hadith.

30. Muslim, *Sahih*, 1:40, on the authority of Abu Hurayrah.

not mischief.” (Qur'an 2:205). Allah's not loving unbelief and not being pleased with disobedience does not entail that people will not commit them. Nor does it mean that something can occur in the universe contrary to His will.

This concerns what Allah wills us to do, and we act according to His commands and prohibitions.

Muslims have held this understanding of divine decree, an important pillar of faith, apart from misguided sects that denied decree in this sense.

The Effects of Belief in Divine Decree

Among the fruits of belief in divine decree are complete submission to Allah, obedience to His commands and prohibitions, and affirmation of His oneness in His most beautiful names and attributes. This protects the community from division and its members from deviation.

The Most High says: *“Say: Naught befalleth us save that which Allah hath decreed for us. He is our Protecting Friend. In Allah let believers put their trust!”* (Qur'an 9:51).

The reality of belief in divine decree, its good and its evil, becomes evident in reliance on Allah, seeking His help, turning to Him in supplication, and calling on Him for deliverance.

When a servant knows that everything that befalls him in this world has been recorded for him, that his lifespan is fixed and his provision allotted, and that he must respond to the commands and prohibitions of the Shari'ah, he is no longer deceived by this passing world. He pursues the path of jihad without fear. Whenever he hears a call to battle, he hastens to it, seeking death where it may be found, and saying:

“Can ye await for us aught save one of two good things (death or victory in Allah's way)?” (Qur'an 9:52). That is, victory or martyrdom, both of which are good.

With this faith, Muslims went forth to fight the Persians and Byzantines. It enabled those striving in battle to break through enemy ranks and declare: “We love death more than you love life.”

Explaining the Sunni approach to causality in Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah cites the words *“that whosoever will may choose a way unto his Lord. Yet ye will not, unless Allah willeth. Lo! Allah is Knower, Wise.”* (Qur'an 76:29-30), and says: “Allah affirms both wills, His own will and the servant's will, and makes clear that the servant's will is subordinate to the Lord's.”³¹

He also says:

“Placing one's ultimate reliance on causes amounts to associating partners with Allah. Denying that causes are causes is a defect of reason, and neglecting the means one has been commanded to use undermines the Shari'ah. The servant's heart must rely on Allah, rather than on any cause. Allah makes available the means that will benefit him in this world and the Hereafter. If those means are within his ability and he is commanded to use them, he must use them while relying on Allah, as when fulfilling obligations, fighting the enemy, carrying weapons and putting on armour. In repelling the enemy, he cannot be content with reliance alone while failing to do what he has been commanded to do in jihad. Whoever abandons the means he is commanded to use is incapable, negligent and blameworthy.”³²

Islam stresses adherence to scriptural rulings and the use of the means associated with them, just as firmly as it stresses reliance on Allah.

31. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatawa al-kubra*, 8:238.

32. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatawa al-kubra*, 8:529.

The Prophetic biography records the owner of a camel who questioned the Prophet. In Anas's report, a man asks: "Messenger of Allah, should I tie it and rely on Allah, or let it loose and rely on Him?" He replies: "Tie it and rely on Allah."³³

In Sahih Muslim, Abu Hurayrah reports that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, though there is good in both. Be intent on what benefits you, seek Allah's help, and do not give way to helplessness. If something befalls you, do not say: 'If only I had done this, such and such would have happened.' Rather, say: 'Allah decreed it, and He did what He willed.' For 'if only' opens the way to Satan's work."³⁴

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, taught his community the meaning of reliance on Allah. He said to a man: "When you go to bed, say:

‘Allah, I submit myself to You, turn my face to You, entrust my affairs to You, and place my back in Your protection, in longing for You and fear of You. There is no refuge or escape from You except with You. I believe in Your Book that You revealed and Your Prophet whom You sent.’ If you die that night, you will die upon the innate disposition; if you reach the morning, you will have attained good.”³⁵

These hadiths refute the Qadariyyah who deny decree, disregard it, and fail to give reliance on Allah its due. They also refute the determinist

33. Al-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 2517. Its chain of transmission is hasan (good).

34. Muslim, *Sahih*, 4:2052, in the chapter commanding strength, abandoning helplessness, seeking Allah's help, and entrusting decrees to Him. The strong believer here is one with firm resolve: more ready to engage in jihad, more determined in commanding right and forbidding wrong, more patient under harm and hardship, and more eager to worship.

35. Al-Bukhari, hadith nos. 247, 6311 and 6315; see *Fath al-bari*, 1:357.

Qadariyyah, who do not recognise the use of means as a fundamental part of the approach.

How the Believer Responds to Divine Decree

Ibn Taymiyyah says: “The servant has two situations in relation to a decreed event: before it and after it. Before the event,³⁶ he must seek Allah's help, rely on Him and pray to Him. If the event occurs independently of his own act, he must bear it patiently or be content with it. If it occurs through his act and is a blessing, he must praise Allah for it; if it is a sin, he must seek His forgiveness. The servant also has two situations in relation to what he is commanded to do.³⁷ Before acting, he resolves to obey and seeks Allah's help in doing so. Afterwards, he seeks forgiveness for his shortcomings and thanks Allah for the good He has granted.

The Most High says: *‘Then have patience (O Muhammad). Lo! the promise of Allah is true. And ask forgiveness of thy sin,’* (Qur'an 40:55).

He commands him to be patient in decreed afflictions and to seek forgiveness for sin.”³⁸

Invoking Divine Decree as an Excuse

Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah agree that people are bound by the commands in the scriptural texts and forbidden to do what those texts prohibit.

No one has an argument against Allah for abandoning a commanded duty, or for committing a forbidden act.

36. This concerns the will governing what occurs in the universe.

37. This concerns the will expressed in the Shari'ah.

38. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatawa al-kubra*, 8:77.

Ibn Taymiyyah says:

“Rather, Allah has the conclusive argument against His servants. Anyone who invokes divine decree to abandon a command, commit a prohibition, or reject what the texts teach concerning promise and warning is more deeply misguided, more false in his claims about Allah, and more opposed to His religion than those Qadariyyah.”³⁹

The Qadariyyah who uphold unrestricted choice resemble the Magians in affirming that someone other than Allah brings evil into existence without His will, power or creation.

The determinist Qadariyyah resemble the polytheists who say: “*Had Allah willed, we had not ascribed (unto Him) partners neither had our fathers, nor had we forbidden aught.*” (Qur'an 6:148). They invoke decree to cancel religious obligations, and thus resemble the unbelievers. This denies the messengers who brought commands and prohibitions: “*and Allah sent (unto them) prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and revealed therewith the Scripture with the truth that it might judge between mankind concerning that wherein they differed.*” (Qur'an 2:213).

Belief in divine decree means doing what is commanded, refraining from what is forbidden, and accepting what is decreed.

The Most High says: “*No calamity befalleth save by Allah's leave. And whosoever believeth in Allah, He guideth his heart.*” (Qur'an 64:11). Ibn Mas'ud says: this is the person whom an affliction befalls, who knows that it comes from Allah and therefore accepts it and submits.

This expresses the true meaning of being tested and enduring the test patiently.

39. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatawa al-kubra*, 8:452.

The Most High says: *“And surely We shall try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives and crops; but give glad tidings to the steadfast, Who say, when a misfortune striketh them: Lo! we are Allah's and lo! unto Him we are returning. Such are they on whom are blessings from their Lord, and mercy. Such are the rightly guided.”* (Qur'an 2:155-157).

Hidden and Disclosed Decree

Hidden decree is what Allah, glorified is He, has determined for us but concealed from us. He commands us to believe in it through the Messenger's words: “And that you believe in divine decree, its good and its evil.”

It includes every determination Allah has made for created beings. Every movement in this universe is subject to His will. What lies beyond our present has been concealed from us, and we know nothing of it. Our knowledge falls short of His knowledge, and our minds are limited before His unseen reality.

Disclosed Decree

Allah wills to show believers His complete power, effective will, and perfect, all-encompassing knowledge. He therefore discloses an aspect of His hidden decree, demonstrating its meaning in practice and teaching us how to respond to it. The Qur'an reveals this aspect in many places. Here we shall examine just one instance in which Allah disclosed His hidden decree so that it became something witnessed before us.

The story of Moses and the righteous man,⁴⁰ peace be upon them, offers a precise portrayal of disclosed decree. It contains successive surprises and remarkable actions that manifest Allah's complete power and profound wisdom, as the righteous man explains to the prophet Moses, peace be upon him, what he had been unable to bear patiently.

The Most High says: *“As for the ship, it belonged to poor people working on the river, and I wished to mar it, for there was a king behind them who is taking every ship by force. And as for the lad, his parents were believers and we feared lest he should oppress them by rebellion and disbelief. And we intended that their Lord should change him for them for one better in purity and nearer to mercy. And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and there was beneath it a treasure belonging to them, and their father had been righteous, and thy Lord intended that they should come to their full strength and should bring forth their treasure as a mercy from their Lord; and I did it not upon my own command. Such is the interpretation of that wherewith thou couldst not bear.”* (Qur'an 18:79-82).

The lesson of the story lies at its conclusion, in the words: *“and I did it not upon my own command.”*⁴¹ It is Allah's mercy and wisdom that He wishes to disclose to His servants.

40. He is al-Khidr, peace be upon him. The stronger view is that he was a prophet. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, relates: “While Moses was among his people, a man came and asked: ‘Do you know anyone more knowledgeable than you?’ Moses said: ‘No.’ Allah then revealed to Moses: ‘Yes: Our servant Khidr ...’” Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 7478, reported by Ibn Abbas from Ubayy ibn Ka'b.

41. This story refutes proponents of mystical unveiling and inspiration, and invalidates claims of contact with Allah outside revelation and prophethood.

The Effects of Departing from the Meaning of Divine Decree

How I wish there were no need to prolong the discussion of divine decree, survey people's opinions about it, or explain the causes of division. Had this dispute remained within theoretical inquiry and the pages of books, that might have been possible. But it has extended into the practical life of the community. Most people have neglected the true approach to divine decree. This question was not a matter of controversy among the Companions and the Successors until the sects arose, disputation multiplied, and speculative theology developed. They pursued it on the foundations of Greek philosophy, absorbed its concepts, and relied on rules of logic to establish arguments against their opponents. People came to believe they had no choice but to follow one of two approaches: compulsion or unrestricted choice.⁴² In our own time, the absence of sound approaches offered to students of religious knowledge has helped this phenomenon to emerge.

Since this study examines the materialist tendency and its danger in the Islamic world, we shall consider the Qadariyyah who deny decree⁴³ in some detail and respond to them. We shall demonstrate to proponents of materialism that their historical roots extend to the foundations of that sect. Their interests may differ, but their underlying principles are the same, meeting in Aristotelian materialist philosophy. We cannot now give a full

42. Debate arose around the well-known question: "Does the human being have free choice, or is he driven by compulsion?" This study has shown the error in posing the question in this way. Neither the Qur'an nor the Sunnah uses this expression; it comes from philosophers and speculative theologians. The Qur'an says: "*As for him who giveth and is dutiful (toward Allah) And believeth in goodness; Surely We will ease his way unto the state of ease.*" (Qur'an 92:5-7), and the Sunnah says: "Everyone is enabled to pursue that for which he was created."

43. A complete study of the determinist Qadariyyah's ideas exists under the title *Akhtar al-naz'ah al-falsafiyyah al-aqliyyah fi al-alam al-islami* [The dangers of the rationalist philosophical tendency in the Islamic world].

account of the sect in a separate chapter. The appropriate responses will instead appear when we address the questions raised by materialist thinkers, which also concern people today: evolution and change, making contemporary sciences the judge of scriptural texts in the name of scientific renaissance and enlightenment, defining the source of knowledge, and defining the sources and value of evidence.

Misguided Sects

Earlier scholars took care to establish criteria for recognising and distinguishing the proponents of different doctrines and schools, identifying the sects, and explaining their approaches.

In *al-Milal wa-l-nihal*, al-Shahrastani⁴⁴ mentions some of these principles:

“Know that writers on doctrines have different ways of enumerating Islamic sects. It is beyond dispute that not everyone who differs from others over one proposition in one question is thereby considered the founder of a distinct doctrine. There must therefore be a criterion based on questions that constitute fundamental principles ... I have attempted, as far as I could, to delimit these into four rules, the major foundations:

1. The divine attributes and oneness. This includes questions of eternal attributes, affirmed or denied by different groups, and the distinction between attributes of essence and attributes of action.
2. Divine decree and justice. This includes questions of divine determination and decree, compulsion and acquisition of acts, willing good

44. He is Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim al-Shahrastani, a philosopher and speculative theologian of the Ash'ari school. His book contains a major confusion: he uses Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah to mean the followers of Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari. This ambiguity misled groups of people into presenting the Sunni approach in a manner contrary to its actual nature.

and evil, and what is decreed and known, with affirmation by some groups and denial by others.

3. Promise and warning, and doctrinal classifications and judgements. This includes questions of faith, repentance, warning, postponing judgement, declaring unbelief and declaring misguidance, affirmed in one manner by some groups and denied by others.

4. Revelation and reason, the message and the trust. This includes questions of judging good and evil, welfare and the greater good, divine assistance, and protection from error.”⁴⁵

Disagreement over these questions existed between the Kharijites, the Mu'tazilah, the Murji'ah, the Shi'ah and their offshoots on one side, and Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah on the other, as well as among these sects themselves.⁴⁶

Through discussion, I have noticed that some writers and thinkers recoil from examining questions concerning the sects. They suppose that responding to a sect means entering into blameworthy speculative theology, or that it will increase division among Muslims.

This concern requires a clear answer.

Allah sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth. He conveyed the message, fulfilled the trust, counselled the community, strove for Allah as he should, brought Muslims together, and left them upon a clear path. When they differed about anything, they referred it to Allah and His Messenger, guided by His words: “*and if ye have a dispute concerning*

45. Al-Shahrastani, *al-Milal wa-l-nihal*, 1:5.

46. Disagreement over these opinions no longer appears as it did when the sects emerged. It takes other forms and uses new terms, such as rationalist Islam, enlightened Islam, modernism or modernity, or appears under the guise of religious renewal.

any matter, refer it to Allah and the messenger if ye are (in truth) believers in Allah and the Last Day.” (Qur'an 4:59).

When the sects divided and branched into schools, each group rose to defend its opinion and sought arguments supporting its position. Unlike the Companions, they did not return to their Lord's Book and their Prophet's Sunnah. Instead, they devoted themselves to the philosophers' books and arguments, and cast Allah's Book behind their backs, except those upon whom Allah had mercy, who remained faithful to the Companions' understanding and the way of the righteous early generations.

The sects' views spread among people, the affliction became general, and confusion prevailed. Scholars therefore had to confront these deviations, explain the sects' approaches, identify their unsound opinions, expose their falsehood and answer them.

Today, some believe that these sects have disappeared and their opinions died out, because they see no visible organisations or prominent bodies representing them. The reality, however, is that every misguided sect has followers driven by their own desires. Some adopt these opinions without knowing their falsehood or danger. Others know their true nature, but make them their starting point because they suit their desires and opinions. A person may adopt a view without knowing whose view it is. When told that it agrees with the Kharijites or the Mu'tazilah, he may reply: "I have never heard of the Mu'tazilah and know nothing about the Kharijites." Yet he may lecture at seminars, speak at gatherings, or contribute to intellectual and literary activity. One reason for this confusion and ignorance about contemporary approaches, and their connections to earlier philosophical or theological systems, is that proponents of deviant ideas attempt to conceal their ideas' true nature and prevent people from recognising their sources. This has helped such obscure ideas gain acceptance and spread.

This study offers an example of the phenomenon in the ideas of Jawdat Said. He draws on misguided theological sects such as the Qadariyyah and

the Mu'tazilah, but does not declare this. Instead, he presents himself as condemning and criticising speculative theology.

In this study, however, we do not judge by a writer's claims or concern ourselves with what he declares or conceals. We examine the actual ideas and opinions he expresses, and subject them to our established method of assessment, using clear rules and defined criteria. Through this comprehensive critical approach, we can form a complete understanding of a particular thinker. Proponents of false ideas may deliberately advise followers and disciples not to examine books about the sects, claiming that this leads to deviation and error. Ibn Arabi, the proponent of union with and indwelling of the divine, explicitly makes this claim in his Futuhat:

“Those whose understanding is limited may not examine books on religions and sects. A person endowed with unveiling may examine them to discover how their views came to diverge, since he is safe from agreeing with their beliefs.” I believe, however, that this restriction was intended to conceal these people's errors from the eyes of their disciples. Hence their saying: “Whoever says ‘No’ to his shaykh has departed from the path!”

I believe that every Muslim must know, at the very least, that there are deviant and misguided sects that must be avoided: their teachings must not be received and their approaches must not be followed. Every Islamic thinker who contributes through writing must also be acquainted with the sects' views, foundations and approaches, the history of their emergence, the sources of their inquiries, and their leading figures. He must have a clear understanding, be able to distinguish what is corrupt, and take care not to include misguided sectarian opinions in his books except as quotations or examples.

The scholars of the community gave this matter close attention, investigated and scrutinised it thoroughly, uncovered these groups' concealed positions and methods of entry, clarified their actual beliefs, and

formulated the rules that help distinguish sound from unsound opinions. We believe that this area of Islamic work needs to be developed today. Efforts in this direction are few, and largely confined to introducing the sects' history and outlining their views.

An important point must be made: the Qadariyyah form a sect distinguished by its own ideas. Some have supposed that it dissolved into the Mu'tazilah after most of its leaders, such as Ghaylan al-Dimashqi, al-Ja'd ibn Dirham and others, were killed for denying divine knowledge. Some writers have therefore confused the two and treated the Mu'tazilah and the Qadariyyah as one sect.

We treat this sect as distinct from the Mu'tazilah, despite shared opinions. The Qadariyyah who deny decree also converge with the foundations of the positivist approach and the aspirations of the Marxist approach that arose from it. Anyone who believes in Marxist principles while claiming Islam is a Qadari; his claim does him no good, just as the words "There is no god but Allah" do not benefit a Christian who says them while remaining attached to Christianity.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, warned the community against division and explained that it would occur, saying: "This religious community will divide into seventy-three: seventy-two in the Fire and one in Paradise."⁴⁷

47. Reported by Abu Dawud, al-Darimi, Ahmad, al-Hakim and others.

CHAPTER THREE

Philosophical Approaches

1. The Materialist Approach

This approach rests on a theory which regards matter as the foundation of existence and its sole reality, and holds that existence, its manifestations and its events can be explained as manifestations and effects of matter.

The Materialist Approach to Thinking

The materialist approach rests on a fundamental principle: the external material world represents the supreme reality. This objective reality exists independently of consciousness and is not subject to any other source. When sources of knowledge conflict, knowledge derived from matter takes precedence over all other knowledge, whether the source of that other knowledge is revelation or a judgement of pure reason. Within this approach, scriptural texts are rejected altogether and their source is not recognised. Yet materialist thinkers who have infiltrated the ranks of Muslims do not proclaim this rejection openly. Instead, they work to invalidate the meaning of the texts and treat them as though they did not exist. They advocate obtaining knowledge from material sources or from reality, regarding history and the events of the universe as sources of knowledge, or declaring their adherence to the spirit of the text while moving away from the texts themselves.

According to the orientation of materialist thinkers, this requires dispensing with prophethood itself and disregarding what proceeds from it, on the grounds that it represents an earlier historical period, while adopting the regularities of the universe and society in its place. Advocates of this view also attempt to offer a new interpretation of revelation and of the manner in

which it is received from Allah. They likewise rely on the concept of change and on the laws governing the development of nature, societies and human beings.

This tendency represents the approach of the contemporary materialist school of change.¹ Some of its adherents like to call this tendency the "Islamic Left", "rationalist Islam", and other such names!!

The Materialist and Idealist Philosophical Approaches

An important methodological question needs to be clarified here. The prevailing conflict among philosophers, both ancient and modern, concerns materialist and idealist philosophy, or the materialist approach and the rationalist philosophical approach. We observe that adherents of philosophical thought, in both its materialist and rationalist forms, exclude the Islamic approach from comparison and study.

On the choice of materialism and the definition of matter, Garaudy says:

"We shall have the opportunity to show later that there is no third path by which to escape this choice: the choice between idealism² and materialism." Garaudy then asks, "What is matter?", and answers:

"1. The events of the world are the various aspects of matter in motion. Matter is that which exists outside my mind and outside every mind, and which needs no mind in order to exist.

1. I discussed the foundations and approach of this school in a series of articles in the Jordanian newspaper *al-Liwa*. They will shortly be published, Allah willing, in a separate book.

2. Idealism is the doctrine which regards reason as prior to matter and as the primary source of knowledge. It then divides into numerous doctrines through differences over the nature of reason.

2. Matter is therefore the primary driving force, while our sensations and our thought are merely the product and reflection of this reality."³

The essence of the conflict between materialism⁴ and "rationalist" idealism concerns which of the two has priority over the other:

A. The rationalist, or "idealist", philosophical approach rests on the belief that thought precedes matter in existence. Accordingly, knowledge derived from thought, or from reason, must take precedence over everything else.

B. The materialist, or "positivist", philosophical approach rests on the belief that matter has priority in existence and that thought is its reflection. Accordingly, knowledge derived from matter takes precedence over everything else.

A Comparison of the Rationalist and Materialist Approaches to Thinking

Researchers in philosophy like to compare philosophical approaches. I shall present here a comparison made by a researcher working in the field of philosophical reference works, who writes:

3. The introduction to *al-Madiyyah* [Materialism], by Roger Garaudy, before he embraced Islam. Garaudy disavowed this book because it contained Stalinist ideas; he did not abandon Marxist materialism, as we have mentioned elsewhere.

4. We use the expression "materialist approach" in contrast to the other approaches. By it we mean the foundations of materialist philosophy, which have produced mixed approaches that would be difficult to enumerate in this study. All of them, however, go back to the foundations of materialist philosophy, under many names and terms. I therefore do not regard the empirical method as a materialist approach: it is a means, not an intellectual, philosophical theory. Muslims have employed this method since the first day of Islam.

Metaphysical and Scientific Thinking⁵ Converge

"Despite the difference between the philosophies of metaphysical and scientific thinking, the two converge on numerous points. First, their roots go back to the ancient Greek philosophers, and their concepts go back to the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle. Plato is regarded as the first philosopher to base his philosophical thought on the constituent elements and foundations of this thinking. Aristotle, however, criticised his teacher's metaphysical principles and replaced rational thinking with thinking based on sense perception, observation and experiment. He is thus regarded as the first empirical and scientific philosopher.

Within this reciprocal relationship between the subject and the thing, between the internal and the external, philosophical thinking, whether metaphysical or scientific, faces a common question: how do we know, and where does knowledge begin? The answer determines the type of thinking followed by the philosopher.

In the rationalist approach, knowledge moves from the mind towards the external world, that is, from the subject towards the object. This means that the thinking is metaphysical in kind. In the empirical approach, the direction of thought is reversed: it moves from the external world towards the subject.

Whereas rationalist philosophy holds that objective thought is merely the product of the subjective mind's creativity, realist philosophy holds that the subjective mind is merely the product of external reality. We conclude from this that the difference between the two approaches to

5. "Metaphysical thinking" here means "rationalist thinking", and "scientific thinking" means "materialist thinking".

thinking is a question of emergence: where does knowledge emerge from?"⁶

Thus we find that most researchers into philosophical approaches exclude the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger as sources of knowledge. Most of them also give the results they obtain from philosophical sources precedence over the knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, as we explained a little earlier.

Philosophical Terms

Adherents of the materialist approach use terms of their own to express their ideas and beliefs. We may need to define some of these here and explain what they mean by them. They may use such terms in senses other than those for which they were originally coined in the language. Those who use these terms do not turn to the Shari'ah or to the language to determine their meaning, but to philosophical foundations.

I have mentioned some of these definitions in the course of the study. Here I shall discuss one of these terms.

External Existence

By this they mean material existence or existence in reality. Jawdat Said has used the term to define the levels of existence.

Some also call it reality outside the mind, or outside human consciousness, whereas some scholars call it existence in concrete entities, as opposed to existence in minds.

6. Dr Nawal al-Sayigh, *al-Marji' fi al-fikr al-falsafi* [The Reference Work on Philosophical Thought], p. 14.

Garaudy says: "Matter is that which exists outside my mind and outside every mind, and which needs no mind in order to exist."⁷

2. The "Rationalist" Philosophical Approach

This approach explains everything in existence through the principles of philosophy and logic and the findings of human reason, whether to establish and accept things, to interpret them, or to understand their meanings.

The Rationalist Philosophical Approach to Thinking

This approach rests on a fundamental principle of thinking which makes reason the judge in all matters and gives it precedence over other sources of knowledge, such as revelation or sense perception. Among speculative theologians, this principle is known as giving reason precedence over transmitted knowledge.

Within this approach, scriptural texts are dealt with by reinterpreting them in accordance with a rational conception. This approach is adopted by groups among the deviant sects, such as the Mu'tazilah, the Khawarij and the Rafidah. It is also represented in the approach of the contemporary reformist school, which relies on the rationalist philosophical approach.

Refuting the Philosophical Rule

Adherents of materialist philosophy claim that matter exists before thought and that our conception must be derived from it. Adherents of rationalist philosophy likewise claim that reason is the foundation of existence and

7. The introduction to *al-Madiyyah* [Materialism], by Roger Garaudy.

that our conception must be derived from it. This relationship has been called the "levels of existence".⁸ Across successive generations, it has been expressed in various ways and in similar formulations, suited to differing circumstances of time and place.

What concerns us in this question is the period in which speculative theology appeared in the life of the Muslim community, after philosophy had acquired supporters and promoters and interest had arisen in translating books drawn from Greek culture.

At the philosophers' starting point in this question lies their description of the reality of existence as matter and form.

Ibn Sina says of these levels:

"An existing concrete entity; a form taken from it; a spoken expression indicating it; and writing indicating the spoken expression."

Abu Hamid al-Ghazali came after him and said:

"The reality of the thing in itself; the establishment of its representation in the mind; a sound composed of letters indicating it; and written marks indicating the spoken expression." Others expressed it as follows:

"Existence in concrete entities; existence in knowledge; existence in speech; and existence in written form."

Contemporary adherents of materialist philosophy have also expressed it as:

"External existence; mental images; verbal existence; and written existence." The meaning becomes clear in the following formulation:

8. This expression, which denotes a limited rule, is used to construct a general law encompassing human life, the universe and the realms of the unseen. See *Iqra* [Read], pp. 47-70.

"Material existence; mental existence; existence in speech; and written existence." To abbreviate these expressions, we have three words:

Matter; reason; transmitted knowledge, or revelation.

As we have seen, philosophers pay no attention to transmitted knowledge. Muslims who work in philosophy, however, regard transmitted knowledge as any report received through transmission, whether it is a scriptural text from the Qur'an or the Sunnah, or a report of some other event.

Giving Matter Precedence

Adherents of the materialist approach give knowledge derived from matter precedence over reason and do not recognise revelation at all.

Giving Reason Precedence

Adherents of the philosophical, rationalist approach give knowledge derived from reason precedence over matter and over transmitted knowledge as well, on the grounds that reason is the foundation of the Shari'ah and precedes it in existence. The Mu'tazilah and the Ash'aris have adopted this approach.

Fakhr al-Din al-Razi⁹ stated the universal rule, which is a purely philosophical rule:

9. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi was one of the leading Ash'aris who combined the Ash'ari doctrine with philosophy and Mu'tazili thought. See *Lisan al-mizan* [The Tongue of the Balance], 4:500.

"If evidence received through transmission conflicts with rational evidence, or what is heard conflicts with reason, or transmitted knowledge conflicts with reason, or the apparent meanings of transmitted texts conflict with decisive rational proofs, or any similar formulation is used, then either the two are combined, which is impossible because it combines two contradictories, or both are rejected.

Alternatively, precedence is given to what is received through transmission. This is impossible, because reason is the foundation of transmitted knowledge. If we gave the latter precedence over it, this would impugn reason, which is the foundation of transmitted knowledge. To impugn the foundation of a thing is to impugn the thing itself. Giving transmitted knowledge precedence would therefore impugn both transmitted knowledge and reason. Reason must consequently take precedence; transmitted texts must then either be reinterpreted or have their meaning consigned to Allah."¹⁰

Commenting on this, Ibn Taymiyyah says:

"Al-Razi and his followers made this statement a universal rule governing what may and may not be used as evidence from the books of Allah Most High and the words of His prophets, peace be upon them... With this rule which these people devised, each group lays down a rule for itself concerning what the prophets brought from Allah. They make their foundation what they suppose their minds have understood, and subordinate what the prophets brought to it. Whatever agrees with their rule they accept; whatever contradicts it they do not follow."¹¹

10. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar' ta'arud al-aql wa-l-naql* [Averting conflict between reason and revelation], vol. 1, p. 4. The original formulation of this rule is set out in the book of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi.

11. The preceding source, p. 6.

The Source of Knowledge

The question of the source of knowledge in Islam is settled. Its answer accords neither with the philosophical approach we have described nor with the philosophers' procedure. In cases of conflict, Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah give precedence to the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah, without impugning what is reached through sense perception or through reason.

Ibn Taymiyyah offers an excellent explanation of the Sunni approach to knowledge: "There are three routes to knowledge: sense perception, reason, and what combines the two, such as transmitted reports. Some things can be known only through reports, as everyone knows from the reports of truthful people, such as mutawatir reports, and from what is known through the reports of the prophets, may Allah bless them all. This division must be acknowledged. Conclusive evidence has established the prophethood of the prophets and that, through reports,¹² they may know what can be known only through reports. They likewise impart knowledge to others through their own reports.

It is impossible for sound evidence to establish that everything the prophets reported can be known without reports... Thus the communities most complete in knowledge are those which acknowledge the routes of sense perception, reason and transmitted reports. Whoever denies one of these routes loses knowledge in proportion to the routes he has denied."¹³

12. "Transmitted report" here means revelation.

13. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar' ta'arud al-aql wa-l-naql* [Averting conflict between reason and revelation], vol. 1, p. 178.

Ibn Taymiyyah also rejects the philosophers' procedure of regarding matter as prior to thought, or the reverse, on the basis of the aforementioned rule of the levels of existence. He says:

"He, glorified be He, taught what is in minds and created what is in concrete entities. Both are brought about by Him. Yet what is outside the mind He brought about through creation, and what is in the mind He brought about through teaching."¹⁴

He then explains the error of the philosophical rule and of applying it to existence in general:

"The well-known procedure among speculative theologians is to infer the temporal origination of bodies from the temporal origination of accidents. We have discussed this in more than one place and explained that it conflicts with both the Shari'ah and reason."¹⁵

In this connection, we may note that the speech of Allah precedes the creation of concrete entities and the creation of minds, that is, the existence of matter and reason.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "Allah wrote the decrees of created beings fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth..."¹⁶

By refuting the philosophical rule, I do not mean that I have discussed it exhaustively; that would require large volumes. Rather, I mean that I have set out the criteria which reveal the true nature and limitations of the philosophical approach and its failure to encompass all the foundations of knowledge.

14. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmu' al-fatawa* [Collected Fatwas], 16:266.

15. *Majmu' al-fatawa al-kubra* [The Great Collection of Fatwas], 16:267.

16. Reported by Muslim, 4:2044.

Muslim scholars do not disagree that the approach of philosophy differs from that of Islam and shares no common ground with it, because the foundations of the two differ. Instability and constant change have become prominent features of philosophical approaches.

Bochenski says of contemporary philosophy:

"Western philosophy entered a period of profound crisis at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. The symptoms of this crisis appear in the emergence of intellectual movements opposing the two most important doctrines in modern European thought: mechanistic materialism and subjectivism. Such a profound transformation in intellectual and spiritual life naturally corresponds to parallel changes in the social sphere. These causes can be divided into three groups. The first comprises the crisis in physics and the crisis in mathematics. The second comprises the emergence of two methods of inquiry: the mathematical method and the phenomenological method. The third consists of a number of new worldviews, the most important of which are the irrationalist worldview and the new metaphysical realist tendency."¹⁷

Our concern in all this is only to observe the constant change in philosophical approaches, their instability and their contradictions.

It is therefore impermissible to adopt any philosophical theory, because such theories are subject to refutation and constant change.

There is no doubt that the instability of speculative theology, which arose within Islamic life, goes back to all these causes.

17. Bochenski, *al-Falsafah al-mu'asirah fi Urubba* [Contemporary Philosophy in Europe], *Alam al-Ma'rifah*, no. 165, pp. 27-38.

Al-Shahrastani said that among philosophers and speculative theologians he had found only perplexity and regret:

By my life, I have visited all the schools,
And cast my eyes across those landmarks;
I saw only a perplexed man resting his hand
Upon his chin, or a penitent striking his teeth.

Philosophical disputation, in its various forms, has been prohibited:

Allah Most High says:

“Among mankind is he who disputeth concerning Allah without knowledge, and followeth each froward devil; For him it is decreed that whoso taketh him for friend, he verily will mislead him and will guide him to the punishment of the Flame.”

Qur'an 22:3-4

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"No people went astray after having been guided without being given to disputation." He then recited:

*“They raise not the objection save for argument. Nay! but they are a contentious folk.”*¹⁸

Qur'an 43:58, excerpt

The righteous early generations condemned philosophy, its approaches and its terminology. Yet the difficulty facing the critic of philosophy is that he has no explicit texts condemning philosophy directly. This is, however, a misconception which arose because philosophy entered Islamic culture through the disputation known as speculative theology, and was not initially mentioned by its own name. Today, adherents of philosophical

18. A hasan hadith, reported by al-Tirmidhi, 5:378, no. 3253, and Ibn Majah, no. 48.

approaches have devoted themselves to reinforcing this understanding. They profess to condemn speculative theology, yet call for philosophical principles and praise philosophers and their followers, secure against criticism on the grounds that the condemnation applied to speculative theology rather than philosophy.

Al-Shafi'i, may Allah have mercy on him, disavowed Hafs al-Fard, who argued by means of disputation and speculative theology, that is, "philosophy". Al-Dhahabi says in *Mizan al-i'tidal*:¹⁹ "Al-Shafi'i declared him an unbeliever during their debate." He also refused to visit him during his illness.

Abu al-Ma'ali al-Juwayni said: "My companions, do not engage in speculative theology, that is, 'philosophy'. Had I known that speculative theology would bring me to the state it has, I would not have engaged in it." At his death he said: "I have plunged into the vast ocean, left behind the people of Islam and their disciplines, and entered into what they forbade me to enter. Now, unless my Lord comes to my aid with His mercy, woe to Ibn al-Juwayni."

There is also a fine poem by Ibn Abi al-Hadid:

O enigma of thought, before you
I was bewildered, and my life passed away.

Minds travelled in search of you,
Gaining nothing but the hardships of the journey.

May Allah condemn those who claimed
That you could be known through rational inquiry.

They lied: what they spoke of
Lies beyond human capacity.

19. *Mizan al-i'tidal* [The Balance of Moderation], 1:564.

The poem of Muhammad ibn Umar al-Razi is also well known. He said:

The furthest advance of minds ends in fetters,
 And the utmost striving of the learned ends in error.
 Our souls are estranged from our bodies,
 And the yield of our worldly life is suffering and affliction.
 From a lifetime of inquiry we have gained nothing
 But a collection of "it was said" and "they said".

Abu Yusuf said: "Whoever seeks religion through speculative theology, that is, 'philosophy', falls into heresy; whoever seeks wealth through alchemy²⁰ becomes bankrupt; and whoever seeks out obscure hadith reports tells lies."

Al-Shafi'i said: "My judgement concerning the practitioners of speculative theology, that is, 'philosophers', is that they should be beaten with palm branches and sandals, paraded among the tribes and clans, and proclaimed thus: this is the reward of one who abandons the Qur'an and the Sunnah and turns to speculative theology." Al-Shafi'i also said: "I have encountered among the practitioners of speculative theology, that is, philosophy, things which I never thought a Muslim would say. For a servant to be afflicted with everything Allah has forbidden, except associating partners with Him, is better than to be afflicted with speculative theology."²¹

Some of those afflicted with speculative theology returned to the right path towards the end of their lives, such as al-Ash'ari, al-Juwayni, al-Razi and al-Ghazali. They devoted themselves to the Noble Qur'an and the Prophetic hadiths and abandoned the methods of speculative theology. Muhammad

20. The term here does not mean chemistry as we know it today, but the practices of ignorant people who attempted to turn cheap metals into precious ones, such as converting copper into gold and tin into silver.

21. Al-Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah [The Tahawi Creed], al-Maktab al-Islami edition, p. 210.

ibn Umar al-Razi said: "I have reflected on the methods of speculative theology and the approaches of philosophy, and have found that they neither heal the sick nor quench the thirsty. I have found the closest path to be that of the Qur'an. In affirmation I read, '*The Beneficent One, Who is established on the Throne.*', and in negation I read, '*Naught is as His likeness.*'"

We may be able to add another criterion for methodological classification when trying to distinguish and classify writers and thinkers, explain their approaches and determine their intellectual identities: their "supreme model" in philosophy.

We shall find that some make Aristotle and his followers their supreme model, while others make Plato and his followers theirs. Many readings of the philosophical heritage have appeared, and each proponent of these readings has adopted a supreme model from that heritage and kept it before his eyes.

We shall find that Muhammad Iqbal made his supreme models the Sufi Jalal al-Din al-Rumi, Ibn Arabi, al-Hallaj and others of their kind who followed the Sufi philosophical orientation.

Jawdat Said made Socrates, Gandhi, Toynbee, Goethe, Kant and others exemplary figures, taking their ideas as his point of departure.

Shahrur likewise placed al-Biruni, Ibn Rushd and al-Farabi, along with Kant, Darwin and others of their kind, among those firmly grounded in knowledge, and made them his supreme models.

Once we know the doctrines of these men, it becomes easier to determine the position of their followers!

A phenomenon that has emerged in contemporary societies has helped confirm this criterion: these societies praise such philosophers and bestow on them the most flattering titles. Their names have filled streets,

universities and hospitals, and they have received a degree of esteem and respect which they did not enjoy in their lifetimes. Abu Ali, Ibn Sina, lived as a fugitive during a period of his life, after revealing his esoteric doctrine, in which he shared common ground with the Qarmatians and the Isma'ilis. Nevertheless, "Ibn Sina" emerged as a supreme model for many researchers, under the banner of honouring knowledge and its scholars!!

Muslim scholars classified philosophers according to their approaches in order to identify them. Thus they spoke of natural philosophers, eternalist philosophers, eternalist theistic philosophers, philosophers who held that the world was temporally originated or that it was eternal, philosophers who advocated invoking the celestial bodies, atheistic philosophers, and other names indicating their approaches. These classifications have disappeared from contemporary studies and been excluded as philosophy acquired prestige. They falsely and slanderously called it "the mother of the sciences" and overlooked its corrupt foundation.

As we have explained, the fundamental criterion distinguishing the philosophical approach from the Islamic approach is the manner in which scriptural texts are treated.

Philosophers derive no benefit from what came from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, because their approach rests on making reason the judge and reinterpreting the text to accord with reason or matter. They had no fixed rule to which they could refer, nor did they establish a principle for distinguishing texts that require reinterpretation from those that do not. Instead, they left this to the interpreter himself and to his choice when he heard the discourse, rather than to anything grounded in the speaker's intended meaning. They supposed this procedure to be suitable for sifting and sorting ideas, and relied on it. To that end, they depended on their personal spiritual intuition and unveiling. They therefore said: "Affirm what you have recognised by the light of your inward vision, and reinterpret what you have not recognised."

Or they say: "Whatever contradicts reason must be reinterpreted; otherwise it need not be."

They did not make the Messenger himself, through his discourse, the guide by which truth is distinguished from falsehood and guidance from error. Rather, they made the distinguishing criterion something which varies with people's intuitions and reasoning across time and place.

The contemporary would-be philosopher Jawdat Said says: "I want to abandon the method by which we have become accustomed to examining this subject: referring back to the texts over which the Muslim sects contend and concerning whose authenticity or meaning they dispute."²²

Or he says: "Returning to the texts would not resolve this phenomenon."²³

As for us, Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah, we say that returning to scriptural texts is what protects us from error, brings us out of disagreement and sets us on Allah's straight path. Returning to external, material existence, as Jawdat and Shahrur claim we should, means only returning to the materialist philosophy advocated by Marx, Engels and others. This means that problems will grow more confused and more distorted. Philosophy will neither solve people's problems today nor make them happy, because philosophy has never saved them. We all know the loss and error which the debates of speculative theology brought upon the Muslim community.

Those who undertook to debate philosophers merely invalidated their methods without establishing a particular method of their own. They simply set the views of the sects against one another. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali mentioned this in the course of his criticism of philosophers: "At

22. *Iqra* [Read], p. 226.

23. The pamphlet *Unzuru 40* [Look, 40], p. 5.

times I hold them to the doctrine of the Mu'tazilah, at others to that of the Karramiyyah, and at still others to that of the Waqifah. I do not take up the defence of any particular doctrine."²⁴

This was the predominant method of criticism among them.

Ibn Taymiyyah says:

"As for the Prophetic, Sunni, Salafi, Muhammadan, scriptural method, only someone well versed both in it and in their statements which contradict it can debate them by means of it. He will then recognise the falsity of their statements through clear reasoning which accords with clear transmitted knowledge.

Guidance lies in that with which Allah sent His messengers. Whoever turns away from it is not guided; what, then, of someone who opposes it with something that contradicts it and gives that contradiction precedence over it?"²⁵

Where Does the Error Lie?

The error in the philosophical approach lies in its misuse of the rule of the levels of existence: generalising this rule to encompass everything and turning it into a universal rule to which all matters are subject, whether they concern the present world or the unseen of which revelation has informed us. They gave external, material existence precedence over revelation and regarded this existence as the authority to which disagreements should be referred.

24. See al-Ghazali, *Tahafut al-falasifah* [The Incoherence of the Philosophers], p. 68, and the footnote in *Dar' ta'arud al-aql wa-l-naql*, 1:163.

25. *Dar' ta'arud al-aql wa-l-naql* [Averting conflict between reason and revelation], 1:164-166.

We can examine this question more fully through the way discourse conveys meaning.

It must be pointed out that general, universal terms have no existence outside the mind except as particular, specific instances.

The person addressed understands the meanings expressed by a word only if he knows their concrete instances or something corresponding to them, with a shared element and a basic resemblance between the two.

No descendant of Adam can dispense with teaching received through hearing. Allah taught Adam all the names and spoke to him through revelation, teaching him what he had not learnt by reason alone. A word signifies a meaning through its indication of what the speaker meant and intended. The speaker's intention and meaning are in his heart and cannot initially be known from the word alone. Yet the meaning cannot be known independently of the word until it is first established that this intended meaning is what is meant by that word. Once this is known, hearing the word a second time makes the meaning known without any pointing.

When the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, explained to us matters which had not previously been known, and for which there was no word in the language denoting them specifically, he used words whose meanings corresponded to those matters and made them their names. A shared element thus exists between them, as with prayer²⁶ and zakat. Similarly, when he informed us of matters relating to belief in Allah and the Last Day, which people had not previously known and for which they therefore had no words denoting them specifically, he took suitable words from the language, on the basis of the shared element they indicate in relation to those unseen meanings.

26. In its original linguistic sense, prayer means supplication. The prayer prescribed by the Shari'ah consists of bowing, prostration and all the other constituent requirements of prayer. When attributed to Allah Most High, however, it means mercy.

The unseen matters of which the Messenger informs people may be things whose counterparts they have apprehended through their senses and reason. An example is his informing them that the wind destroyed Ad: Ad were human beings like themselves, and that wind was of the same kind as their wind, although more powerful. These stages must therefore be recognised. First, people apprehend perceptible meanings which they observe. Second, they grasp their universal meanings by reason. Third, they are taught the words indicating those perceptible and rational meanings. These three stages are indispensable in all discourse.

When we are informed about unseen matters, we must be taught the meanings which they share with observed realities and the resemblance between them. This is done by acquainting us with familiar matters. If the unseen matters are like them, there is no need to state the difference, as in the earlier reference to past peoples. If they are unlike them, this is explained by stating the difference: this is not like that. Once the absence of likeness is established, the attribution alone is sufficient to explain the difference. The absence of equality does not preclude a shared element, which is what the shared expression signifies. Through this we come to understand unseen matters; without the shared meaning, this would be impossible.²⁷

The fundamental error of philosophers is their reliance on a single source of knowledge and their contentment with it. Materialists who follow the materialist approach regard matter as the foundation and rely on what proceeds from it. Adherents of the rationalist philosophical approach regard reason as the foundation and rely on the judgements it produces.

As we explained in the introduction to this study, Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah rely on revelation and give it precedence, without impugning knowledge obtained through sense perception or reason.

27. Al-Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah [The Tahawi Creed], p. 106.

CHAPTER FOUR

Ideas and Individuals

To determine the connection between a particular writer and one of these approaches, it is necessary to study each writer's intellectual output comprehensively, identify his fundamental ideas, and compare them with the foundations of these approaches. Only then can his ultimate affiliation be determined.

One observation deserves attention. Affiliation cannot be determined merely by a similarity of views or by participation in raising certain questions. It must be determined by observing the approach to thinking from which the writer proceeds, to which he refers all the questions he raises, and through which he deals with them. To clarify this further, we need to determine the writer's view of the important methodological questions, through which he has formed a comprehensive outlook with a distinctive character of its own.

After carrying out a broad intellectual survey of those active in the Islamic field, I selected certain writers with a materialist tendency as suitable representatives for a comprehensive study of this kind. They are:

1. Jawdat Said.
2. Muhammad Iqbal.
3. Muhammad Shahrur.

It is appropriate to record a brief profile of each here.

Jawdat Said

He comes from Bir Ajam, a village in the Syrian governorate of Quneitra in the occupied Golan region. It now lies on the line separating the area from

the forces of the Zionist enemy, and entry requires a permit. Jawdat secluded himself in this village for several years before presenting the public with his latest books and pamphlets, whose tendency is purely materialist.

He is of Circassian origin, as has been reported. The Quneitra region witnessed numerous migrations from the Soviet Union, mostly of Circassians and Turkmens. These people fled the brutal practices of the communist regime when the Bolshevik communist revolution took place under Lenin's leadership.

The religious affiliations of the inhabitants of those areas¹ were varied, including groups of Sunnis, Shi'is and some Isma'ilis. These groups merged into society and rapidly integrated with the religious affiliations of the local population.

Jawdat now lives in Damascus. He is permitted to give monthly lessons in his home, take part in televised discussions and deliver lectures in cultural centres.

He received his early education in Syria and continued his university studies at al-Azhar.

He has six published books and numerous lectures and pamphlets through which he has presented his ideas. He has given these books a distinctive series heading: "Studies in the Regularities of Change in the Self and Society".

1. Marxist ideas spread among the members of this community through the arrival of relatives and friends from the Soviet Union.

His Book Titles²

1. Madhhab ibn Adam al-awwal [The Way of Adam's First Son].
2. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves].
3. Al-Amal qudrah wa-iradah [Action: Capacity and Will].
4. Fuqdan al-tawazun al-ijtima'i [The Loss of Social Balance].
5. Al-Insan hina yakunu kallaan wa-hina yakunu adlan [The Human Being When He Is a Burden and When He Is Just].
6. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous].

He has also issued periodical publications in the form of the Unzuru [Look] pamphlets, of which approximately eighty issues have appeared to date. A group of his followers has helped prepare them, including his sister Layla Said, her husband Khalis Jalabi, Musa al-Janati and others.

Jawdat announced his approach to activism from the beginning of his work in Islamic outreach, adopting the slogan "individual, peaceful, public". On this basis, he condemns outreach founded on collective activity or a directed political organisation. Reality, however, bears witness to the contrary! He maintains a large intellectual grouping and a continuous organised effort through which he promotes his ideas. His activity can be understood only as an organisation with specific political and intellectual ideas. He and his followers operate within a defined field and produce

2. In preparing this profile, I used an outline of Jawdat's life, his book titles and a presentation of his ideas recorded in the introduction to the interview conducted with him by the London-based magazine *al-Alam*. The interview was conducted by Wahid Tajah, a well-known Marxist. Al-Alam has Iranian Shi'i sympathies.

various written publications³ and pamphlets with a distinctive character, through which he addresses supporters at home and abroad. His pamphlets are distributed in different countries of the world with conspicuous enthusiasm. Yet this activity has not appeared in party form or been understood in those terms, because he opposes no regime. Rather, he defends regimes, and his activity ultimately serves their interests. Closed doors are therefore opened to him and his followers, and cultural clubs and media centres are placed at his disposal.

For this reason, in the present study we are not taken in by what Jawdat says on this matter. We judge by what he actually does.

As I have stated, I am not presently concerned with evaluating Jawdat's political position. My concern is his intellectual activity.

Jawdat seeks to lead the materialist school of change and to become its undisputed pioneer in the Islamic world. His role in this respect is no less than that once played by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani.

The Critic's Task

Before explaining why I selected particular individuals for this study, it may be useful to explain the critic's function and real task. This function rests on specific elements.

First: identifying the approaches, establishing foundations and criteria, and comparing them. Although this is a general task, it helps identify the frameworks involved in the critical process and reduces the amount of supporting evidence that must be cited for each individual separately.

Second: distinguishing each individual, identifying his particular characteristics and general ideas, bringing his features to light, and then

3. See the conclusion, Arabic p. 361, which reproduces some of the posters and slogans distributed as gifts with the *Unzuru* pamphlets.

determining his approach. Just as this identification helps us connect the individual with an approach, it also helps the writer himself recognise the true nature of his ideas and the features of his intellectual personality. Some of these writers are at times unaware of themselves, and at other times do not know the true nature of their own approaches.

Third: classifying the writer and determining his affiliation on the basis of the principles and criteria used in the critical process.

What Materialist Thinkers Have in Common

On the basis of these considerations, I examined the individuals selected as the subjects of this study.

In studying them, I encountered little difficulty in identifying their ideas and explaining their approaches. I should point out that although each appears with a distinctive character in his style and manner of presentation, they share a general line governed by a single outlook:

1. The prominence of the materialist tendency in their ideas.
2. Their reliance on the foundations of Marxist theory and its practical applications.
3. Their adherence to philosophical approaches in research and analysis.
4. Their reliance on the general theory of evolution known as the theory of "origin and development".
5. Their starting point in the universal principle of change, which is a Marxist theory of dialectical materialism.

6. Their attempt to introduce what are called the "human sciences"⁴ into Islamic beliefs, accepting the conclusions of sociologists, psychologists and philosophers as established results and interpreting scriptural texts through them. In most cases, these studies amount to no more than theories and hypotheses which have not attained the level of certain knowledge.
7. These writers generally attempt to separate the Noble Qur'an from the Prophetic Sunnah in a manner which places the Sunnah under suspicion and accusation, and to construct a theory of knowledge by disregarding the Sunnah.
8. Their use of methods of disputation known in Islamic history as speculative theology.
9. Their adoption of the Mu'tazili approach, the views of the Qadariyyah in particular, and the doctrine of free choice as opposed to that of compulsion.
10. Their reconsideration of the Islamic heritage in both form and content, including scriptural texts.

We can thus understand the true nature of the similarity between the ideas of this group: they belong to the materialist approach and differ only in their manner of presenting questions.

Despite this agreement in approach, Shahrur has treated certain subjects in his own distinctive way and expanded on some of them. Yet the foundations of these ideas appear clearly in Jawdat. Scarcely an idea can be found in Shahrur's book without a foundation and an echo in Jawdat's writings. Jawdat, however, adopts a measured style, marked by precision in

4. These studies proceed under the slogan "the Islamisation of knowledge" or "the Islamisation of the human sciences".

discussion and an ability to manoeuvre.⁵ Shahrur, by contrast, presents subjects hastily and uses imprecise formulations, which has led him into contradictions in more than one place.

I shall give an example of their agreement in ideas and their difference in presentation.

In a provocative and unfamiliar manner, Shahrur called for the task of interpreting the Qur'an to be withdrawn from the religious scholars and restricted to philosophers, after describing them in the most flattering terms:

"Those firmly grounded in knowledge are the people who occupy the foremost position among scientists and philosophers, such as al-Biruni, al-Hasan ibn al-Haytham, Ibn Rushd, Isaac Newton, Einstein, Charles Darwin, Kant and Hegel."⁶

Jawdat holds the same ideas, but does not present them in Shahrur's provocative manner.

Jawdat answers the following question:

"What is the way to unite Muslims, or those working for Islam?" He says: "I have indicated in some of my books that the traditional answer to this question is: by returning to the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the righteous early generations. Yet this answer, in its traditional form, is no longer sufficient. For it to hold true and acquire practical effectiveness, Muslims and non-Muslims must discover an approach to understanding the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the whole human heritage."⁷

5. Jawdat's style in his books differs from his style in seminars. In his books he is measured, whereas in seminars he displays agitation and impatience, which can lead to errors or departures from customary conduct.

6. Shahrur's book, p. 193.

7. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 224.

Here we can see the agreement between Shahrur's ideas and those of Jawdat. Like Shahrur, Jawdat calls for the discovery of an approach devised by non-Muslims for understanding the Qur'an and the Sunnah. I have addressed this question in the chapter "Changing the Sources of Evidence".

I have also identified the ideas of other writers who belong to the materialist approach, deal with scriptural texts through materialist thinking, and have books and prominent cultural activities to their credit. I did not wish to include them in this study and subject their output to criticism. I preferred to confine it to the selected individuals, since they occupy leading positions in intellectual direction. The reader can also undertake intellectual classification using the criteria of distinction we have reached, and can explore further the sources on which we relied to establish these principles, obtaining additional information useful in future critical work.

This study represents a modest step towards a comprehensive Islamic approach to criticism. I therefore call on our brothers who possess critical ability to contribute further steps along this path. A substantial group of people with a materialist tendency still needs to have its output subjected to criticism.

It must be emphasised that this study does not seek to vilify anyone or diminish his worth. We examine the intellectual output he has published. It is appropriate to mention that there is no personal hostility or previous disagreement between me and any of those selected for this study. I have seen Jawdat and Shahrur only on television.⁸ I have never met any of them or entered into a discussion with them.⁹

8. I saw Shahrur in a television recording together with Jawdat and Muhammad Anbar.

9. Jawdat claims that he met me in Sudan and that we had a discussion there. This did not happen: I have never visited Sudan!

These individuals are not the targets for their own sake; they are merely examples. The study is general, and its critical task does not end if one of them abandons his ideas or retracts some of them.

The reader may find certain ideas repeated in each chapter. This has not happened by chance but deliberately, because the supporting evidence is relevant to both subjects and because repetition helps expose the deviation more effectively.

When we speak of these men, we are speaking of Ahmad Khan's intellectual school. He preceded them in these ideas and was the first person in the lands of Islam to seek systematically to adapt Islam to Western civilisation.

Ahmad Khan has been neglected and discredited in the lands of Islam. He appeared as an admirer of the West and an advocate of borrowing from it. He sought accommodation with the British and assisted them against Muslim men who attempted to establish an Islamic state in India!! He visited Britain, received a royal decoration and an honorary title, met the Queen and ministers, and gained membership of scientific and intellectual clubs.

Ahmad Khan advocated reliance on the Qur'an alone and excluded acting on the Prophetic hadiths. He also called for a modern reinterpretation of the Qur'an suited to the laws of nature.

He left no area of religious rulings without contributing some distortion to it. These statements proceeded from his deeply rooted materialist tendency.

In his view, divinity is what philosophers call the "first cause": Allah created the universe, laid down its laws and left it, without subsequently intervening in those laws.

In his opinion, prophethood is a human faculty, a natural gift and a personal aptitude.

He does not regard revelation as an extraordinary occurrence, but as something in accordance with the regularities of the universe.

He regards Adam as a symbol of humanity rather than a particular individual, and explains human existence on earth through Darwin's theory.

We shall not discuss Ahmad Khan at length. He has faced extensive campaigns of criticism, and for this reason none of his followers has cited him. They have taken his ideas without indicating their source.

When I selected the subjects of this study, I felt that the choice would come as a great surprise in the field of criticism. Young people enthusiastic about certain individuals might find it difficult to accept such an unexpected position. They may not have become accustomed to seeing famous individuals subjected to study and criticism, and may fear the collapse of their supreme model before their eyes!!

This did indeed happen in the case of the criticism of Jawdat Said's writings, when I published four very brief articles drawn from this study in al-Bayan magazine. The magazine received a response which revealed the extent of the shock caused by those articles.

Our brother Muhammad Bayumi writes:

"I read what our brother Adel al-Tal wrote under the title 'The Dangers of the Materialist Tendency in the Islamic World', and was struck by shock and perplexity.

The shock was caused by the ideas which our brother Adel quoted from Jawdat Said. There is no doubt that these ideas and the formulations in which they were expressed shock every thinker who belongs to Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah, leaving him astonished: how can such ideas and expressions come from a man like Jawdat Said, who works in Islamic outreach and seeks to solve the problems of the Muslim community!!

The perplexity arose because some Islamic writers had quoted Jawdat Said, and the very books which our brother Adel al-Tal had criticised. Al-Bayan magazine had also published articles by some of our brothers which appealed to Jawdat's views as evidence.

This left me perplexed, and that perplexity compelled me to reflect at length, in the hope of finding an explanation and a way out!

After prolonged reflection, I could find only this explanation:

1. Jawdat's position: I think, and Allah knows best, that the strange views which arose in his thought did so because 'the man's intellectual roots are not connected to the pure intellectual formation of Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah. Rather, they are connected to a mixture of other forms of upbringing and ideas alien to Sunni thought, which elevate reason beyond the limits set for it by the Shari'ah.'"¹⁰

In fact, the surprise may concern only Muhammad Iqbal and Jawdat Said. Criticism of Shahrur is no surprise: he has been subjected to considerable criticism, even rebuke, and at present has no followers or pupils. He has instead recently joined Jawdat Said's "group", settled under his umbrella, and become his congenial companion.

We can say that Jawdat and Shahrur are two sides of the same coin. Shahrur represents the prominent, exposed side, and Jawdat the hidden, concealed side. Jawdat describes Shahrur as possessing a keen mind, says that his book is worth reading, and calls its author bold.

There is no doubt that this association receives support and encouragement from various media centres. Jawdat, Muhammad Shahrur and their followers have come to dominate the cultural scene with unprecedented

10. *Al-Bayan* magazine, no. 65, p. 104.

speed. Doors have been opened to them, and all cultural centres throughout the country have been placed at their disposal. This was clearly apparent in the media campaign accompanying the publication of Muhammad Shahrur's book. Within only a few days it had been distributed across the various cultural and political spheres. This developed to the point that copies were presented to senior officials and some heads of state. None of this could have happened had agencies with evident influence not been directing the campaign and supporting the efforts which help establish the alien ideas carried by Shahrur's book in particular and Jawdat's books in general.¹¹

Collusion between Jawdat and Muhammad Shahrur in propagating these ideas, spreading them and drawing attention to them has been established. They have done this through joint visits to many intellectuals,¹² stressing the need for them to express an opinion on Shahrur's book. We understand how embarrassing this request can be for such people, since it may fall within the sphere of intellectual classification.

It is perhaps noteworthy to observe the phenomenon of open discussion on television programmes. Jawdat has become their shining star, missing no opportunity. He has also become the guest of honour at most seminars held in the cultural centres of the various governorates.

We mention these examples only to establish the connection between Jawdat's thought and Shahrur's. Each is a mirror of the other, and both draw from the Marxist materialist approach and the approach of the Qadari, Mu'tazili sect.

11. Despite the collapse of the Soviet Union and the signs of failure in Marxist theory, this theory still has adherents promoting it in the lands of Islam!

12. I possess a video recording featuring Jawdat, Muhammad Shahrur and Muhammad Anbar. In it, Muhammad Anbar states that Jawdat and Shahrur visited him to obtain his opinion of Shahrur's book.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Human Sciences

In the absence of the Islamic awakening, or while it was faltering, a group carrying ideas hostile to Islam entered the Islamic cultural arena. Circumstances enabled this group to become emblematic figures of Islamic thought. This procedure succeeded to a certain extent, and these infiltrators gained leading positions in intellectual direction. They became adept at raising problems, placing obstacles, and diverting the efforts of those working for Islam away from their fundamental problems and real concerns. They magnified the intellectual crisis under the slogan "the crisis of reason" and the backwardness of Muslims, presenting partial solutions based on the approach of change while excluding comprehensive solutions founded on religious renewal and a return to acting on the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

These men also urged the Muslim community to undertake the Islamisation of knowledge through the Islamisation of the human sciences, such as Western sociology, which is a materialist, positivist approach, psychology, and other studies concerned with human beings. The philosophical roots of these disciplines are evident; most go back to materialist or idealist philosophy. I shall examine one subject as an example clarifying the true nature of these disciplines:¹ the study of the stages of history in sociology.

1. They are called human studies or the human sciences. In most cases, they are theories which have not attained certainty. See "Refuting the Philosophical Rule" in Chapter Three; the Arabic reference is p. 57.

Positivist Sociology

The Stages of History

This term appeared in the writings of Auguste Comte,² to whom historians attribute the establishment of positivist sociology in Europe. I shall review Comte's ideas about social laws and the stages of history. Comte presents positivist thinking, or "materialist thinking", as a universal, general approach and establishes two principles by which people can understand social phenomena:

A. Social phenomena must be subject to laws rather than follow arbitrary inclinations. Understanding phenomena in the positivist, or "materialist", manner is regarded as a means of reaching the laws governing them. Comte concludes that since social phenomena are part of nature as a whole, and nature as a whole has been subjected to laws, social phenomena must necessarily be subject to laws.

B. People must be provided with the means to understand the laws to which social phenomena are subject. These laws can be discovered only by studying social phenomena in a positivist manner, with the aim of explaining their nature, their relationships with one another and with other things, the laws governing them, and the consequences of these relationships for their emergence, development and variation across societies and periods.

From Comte's perspective, the sciences are either theoretical or practical and applied. The former concern themselves with tangible phenomena,

2. A French sociologist and philosopher, 1798-1857, and the founder of positivist philosophy.

while the latter seek to discover the natural laws which govern these phenomena and determine their existence.³

Comte also presents the concept of social change, or "social dynamics", the stages of history, or the law of the three stages:

"Its subject is the study of the laws of social movement and the mechanical course of human societies, and the discovery of the extent of humanity's progress in its development. Comte's theory of social dynamics rests on two other theories of his: the law of the three stages and the theory of the development of humanity. Their details are as follows.

From his study of social dynamics, Comte arrived at a general law which he called the 'law of the three stages', *Loi des trois etats*. In summary, it states that, in understanding each branch of knowledge, the human mind or human thinking has passed through three stages:

1. The theological, or 'religious', stage: the mind followed a religious manner of understanding, explaining phenomena by attributing them to personalised, willing powers external to the phenomena themselves, such as gods, spirits, devils and the like. An example is explaining growth by attributing it to Allah, exalted is His power, or to the god of vegetation.
2. The metaphysical, or 'abstract', stage: the mind explained phenomena by attributing them to vague, impersonal, abstract powers, or to metaphysical forces and first causes which it could not establish. An example is explaining plant growth by attributing it to a power of germination latent in the plant itself.
3. The positivist, or 'scientific', stage: the mind explained phenomena by attributing them to the laws governing them and to the immediate causes

3. For a fuller account, see Dr Zaydan Abd al-Baqi, *al-Taḥkīm al-ijtimā'i: naṣḥ'atuhu wa-tatawwuruḥu* [Social Thought: Its Emergence and Development], pp. 302-310.

affecting them. An example is explaining growth by attributing it to physical and chemical factors and to the laws which constitute the phenomenon. No further stage follows this one. Thereafter, human thought can at most refine the instruments on which it relies, examine more precisely the details it studies, fill the gaps, and agree on the ordering of positivist scientific findings.

Comte turned to the history of the sciences and the history of humanity to confirm the validity of his law. Through study and inquiry, he found that each branch of knowledge, in explaining its phenomena, had passed through the theological stage and then the metaphysical stage. Finally, most sciences reached the positivist stage. Each stage of humanity's development also resembles a corresponding stage in the life of an individual. The theological stage resembles childhood; the metaphysical stage corresponds to adolescence and youth; and the positivist stage in which humanity has settled resembles the manhood and maturity reached by the individual. Humanity in its stages of progress is thus like the individual in the stages of his emergence, growth and advancement. In his emergence and development towards maturity, the individual repeats the life of humanity: theological in childhood, metaphysical in youth, and positivist in manhood. Comte added that all manifestations of art, literature, civilisation, science and the like can be understood only in the light of the history of intellectual development. Social dynamics, like social statics, expresses a particular stage of human thinking. This takes his law beyond intellectual development to the development of humanity in general, making it a quasi-metaphysical law.

The Theory of Social Progress

Comte completes his discussion of social dynamics through his theory of progress. As he sees it, progress is the movement of society towards a definite goal which cannot be reached without passing through definite, necessary stages. Social movement is therefore subject to laws. Earlier

thinkers, with the exception of Ibn Khaldun, had not anticipated this idea; they had conceived social movements as mere oscillations and disturbances within society. Comte accordingly attacked Pascal, Condorcet and others who had failed to grasp the proper scientific meaning of progress, which had led them to mix their studies with philosophical principles and metaphysical conceptions.

Comte's law of human progress does not prevent people from acting in response to historical events. It nevertheless affirms an 'unchanging path of human development': certain changes occur in the course of human progress without any human intervention. Progress therefore does not follow a straight line but proceeds through a series of varied, unequal oscillations. Yet this social movement is accompanied by progress which takes two forms:

1. Progress in our social condition, expressed in material advancement. In his view, this is more readily apparent, faster in its movement, easier to bring about and nearer to attainment. It depends on the extent of our knowledge of the laws of social phenomena.
2. Progress in our human nature, evident in both biological and intellectual respects. Biological progress has increased average human lifespan and advanced the principles of health and the art of medicine. Intellectual progress, meanwhile, has produced new means of controlling nature and harnessing it to serve humanity. Reason or intelligence is regarded as a general instrument which can be used without restriction to extend human intervention in, and supervision of, the universe and its phenomena. Each of these two forms is necessary for the other and for the progress of humanity. Human progress, whether political, moral or intellectual, cannot be separated from material progress, because of the

comprehensive reciprocal interconnectedness which characterises the natural course of social phenomena."⁴

These are Comte's views on the "stages of history" and his division of human life into definite stages. He chose to call the stage in which the prophets lived the stage of childhood, likening it to children who had not reached youth or maturity.

Jawdat Said, Iqbal and Shahrur have adopted most of Comte's views. Jawdat relied on the stages of history in establishing his ideas, as appears in the introduction to his book *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim*.⁵ He sometimes calls these stages civilisational cycles and advocates referring to history as a source of knowledge. Jawdat has not attributed these ideas to their proponents among Western positivist sociologists. He has presented them as though they were his own inventions and innovations, while drawing them ready-made and ordered from those thinkers. His only concern is to give them an Islamic colouring by adding Qur'anic verses or Prophetic hadiths. At times he selects words from the Torah and the Gospel, or presents the ideas of Zoroaster: it seems that he sees no difference!!

Jawdat has absorbed these ideas to the point of intoxication and is concerned only with disseminating them by any means. I have observed that he has adopted Comte's own manner of presenting problems and solving them, without ever indicating this.

I shall quote some of the expressions used by Jawdat, drawn from Comte's ideas and following the same style when he raises a problem in order to find a solution.

4. Dr Zaydan, *al-Tafkir al-ijtima'i: nash'atuhu wa-tatawwuruhu* [Social Thought: Its Emergence and Development], pp. 321-323.

5. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 10.

In *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim*, he says:

"The mind can adopt one of two positions towards problems. Either it assumes that they are subject to laws, and that a problem can therefore be brought under control and harnessed; or it assumes that they are not subject to laws, or that those laws cannot be discovered..."⁶

Comte presented his positivist ideas in the same manner adopted by Jawdat when comparing the positivist and religious methods.

He said:

"A. The positivist method rests on the belief that phenomena are subject to laws.

B. The religious, metaphysical method rests on the belief that they are not subject to laws."⁷

Thus Jawdat selects the deviant ideas of positivist sociologists and conveys them in an obscure style suited to conditions of scientific backwardness in the lands of the Muslims. He claims that Muslims do not use the means or seek the causes through which things proceed. If this does exist among Muslims, it is found among certain sects and orders which do not adopt the Islamic approach or use scriptural evidence to establish the rulings of the Shari'ah, as is also the case with Jawdat. He has generalised this principle to all Muslims in support of his doctrine of divine decree and his adoption of the doctrine of free choice as opposed to compulsion.

6. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 15.

7. Dr Zaydan, *al-Tafkir al-ijtima'i* [Social Thought], p. 307.

Jawdat has condensed his idea of humanity's development, derived from positivist sociology, in a special chapter on the guide to ideas, where he says:

"Ignorance of the beginning of creation gives a distorted picture of reality, creates confusion, and prevents a proper engagement with reality. The traditional view imagined that the universe was created complete and in its present form from the outset. This is the result of a limited view confined to a single moment.

Creation continues at its various levels. Humanity is like an individual with stages of growth, and has not yet reached maturity."⁸ These are Comte's ideas about the law of the three stages through which humanity passes in its course, with the positivist stage representing maturity.

Jawdat and his followers⁹ advocate reading *Ma'alim tarikh al-bashariyyah* [Landmarks of Human History], which portrays humanity's journey on this earth through positivist sociology.

8. *Iqra* [Read], p. 283.

9. Khalis Jalabi, his wife Layla Said and some other followers follow Jawdat in these ideas. They advocate reading this book as well as *Afaq al-mustaqbal* [Horizons of the Future].

CHAPTER SIX

Materialism

Our discussion in the introduction of the approaches competing for dominance in the cultural arena of the Islamic world showed that the criterion we use to determine affiliation to one of them is the manner in which scriptural texts are treated. We also established that the materialist approach regards the external world, outside the human self, as the sole objective reality from which knowledge may be obtained.

In this chapter, I shall examine the position of Jawdat Said and his associates towards the materialist approach and determine its connection with Marxist and positivist ideas.

Jawdat does not conceal his admiration for the materialist approach and its characteristics, or the fact that he proceeds from a system of Marxist ideas.

I shall begin by tracing Jawdat's connection with this approach through selected passages from his books and lectures.

Jawdat explicitly praises the Marxist materialist approach when interpreting the verse "*Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts*". He says:

"The essence of Marxist thought, its beginning and its end, lies in grasping the content of this verse, focusing on the human capacity to make history and carry out change. The clamour which Marxist thought has created for more than a hundred years lies only in its adherents' adoption and understanding of this idea."¹

1. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 219.

This is a truly strange and astonishing position. It is strange that such praise should come from a man working in Islamic outreach who claims to seek solutions to the problems of the Muslim community. Here he testifies to the originality of Marxist thought and describes it as powerful and coherent. Through this procedure, he seems to suggest that Marxist thought has its source in the Book of Allah and that materialist philosophy comes from Islam, as those who call themselves Islamic philosophers attempted to do. Jawdat imagined that through this transparent procedure, citing Qur'anic verses, he could strengthen his materialist approach, attribute materialism to Islam and spread this understanding among Muslims. He imagined that he could accomplish this successfully, without difficulty or exertion. He thought that in this way he could achieve what the leading figures and advocates of Marxist thought in the lands of Islam had failed to achieve when they tried, by every means and every route, to establish a connection between the Islamic approach and Marxist ideas. It seems that Jawdat did not despair as they did, but continued his attempt. He praises their views and extols them as the first to grasp the purport of this Qur'anic verse and the first to act on it!!

What is astonishing is that, despite the theoretical and practical failure of the Marxist idea, Jawdat continues to advocate it and hold fast to it. More astonishing still is his great audacity in calling on Muslim youth to carry out change from the starting point of the Marxist materialist principle. Jawdat has discovered, as Muslims have not, that Marxist theory solves their problems and their crisis!! Here he calls for adherence to the element of truth which lies in Marxist theory. His book *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* constitutes an open call to adopt the approach of Marxist materialism. In it he says:

"Likewise, if we remember that we must not deprive people of what is theirs, and that wisdom does no harm whatever vessel it comes from,

acknowledging the element of truth in Marxist theory does us no harm. If we reject that element of truth because of the element of unbelief among them, however, we are not acting correctly."²

With evident self-assurance, Jawdat declares here that Marxist theory contains truth which Muslims must adopt!! Every Muslim who has grasped the true nature of communism must ask: what wisdom do Marxists possess, and what truth is there in their views?!

Jawdat is not describing an approach unfamiliar to us or a reality remote from us. He praises an approach whose effects we suffer daily.³ This approach has carried the causes of its own destruction since its inception and is incompatible with the innate disposition with which Allah created human beings. It was shaken and collapsed when the inevitable promise came to pass. It fell, as had long been expected.

Advocates of Marxism constantly mock those who uphold virtue and call for moral values. One of the leading figures of the Communist Party cries: "You foolish idealists! You are searching for a mirage which has no real existence when you speak of truth and virtue, honesty and trustworthiness. These are empty words which each generation fills with whatever pleases it. In themselves, however, they are nothing fixed and definite which can be recognised."

Thus we find that Marxists do not believe in wisdom and do not love virtue. How, then, can we find among them what we seek⁴ and solutions to

2. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 80.

3. Perhaps Jawdat and his family's migration to the Levant was one consequence of the oppression practised by communist regimes in the Caucasus.

4. Adherents of materialist ideas and philosophical doctrines use the slogan "Wisdom is the believer's lost possession" or "Wisdom does no harm whatever vessel it comes from". This is not authentically established from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, but is a saying widely repeated. It is exploited to introduce Western ideas into Islam.

our problems? They believe only in principles which proceed from matter and in relationships produced by the means of production.

In a defensive move which reveals his embarrassment and weakness as he presents Marxist ideas, Jawdat recognises that some people fear for their religion. He therefore uses expressions to reassure Muslims about their religion, affirming that there is no danger to the verses of the Book of Allah under Marxist ideas. He says:

"If we recall what we have already said, that when we learn how to read Allah's signs in the horizons and in ourselves, there is no longer anything to make us fear for Allah's verses in the Book, because the signs in the horizons and in ourselves will show that the verses of the Book are true."⁵

There is a clear indication here of the importance of reading and reflecting on the signs in the horizons, while belittling Allah's verses in the Qur'an and their study and subjecting them to the signs in the horizons and the discoveries made there. A Muslim knows that Allah's verses are true whether modern science discovers His signs in the horizons or not. If it does, the discovery supports that truth and increases the faith of those who believe.

Jawdat appears to want to establish a separation between Marxism as an approach and communism as a creed.⁶ Perhaps he derives this conception from the unacceptable popular saying: "Take their words and do not concern yourself with their deeds."

It is well known that Marxist belief is not merely a slogan but a practical and doctrinal reality whose two aspects cannot be separated. Marxists proceed from their sweeping slogan: "There is no god, and life is matter." If

5. *Hatta yughayyiru* [Until They Change], p. 81.

6. The polytheists of Mecca before Islam believed in Allah's existence, yet they were not considered believers. Allah Most High says: "*If thou shouldst ask them: Who created the heavens and the earth? they would answer: Allah.*"

they thought to deceive us, as Jawdat had been deceived, and replaced their slogan with another expression, "There is a god, and life is matter", would anything change? Would it be permissible to accept Marxist theory because of this merely formal alteration? That could happen only if, by way of a joke, we chose to give someone whose faith took this form a new name: "the Muslim Marxist" or "the red shaykh".

Presenting Marxist ideas by clothing them in an Islamic mantle is extremely dangerous and deviant. This procedure represents a major deception, and the Muslim community continues to suffer the effects of such situations. The confrontations still echo in people's minds when some thinkers, perhaps some of them with good intentions, attempted to present Islam in the guise of socialism, social justice,⁷ or a democratic system. We saw the severity of the scholars' condemnation of these attempts, which led most of those thinkers to withdraw their positions and disavow what they had written in this direction.

Jawdat Said, however, adopted another style and a new, inventive procedure in this matter. He openly called for adherence to Marxist thought by urging people to adopt the element of truth he had discovered in Marxist theory. He says:

"When a Marxist says that the study of social history has become a science, we should not tell him that he is mistaken, but that this is true. If he considers natural phenomena capable of giving us objective truths, we should see this as an affirmation that the signs in the horizons yield objective truths. We may add that the signs in ourselves also yield objective truths."⁸

7. Sayyid Qutb disavowed his book *al-Adalah al-ijtima'iyyah* [Social Justice] because it contained materialist ideas. He disavowed it after his approach had become sound and his thought had matured. We ask those responsible for publishing his books either to exclude the works he disavowed from their publication lists or to clarify the ideas he disavowed.

8. *Hatta yughayyiru* [Until They Change], p. 81.

In this way, Jawdat suggests to Muslims that they should accept Marxist ideas and regard them as true. He asks us to believe the Marxist and not tell him that he is mistaken. But on what grounds should we believe him? We know that by studying history, the Marxist means studying the history of the earth and humanity through Darwin's theory and through class struggle. Marxists know this as historical materialism. We shall shortly establish Jawdat's belief in historical materialism through his complete belief in the stages of history formulated by Auguste Comte and elaborated by Marxists in their studies. Jawdat has also set them out as follows:

"Ten thousand years ago, human beings lived in caves. They knew nothing of agriculture and were naked, weak and unarmed."⁹ In his latest book he says:

"His awareness of humanity's long history, in which people passed through successive stages as they moved from hunting to herding and then to agriculture..."¹⁰

When Jawdat tells the Marxist that he has not erred, he shares his historical materialist approach, just as he shares his dialectical materialism.

What is Marxism other than these principles which he enumerates before telling the Marxist that he has spoken the truth?

Here he also lists Marxism's other merits when discussing other people's concept of change. A Muslim does not tell a Marxist that he has spoken the truth, because a Muslim has a comprehensive, integrated approach from which to proceed. Rather, he calls on Marxists to adhere to it; he does not become dependent on them, taking from them the principles of unbelief and atheism!!

9. A televised discussion together with al-Buti.

10. *Iqra* [Read], p. 89.

Jawdat says: "The question of changing societies occupies the foremost place in the research of this age. Communists regard themselves as the originators of this idea. On this basis, they call themselves progressive and denigrate the understanding of the rest of humanity as metaphysical, reactionary and utopian, considering that others deprive themselves of the capacity to change history.

They summarised the history of human knowledge in the introduction to al-Diyaliktik [Dialectics], and held that Marx and Engels had explained that philosophers had interpreted the world, whereas what mattered was changing it.

The book al-Nas wa-l-ilm wa-l-mujtama' [People, Science and Society], written by six Russian scholars, answers the following question: 'What is the role of people in the course of history? Is historical necessity, or determinism, like the fate decreed by the gods? What, then, is the point of action? Does any of us struggle to bring about spring and summer? The law of history differs from the law of nature, since it makes its way through people's activity. Historical laws do not operate automatically. People make their own history through the activity of those who recognise, with varying degrees of clarity, the maturing needs of social development.' This appears on page 69. On page 87 of the same book:

'By revealing the laws of social development and providing a scientific picture of the world, Marxism became a spiritual weapon of the proletariat.'

In al-Diyaliktik: 'The third merit of Marxist philosophy is that, just as the laws of nature's development can be known, so can the laws of society's development, which have objective significance. Thus, despite the complexity and interconnection of events in social life, their study can become a science as precise as biology and capable of using the laws of social development in scientific applications. Socialism thereby becomes a science.'

They regarded this merit of theirs as sufficient justification for rejecting every theory founded on faith whatsoever, as they said in al-Diyaliktik: 'If nature alone is capable of giving us objective truth, every theory founded on faith must be rejected altogether.'"¹¹

This admiration and this lengthy presentation of Marxist ideas make the reader feel that he is reading a Marxist author rather than an Islamic writer. A comment by Jawdat on one Marxist idea caught my attention. He says:

"It is true that they recognised the existence of regularities in societies, and this does establish those regularities. Yet their explanation of them was only very partial, since they confined it to the means of production. The means of production are only a small part contributing to changing what is within the self. Their recent writings, however, indicate that they have moved to some extent beyond the narrowness in which they were confined."¹²

He agrees with their views to the very end. If he finds a gap in their doctrine, he tries to find them an excuse. Here he explains that they have escaped the narrowness caused by confining change to the means of production. This aspect had been the object of severe criticism and great ridicule from opponents of Marxist ideas. Now he takes pride in their return

11. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], pp. 78-79.

12. *Hatta yughayyiru* [Until They Change], footnote on p. 80.

to what he sees as the right path: that change encompasses all aspects of life...?? He has become a Marxist theorist too..!

This review shows us that Jawdat accepts the materialist approach from beginning to end, from its outer shell to its core. This is communist Marxism raising its head through him..!

Dialectical Materialism

The writer has not left us uncertain about his position or his embrace of every aspect of Marxist theory. We can let Marxism's leading figures bring out the points of convergence between their ideas and his. He says: "If he considers natural phenomena capable of giving us objective truths, we should see this as an affirmation that the signs in the horizons yield objective truths."¹³

This statement represents the materialist approach, which places objective reality in matter alone. Jawdat, however, disregarded the truth when he omitted to explain the Marxists' complete conception of matter. He also concealed the points of convergence between his ideas and theirs, as we shall show through excerpts from his statements compared with those of Marxists.

In *al-Madiyyah al-diyaliktikiyyah wa-l-madiyyah al-tarikhiyyah* [Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism], Stalin says:

"Philosophical materialism rests on another principle: matter, nature and being are an objective reality existing outside perception or consciousness and independently of it. Matter is primary, because it is the source of sensations, conceptions and consciousness, whereas consciousness is a secondary, derived element, since it reflects matter and

13. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 81.

being. Thought is the product of matter when its development has reached a high degree of perfection..."¹⁴

Engels says: "Nature exists independently of every philosophy. It is the foundation on which we have grown, and we human beings are also its product. Outside nature and humanity, nothing exists."¹⁵

Jawdat Said affirms this materialist conception exactly as Marxists have adopted it: "External existence, that is, material existence, is the fixed reality to which we refer in cases of disagreement. Mental images are liable to deficiency."¹⁶ By mental images, the writer means the images of reality formed in the mind. This is what Marx expresses when he says: "The mind is the reflection of matter upon the mind; it is like a reflecting mirror."

Historical Materialism

When discussing the study of social history, the writer says: "When a Marxist says that the study of social history has become a science, we should not tell him that he is mistaken, but that he is right."¹⁷

Just as Jawdat concealed the true nature of the materialism in which he believes, as materialists do, here too he disregards the truth and does not reveal all the aspects adopted by Marxism concerning history.

It is natural for Marxists to interpret history from purely materialist foundations. This is familiar among them and well known about them.

14. Stalin, *al-Madiyyah* [Materialism], p. 29.

15. *Fuyirbakh wa-nihayat al-falsafah al-klasikiyyah* [Feuerbach and the End of Classical Philosophy], p. 16.

16. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 57.

17. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 81.

Marx says:

"We must begin by stating the first premise of all human existence, and therefore of all history: people must be in a position to live in order to be able to make history. Life, however, involves above all food, drink, shelter, clothing and many other things. The historical act is therefore the production of the means required to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself. This act is indeed a historical act, a fundamental condition of all history, which must be fulfilled day by day and hour by hour, today just as thousands of years ago, simply to sustain human life."¹⁸

Jawdat has concerned himself with history and made it a fundamental source of knowledge. Ultimately, he has come to give it precedence over the meaning of the verses of the Book, as in his statement:

"The meaning of the Book can be cancelled altogether, as though it did not exist. What will alert Muslims to this is the concern shown in the Book for history, human conditions and historical events. In other words, what will teach us is not the Qur'an: the events of the universe and history are what will teach us."¹⁹

He also says: "Allah has taught us in His Book that history is a valid source of knowledge, and that history is not only the past but also what is to come."²⁰

Marx says on this matter:

"It is thus entirely clear from the outset that a material connection unites human beings, determined by their needs and their mode of production. It

18. *Al-Idiyulujiyyah al-almaniyyah* [The German Ideology].

19. *Unzuru 40: Bayna al-lughah wa-l-waqi'* [Look, 40: Between Language and Reality], p. 8.

20. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 239.

is as old as humanity itself and constantly takes new forms, thereby constituting a 'history'."21

Marx says:

"In every age, the ideas of the ruling class are also the ruling ideas. This means that the class which is the dominant material force in society is at the same time its dominant intellectual force. The class which controls the means of material production also supervises the means of intellectual production. Consequently, the ideas of those who lack the means of intellectual production are subject to this ruling class."22

Stalin says:

"If it is true that the world is perpetually in motion and development, and that the disappearance of the old and emergence of the new constitute the law of development, it is clear that there are no fixed, unchangeable social systems, no eternal principles of private property and exploitation, and no eternal ideas..."

He continues: "If the transition from slow quantitative changes to sudden, rapid qualitative changes is the law of development, it is clear that revolutions carried out by oppressed classes are entirely natural and inevitable events."23

Cornforth says:

"Qualitative changes generally occur with relative suddenness, in a leap. Something new is born suddenly, although its possibilities were

21. *Al-Idiyulujiyyah al-almaniyyah* [The German Ideology].

22. *Al-Idiyulujiyyah al-almaniyyah* [The German Ideology], p. 56.

23. *Al-Madiyyah al-diyalikikiyyah* [Dialectical Materialism], pp. 25-26.

contained in the gradual transformation produced by the continuous quantitative changes which preceded it."²⁴

One observation deserves attention. Jawdat Said conveys Marxist ideas themselves, presents them as their proponents do, and invites us to adopt them in an enticing manner which almost declares: "I am the advocate of materialism among you." Just as Marxists combine historical and dialectical materialism and regard them as an integrated whole, Jawdat combines the two.

Kelle says:

"A dialectical materialist theory of the world as a whole cannot be established without a materialist explanation of social life: without discovering that society is also a form of the movement of matter and is subject in its development to objective laws like those of material nature. Dialectical materialism is impossible without historical materialism."²⁵

The Laws Governing the Course of Society

We can discern Jawdat's interest in highlighting other aspects of Marxist theory through the Marxists' discovery of the laws governing the course of society. He says:

"The same applies today to Marxist theory in its establishment of social regularities. If its proponents have discovered regularities and signs in the course of societies, just as astronomers before them discovered regularities in the movement of celestial bodies, this has no connection with denying faith.

24. *Madkhal ila al-madiyyah al-jadaliyyah* [An Introduction to Dialectical Materialism].

25. *Al-Madiyyah al-tarikhiyyah* [Historical Materialism], p. 12.

Likewise, when evidence emerges today that society can be changed by adopting scientific methods, and they proceed from this to deny faith, we should not be provoked... We should instead reflect on the regularities they use to harness society to their chosen aim. In this situation, we will have acquired the immunity we need..."²⁶

When presenting his materialist ideas to Muslims, Jawdat likes to use the Marxists' own words and expressions. He works tirelessly to show their connection with Islam and to summon evidence from the Noble Qur'an, even if only at the level of wording, in order to show harmony between materialist ideas and Islam. For this reason, he gave his books the series heading "Studies in the Regularities of Change in the Self and Society". This represents an attempt to imitate and draw from the Marxist approach.

But what regularities have the Marxists discovered which Jawdat wants us to hold fast to, unaffected by their denial of faith, against which he has declared that we possess immunity..!?

From passages quoted from the leading figures of materialist thought on change, we can identify some features of the change discovered by Marxists.

Cornforth says:

"Only with the emergence of agriculture did human history become the history of class struggle to change the conditions of production, followed by the enormous change in capitalist societies."²⁷

26. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], pp. 81-82.

27. Cornforth, *Madkhal ila al-madiyyah al-tarikhiyyah* [An Introduction to Historical Materialism].

Materialists are well known for dividing humanity into successive stages. In their books, these are specified in the following order: primitive communalism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism and communism.

Human beings are also said to have passed through definite stages, from hunting to herding, then agriculture, followed by industry and trade.

There are also ice, stone and bronze ages.

They have regarded this as fundamental, established knowledge, although their sources rest on certain excavations and remains which do not provide complete, certain truth. Yet we find Jawdat following their views and regarding their studies as sound knowledge to be followed. He says:

"We can likewise say that ignorance of the scientific position and of the history of the beginning of creation places a person in a state of compounded ignorance. He claims that knowledge will not increase and that human beings will not be able to extend their power and ability to harness things beyond what they have already attained. This position shows a failure to appreciate knowledge or grasp humanity's long history, in which people passed through stage after stage as they moved from hunting to herding and then agriculture. Dividing human history into the Old and New Stone Ages and the Bronze and Iron Ages shows how the creation of knowledge, control and the capacity to harness things began. In the Noble Qur'an: '*And hath made of service unto you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth;*'; and in the Torah: 'Subdue it and have dominion' (Genesis, chapter 1, verse 28)."²⁸

Jawdat does not conceal his opinion of Western sociology. He makes all his works fertile ground for these ideas and proceeds in this programme of exposition from the human capacity to bring about change and to know its

28. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], pp. 89-90.

regularities. The writer openly acknowledges that these regularities were discovered by Marxists and the Western world in general. He says:

"As for the scientific discovery that these regularities are subject, in some way, to human control, it was the people of the Washington-Moscow axis who recognised it first in the modern age."²⁹

He then says:

"An expert in the regularities of societies can understand them and take measures to change society's outlooks."³⁰

After I had written the study of Jawdat's Marxist materialist approach, recordings of his talks at a cultural seminar appeared on tape.

These talks establish what I have argued concerning Jawdat's adoption, praise and defence of the foundations of the Marxist materialist approach. Here he salutes the positions taken by the communist revolution, saying:

"Communities are judged by their culture. Arrogant domination and subjugation in this twentieth-century age in which we live have a distinctive feature. It is not simply that the numerous powers which exploited the world have become a single power, or that the great socialist or Bolshevik revolution also arose to improve the lives of the oppressed and establish equality among them. The aim was sacred, and it remains so, even though the efforts made were insufficient to liberate people. This does not mean that the struggle along this path is closed off, as the privileged would like to suggest to us."³¹

29. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 6.

30. The preceding source, p. 21.

31. This statement was followed by loud applause. The seminar took place in Suwayda and included people who held socialist ideas.

In the same seminar, where the audience applauded him, he raised the relationship between those who arrogantly dominate and those who are subjugated, defining it through the ideas of the Marxist materialist approach and its conceptions of life and history. He said:

"When humanity entered the industrial age, human life changed, and the second transformation or second revolution in human life took place. The industrial age gave the relationship of arrogant domination and subjugation a new character. The peasant had been exploited in the field and sold with it. With the arrival of the industrial age, however, people became part of the machine, used and sold with it. Indeed, in terms of surplus value and effort, perhaps we can say even today that no individual can be wealthy and enjoy good things except through some form of theft, some appropriation of the effort of others."³²

Here Jawdat presents Karl Marx's ideas in *Ra's al-mal* [Capital], which discusses the relationship between workers and employers in European capitalist systems and maintains that every surplus in the value produced by a worker beyond what he needs and consumes constitutes theft. Jawdat has omitted any account of the just Islamic approach to defining the relationship between workers and employers. Although we are not directly refuting Marxist ideas here, we are concerned to establish the connection between Jawdat's ideas and this approach. He generally feels no shame in using materialist terminology and the expressions of Marxist materialists.³³ In the seminar mentioned a little earlier, he used an example from the Marxist system, saying:

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- 32. Someone in the audience asked Jawdat whether this applied to the Prophet Solomon when he employed jinn and human beings for construction. Jawdat's answer was evasive in its attempt to support this proposition. In the end, he said that he agreed with the questioner.
 - 33. I have found no statement by Jawdat classifying the Soviet Union, before its collapse, among those who arrogantly dominate, although its establishment rested on the ruins of continuous campaigns to crush Muslims.

"Once again, I am deeply pained because we have not educated our peoples or taught them about the principal contradiction in the world. I borrow this Marxist-Hegelian proposition: 'the principal contradiction and the secondary contradiction'. There is a principal contradiction between those who arrogantly dominate and those who are subjugated. The former do not care about the religion of the subjugated person, his secularism, his Sufism or his doctrine. They care only about the secondary contradictions among the subjugated..."

I too am pained, more than Jawdat Said, because he deceives these peoples, openly and explicitly portraying circumstances and analysing events through Marxist materialist ideas, rather than because they have not been educated in what he says. Why did he not trace the relationship between those who arrogantly dominate and those who are subjugated on the basis of Islam, revealing the true nature of the terrible acts committed against subjugated Muslims in Bosnia by the arrogant Serbs and their European supporters, whether the latter belong to the dominant or the subjugated according to Jawdat's classification?

In this war, both West and East have revealed their true character: they carry the old Crusader hatred of Islam. Beginning with the Russians, who hold Marxist ideas, they have not abandoned their old fanaticism. They have taken their unjust position towards Islam and have not concealed their assistance and support for those of their own religious community. Indeed, Russian communists have been the Serbs' greatest supporters because of what the two share: Orthodox Christianity.

In the lands of Islam, there are still people among us who divert the issue from its proper direction and seek to conceal the religious hostility of these arrogant unbelievers. They deny their religious fanaticism and claim that they do not care about the religion or doctrine of the subjugated. Reality, however, bears witness to the contrary: it reveals their most atrocious forms

of persecution, as in Bosnia today and among the Muslim peoples who have separated from the former Soviet Union.

A necessary observation must be made here. The Muslim community is today being targeted in its religion by both Western and Eastern states. Jawdat should therefore have analysed the fundamental contradiction between arrogant unbelievers wherever they are and Muslims wherever they are, defining it on the basis of Islam. The results would then have been different, revealing the real contradiction between the camp of unbelief and the camp of faith.

Every attempt to exclude the contradiction between Islam and its enemies and to analyse events without indicating the difference between unbelief and faith represents a link in the course of a great deviation. It also represents a dangerous assault on the education required by Muslim youth. This orientation helps divert attention towards the Marxist proposition that the peoples of the Islamic region must solve their questions of destiny by linking them with those of the peoples of the Third World, supported by the socialist camp.

The danger of this orientation has been established and this proposition has failed, as everyone came to realise that communist states could not stand with Islamic states. They stood instead with the enemies of Islam and with Zionism, in complete alliance with the people of unbelief.

Jawdat and his associates have been affected by Marxist materialism to the depths of their hearts. This love has consumed their thought, leaving them able to draw examples only from Marxism. Khalis Jalabi says:

"We must not be deceived into thinking that external forces finished off the Soviet Union. In 1917, something extraordinary happened. When the monarchy of the Romanov family collapsed, the Mensheviks took power. They were the majority in the Soviet parliament, which was then called

the Duma, whereas the communists, the Bolsheviks, represented the minority and had no control over affairs.

At that time, Lenin put forward a proposal which attracted the crushed, impoverished classes, and a clash occurred between the two sides. Yet the strange thing was that the 'minority' wing, through its historical consciousness, managed to win this battle, to which the historical law applied: *'How many a little company hath overcome a mighty host by Allah's leave! Allah is with the steadfast.'* Millions died in a crushing civil war. At first, the White Russians achieved some success with the assistance of former generals in the Romanov army, the remnants of the intelligence apparatus, and some fifteen European states, including the great powers of the time, the United States³⁴ and Great Britain. Yet the divine law applied to them once again: they spend their wealth, it avails them nothing, then it becomes a source of regret for them, and then they are defeated. The communists suffered greatly, and hostile forces closed in on them from every side. Matters reached the point that Lenin considered surrendering Leningrad to the White Russians. The city was then called St Petersburg, and after the collapse of communism its name was restored. Trotsky, however, refused to surrender and continued the resistance, and many died. There the communists were put to the test and shaken severely. By proceeding according to the divine law, Allah ordained victory for them even though they did not believe in Him. (We must not confuse belief in Allah with following His laws, in accordance with which life was ordered. Thus Westerners, through Allah's regularity,

34. It has been established that Western states, especially the United States of America, assisted Lenin's group and associates. They were therefore allies in the Second World War, after which a policy of peaceful coexistence, or international detente, emerged between them. Their Cold War was a political performance serving colonial purposes.

were able to make iron fly through the air and succeeded, whereas their violation of Allah's regularity in committing immoral acts brought upon them the curse of AIDS.)...³⁵

Little remained in the communists' hands in those days. Nevertheless, they persevered, stood firm and succeeded..."³⁶

Only someone who can no longer see anything in this world except through the prism of communism and its principles could apply Qur'anic verses to communist fighters in this way.

35. He speaks of AIDS as though it were confined to the West and communists were immune to committing immoral acts. Has the writer forgotten that communism, which means sharing wealth, also means sharing women!! *"For indeed it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts, which are within the bosoms, that grow blind."*

36. Khalis Jalabi, *Unzuru 50* [Look, 50], p. 5. The writer should have cited the events of the Prophetic biography themselves concerning the Battle of the Trench, rather than applying the text of Qur'anic verses to the communist revolution as publicity for that revolution!! But, as the saying goes, love is blind...!

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Approach to Change

The writer chose a striking title for one of his books, taken from part of a noble verse: "*until they (first) change that which is in their hearts*". This was the second book in the series through which he expressed his views on Islamic work.

He considered that "the essence of Marxist thought, its beginning and its end, lies in grasping the content of this verse"¹. He made the verse a slogan for the movement towards the change he seeks in society and works to bring about. He also described his approach in his series of studies as "Studies in the Regularities of Change in the Self and Society".

He stated this explicitly: "All my efforts in this book were directed towards explaining that changing what is in the self is a human function. The interpretation of the verse which forms the book's title revolved around this foundation."² Before entering into a dialogue with Jawdat about the validity of his theory and the foundation on which it rests, we shall offer some observations.

1. This theory follows the materialist approach adopted by Jawdat. In this respect, it is directly connected to Marxist thought, however much Jawdat tries to show a connection with the Islamic approach.

2. Jawdat detached this passage from a noble verse and supplied an interpretation of his own which differs entirely from its complete meaning and does not accord with the principles of Qur'anic interpretation. It is well known in these principles that an expression separated from its context

1. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 219.

2. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 7.

does not convey its intended meaning. Returning to the full text of the verse makes the matter clear:

Allah Most High says: *"Alike of you is he who hideth the saying and he who noiseth it abroad, he who lurketh in the night and he who goeth freely in the daytime. For him are angels ranged before him and behind him, who guard him by Allah's command. Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts; and if Allah willeth misfortune for a folk there is none that can repel it, nor have they a defender beside Him."* (Qur'an 13:10-11).

The writer has given this part of the verse an interpretation which accords neither with the Noble Qur'an nor with the Prophetic Sunnah nor with the meanings of the Arabic language.

A. Through his interpretation of this part of the verse, the writer sought to establish that changing what is in the self is a human function. He said:

"His saying, Most High, *"until they (first) change that which is in their hearts"*,

indicates that ideas can be placed in the self in the first instance, just as its existing concepts can be removed and others put in their place. In the process of change, this is more important than bringing something into being in the first instance. Nevertheless, Allah attributed to human beings this capacity to remove concepts and replace them with others.

It behoves us to think and reflect on this task attributed to human beings. We must see and consider carefully. Allah Most High says to us:

"And (also) in yourselves. Can ye then not see?"

Qur'an 51:21

How can we fail to give this subject our attention? It is the problem of Muslims, indeed of human beings in general."³

When Jawdat establishes this principle, granting human beings the capacity to change, he places himself alongside the doctrine of the Qadariyyah, which grants humanity this capacity. The following account defines their approach:

"The position on qadar was the course taken by Ma'bad al-Juhani and Ghaylan al-Dimashqi. They say that the servant is the agent of good and evil, belief and unbelief, obedience and disobedience, and is recompensed for his action; the Lord Most High has given him the capacity for all of this."⁴ Elsewhere, al-Shahrastani quotes the Qadariyyah as saying "that Allah has delegated to us the performance of these acts". We can define the Qadari doctrine as holding "that people themselves determine the acts they acquire".

Jawdat attributes change to human beings, saying that they make their own destiny and make history. He establishes a mathematical rule for this, through which he makes the change wrought by Allah dependent on the change wrought by human beings.

He says: "Allah will necessarily change the condition of a people if they change what is in themselves: this is Allah's regularity."⁵

B. The writer also converges with the materialist positivist doctrine. As the author claims, its adherents have discovered the regularities governing the course of societies: "The same applies now to Marxist theory in its establishment of social regularities. If they have discovered regularities and

3. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 59.

4. Al-Shahrastani, *al-Milal wa-l-nihal* [Religions and Sects], 1:62.

5. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 63.

signs in the course of societies, just as astronomers before them discovered the regularities governing the motion of celestial bodies..."⁶

The Statements of Qur'anic Commentators

Our present concern is that this interpretation of the verse is very far from sound interpretation. Reading the commentaries of the scholars of the Muslim community, past and present, clarifies the matter:

Ibn Jarir al-Tabari says: "The meaning of the statement is that Allah does not change the well-being and blessings enjoyed by a people, removing these from them and destroying them, until they change what is in themselves by wronging and transgressing against one another. His punishment and the change He brings then befall them."⁷ Thus change is confined to the transition from obedience to disobedience, and the punishment is a change from blessing to affliction. The verse provides no evidence that this concerns will, guidance or misguidance, nor that the contrary implication also applies, as the writer attempts to maintain. The meaning at the end of the verse explains its beginning. Allah Most High says: "*and if Allah willeth misfortune for a folk there is none that can repel it*". That is, if Allah wills destruction and humiliation in this present world for those who conceal themselves by night and move abroad by day, with forces and protection before and behind them guarding them against Allah's command, there is none that can repel it. He means that no one other than Allah can turn this away from them.

The verse is, in its original purpose, a reply to the Qadariyyah, who say that human beings create their own acts or possess their own destiny. This contradicts Jawdat's use of it as evidence that a person possesses the

6. The preceding source, p. 81.

7. *Tafsir al-Tabari* [The Commentary of al-Tabari], 13:121.

capacity to change what is in his own self in the first instance, or what is in another's self. Human will is subject to Allah's will. In interpreting His saying, Most High, *"That is because Allah never changeth the grace He hath bestowed on any people until they first change that which is in their hearts"*, Ibn Kathir says: "He, Most High, declares the completeness of His justice and equity in His judgement: He does not change a blessing He has bestowed upon anyone except because of a sin that person has committed. This is as He dealt with Pharaoh's people and those like them: when they denied His signs, He destroyed them because of their sins and stripped them of the blessings He had bestowed upon them."⁸

The Historical Roots of the Principle of Change

The writer Jawdat Said established a universal principle of change based on the verse *"Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts"*. He did not originate this principle himself, as someone first encountering it might suppose. Rather, the theory is drawn from a collection of the historical foundations of the old deviant sects and from the ideas of ancient Greek philosophers. The most Jawdat has done in this matter is to bring together scattered foundations, replace old expressions with contemporary ones, and give his study the appearance of renewal. In doing so, he drew inspiration from the intellectual activity of contemporary advocates of renewal, and took the inspiration for practical activity from Marxist ideas and their application in human life.

For a considerable time, Jawdat managed to conceal the truth about his ideas and their source. Only a very few people noticed it. The matter was obscured and disguised for many, even for sincere followers of his. We therefore find them defending these ideas fiercely, without grasping their implications or the true nature of their source. They do not know that their

8. *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-azim* [Commentary on the Noble Qur'an], 2:502.

roots extend into the distant past, to the era of the deviant sects and their disputes over questions of speculative theology.

The contemporary cultural arena has lost the comprehensive, systematic approach to criticism⁹ which rests on identifying doctrinal affiliation and which the great scholars practised in confronting newly arising deviations in belief.

The Law of Change

We can distinguish two prominent principles which characterise Jawdat's thought in particular and materialist thought in general:

1. The universal principle of change.
2. The general principle of development.

These two principles form the central axis on which all Jawdat's books and ideas rest. In this chapter, we shall consider some practical applications of the universal principle of change. I have devoted a separate chapter to the principle of development.

The Principle of Change

From Jawdat's books in general, and *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves] in particular, we can discern the questions of change which he has adopted and which will be the subject of our comprehensive examination throughout the chapters:

1. Making human beings capable of changing what is in themselves and in others.

9. I published a series of articles in the newspaper *al-Liwa* on "The Comprehensive Islamic Approach to Criticism". They will appear, Allah willing, in a separate book.

2. Believing that human beings can hold their destiny in their own hands.
3. Making Allah's will dependent on human will, on the basis that humanity is master of the universe.
4. Making the sphere of change possessed by human beings encompass society's conditions, including health and illness, poverty and wealth.
5. Changing Muslims' understanding of causality and bringing it into accord with positivism, so that change occurs necessarily when its causes are present, independently of the divine will.
6. Making change a general regularity for humanity, pertaining to life in this world rather than to the Hereafter.
7. Making change encompass Muslims and non-Muslims.
8. Making change concern the group, without extending to the individual.
9. Not requiring the basis of change to derive from the Shari'ah.
10. Holding, without qualification, that rulings change with changing times.
11. Extending change to the sources of knowledge.
12. Extending change to the sources of evidence.
13. Making change abolish reliance on prophethood, through "the end of prophethood", and establish reliance on the regularities of the universe, society and the psyche.
14. Changing the foundations of relations between Islamic society and other societies, and abolishing the distinctions between religions in favour of a universal religion of humanity. This call is known by the term "rapprochement between religions": merging them into a single path.

The Linguistic Meaning of Change

*Lisan al-Arab*¹⁰ gives the meaning of change as transformation: a thing changes from its condition, that is, it is transformed; to change it is to transform and replace it, as though making it other than it was.

Tha'lab said of His saying, Most High, "*That is because Allah never changeth the grace He hath bestowed on any people until they first change that which is in their hearts*", that it means: until they alter what He has commanded them to do.

Muslim scholars did not use the term "change" to designate Muslims' task of undertaking work that restores the practice of religion to its former state. Rather, the term "renewal" came through the hadith of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: "Allah sends to this community, at the beginning of every hundred years, someone who renews its religion for it."¹¹ Renewal means reviving what has fallen into neglect of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and acting upon them.

The course followed by Jawdat Said in his books and lectures converges with the doctrine of materialist philosophers, and with the materialists and Marxists who advocate regularities of change in societies.

Although the term "change" occurs in the Noble Qur'an to signify Allah's punishment of peoples who abandon His religion and deny the blessings He has bestowed upon them, so that He replaces those blessings with torment and misery, the Qur'an does not contain the reverse formulation. Nor does it present an inevitable mathematical equation which makes Allah's will continually subject to the will of a people, as Jawdat portrays it!!

10. *Lisan al-Arab* [The Tongue of the Arabs], entry ghayara.

11. Abu Dawud, hadith 4291.

In explaining the verse "*That is because Allah never changeth the grace He hath bestowed on any people until they first change that which is in their hearts*", Ibn Taymiyyah said: "This change is of two kinds:

One is that it becomes manifest, taking the form of speech and action which entail blame and punishment.

The second is that they replace the faith in their hearts with its opposite: uncertainty, doubt and hatred, and resolve to cease doing what Allah and His Messenger have commanded. In this case, they deserve punishment for abandoning what is commanded, and in the former case for doing what is forbidden. Likewise, a person is punished for what is in the self that contradicts love of Allah, reliance on Him, sincerity towards Him and gratitude to Him. All these things are obligatory. If the heart is emptied of them and assumes their opposites, it deserves punishment for abandoning the obligations."

This principle represents the Islamic understanding of recompense and punishment. It rests on the will expressed in the Shari'ah, as distinct from the will concerning what occurs in the universe, which appears in the form of divine decree, a prominent pillar of faith in Allah. Jawdat has attempted, through certain Qur'anic verses, to affirm the Qadari sect's understanding that human beings possess complete freedom of choice in worldly life and that their dominion encompasses all creatures. He said:

"From this it becomes clear to us that effective human effort to change society from evil to good, or the reverse, begins with the selves.

But what are these selves?

The Noble Qur'an did not concern itself with uncovering the true essence of the self, because this apparently offers no practical benefit. It concerned itself instead with how to deal with selves in order to change what is in them.

Here the question arises: is there anything in the self in the first instance, or is everything placed in it? How is what it contains removed? How is it replaced with something else? What is the extent of the difficulties a person encounters in this sphere?

Allah Most High says that a person can purify the self and can corrupt it:

“He is indeed successful who causeth it to grow, And he is indeed a failure who stunteth it.”

Qur'an 91:9-10

What, then, are the principles of purifying the self which bring success? What are the factors in corrupting the self which bring failure?

As far as can be seen, the self contains nothing in the first instance except the capacity for wickedness and piety. This is the wondrously fashioned creation which Allah Most High brought into being with this immense readiness to receive wickedness and piety. Allah Most High says of this:

“And a soul and Him Who perfected it And inspired it (with conscience of) what is wrong for it and (what is) right for it.”

Qur'an 91:7-8

Allah created the self and fashioned it wondrously, then inspired it with its wickedness and its piety. This fashioning and this inspiration are the work of Allah Most High. He then said:

“He is indeed successful who causeth it to grow, And he is indeed a failure who stunteth it.”

Qur'an 91:9-10

This is human work. Allah attributed purification and corruption to the servant, and attributed fashioning and inspiration with wickedness and

piety to Himself, glorified is He. Whatever is thus attributed to the servant is only through the capacity He, Most High, grants by His favour and generosity."¹²

Through his interpretation of Surat al-Shams, Jawdat attempts to divide the affairs of life between Allah Most High, glorified is He, and the created human being. He assigns inspiration to Allah and purification to humanity. He defines purification as the capacity to change what is in the self, derives from this a universal, consistently applicable principle, and claims that Allah, glorified is He, assigned this task to human beings through the verse *"until they (first) change that which is in their hearts"*. In truth, however, the whole matter belongs to Allah, contrary to Jawdat's unjust division. Nor can this verse serve as evidence for it. Purification, in its complete reality, comes from Allah Most High to the human being, as in His saying: *"Had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy unto you, not one of you would ever have grown pure. But Allah causeth whom He will to grow. And Allah is Hearer, Knower."* (Qur'an 24:21). His saying also occurs: *"Nay, Allah purifieth whom He will, and they will not be wronged even the hair upon a date-stone."* (Qur'an 4:49).

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, attributed purification to Allah Most High. In his supplication, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "O Allah, grant my soul its piety and purify it: You are the best to purify it; You are its Protecting Friend and its Master."¹³

The verses which attribute purification to the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, include Allah Most High's saying: *"And raise up in their midst a messenger from among them who shall recite unto them*

12. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], pp. 58-59.

13. *Sahih Muslim*, 4:2088.

Thy revelations, and shall instruct them in the Scripture and in wisdom and shall make them grow." (Qur'an 2:129).

The verses which attribute purification to human beings include His saying, Most High: *"He who groweth (in goodness), groweth only for himself, (he cannot by his merit redeem others). Unto Allah is the journeying."* (Qur'an 35:18). He also says: *"What could inform thee but that he might grow (in grace) Or take heed and so the reminder might avail him?"* (Qur'an 80:3-4). Addressing Moses, peace be upon him, He, Most High, also says: *"(Saying:) Go thou unto Pharaoh - Lo! he hath rebelled - And say (unto him): Hast thou (will) to grow (in grace)? Then I will guide thee to thy Lord and thou shalt fear (Him)."* (Qur'an 79:17-19).

Thus it is clear that purification is not confined to human action or exclusively within its domain. Nor may Jawdat infer from it anything that establishes human ownership of destiny, or that this destiny has come into human hands.

The basis for knowing who possesses humanity's destiny must come from a divine source, represented definitively by the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Likewise, in determining who possesses the power to change and replace things in matters of guidance and misguidance, death and life, wealth and poverty, we must return to the Islamic approach: the approach of Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah, who make the Qur'an and the Sunnah the arbiters. Allah Most High says: *"It is but Thy trial (of us). Thou sendest whom Thou wilt astray and guidest whom Thou wilt: Thou art our Protecting Friend, therefore forgive us and have mercy on us, Thou, the Best of all who show forgiveness."* (Qur'an 7:155). This proves that a person does not possess guidance for himself unless Allah wills, and does not possess the power to change what is in his own self or the selves of others unless Allah wills. Allah's will is effective and precedes human will.

He, Most High, says: "*No soul can ever die except by Allah's leave*" (Qur'an 3:145).

The Sunni approach to this matter affirms acquisition for humanity and creation for Allah, in balance and harmony. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "Everyone is facilitated towards that for which he was created." The clearest example of who holds humanity in His grasp, and who determines guidance, provision and the appointed term, is the dialogue between the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and his uncle Abu Talib on the day of the latter's death. This bears witness to the Sunni position. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was eager for his uncle to be guided and persisted in calling him, until the verse was revealed: "*Lo! thou (O Muhammad) guidest not whom thou lovest, but Allah guideth whom He will. And He is Best Aware of those who walk aright.*" (Qur'an 28:56).

Ibn Kathir said: "It is established in the two Sahih collections that this verse was revealed concerning Abu Talib, the uncle of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He protected him, supported him and stood by his side. The Messenger loved him deeply with a natural love, rather than a love grounded in religion. When death approached and his appointed term arrived, he called him to faith and to entering Islam. But the decree had already taken effect in his case and snatched him away; he continued in his existing unbelief. To Allah belongs perfect wisdom."¹⁴ Al-Bukhari relates the account through Sa'id ibn al-Musayyab, from his father, who said: "When death approached Abu Talib, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, came to him and found Abu Jahl and Abd Allah ibn Abi Umayyah ibn al-Mughirah with him. He said: 'Uncle! Say: there is no god but Allah, a statement by which I may plead your case before Allah.' Abu Jahl and Abd Allah ibn Abi Umayyah

14. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* [The Commentary of Ibn Kathir], 3:629.

said: 'Would you abandon the religion of Abd al-Muttalib?' He refused to say: there is no god but Allah. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: 'I shall seek forgiveness for you unless I am forbidden to do so.' Then Allah revealed: "*It is not for the Prophet, and those who believe, to pray for the forgiveness of idolaters*". Concerning Abu Talib, Allah also revealed His saying: "*Lo! thou (O Muhammad) guidest not whom thou lovest, but Allah guideth whom He will*"."¹⁵

This clearly indicates that the Prophet could not change anything in his uncle's self, even though his uncle supported and protected him. Had the Prophet been able to bring his uncle into faith, he would not have delayed. He understood that guidance and misguidance, wealth and poverty, are in Allah's hands.

We thus understand that Jawdat Said's claim that change lies in human hands, and that Allah Most High has delegated this capacity to humanity, contradicts the Islamic approach and accords with the Qadari doctrine. It holds that human beings possess the power to change what is in the self in the first instance, which is a rejection and denial of divine decree.

Jawdat Said credited the Washington-Moscow axis with discovering the laws and regularities of change when he said:

15. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, hadith 4772; *Fath al-Bari*, 8:506.

"Discovering that this change is subject to regularities, and that human beings have power over it, requires greater effort. Ibn Khaldun's distinction was that he observed that change has regularities: he discussed the four generations in the rise and collapse of states. But Ibn Khaldun did not observe the possibility of controlling these regularities. As for the scientific discovery that these regularities are subject, in one way or another, to human power, in the modern age the human being of the Washington-Moscow axis recognised this before others."¹⁶

This is an explicit admission of Jawdat's belief that the concepts of change in which he believes were brought from the West, from Moscow or Washington; more plainly, from Moscow's Marxist ideas or Washington's materialist positivism.

Although Jawdat attributes the subject of change to Ibn Khaldun, he shows that Ibn Khaldun differs from them because he did not perceive the possibility of controlling these regularities. But why did Jawdat not investigate the reason for Ibn Khaldun's reluctance to assert the possibility of controlling the regularities of change, as Marxist materialism does?

Jawdat appears to know the reason, but does not wish to state it: Ibn Khaldun does not base his statements on Qadari ideas and their position on qadar. He proceeds from the understanding of the approach grounded in faith, which affirms Allah Most High's decree in everything. Jawdat, by contrast, proceeds through materialist ideas which hold that the regularities of change in societies can be controlled¹⁷ and that those societies can be directed as desired. Jawdat continues to praise Western ideas and to

16. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 6.

17. The fall of the Soviet Union indicates the collapse of Jawdat's theory concerning control over the regularities of change in societies. The establishment of the Soviet Union through a military coup and the use of force, together with the fighting between the states which separated from it, confirms the failure of Marxist theory.

concern himself with adapting religion to the theories of psychology and sociology, regarding this as the means of changing what is in human selves: "This science remains unfamiliar and has not yet been domesticated among Muslims so that they can harness it to change what is in themselves and to discover what they ought to change within themselves."¹⁸

Why does Jawdat confront us every time with a dangerous opinion: using psychology to effect change in society!! Where, then, is the Book of Allah? Where is the hadith of His Messenger? Have they become unfit to perform the desired task of change? Jawdat does not leave the answer obscure. Each time, he explicitly states that there is an alternative to the Book: the signs in the horizons and in the selves, or the events of history and the universe.

Of Allah's signs in the Book, he says:

"The verses of the Book may cease to perform the role of knowledge in certain circumstances."¹⁹

The verses of the Book do not cease to operate. They are fixed and preserved by the permission of Allah, Who has undertaken to preserve the Reminder. If Muslims neglect this, Allah's verses do not disappear. They will remain the authority when people dispute. It is impermissible to turn away from them to other authorities. Whoever does so has established a new religion and an approach other than Islam. Let him give it whatever name he pleases!! But let him not say that it is Islam!!

18. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 87.

19. *Iqra* [Read], p. 228.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Regularities

There is a strong connection between Jawdat Said's ideas and those promoted by the Qadari sect which denied the divine attributes. Al-Ja'd ibn Dirham was one of its leading figures. The sect is characterised by denying the attributes of the Creator; its adherents are also called the deniers of divine decree, or the Qadariyyah who negate it.

As we explained in the discussion of abolishing prophethood, the writer sets regularities against prophethood. He says: "Thus, when attention to facts and communication with Allah through His regularities began, prophethood stopped, because prophethood belonged to a particular stage and came to an end."¹

What, then, are these regularities which he has substituted for prophethood?

The writer displays a complete connection between regularities and the materialist conception. He links the levels of existence to divine decree, and calls the external world, which is the material world, "existence governed by regularities". He says:

1. *Unzuru 40: al-Lughah wa-l-waqi'* [Look, 40: Language and Reality], p. 7.

"External existence, which we have regarded as the foundation of the levels of existence, derives from this existence governed by regularities: law. *"That is the measuring of the Mighty, the Wise."* It can be said of existence governed by regularities that it is 'Allah's word'. According to human reason, it precedes external existence: *"But His command, when He intendeth a thing, is only that He saith unto it: Be! and it is."* (Qur'an 36:82)."²

Here the writer's connection with the Qadari sect emerges through the equation he has stated. We can reduce it to a mathematical formulation:

Divine decree = existence governed by regularities ("material existence") = law = Allah's word.

Material existence is thus Allah's word. This is the foundation of positivism, which proceeds from matter and denies the unseen.

When the writer seeks to express divine decree and connect its meaning to the materialist approach, he says³:

"Today, this matter is clearest in the world of chemistry. New compounds appear with new properties which had not previously been realised as external existence, such as medicines. Yet they existed as existence governed by regularities, because all their elements were available.

2. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 91.

3. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 93.

This existence governed by regularities is another kind of level of existence. It may be an entry into conceiving the existence of the spirit. To Allah Most High belong creation and command. The spirit is of Allah's command: "*Say: The Spirit is by command of my Lord*" (Qur'an 17:85). Allah's command, Allah's word and Allah's regularity are expressions which may be close in meaning. But Allah's regularity is described as undergoing neither replacement nor alteration."

Here too he indicates his conception of divine decree mathematically, making the conception of the spirit subject to the materialist approach. We can reduce these ideas to a mathematical equation:

Allah's word # Allah's command # Allah's regularity.⁴

These passages indicate that the writer puts regularities in the place of Allah's speech and treats them as an expression of His decree and command, as though Allah had no intervention in the universe except through the regularities He determined before creation. This understanding accords with contemporary positivism, which makes the laws and regularities of nature the fundamental source in life and the sole source of knowledge. The writer has adopted and advocated this through his return to material existence within the levels of existence.

Since, in his view, a regularity can be discovered and known, the spirit is of Allah's command, and Allah's command is close to regularity, the spirit will be capable of being known and conceived. According to this understanding, discovering the true nature of the spirit will soon be within the reach of those who have reached the stage of take-off in the sciences, as the writer claims: the Moscow-Washington axis. This conception leads to the disappearance of the unseen from existence!!

4. The sign # means closeness in meaning.

This is a dangerous incongruity and a grave deviation in the conception of belief: combining Allah's command, His word and His regularity so that the combined matter is within the reach of human knowledge, as the writer portrays it in discussing knowledge of the spirit. This accords with contemporary positivism, which is based on subjecting everything to the experimental approach, and with its adherents' famous principle: "Nothing in existence perishes, and nothing is created from nothing."⁵

Denial of the unseen is nothing new among the adherents of the "materialist" school of change. Ahmad Khan was the first pioneer in bringing materialist thought to prominence in the lands of Islam. He had a pronounced materialist tendency, and was the first to lay the foundation for a materialist interpretation of the Noble Qur'an. He says:

"The truths and teachings of Islam never conflict with the laws of nature, because the Qur'an is Allah's word and the laws of nature are Allah's action. His speech does not conflict with His action." On its face, this is a correct truth: sound knowledge does not conflict with religion. Ahmad Khan, however, produced an interpretation of the Qur'an which was not based on true knowledge. In it, he contradicted the meanings of the Arabic language and the consensus of the Companions. He reinterpreted the Qur'an and reconsidered its meanings on the basis of Western ideas and values. He describes divinity as a "first cause", as the philosophers do, and says that Allah established laws and regularities for the universe, but does not subsequently intervene in these laws.

5. This statement is famously attributed to the physicist Lavoisier.

Just as Jawdat Said's approach converges with Ahmad Khan's materialist interpretation, it also converges with the approach of the Qadariyyah who deny the divine attributes. This is through his saying that Allah communicates with human beings through regularities, the prophets being human beings, and that Allah speaks only through regularities and laws. This is the denial practised by the Qadariyyah, who deny attributes to Allah Most High. Through this conception of regularities, denial appears in relation to the attribute of speech!⁶

The writer has generalised the concept of regularities, taking it outside its scriptural framework and expanding its domains. He says:

"People recognise regularity only in nature, and do not acknowledge it in the selves. They consider the world of the selves to lie outside constancy, or outside regularity. This contradicts the Qur'anic approach, and even the approaches of earlier Muslims. Restricting the meaning of knowledge to the horizons came to the Islamic world from the Western conception of knowledge."⁷

From this passage we understand one specific point: the writer considers the domains of regularities to be:

1. Society. 2. The selves. 3. Nature.

Someone examining the Noble Qur'an, the Prophetic Sunnah and the statements of the Companions does not find all these domains mentioned by the writer. Allah Most High says: *"That was Allah's way with those who passed away of old - and the commandment of Allah is certain destiny -"*

6. Al-Ja'd ibn Dirham was the first of the Qadariyyah who denied the attributes of Allah, Mighty and Majestic. Khalid ibn Abd Allah al-Qasri killed him in Wasit on the Day of Sacrifice, saying: "People, offer your sacrifices; may Allah accept them. I am sacrificing al-Ja'd ibn Dirham, for he claims that Allah did not take Abraham as an intimate friend and did not speak to Moses directly. Exalted is Allah, far above what al-Ja'd says."

7. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 95.

(Qur'an 33:38). He also says: "*This is Allah's law which hath ever taken course for His bondmen. And then the disbelievers will be ruined.*" (Qur'an 40:85). In every verse where the word sunnah occurs, it indicates an aspect of this religion and contains a call to follow it or an admonition from which to take a lesson. In the sphere of nature, however, when indicating events in the universe, the Qur'an uses the word "signs" in such passages, as in His saying, Most High: "*A token unto them is night. We strip it of the day, and lo! they are in darkness. And the sun runneth on unto a resting-place for him. That is the measuring of the Mighty, the Wise.*" (Qur'an 36:37-38).

Generalising regularities in this way and making them a substitute for prophethood constitutes a departure from the Qur'anic approach and contradicts it.

Understanding this matter is extremely important. If it were to remain merely a matter of terminology, with no further consequences resting on it, it would be simple and would give rise to no objection.

Here, however, we are dealing with a writer who believes in the materialist approach, in the end of prophethood and in the decline of its importance. We thus perceive the danger of confusing terms, and its effect in invalidating the verses of Allah's Book, distorting their meanings, excluding the Messenger's hadiths from practice and subjecting them to regularities.

When the writer wished to give us examples distinguishing reality from the Qur'an, he said⁸:

"The Qur'an says of hearts that they are what understand: in other words, the heart is the organ of understanding. But reality, that is, dealing with reality, has revealed that the heart is merely a pump and has no connection with understanding. This pump simply works faster or slower

8. *Unzuru 40: al-Lughah wa-l-waqi'* [Look, 40: Language and Reality].

according to the commands issued to it; it does not itself issue the commands."

Thus we perceive the danger of this orientation and the wrongfulness of this conduct! What has happened to this man that he dares to deny the Noble Qur'an in such an insolent manner?

The Qur'an did not say that the organ of understanding is the muscle which pumps blood, as he claims. This is a grave fabrication by Jawdat Said and an inconceivable affront to Allah's Book! The verse to which he alluded, claiming that it explicitly states that the heart muscle understands things, is His saying, Most High: *"Have they not travelled in the land, and have they hearts wherewith to feel and ears wherewith to hear? For indeed it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts, which are within the bosoms, that grow blind."*

His interpretation of this verse constitutes a departure from the principles of Qur'anic interpretation and a disregard for the meanings of the language in which the Qur'an was revealed. Had he returned to the meanings of Arabic before issuing his unjust interpretation, he would have found among the meanings of qalb, "heart", "the purest and noblest part of a thing"⁹. *Lisan al-Arab* states that qalb may express the intellect. In his explanation, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, distinguished between qalb and fu'ad when he said¹⁰: "The people of Yemen have come to you. They have more tender af'idah and softer qulub. Faith is Yemeni, and wisdom is Yemeni." Although we are not presently concerned with examining the meanings of heart and intellect and the difference between them, it is necessary to expose the misleading procedure practised by adherents of materialist interpretation: separating the language from the

9. *Mu'jam maqayis al-lughah* [The Dictionary of Linguistic Measures], entry qalb.

10. A hadith agreed upon by al-Bukhari and Muslim: al-Bukhari, 4388; Muslim, *Kitab al-Iman* [The Book of Faith], 84.

verses of the Book and trying to establish a contradiction between the Book and reality, or between knowledge and the Qur'an. He, Most High, says: *"And among mankind is he who disputeth concerning Allah without knowledge or guidance or a scripture giving light, Turning away in pride to beguile (men) from the way of Allah."* (Qur'an 22:8-9).

Nothing led the writer to this interpretation except his absorption in love of the materialist approach and its application to scriptural texts.

It is useful to mention a view of Sayyid Qutb in this sphere which serves as a direct reply to Jawdat's attempts to establish materialist foundations in the Noble Qur'an.

Sayyid says: "How, then, can we proceed without attaching the definitive, absolute Qur'anic texts to meanings which are neither definitive nor absolute?

An example is useful here:

The Noble Qur'an says, for example: *"He hath created everything and hath meted out for it a measure."* Scientific observations then reveal precise correspondences and carefully observed harmonies in the universe. The earth, with its particular form, its distance from the sun, the moon's distance from it, the sizes of the sun and moon relative to its size, its speed of motion, the inclination of its axis, the composition of its surface and thousands of other characteristics, is suited and adapted to life. None of this is an accidental occurrence or an unintended coincidence. These observations help us expand and deepen in our understanding the meaning of *"He hath created everything and hath meted out for it a measure."* There is no harm, then, in pursuing such observations to expand and deepen this meaning, and so on.

This is permissible and desirable. What is impermissible and scientifically unsound, however, is illustrated by these other examples:

The Noble Qur'an says: "*Verily We created man from a product of wet earth;*". Then a theory of origin and evolution associated with Wallace and Darwin supposes that life began as a single cell, that this cell arose from water, and that it developed until it culminated in the creation of humanity. We then take this Qur'anic text and breathlessly pursue the theory, saying: this is what the Qur'an meant!!

No. In the first place, this theory is not definitive. In less than a century, it has undergone modifications which almost change it entirely. Deficiencies have appeared in it, based on incomplete knowledge of the units of heredity which preserve each species' characteristics and do not permit one species to become another. Tomorrow, it remains liable to deficiency and invalidation. The Qur'anic truth, however, is definitive, and this need not be its meaning. It establishes only the origin of humanity's emergence, without mentioning its details. It is definitive in the point it addresses, which is the origin of human existence. That is sufficient; nothing more is added.

The Noble Qur'an says: "*And the sun runneth on unto a resting-place for him.*". It establishes a definitive truth about the sun: that it moves. Science says that the sun moves relative to the surrounding stars at a speed estimated at approximately 12 miles per second. In its rotation with the galaxy, of which it is one of the stars, however, they all move together at 170 miles per second. But these astronomical observations are not identical to the meaning of the Qur'anic verse. They give us a relative, provisional truth which is open to modification or invalidation. The Qur'anic verse gives us a definitive truth, that the sun moves, and that is sufficient. We must never attach the latter to the former.

The Noble Qur'an says: "*Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were of one piece, then We parted them*". A theory then appears which says that the earth was a part of the sun and separated

from it. We take the Qur'anic text and breathlessly pursue this scientific theory, saying: this is what the Qur'anic verse means!!"¹¹

In this sphere, we must draw attention to a fundamental phenomenon on which Jawdat's interpretation of Qur'anic verses rests, and to his attempt to oppose the approach of the righteous early generations concerning unseen matters. He bases this conception on the opinions of speculative philosophers and constructs his intellectual edifice upon the views of the deviant sects.

Extracts from the commentators' statements about the spirit show us the extent of Jawdat's excessive commitment to an orientation founded on sense perception.

Al-Bukhari¹² and Muslim relate from Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud, who said: "While I was with the Prophet in a cultivated field, and he was leaning on a palm stalk, some Jews passed by. Some said to others: 'Ask him about the spirit.' One said: 'What makes you uneasy about it?' Others said: 'He may confront you with something you dislike.' They said: 'Ask him.' They asked him about the spirit. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, remained silent and gave them no answer. I knew that revelation was coming to him, so I rose from where I stood. When the revelation had come down, he said: *"They are asking thee concerning the Spirit. Say: The Spirit is by command of my Lord, and of knowledge ye have been vouchsafed but little."*

Al-Isma'ili said that the spirit belongs to Allah's command, and that the intended meaning may be that Allah has reserved knowledge of it to Himself and no one may ask about it. Ibn Battal said: "Knowledge of the true nature of the spirit is among the matters whose knowledge Allah has reserved to Himself, as this report demonstrates. The wisdom in leaving it

11. *Fi zilal al-Qur'an* [In the Shade of the Qur'an], 1:183.

12. *Fath al-Bari*, 8:401, hadith 4721.

obscure is to test His creatures, so that He makes them recognise their inability to know what they cannot perceive, compelling them to consign knowledge of it to Him." Al-Qurtubi said: "The wisdom in this is to demonstrate a person's incapacity. If he does not know the true nature of his own self, despite certainty of its existence, his inability to grasp the reality of the True One is all the more evident." Scholars have many views on this subject. The writer, however, converges with the view of the later Sufis, although his manner differs from theirs because he follows a purely materialist approach in this matter.

CHAPTER NINE

Sources of Evidence

The sources of evidence¹ are the sources of the Shari'ah and the foundations of religion. They consist of the Qur'an, the Sunnah, consensus and analogy. None may be abandoned. Nor may anyone depart from them, abolish one of these sources or neglect it, and then claim to be a Muslim.

When Jawdat considered the sources of evidence, he treated them through the theories of positivist sociology and subjected them to the materialist approach. He differed from its adherents only in adorning his ideas with Qur'anic verses and Prophetic hadiths to secure religious acceptance for them. He did this when interpreting Allah Most High's saying: "*We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifest unto them that it is the Truth. Doth not thy Lord suffice, since He is Witness over all things?*" (Qur'an 41:53).

Jawdat does not conceal his view here that this verse transfers the source of evidence from the Qur'an to the signs in the horizons and in the selves. He says:

"This verse transfers the evidence for the subject of religious thought established by the verses of the Book. It transfers the source of evidence from the verses of the Book to the signs in the horizons and in the selves. Humanity had not previously been prepared for this far-reaching transition; indeed, it remains unprepared for it even now. The absence of this transition, or the inability to adapt to it, is what has made the sources of evidence for knowledge and faith different in the minds of the contemporary world. They have made religion distinct from knowledge,

1. Adillah is the plural of dalil, evidence. Dalilah means a clear proof.

locating the source of knowledge in reality and the source of religion in the unseen. Through this historical transition, which human beings have been unable to comprehend, the verse integrates religion completely into knowledge of reality in the human environment, making it a subject for people's reflection."²

The transition Jawdat makes represents the replacement of scriptural evidence with one form of evidence for knowledge: evidence from sense perception. Jawdat resorted to this after deciding to exclude scriptural texts as an independent source of knowledge which provides objective truth, and after deciding to give material reality precedence over the texts. It was therefore natural for him to attempt to change the sources of evidence themselves as well. In his view, Allah's verses are open to reinterpretation and dispute, and he believes in returning to external material existence when disagreement occurs.

This action undertaken by Jawdat is no simple matter. It removes scriptural evidence from its fundamental function of guiding people and explaining the truth!

Jawdat's attempt to integrate religion completely with knowledge of reality also represents a dangerous position. It hands this religion over to human minds which remain in continuous dispute over scientific theories, their stability and the validity of their results. Dispute will then arise within religion as well.

Jawdat considers humanity unprepared for this stage. He has overlooked the fundamental purpose of revealing the Qur'an. Allah Most High says: *"And We reveal the Scripture unto thee as an exposition of all things, and a guidance and a mercy and good tidings for those who have surrendered (to Allah)."* (Qur'an 16:89).

2. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 217.

Jawdat is then compelled to clarify his position on scriptural evidence. He decides that evidence concerning the beginning of creation is found in travelling through the earth, rather than in the Book. He says:

"This verse, the verse of the horizons and the selves, overturned the location and source of evidence, just as the verse of change overturned people's conceptions. The verse of the horizons and the selves determined the location and source of evidence as being outside the Book. We therefore do not seek how creation began from the Book, but from travelling through the earth and looking, as the Book commands. The judgement is in the Book, and the evidence is in reality, the earth, and the signs in the horizons and in the selves."³

Where did he obtain this interpretation which abolishes the place of evidence in the Qur'an and locates it in the signs in the horizons, "the natural sciences", the signs in the selves, "psychology", and travelling through the earth? The verse does not indicate this idea, and no rational person could infer it from its text. The Noble Qur'an makes the signs in the horizons and in the selves a confirmation and clarification of the truth. It does not make them a change or a transfer.

He, Most High, says: "*and if ye have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the messenger*" (Qur'an 4:59). Jawdat, however, says: refer it to external material existence, represented by the signs in the horizons and in the selves.

Jawdat thus contradicts the explicit Qur'anic text, the authentic Prophetic Sunnah and the consensus of Muslims that, in disagreement, the authority is Allah's Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger.

3. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 221.

Establishing this transition in this manner severs the connection between Muslims and the source of their knowledge and their approach to knowing. It also separates the rulings of the Book from the practical application of its verses in lived reality. According to Jawdat's view, this requires Allah's verses to receive continual testimony and constant validation from the signs in the horizons and in the selves. This subjects Allah's Book to control from a source other than revelation, outside scriptural evidence. Adherents of the rationalist philosophical tendency say that reason⁴ testifies to the validity of Qur'anic verses and judges for or against them. They have made reason an arbiter over the Shari'ah. In this regard, Muhammad Iqbal says: "There is no doubt that philosophy has the right to judge religion."⁵

Likewise, adherents of the materialist tendency say that Allah's verses perform no role, and that reality, history or the events of the universe testify to their validity and stability, and consequently to their acceptance among people. Jawdat says of this:

4. Among speculative theologians and philosophers, this principle is known as giving reason precedence over transmitted knowledge. It entails reinterpreting everything in the Qur'an and the Sunnah which conflicts with the judgements of reason so that it accords with human minds.

5. *Tajdid al-fikr al-dini fi al-Islam* [The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam], p. 7.

"In judicial proceedings, they require proof, evidence and witnesses. Allah Most High establishes two just witnesses to His religion and His Book: the signs in the horizons and in the selves. He says: "*We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifest unto them that it is the Truth.*". These are two recognised witnesses entitled to testify. Their distinction is that they are impartial and are not suspected of bias or personal inclination. Whoever can call the signs in the horizons and in the selves to testify to his case has therefore fulfilled the required complement of testimony and brought the evidence out of the unseen world into the witnessed world."⁶

Some may suppose that the testimony mentioned here is, as we conceive it, testimony of confirmation and support, or one of the factors helping people to understand Allah's verses in the Qur'an and take a lesson from them. We observe, however, that he treats it as the arbiter over Allah's verses, as though they were insufficient by themselves to explain the truth and provide knowledge.

He therefore says:

"The disputant may reject the verses of the Book, but he cannot reject the signs in the horizons and in the selves. From this perspective, the evidence of religion has become universal evidence, rather than evidence for a particular group of people."⁷

We understand the following from this passage:

1. Jawdat grants any person the right to dispute Allah's verses and reject their meaning from the Book, on the basis that they cannot independently provide proof of the truth.

6. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 221.

7. The preceding source, p. 222.

2. He regards earlier forms of knowledge as conjectural and subject to personal inclinations before contemporary sciences testified to them, and holds that disagreement used to occur over them.

3. He gives the following example:

"When forms of knowledge were conjectural and subject to personal inclinations, and the signs in the horizons and in the selves did not testify to them, dispute occurred over them. But when their evidence arose from the horizons, the situation changed: chemistry emerged from magic to become an exact science. Likewise, when psychology and sociology began to take their evidence from the horizons and the selves, they became science. Just as there is now no Indian, Chinese, Egyptian or Greek astronomy, as there was previously, so it will be with religion when it becomes knowledge under the signs in the horizons and in the selves."⁸

Jawdat seems to suggest here that religion is not particular to Muslims, but that every person may say whatever he wishes. Here is a further indication that religion will become knowledge under the signs in the horizons and in the selves, whereas before this it consists of conjectural forms of knowledge subject to personal inclinations and open to disagreement. As for chemistry having been part of magic, this is a clear fallacy requiring explanation, because the meanings of terms are being confused. The term *simiya* was applied to operations undertaken by some people to turn cheap metals into precious ones, such as turning copper into gold⁹. Muslim scholars rejected this, and jurists prohibited the practice. Chemistry, however, meaning the industrial arts, rested on established sciences and proceeded according to sound scientific foundations. Muslim scholars

8. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 222.

9. For an extended discussion, see Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*.

worked through it, and it was not part of magic. Jawdat, however, wants to confuse people about this matter!! This is a clear example of his absorption in portraying the Muslim community as ignorant and mocking Muslims. Of the Islamic world, he says: "The number of those who have understood the signs in the horizons and in the selves is small. Indeed, I can say that there is not a single pioneering man in the Islamic world in understanding them. All those discovering the signs in the horizons today come from outside the Islamic world. If a Muslim strives to understand this, the most he achieves is to cite their statements to support his point of view..."¹⁰

We regard this as an injustice to Muslim scholars who have demonstrated excellence in many scientific fields, with achievements recorded in their names. Western media, however, do not reveal this truth. Jawdat appears to have been influenced by these media as well, to the point of asserting categorically that no one has understood the signs in the selves and in the horizons. The theft of intellectual talent from "developing countries" is the clearest evidence concerning this.

4. Jawdat repeats here the Orientalists' proposition and the ideas they introduced into the lands of Islam, which attack Islamic scriptural texts. They treat these texts as conjectural in meaning and unsuitable as a basis for establishing proof, or as old and unfit for this age. This orientation constitutes a departure from the Islamic approach. Allah revealed verses in His Book which indicate people like these: those who invalidate His verses and regard them as belonging to old civilisations, the childhood of humanity, the age before science or the age before civilisation. Jawdat repeats such expressions frequently. He, Most High, says: "*That, when Our revelations are recited unto him, he saith: Mere fables of the men of old.*" (Qur'an 68:15).

10. *Al-Amal* [Action], p. 234.

Concerning these people, He, Most High, says:

“And whoso opposeth the messenger after the guidance (of Allah) hath been manifested unto him, and followeth other than the believer's way, We appoint for him that unto which he himself hath turned, and expose him unto hell - a hapless journey's end!”

Qur'an 4:115

5. He regards the signs in the horizons and in the selves as absolute, indisputable truth, because they represent the external world or external existence, meaning material existence. He gives these signs precedence over Allah's verses in the Book and relies on the levels of existence, the rule used by philosophers and also used incorrectly by Marxists. They said that matter precedes thought in existence and then constructed their approach on this error.

If Allah's verses were insufficient to impart knowledge, He would not have made returning to them in dispute obligatory for Muslims. Allah has not asked us to wait for modern scientific discoveries to appear, adopt them, and abandon His verses and the Sunnah of His Prophet for their sake.

6. Jawdat tries to bring out a universal formulation by unifying the source of evidence, connecting it to contemporary sciences and abandoning the sources particular to each group, such as the Qur'an for Muslims. The aim is that everyone should have a new religion disconnected from the old sources. Secularists explicitly called for this as a solution for unifying humanity and bringing religions closer together. Western and Eastern global systems, and the peoples who follow them and fall under their influence, rest on this conception. Like Jawdat, they rely on the positivist law established by the founder of modern sociology, Auguste Comte, which he called "the stages of history"¹¹.

We may need to pause briefly here to explain in detail the true nature of what Jawdat has done in identifying new sources of knowledge and determining new foundations of religion. Jawdat says:

"Iqbal mentions that this verse made the signs in the horizons and in the selves sources for knowing the truth. This statement appears to reveal something new among the evidences of the foundations of religion: the Qur'an, the Sunnah, analogy and consensus. By this verse, the signs in the horizons and in the selves have the right to know and uncover the truth. This right, as something inferred from the Book, does not perform a major role, as in His saying, Most High: *"Travel in the land and see how He originated creation"*. But when people begin to learn how to deal with the signs in the horizons and in the selves, their significance casts a dazzling light under which one may rightly say: 'Day has dawned: put out the lamp.' Those who have remained long in darkness, however, are dazzled by the brilliant light.

Some people may see in this orientation a departure from religion and a loss of it. We see the opposite. We see that this manner will give religious

11. For an extended discussion, see the chapter on sociology, "The Stages of History", p. 76 in the Arabic edition.

people great splendour, and will also cause people to enter Allah's religion in multitudes. People such as Garaudy are indicators of this orientation. Although many others are dissatisfied with his ideas from various perspectives, he too considers that they carry the ashes of the early generations rather than their flame."¹²

Jawdat does not conceal his audacity here. He declares that the sources requiring validation and authentication from the signs in the horizons are the Qur'an, the Sunnah, analogy and consensus, and that they now perform no role. Jawdat asks whether the modification he has made to the foundations of religion constitutes a departure from religion. We, in turn, put this matter before the people of knowledge and ask them: does establishing new foundations for religion, which Allah has not commanded and the Prophet has not brought, constitute a departure from religion or not? Can we consider someone who adopts the foundations of the materialist approach and neglects the true foundations of religion to have departed from religion or not? Does mocking the foundations of the Islamic religion and treating them as a dim lamp, as against the new foundations which represent brilliant light, constitute a departure from religion or not?¹³ Has contempt for the foundations of religion and the community's creed reached the point where we place a new arbiter over Islam and give it guardianship over its foundations!!

As for Garaudy and those like him, they are welcome in Islam. But at the threshold of this religion, they must cast off all their previous ideas, whether Marxist materialist ideas or any other religious creed. Garaudy says: "I entered Islam with the Gospel in one hand and Marx's Capital in the other, and I am not prepared to abandon either."¹⁴ There is no evidence in Islam for Garaudy's advocacy, and Jawdat Said's as well, of

12. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 223.

13. These questions are interrogative.

14. *Mon Tour du siecle*, p. 337.

rapprochement between religions or a new religion of humanity. Allah Most High requires of believers:

“O ye who believe! Come, all of you, into submission (unto Him); and follow not the footsteps of the devil. Lo! he is an open enemy for you.”

Qur'an 2:208

This verse contains a stern warning against compromising the approach to receiving guidance. Here, a Muslim can only receive from Islam all the commands and prohibitions encompassing every affair of life. He stands at a crossroads: either Allah's guidance or misguidance. "There are not multiple approaches from which the believer may choose one. No! Whoever does not enter Islam in its entirety, does not surrender himself wholly to Allah's command and Shari'ah, and does not free himself from every other conception, approach and law, is on the devil's path and follows the devil's footsteps. There is no compromise, no approach in between, no plan with half taken from here and half from there! There are only truth and falsehood, guidance and misguidance, Islam and jahiliyyah."¹⁵ Someone wishing to enter Islam would cast off every previous bond of belief and abandon all ideas contrary to the Islamic creed. He would submit willingly and humbly to the Islamic approach, saying with evident confidence and dignity: I have believed and renounced my former attachments. *"Lo! I have turned my face toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth, as one by nature upright, and I am not of the idolaters."* (Qur'an 6:79). He would also say: *"Lo! my worship and my sacrifice and my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the Worlds. He hath no partner. This am I commanded, and I am first of those who surrender (unto Him)."* (Qur'an 6:162-163).

15. For an extended discussion, see the *Zilal* commentary, 1:211.

Returning to the Book of Allah

Jawdat does not conceal his annoyance and impatience at hearing demands to return to the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the approach of the righteous early generations. He regards this manner as a departure from the sound scientific approach. This is apparent in his saying:

"Young people burning with eagerness for cooperation, harmony and the unification of Islamic, and even human, efforts often confront me with the question: what is the way to unite Muslims, or those working for Islam? I have indicated in some of my books that the traditional answer is: by returning to the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the righteous early generations. This answer, however, is no longer sufficient in its traditional form. To become true and acquire practical effectiveness, Muslims and non-Muslims must discover an approach to understanding the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the whole human heritage. I shall anticipate the detailed answer with a brief one: this approach is that of the signs in the horizons and in the selves. It will determine the meaning of the Book, the meaning of the Sunnah and the meaning of people's understanding of both throughout history. In my writings, I have offered indications and glimpses of the importance of the signs in the horizons and in the selves: they are a kind of revelation and the manner through which Allah declares His will to His creatures. This new manner has new advantages as well.

I hope the reader will attend to this subject, follow it, bring together my scattered writings in this sphere, and train himself to appreciate Allah's signs in the horizons and in the selves and their advantages. They are two paths for transforming religion into knowledge and universality. Whenever something becomes knowledge, it becomes universal. Islam contains this kind of divine address, and this inclusion is what made it universal. It is universal from its foundation and its earliest emergence: *"And We have not sent thee (O Muhammad) save ... unto all mankind"*.

This approach, then, is the path through which Islamic schools will unite; indeed, through which the world will unite. "*And ye will come in time to know the truth thereof.*".¹⁶

A Muslim may not be astonished to hear a secularist demand that acting upon Allah's Book be excluded and that there be no return to applying Islamic Shari'ah in life, treating it as belonging to the past and unsuited to the demands of the age or the characteristics of modern society. But for such rejection to come from those working in Islamic outreach is a matter that calls for astonishment. It requires study, scrutiny, deep investigation and great discernment. It also calls us to reflect further on this strange phenomenon and follow it closely!!

1. Jawdat calls for a new approach to understanding the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the whole human heritage: the approach of the signs in the horizons and in the selves. He does not deny that he considers this the approach which determines the meaning of the Book, the meaning of the Sunnah and the meaning of people's understanding of them throughout history.

2. Jawdat grants non-Muslims the right to discover an approach to understanding the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Here he converges with Muhammad Shahrur, who confines the right to interpret the Qur'an to people such as Einstein and other non-Muslims.

Jawdat also tries to portray religion as being like geography and astronomy. He says:

"The study of religion must be presented in the same form as geography, astronomy, chemistry or physics. In this way, faith becomes knowledge... As long as the subject is examined on the basis of outcomes, accepting religion comes down to considering its outcomes. People accept it as they

16. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 224.

have accepted the outcomes of practical research in various fields, without a psychological barrier concerning the person, time or place of their discovery."¹⁷

The writer seems to imply that religion is not scientific before being studied like geography and astronomy. This fabrication, drawn from the delusions of Orientalists and their followers, is repeated by Jawdat throughout his books. Elsewhere, he also describes religion in terms of conjecture and personal inclination.

Here we pause with Sayyid in his *Fi zilal al-Qur'an*, where he says:

"Likewise, we must not attach the definitive truths which the Qur'an sometimes states about the universe, in establishing a sound conception of the nature of existence, its connection with its Creator and the harmony between its parts, to the hypotheses and theories of human reason. We must not even attach these definitive truths to what human reason calls 'scientific facts', reached through experiments which it regards as conclusive.

Qur'anic truths are definitive, conclusive and absolute. The truths reached by human research, whatever tools are available to it, are neither definitive nor conclusive. They are restricted by the limits of its experiments and by their conditions and instruments. According to the human scientific approach itself, it is therefore a methodological error to attach definitive Qur'anic truths to provisional truths, which constitute everything human knowledge reaches!

This applies to 'scientific facts'. The matter is clearer still with theories and hypotheses called 'scientific'. These include all astronomical theories, all theories concerning humanity's emergence and stages of development, all theories concerning the human psyche and behaviour, and all theories

17. *Al-Amal* [Action], p. 196.

concerning the emergence and stages of societies. None of these are 'scientific facts', even by human standards. They are theories and hypotheses. Their entire value is that they can explain the greatest possible number of cosmic, biological, psychological or social phenomena, until another hypothesis appears which explains more phenomena or explains them more accurately. They therefore remain open to change, modification, reduction and addition. They may even be turned upside down by the appearance of a new instrument of discovery or a new interpretation of the existing body of observations!

Every attempt to attach general Qur'anic indications to the ever-renewed and changing theories reached by science, or even to scientific facts which are not absolute, as we have explained, contains, first, a fundamental methodological error. It also entails three meanings, all unworthy of the majesty of the Noble Qur'an.

The first is the inward defeat which leads some people to imagine that science is dominant and the Qur'an subordinate. They therefore try to establish the Qur'an through science or draw evidence for it from science. The Qur'an, however, is a book complete in its subject and definitive in its truths. Within its own subject, science continues to overturn today what it established yesterday. Everything it reaches is provisional and non-absolute, because it is restricted by humanity's environment, reason and instruments, none of which is capable by its nature of providing a single definitive, absolute truth.

The second is misunderstanding the nature and function of the Qur'an. It is a definitive, absolute truth concerned with forming the human being in a manner which accords, as far as humanity's relative nature permits, with the nature of existence and its divine order. The human being should thus befriend the surrounding universe rather than collide with it, learn some of its secrets and use some of its laws in his stewardship. These laws are disclosed to him through observation, research, experimentation and

application, according to the guidance of his reason, which was bestowed on him to work, rather than to receive material information ready-made.

The third is the continuous reinterpretation, with strained ingenuity and artificial effort, of Qur'anic texts, so that we take them and breathlessly pursue hypotheses and theories which neither hold firm nor remain stable, and in which something new arises every day.

None of this accords with the majesty of the Qur'an. It also contains a methodological error, as we have explained.

This does not mean, however, that we should not benefit, in understanding the Qur'an, from the theories and facts which science reveals about the universe, life and humanity. No! That is not what we meant by this explanation. Allah, glorified is He, has said: "*We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifest unto them that it is the Truth.*". This indication requires us to continue reflecting on all the signs of Allah disclosed by science in the horizons and in the selves, and to use what it discloses to expand the range of Qur'anic meanings in our understanding."¹⁸

3. The New Revelation

The passage quoted a little earlier shows that Jawdat constructs a strange conception of divine revelation. I have examined revelation in the chapters on the end of prophethood and on development. Here, however, we need to examine Jawdat's view of the meaning and kinds of revelation. He refers here to "the importance of the signs in the horizons and in the selves, and that they are a kind of revelation and the manner through which Allah declares His will to His creatures..."¹⁹

18. *Fi zilal al-Qur'an* [In the Shade of the Qur'an], 1:182.

19. *Iqra* [Read], p. 224.

Some may suppose that Jawdat's statement about the signs in the horizons and in the selves is his own invention. This is incorrect: philosophers said it before him. Ibn Rushd says in *Manahij al-adillah*: "Among the forms of Allah's speech may be what He imparts to scholars through demonstrations." Through what he quoted from Iqbal, Jawdat indicated these meanings: "In truth, the way in which the Qur'an uses the word revelation shows that it regards revelation as a general attribute of existence, although its reality and nature differ according to the stages of progression and development in existence. The plant growing freely in space, the animal whose development produces a new organ enabling it to adapt to a new environment, and the human being drawing inspiration from the light in the depths of existence: all are states of revelation differing in their nature according to the needs of the recipient of revelation or the needs of the species to which it belongs."²⁰

As we have mentioned, he regards prophethood as a development in spiritual power or prophetic consciousness. In defining revelation in this way, Jawdat and Iqbal converge with Ibn Sina, al-Farabi and similar atheist philosophers who regard prophethood as a "sacred faculty". Muhammad Shahrur and Jawdat share this idea with Iqbal. It also converges with the adherents of positivism and the doctrine founded on sense perception, which denies any direct human connection beyond the universe.

4. Replacing Scriptural Texts

Jawdat shows open hostility towards returning to acting upon scriptural texts, Allah's verses in the Book, in lived reality. He regards this as a retreat and as treating the matter in a primitive way. He therefore rallies people to stand against this return, or even against merely contemplating it, giving reasons which make him enthusiastic about excluding scriptural texts.

20. *Al-Amal* [Action], p. 129.

A. These texts are open to reinterpretation and dispute, and the Muslim groups therefore pull them in different directions.

B. We cannot confront the world through these texts because they contain matters unfit for inviting people to accept, such as allowing a child to be caliph!

C. These texts represent mental images capable of increase and decrease. He expressed this in saying:

"Some young people once expressed to me, with complete sincerity, their questions about whether the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, could leave the community after him without specifying who would lead them and whom they should consult in their difficulties, and so on.

My reply was given with the same truthfulness and sincerity: I want to leave behind the manner to which we have become accustomed in examining this subject, namely returning to texts which Muslim groups pull in different directions and whose authenticity or meaning they debate. I thank them for posing the question logically, rather than textually.

I tell you, without claiming to close the subject or deliver the final judgement: we Muslims bear a universal religion to which we invite the whole world. This world has its own arduous experiences in these very subjects. Is it appropriate, when inviting it now, to tell it that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, specified the source of knowledge of truth in a particular person from a particular lineage, and that the person who leads Muslims is appointed while still a child? Or should we say that the principle in Islam is "*Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct.*", and that the person

most entitled to take charge of a matter is the one most competent to do so?"²¹

The sincerity these young people showed, entrusting themselves to him, would not have arisen without their longing to resolve the Muslim community's predicament and know its true authority. With complete sincerity, I tell these young people that Jawdat has deceived them and betrayed them in their most precious possession, their creed. He has misled them concerning knowledge of the truth and exposure of falsehood. He has not shown them the path to the correct answer, nor directed them to Allah's Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger, the path which does not change. *"Say: Though the sea became ink for the Words of my Lord, verily the sea would be used up before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even though We brought the like thereof to help. Say: I am only a mortal like you. My Lord inspireth in me that your Allah is only One Allah. And whoever hopeth for the meeting with his Lord, let him do righteous work, and make none sharer of the worship due unto his Lord."*²² These verses give us clear evidence of the connection between righteous action and the source of revelation.

The Qur'an has been described as the way out of trials: "The Book of Allah contains the account of what was before you, the news of what comes after you and the judgement concerning what is between you. It is the decisive word, not a jest. Allah breaks any tyrant who abandons it, and leads astray whoever seeks guidance elsewhere. It is Allah's firm rope, the wise Reminder and the straight path. Through it, personal inclinations do not deviate and tongues are not confused. Scholars never have their fill of it; it does not wear out through repeated recitation, and its wonders never end. Whoever speaks by it speaks truth; whoever acts upon it is rewarded;

21. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 226.

22. Surat al-Kahf, verses 109-110.

whoever judges by it judges justly; and whoever calls to it is guided to a straight path."!!

The other matter in which he led them astray and introduced fear into their hearts was his telling them that these texts are open to reinterpretation, that Muslim groups pull them in different directions and dispute their authenticity or meaning.

This is another fabrication repeated by Orientalists when confronting young Muslims to express Islam's inadequacy in keeping pace with contemporary civilisation. Those defeated psychologically and intellectually before such statements may believe them. Fascination with the results of contemporary sciences may obscure their sound vision. Such people usually lack a foundation of sound Islamic knowledge and experience in dealing with and understanding texts. Adherents of the materialist orientation are supporters of this group.

As we explained in the introduction, the treatment of texts is the criterion which distinguishes commitment to the Islamic approach from commitment to the materialist or rationalist approach. Adherents of the scriptural orientation, "the school of renewal", receive scriptural texts as they stand, without reinterpretation, invalidation, consigning their meaning to Allah, specifying their manner or likening Allah to creation. Adherents of the rationalist orientation reinterpret these texts to accord with the findings of reason. Adherents of the materialist orientation, "the school of change", invalidate the texts and abolish their meanings, as the Qadariyyah and Mu'tazilah used to do. This issue is not new to the cultural arena. The dispute arose previously through speculative theology and had a harmful effect in dividing the community, weakening it and disturbing its balance after it had enjoyed harmony and peace. The first deviation took the form of departing from the texts, as is known from the history of the Khawarij, who made their minds the arbiters instead of Allah's Book, going astray and leading others astray.

In replying to the sincere young people eager to reach the desired solution, Jawdat distorted the truth again, placing them before another dilemma more severe than the first. He said: how can we confront the world, which possesses a stock of arduous experiences? Is it appropriate to tell it that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, specified the source of knowledge of truth in a particular person, and that the person who leads Muslims is appointed while still a child?

What would it have cost Jawdat to tell the truth and explain to these sincere young people that the Messenger of Allah did not assign the caliphate to a particular person, and did not state in any hadith that a small child could be appointed caliph of the Muslims? Those who say this are enemies of this religion and lie about the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Jawdat likewise tries to lie to these young people and conceal the truth from them. Some may lack the scholarly ability to examine scriptural texts, master them and recognise the truth for themselves: that someone is falsifying the issue. Only someone possessing sound knowledge can know the truth. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, warned against those who seek to usurp Muslims' rights concerning who should assume authority: someone among the most pious in self and the best in knowledge and conduct²³.

When Jawdat asked the sincere young people to abandon scriptural texts, the Qur'an and the Sunnah, he tried explicitly to direct them towards an alternative path. I have explained these alternatives in the chapter on abolishing prophethood²⁴. They can be summarised as follows:

1. Events in the universe. 2. Events in history. 3. Tangible reality.
4. The signs in the horizons and in the selves, which represent natural laws.

²³. See the conditions for selecting the caliph in the books of jurisprudence.

²⁴. See the chapter "The End of Prophethood" in this book, p. 135 in the Arabic edition.

5. Regularities.

This is an explicit replacement of scriptural evidence with other forms of evidence.

Jawdat habitually displays his fascination with the results of contemporary sciences and modern discoveries, and tries to connect the meaning of the horizons to this kind of evidence. The Qur'anic expression, however, is broader in meaning and more far-reaching in purpose. This illusion has led him to give the verse a starting point for change in determining the kind of evidence, replacing scriptural texts with what is realised in nature and in the conditions of the human psyche, and subjecting these texts to the testimony of the signs in the horizons and in the selves. The verse does not provide the meaning he has tried to extract from it. What prompted him to make this transition was his materialist approach founded on sense perception, rather than the explicit wording of the verse. As we explained in the chapter on materialist interpretation of the Noble Qur'an, he distorts words from their places and twists the texts to make them accord with his ideas.

We can determine the meaning of this verse from its Qur'anic context, according to the established principles of interpretation known to all Muslims.

In the introduction to his commentary²⁵, Ibn Kathir said: "The soundest way is to interpret the Qur'an through the Qur'an. What is stated briefly in one place is expanded in another. If this proves beyond you, turn to the Sunnah, for it explains and clarifies the Qur'an. Indeed, Imam Abu Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i, may Allah Most High have mercy on him, said: everything the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, ruled was derived from his understanding of the Qur'an. He, Most High, says: *"Lo! We reveal unto thee the Scripture with the truth,*

25. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* [The Commentary of Ibn Kathir], 1:6.

that thou mayst judge between mankind by that which Allah showeth thee. And be not thou a pleader for the treacherous;"."

The necessity of knowing the occasions of revelation, the statements of the Companions and the meanings of the Arabic language is also evident. All this helps us know the purposes of the Book and the Sunnah. Such knowledge cannot be obtained by resorting to human theories or the subjects of rationalist philosophy, nor of materialist philosophy.

Our reason for reviewing the principles of interpretation here was to explain the best ways to interpret the Qur'an and expose the error Jawdat committed when interpreting the verse "*We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifest unto them that it is the Truth.*". He gave it an interpretation contrary to these principles, claiming that it transfers the evidence for religious thought from the verses of the Book, meaning the Qur'an, to the signs in the horizons and in the selves, meaning natural laws and scientific discoveries in nature and the psyche. This is a fabrication on his part, an annulment of the verses of the Book and an invalidation of their operation. The matter is clear from the verse's context, as Qur'anic commentators, past and present, have established.

Al-Qurtubi said of "*We shall show them Our portents on the horizons*": "That is, the signs of Our oneness and power. 'In the horizons' means the ruined dwellings of bygone nations, and 'within themselves' means through afflictions and illnesses. Ibn Zayd said: in the horizons are the signs of the heavens, and within themselves are the events of the earth." Ibn Kathir said: "That is, We shall show them Our indications and proofs that the Qur'an is truth sent down by Allah to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, through external signs, the horizons: conquests and Islam's ascendancy over regions and all other religions."

Ibn Kathir's statement indicates that the signs in the horizons confirm that the Qur'an is from Allah. It does not indicate, as Jawdat maintains, a

transfer of evidence from the Book to the signs in the horizons, or that these signs become the witness which testifies to the Book's truthfulness. The Book is truth standing in its own right and needs no other witness to establish it. If signs appear in the horizons, whether Islam's ascendancy as Allah promised or the discovery of knowledge supporting the truth contained in the Book, this is not a witness establishing the Book's validity. Nor does it require that acceptance of the meanings of Allah's verses in the Book be suspended until this witness, which he has set up as arbiter over Allah's Book, has testified.

Distancing Muslims from holding firmly to scriptural texts and dealing with them according to the Sunni approach and the way of the early generations is one of the methods of the early Orientalists. Muhammad Arkoun²⁶ says concerning this:

"We need a hundred institutions over a period of thirty years to make it possible to dislodge Muslims from holding firmly to the texts."

It is truly regrettable to find, among those who present this religion to people and carry the banner of calling to Allah, someone who does not believe in its texts, trust their rulings or find them sufficient to provide sound knowledge. He attacks them and regards them as old and backward, and as a cause of disagreement and a source of dispute and fighting.

We constantly need truthfulness. We need it first with ourselves, so that we know the true nature of our approach and the landmarks of our path, and recognise the importance of our creed and values. We also need this truthfulness when inviting the world to Islam: confronting it with the clear truth that we possess an approach resting on a book from Allah, and that the world must submit to the rulings of this Book and establish its life upon

26. Muhammad Arkoun is a writer of Moroccan origin who lives in France, holds its nationality, writes in its language and teaches in its universities. He has devoted most of his books to criticising the Islamic heritage and scriptural texts.

them. This is the truth Jawdat ought to have conveyed to these sincere young people, telling them: "*Faint not nor grieve, for ye will overcome them if ye are (indeed) believers.*" (Qur'an 3:139). Some Muslims took decisive stands when confronting tyrants. Here is Rib'i ibn Amir standing before Rustam and his henchmen and telling them: Allah has sent us to bring whoever He wills out of worshipping His servants into worshipping Allah alone, out of the narrowness of this world into its breadth, and out of the injustice of religions into the justice of Islam.

Jawdat tries to cast aspersions on scriptural texts through various direct and indirect means.

I shall review some of them:

After discussing the Qur'anic account of Adam's two sons, he said:

"I follow the position of the person who said: whether this story is a myth, a fable or a truth, he found a human being saying: I will not enter a dispute or contest; violence does not concern me; I leave it to you."²⁷

He also says that reality is stronger than the texts:

"The deterrent of fear of Allah did not create peace among Christians over two thousand years. I also say that the deterrent of fear of Allah did not create peace among Muslims over fifteen hundred years, from the Battle of Siffin to the Gulf War. But nuclear deterrence created peace among those who entered this world."²⁸

We tell Jawdat that the supposed peace between the great states possessing nuclear power is not peace. They are yesterday's allies, and some merely assert superiority over others according to their strength and material capacities. There was no genuine hostility between America and the Soviet

27. The Suwayda seminar.

28. *Unzuru 40* [Look, 40], p. 11.

Union, but an agreement to distribute roles for exploiting and dividing up weak peoples.

Jawdat explicitly states that "the clatter of the words 'spirit', 'self', 'Allah' and 'Messenger' no longer terrifies him"²⁹.

29. The preceding source, p. 5.

CHAPTER TEN

The End of Prophethood

Allah Most High says, explaining the task of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace:

“O Prophet! Lo! We have sent thee as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner. And as a summoner unto Allah by His permission, and as a lamp that giveth light. And announce unto the believers the good tidings that they will have great bounty from Allah.”

Qur'an 33:45-47

The Prophet performed this task: he conveyed the message, fulfilled the trust and counselled the community. This task rests on the witness required of the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and of the community, through His saying, Most High:

“Thus We have appointed you a middle nation, that ye may be witnesses against mankind, and that the messenger may be a witness against you.”

Qur'an 2:143, excerpt

Those who undertake the Messenger's task of conveying and counselling after him are the believers. Explaining the character of those who perform this task, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"A group of my community will continue to prevail upon the truth. Those who forsake them will not harm them, until Allah's command comes."¹ In a version related by al-Bukhari:

1. Muslim, 3:1523; al-Bukhari, hadith 7311; *Fath al-Bari*, 13:293.

"The affairs of this community will continue on a straight course until the Hour comes."²

Allah has undertaken to preserve this community's approach for it: "*Lo! We, even We, reveal the Reminder, and lo! We verily are its Guardian*". He preserves it from distortion and disfigurement.

The Prophet also explained to his community that the message continues through the Qur'an and the Sunnah until Allah's command comes.

The finality of the message means the cessation of revelation and reliance on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. If the community suffers debility, weakness or deviation from the approach, Allah's true promise is found in the saying of His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace:

"Allah sends to this community, at the beginning of every hundred years, someone who renews its religion for it."³

This is the Sunni understanding of the finality of prophethood. Adherents of materialist thought, however, view the matter through their materialist approach and regard prophethood as a temporal stage.

Jawdat says:

"When attention to facts and communication with Allah through His regularities began, prophethood stopped, because prophethood was a stage and came to an end."⁴

Here we must examine the conception of prophethood held by Jawdat, Iqbal and Shahrur. Each has a particular manner of treating prophethood, but all agree on invalidating prophethood and abolishing its role!

2. Al-Bukhari, hadith 7312.

3. Related by Abu Dawud, al-Hakim and others; it is sahih (authentic).

4. *Unzuru 40: al-Lughah wa-l-waqi'* [Look, 40: Language and Reality], p. 7.

We shall pause at length with these men. We shall need to examine this issue extensively because of its importance among the opinions maintained by adherents of materialist thought. We need answers to these questions:

- A. What does the end of prophethood mean?
- B. What is the substitute for prophethood?
- C. What is the true nature of prophethood in their view?

First: The End of Prophethood

Jawdat and Iqbal use clear expressions to signify the end of prophethood: "abolishing prophethood", "the cessation of prophethood" and "the finality of prophethood". These expressions accord with the materialist approach, its philosophical foundations and its conception of prophethood.

Jawdat quotes Iqbal as saying:

"Prophethood in Islam reaches its final perfection in recognising the need for the finality of prophethood itself. This entails its profound recognition of the impossibility of existence remaining dependent on a leading-rein by which it is guided. To attain complete knowledge of himself, the human being must ultimately be left to rely on his own resources."⁵

This passage explains the conception of prophethood as belonging to a stage. It obliges prophethood itself to recognise the necessity of relinquishing its task at a particular stage of human history, after it has exhausted its purposes and completed its role, which suited that stage alone. Prophethood itself must recognise this and hand its task over to a new stage differing from it in means and objectives.

5. Jawdat Said, *al-Amal* [Action], p. 131.

We must examine the conception of stages in which Jawdat, Iqbal and Shahrur believe, and the source of this idea.

Jawdat does not conceal his view. He makes these stages correspond to civilisational cycles, saying:

"The idea of the finality of prophethood can be viewed from another perspective, as an idea declaring the end of civilisational cycles."⁶

This idea reveals Jawdat's adoption of the conception of the stages of history. It appeared in the introduction to *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves]. Malik Bennabi brought out this orientation in Jawdat, saying:

"Someone who believes in the stages of history as he, Jawdat, does may find it difficult to conceive of subjecting history to the principle of change. Nevertheless, he tries to free social change from the constraints of restricted causality."⁷

But what is the idea of the stages of history, and what is its source?

He took this idea, in its entirety and its details, from Auguste Comte's ideas. We examined this matter in detail in the introductory discussion⁸.

Jawdat appears to have admired this idea, and therefore converges with Comte's ideas to the point of identity. Were Jawdat not later than Comte, we would say that Comte had stolen these ideas from him! What we need is to know and explain the relationship between abolishing prophethood and the conception of the stages of history.

6. *Iqra* [Read], p. 231.

7. *Hatta yughayyiru* [Until They Change], p. 10.

8. See the chapter on sociology, "The Stages of History", p. 76 in the Arabic edition.

This is clear in Comte: humanity has passed through the three states, the religious, metaphysical and positivist stages. For Comte and sociologists, the period of the prophets is merely a childhood stage. Jawdat adopted this opinion and quoted Iqbal's statement about it:

"If we view the matter from this angle, we find that the Prophet of Islam appears to stand between the ancient and modern worlds. He belongs to the ancient world in respect of the source of his message, and to the modern world in respect of the spirit it contains."⁹

Here he places prophethood in the religious stage of the ancient world, resembling childhood. He therefore insists that prophethood must recognise this truth and hand the matter over to a new stage through the birth of "discursive reason".

He says:

"With the birth of reason and the appearance of the faculty of criticism and scrutiny, life began, in its own interest, to suppress the formation and growth of states of knowledge which do not depend on reason, through which spiritual powers had flowed at an early stage of humanity's development. Humanity is fundamentally governed by emotion and instinct. Discursive reason, which alone makes the human being master of his environment, is acquired. Once we have acquired it, we must establish its foundations and strengthen it by suppressing forms of knowledge which do not depend on it."¹⁰

Before quoting these expressions from Iqbal, he had said:

"How has humanity passed through turning points? What laws governed it while passing through them? How do we live in an age in which many

9. *Al-Amal* [Action], p. 130.

10. *Al-Amal* [Action], p. 130.

people have recognised the possibility, indeed the necessity, of the world living under one law and one supreme ideal? This has been available theoretically since the revelation of His saying, Most High: "*This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion al-Islam.*" (Qur'an 5:3). How was this a precursor of a new universal age, in which people may be compelled to unite their supreme ideals? This can only be achieved through new perspectives."¹¹

The following points emerge from Jawdat's words:

- A. Treating prophethood as a historical stage which has passed and is unfit for constructing modern life.
- B. Holding that the revelation of His saying, Most High, "*This day have I perfected your religion for you*", did not realise any suitable supreme ideal in practice, but remained confined to the theoretical sphere.
- C. Holding that unifying the supreme ideal requires new perspectives unavailable in prophethood because it belongs to the ancient world. He therefore does not regard the society of the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, or the righteous early generations as a supreme ideal to follow.
- D. Making the abolition of prophethood encompass the abolition of the source of knowledge on which it rests, such as the meanings conveyed by the verses of the Book and the Prophetic Sunnah. He therefore states this openly:

"What I want us to understand from this is that the meaning conveyed by the Book can be abolished completely, as though it did not exist. What will alert Muslims to this is the attention given in the Book to history,

11. The preceding source, p. 129.

human conditions and historical events. What will teach us, then, is not the Qur'an: the events of the universe and history themselves will teach us."¹²

For Jawdat, the source of knowledge is the events of the universe and history. Elsewhere, he mentions reality and regularities, and excludes the Qur'an, revelation, as an independent source of knowledge!!

Substitutes for Prophethood

When Jawdat used the term "the finality of prophethood", or its cessation, no one realised that he meant abolishing prophethood or ending it in the sense which has now become apparent to us, especially after the publication of his latest books and pamphlets and his explicit indication: "When attention to reality and communication with Allah¹³ through His regularities began, prophethood stopped."¹⁴

He specifies a temporal stage for this beginning which the reader can recognise from his words here. He means the age of the European scientific renaissance, the discovery of natural laws, the appearance of modern inventions and the development of the means of production.

This indicates a transition from one stage to another within the scheme of the stages of history in which he believes: from the religious stage, "prophethood", to the rationalist philosophical stage, and then to materialist positivism. These facts will become apparent as we review these substitutes.

12. *Unzuru 40: al-Lughah wa-l-waqi'* [Look, 40: Language and Reality], p. 8.

13. Jawdat's use of this expression indicates the extent of his conception of humanity's relationship with its Lord. This conception proceeds through materialist thought, which denies Allah's attributes and extols human attributes.

14. *Unzuru 40* [Look, 40], p. 7.

The First Substitute: Regularities

Jawdat considered cosmic regularities, or natural laws, the appropriate substitute for the conception of prophethood. He said:

"When the final Prophet insisted on looking into the universe and taking lessons from the regularities of earlier peoples, he intended to indicate these evidences: that dealing with Allah must proceed according to His regularities, which do not change with our personal inclinations."¹⁵

He directs this mockery at Muslims who continue to hold firmly to scriptural texts and regard them as the authority and foundation. He says:

"Muslims, in all their naivety, think they have the capacity to connect with the meanings Allah intended through this language, without returning to the reality of which it speaks."¹⁶

Here Jawdat shows clear audacity towards Muslim scholars, portraying them as ignorant and describing them as heedless and naive. He has filled his books with this kind of rebuke, without distinction or exception, even for the generation of the Companions or the Successors. He repeats his rejection of reliance on the texts of revelation, warning Muslims against returning to them or holding firmly to them. He said:

"We must, however, deepen our understanding of this phenomenon. Returning to the texts would not have resolved it. If understanding this truth were confined to speech, language or the text, fighting would continue, and it would be possible to reinterpret the texts, because texts are open to reinterpretation."¹⁷

15. *Unzuru* [Look], p. 7.

16. *Unzuru 40* [Look, 40], p. 4.

17. *Unzuru 40* [Look, 40], p. 5.

How astonishing that someone fears reinterpretation for the texts, but does not fear his own action in abolishing their meaning, treating them as though they did not exist and regarding them as performing no role!!

We must recognise the truth: replacing prophethood with regularities means replacing revelation with the materialist approach.

The Second Substitute: Reality

Jawdat gives reality precedence over everything. Giving reality precedence means giving matter precedence.

He illustrates this through the existence of a thing in material reality, saying: "A rock indicates itself more clearly than all the speech uttered about it, even if that speech is Allah's."¹⁸

It is naive of Jawdat to think he has offered something new, or clear material evidence. Through this example, he seems to be trying to conceal the sun with a sieve.

On every occasion, he diminishes the standing of the Divine, glorified and exalted is He. When he wishes to magnify nature, the universe or reality, he does so extravagantly. At the same time, he says: "The clatter of the words 'spirit', 'self', 'Allah' or 'Messenger' no longer terrifies me."¹⁹

Here he uses the same formulation, saying that the rock indicates itself more clearly than Allah's speech. He, Most High, says: "*And they measure not the power of Allah its true measure*". Allah's speech resembles nothing created. Nothing is measured against it or given precedence over it. When He, Most High, speaks, His speech is truth and its outcome is true. How, then, can the created rock be clearer in its indication than the speech of

18. *Unzuru* 40 [Look, 40], p. 8.

19. The preceding source, p. 4.

Allah, Who created it, determined its existence before creating the heavens and the earth, and then created it according to His knowledge and decree?

Jawdat's claim belongs to sophistry which yields no benefit.

Allah's comprehensive knowledge, perfect power and effective will indicate that His speech is clear and manifest²⁰.

The example of the rock also distorts the subject. In this case, the dispute is not between the rock and Allah's speech, but between Allah's speech and the speech of human beings who deal with the rock, whether by description, definition or evaluation. The silent rock does not speak: its observer speaks. Allah's speech is more eloquent and more indicative of a thing than the thing itself. His saying, Most High, explains this: "*And when Allah saith: O Jesus, son of Mary! Didst thou say unto mankind: Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah? he saith: Be glorified! It was not mine to utter that to which I had no right. If I used to say it, then Thou knewest it. Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I know not what is in Thy Mind. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Knower of Things Hidden?*" (Qur'an 5:116).

This is the relationship between Creator and created: Allah knows everything surrounding His creature. "*Should He not know what He created? And He is the Subtile, the Aware.*" (Qur'an 67:14). We have an example from reality with which to reply to Jawdat, through Allah Most High's saying: "*And the sun runneth on unto a resting-place for him. That is the measuring of the Mighty, the Wise. And for the moon We have appointed mansions till she return like an old shrivelled palm-leaf. It is not*

20. Did Allah not negate what Moses, peace be upon him, supposed to be reality? He, Most High, says: "*He said: Throw! And when they threw they cast a spell upon the people's eyes, and overawed them, and produced a mighty spell.*" (Qur'an 7:116). He, Most High, also says: "*Then lo! their cords and their staves, by their magic, appeared to him as though they ran.*" (Qur'an 20:66).

for the sun to overtake the moon, nor doth the night outstrip the day. They float each in an orbit." (Qur'an 36:38-40).

The description of the sun here is among the conclusive Qur'anic truths. Whatever conceptions astronomers provide of this truth, they will fall short of Allah's speech and knowledge. Whatever sciences and inventions human beings attain, and whatever spacecraft they build, they will never encompass the sun as Allah describes the sun or moon in His Book. Even if they attain some knowledge, their study will be neither comprehensive nor complete. Human reason is limited, and human knowledge falls short of the absolute knowledge of Allah, Who created everything and encompasses everything in knowledge. Scholars' descriptions of creatures can only be hypotheses or theories corresponding to the scientific level reached by astronomy. These sciences are capable of increase and decrease because they come from human beings who contribute to forming these conceptions. How many scholarly theories have people believed correct, only for someone to overturn them later? It is therefore inconceivable that human speech about the sun should be more truthful than Allah's speech about it. We do not deny reality, nor is there any contradiction between sound knowledge and Allah's speech.

The origin of Jawdat's illusion in affirming this principle is his reliance on the materialist philosophical approach, which embellishes and magnifies reality. Adopting this theory also placed him in an unenviable position when he sought to apply the approach of realism scientifically to the Noble Qur'an, claiming that the Qur'an describes hearts as the organ of understanding. We have explained his audacity in doing this²¹. Nothing led him to this position except his excessive materialism.

21. See the chapter "Regularities" in this study, p. 109 in the Arabic edition.

The Conception of Symbolism

Jawdat believes that Allah deals with people through symbols and realities, and that we should reject the symbols and take the realities. He said:

"Allah has dealt with us through symbols and realities. He told us to return to reality and examine it. Symbols are merely temporary aids belonging to a stage, and may differ according to time and place. His actual regularities, however, will not change. Whenever we return to them, we find them fixed as they are: *"Thou wilt not find for Allah's way of treatment any substitute, nor wilt thou find for Allah's way of treatment aught of power to change."* Symbols are merely names for which Allah has sent down no authority."²²

In Jawdat's vocabulary, symbols are language, while realities represent material reality. Language includes texts. Here he regards the use of texts as temporary assistance. He gives material reality precedence over texts through the conception of the levels²³ of existence, and holds that the authority in disagreement is not mental conceptions or linguistic symbolism, but a return to external material existence, which he here calls reality.

Jawdat has fallen into an evident contradiction. He says that Allah dealt with us through symbols, which in his conception are the texts. At the end of his statement, however, he says that Allah has sent down no authority for symbols, and that they represent nothing more than temporary aids appropriate to humanity's stage within the stages of history!!

Jawdat's contradiction exists only in what has appeared to us!! For his part, he was consistent with his approach, which gives matter precedence over

22. *Unzuru 40* [Look, 40], p. 7.

23. The levels are material existence, mental existence, verbal existence and written existence.

scriptural texts. This abolishes prophethood and replaces it with reality, regularities and history.

Elsewhere, he made a statement which clarifies his conception of prophethood:

"Muhammad Iqbal recognised this, especially in his examination of the finality of prophethood. Why was prophethood brought to its finality, with no further prophet or book? Because the final Book showed us the path which has no end. It showed us speech which is not the speech of letters, but tangible realities."²⁴

This explicitly establishes that what replaces the final Prophet and the final Book is reality, or, as he calls it, tangible realities. Here is an indication of Jawdat's materialist approach, known as the approach founded on sense perception.

The Third Substitute: History²⁵

Jawdat does not conceal his interest in history and his treatment of it as a source of knowledge (ilm).

The reader of his books may suppose that by history he means what people understand today: Islamic history or merely earlier nations. He means, however, the history of humanity and its ancient ages relating to the emergence of life on earth.

24. *Unzuru 40* [Look, 40], p. 7.

25. *Maqayis al-lughah* states: "Ta'rikh has been heard, but is not Arabic, nor has it been heard from an eloquent speaker." Its footnote states that Yunus and Abu Malik heard it from the Arabs. *Lisan al-Arab* states: "Ta'rikh is the determination of time."

Despite the doubts surrounding this source, Jawdat made history a source of knowledge. He said:

"Islam regards history as a source of knowledge (ma'rifah), a source of knowledge (ilm). I say that the reason for the cessation of revelation, the finality of prophethood, is that history became a source of knowledge."²⁶

Jawdat made history a source of knowledge in opposition to scriptural texts, saying:

"What will teach us, then, is not the Qur'an, but the events of the universe and history. An example is His saying, Most High: "*Travel in the land and see how He originated creation*". Muslims have possessed this verse since the day of its revelation, but they have gained nothing from it. Even those who discovered how creation began did not start their research from this verse, but from observing the universe, which was the starting point. What indicated itself was the universe itself, rather than the Book."²⁷

This orientation excludes the Book from practical operation in lived reality, relying instead on travelling through the earth and discovering how creation began. History may be a source of knowledge if information is authenticated scientifically. Jawdat and Shahrur, however, have not adhered to a practical approach founded on sound principles in historical research. Reliance on a historical source devoid of conclusive evidence represents a flimsy, laughable manner which cannot withstand scholarly criticism for a moment. The results of research into the history of the earth and the emergence of life upon it cannot withstand any scholarly criticism. They are merely hypotheses without a scientific foundation, subject to an imaginative philosophical approach. They divided the earth's history into

26. A seminar on Syrian television in which Jawdat participated with Muhammad Sa'id Ramadan al-Buti.

27. *Unzuru 40* [Look, 40], p. 8.

Stone and Bronze Ages, and divided the history of the human being into stages: a stage of the human species and a stage of humanity. They made the former a condition of savagery and the latter a condition of learning.

They divided the history of humanity into stages of hunting, herding and agriculture. They also applied other terms to these stages, produced by Marxist thought, such as the feudal age and the industrial age.

Comte's division does not differ from this. He divided humanity's history into a religious state, a philosophical state and a positivist state.

These divisions rest on no certain scientific foundation. They are human judgements open to error and deviation, and have been subjected to severe criticism. Science has also disavowed some of these imaginative theories as lacking a basis in scientific facts.

Jawdat repeatedly states that looking for the truth must take place outside the Book. He says:

"Once again I say: an event or thing indicates itself more clearly than any description. In disagreement, the authority is not the Book, but a return to the event or thing."²⁸

Following Jawdat's statements in his explicit call not to return to scriptural texts in disagreement reveals a deviation from the Islamic approach and a rejection of these texts. Explaining the ruling concerning this situation, He, Most High, says: "*But nay, by thy Lord, they will not believe (in truth) until they make thee judge of what is in dispute between them*". The verse applies generally to making Allah's Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger the arbiters in situations of dispute and disagreement. For new situations without an explicit text, independent judgement proceeds according to the foundations explained to us by the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless

28. *Unzuru 40* [Look, 40], p. 8.

him and grant him peace. These foundations exist to resolve such difficulties. This is a broad avenue which has not been closed.

What Jawdat advocates, receiving information from sources outside the Book despite the truth of the matter being present in it, constitutes a departure from this established foundation. An example is his call to discover how the creation of humanity began from outside the Qur'an. The texts addressing this question, however, are clear, such as His saying, Most High: *"Who made all things good which He created, and He began the creation of man from clay;"* (Qur'an 32:7). This verse specifies that humanity's creation began from clay, and refutes Jawdat's call in a scientifically precise manner. He, Most High, also says: *"Lo! We created them of plastic clay."* (Qur'an 37:11). If information about the beginning of human creation is available so precisely in the Qur'an, why travel through the earth to discover how creation began?! This is a clear indication of Darwin's theory, based on investigating the earth!!²⁹

Of history's testimony, Jawdat says:

"Forming the human being according to values to whose soundness history testifies has been a subject proceeding spontaneously. Science has yet to begin clarifying the regularities of this process. Human beings have made great efforts to refine themselves and emerge from savagery, baseness and vulgarity. The fruits of these efforts, however, have been few because knowledge was scant and understanding obscure."³⁰

What is this task he has assigned to history, making it the witness to the soundness of values? Has history become the new authority for determining correct values in society? Where is the task of the Qur'an and the Sunnah in this matter? Jawdat and his associates follow the approach of

29. See the chapter "Development" in this study, p. 178 in the Arabic edition.

30. *Iqra* [Read], p. 172.

Marxist historical materialism, use its terminology and then interpret human life through it.

The Fourth Substitute: Events in the Universe

How can events in the universe be a substitute for prophethood?

Jawdat never tires of presenting this conception, calling for the abolition of the meaning conveyed by the Book and for receiving objective knowledge from events in the universe!! He even makes the signs in the horizons and in the selves the witness to the Book's truthfulness. By the signs in the horizons he means cosmic regularities, natural laws and scientific discoveries. By the signs in the selves he means the results of psychological research and other contemporary sciences which he advocates as counterparts to Allah's verses in the Book and to the established foundations of religion. He considers that "the verse *"Travel in the land and see how He originated creation"* reveals something new in the evidences of the foundations of religion. By this verse, the signs in the horizons and in the selves have the right to know and uncover the truth."³¹

This is the approach demanded by advocates of Westernisation: changing the foundations of religion to make them accord with Western approaches.

Jawdat continually advocates these substitutes for the conception of prophethood. He has even tried to attribute this call to the noble Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, saying that he recommended it! Where did he obtain this recommendation?! Did revelation come to him with it, unknown to anyone else? Where is the explicit text establishing the cessation or abolition of prophethood, the abolition of the meaning conveyed by the Book, or the end of acting upon prophetic rulings? He, Most High, says: *"Bring me a scripture before this (Scripture), or some vestige of knowledge (in support of what ye say), if ye are truthful."* (Qur'an

31. *Iqra* [Read], p. 223.

46:4). The finality of prophethood is different from its cessation. Its finality requires the foundations followed by the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to remain, without being replaced by others as Jawdat and Shahrur do, and as Iqbal and other adherents of the materialist orientation conceived.

Explaining the task of the Qur'an and the messengers, He, Most High, says:

“Mankind were one community, and Allah sent (unto them) prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and revealed therewith the Scripture with the truth that it might judge between mankind concerning that wherein they differed.”

Qur'an 2:213, excerpt

A brief comparison of Jawdat's and Shahrur's views will be decisive in refuting their ideas and revealing the true nature of their audacity in this matter.

The author of *Fi zilal al-Qur'an* says: "There had therefore to be a fixed scale to which those who disagree could return, a just arbiter to whom disputants could resort, and a decisive word at which argument would end and from which all would return to certainty... This truth has great value in identifying the source from which people receive their conceptions and laws, and to which they ultimately turn in every dispute that arises among them, in its various forms... This stability in the foundation of the conception of faith accords with the function of the Book which He revealed with the truth to judge between people in their disagreements, in every age and with every messenger, from the earliest times... Allah establishes this Book as a foundation for human life. Life then proceeds: if it accords with this foundation and continues to rest upon it, this is truth. If it departs from it and rests upon other foundations, this is falsehood, even if all people accept it. This truth is of great

importance in separating the foundations of religion from what people introduce into them... What has occurred remains an error and deviation, unsuitable as proof or precedent for anyone. Whoever wishes to resume an Islamic life must annul and abolish this error and return to the Book which Allah revealed to judge between people."³²

Allah commands His Prophet to hold firmly to the revelation sent down to him and persevere in this. Jawdat and Iqbal, however, propose that we abandon all this and abolish prophethood and its effects as though it did not exist. Shahrur, meanwhile, regards the Prophet as exercising independent judgement like scholars, while at the same time assigning Darwin and Einstein the task of interpreting the Qur'an and explaining it to people.

He, Most High, says: *"Say: O mankind! Now hath the Truth from your Lord come unto you. So whosoever is guided, is guided only for (the good of) his soul, and whosoever erreth erreth only against it. And I am not a warder over you. And (O Muhammad) follow that which is inspired in thee, and forbear until Allah give judgment. And He is the Best of Judges."* (Qur'an 10:108-109).

Explaining the function of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and his fundamental task, which does not cease, He, Most High, says: *"And this Qur'an hath been inspired in me, that I may warn therewith you and whomsoever it may reach."* (Qur'an 6:19). Acting upon Allah's verses and the Messenger's hadiths may never be invalidated on the pretext that their role has ended and their purposes have been exhausted. He, Most High, also says: *"So hold thou fast to that which is inspired in thee. Lo! thou art on a right path."* (Qur'an 43:43).

32. *Fi zilal al-Qur'an* [In the Shade of the Qur'an], 1:216, abridged.

Allah Most High tells us to hold firmly to the Book and what the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, brings us. Jawdat, Shahrur and their followers, however, confront us carrying a complete formulation of Marxist materialist ideas, alongside theories of Western sociology inspired by Comte, Nietzsche and others, and psychological theories inspired by Freud and his school. They present these formulations, sometimes through enticement and sometimes by mocking Muslims' backwardness. They want Muslims to abandon their Lord's verses, cease receiving guidance from their Prophet's approach and disregard his command as though he did not exist. Do Jawdat and Shahrur grasp the true nature of their views and the consequences arising from them?! I believe such a matter does not arise inadvertently, by error or through heedlessness, because the subject is explicit and clear. This call is not new and has existed for a long time. It is an entire school³³, with its own features, characteristics and conceptions. I have called it "the school of change"³⁴, as stated in the introduction.

The True Nature of Prophethood

We may not need to define prophethood or explain its true nature beyond what we have stated. It is so clear that it has not occupied a large area of concern among Muslims. Through their insight, they understood that faith in Allah, the angels and the revealed books also requires faith in the Messenger.

Negating one of these pillars negates the entire structure of faith. When the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, informed Quraysh of the Night Journey to Jerusalem, the polytheists rushed to his Companions

33. *Haqiqat Jamal al-Din al-Afghani* [The Truth about Jamal al-Din al-Afghani] states that in one of his speeches he said: "Prophethood is a personal skill." For this reason, the Ottoman sultan pursued him.

34. The school which adopts the conception of changing religion instead of renewing religion.

to deny his account. They believed his Companions would do the same when they heard the news. The surprise was great, however, when Quraysh heard what angered them from the Companions of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: "Do we believe him about news from heaven, revelation, and not believe him about news from the earth?! If he said this, he has spoken the truth."

We place a question before the reader: how do Jawdat and Iqbal conceive prophethood? How does Shahrur deal with it? What formulation do they believe in when defining it?

Iqbal and Jawdat proceed through their belief in the stages of history and the division of human life into three stages³⁵. They locate prophethood in childhood, which represents the primitive, backward condition in the scale of historical development. Western sociologists call this "the religious stage", because prophets appeared in it.

Jawdat quotes Iqbal:

"In humanity's childhood, spiritual power develops into what I call 'prophetic consciousness'. It is a means of economising on individual thought and personal choice, and of supplying people with ready-made judgements and choices and prearranged ways of acting."³⁶

Describing prophethood as spiritual power, and saying that this power develops into prophetic consciousness, represents a conception of prophethood which contradicts Allah's Book, the Sunnah of His Messenger and the Muslim consensus affirming revelation and that Allah Most High reveals His books to His prophets. He, Most High, says: "*And it was not (vouchsafed) to any mortal that Allah should speak to him unless (it be) by*

35. Childhood, adolescence and maturity. See the chapter on sociology, p. 76 in the Arabic edition.

36. Jawdat Said, *al-Amal* [Action], p. 130, quoting Muhammad Iqbal, *Tajdid al-fikr al-dini* [The Reconstruction of Religious Thought].

revelation or from behind a veil, or (that) He sendeth a messenger to reveal what He will by His leave. Lo! He is Exalted, Wise." (Qur'an 42:51).

This idea is not unfamiliar. It is known in the history of the deviant sects and among philosophers. We can identify the sources from which these ideas came.

Ibn Taymiyyah says:

"The philosophisers who affirmed prophethoods in a manner agreeing with their corrupt foundations, Ibn Sina and those like him³⁷, did not acknowledge that prophets know through a report which comes to them from Allah, glorified and exalted is He, whether a report from an angel or otherwise. They claimed instead that prophets know through an intellectual faculty, because their power of intuition is more perfect than that of others. They call this 'the sacred faculty' and confine prophetic knowledge to it. Their statement amounts to saying that prophets are of the same kind as other people and have learnt nothing through a report. These men therefore derive no benefit from the prophets' reports."³⁸

Comparing these passages with Iqbal's and Jawdat's statements reveals agreement in views and identity of approach. Ibn Taymiyyah also says:

"Ibn Sina was among the atheists who followed Aristotle's views."³⁹ We find no difficulty in connecting Iqbal's and Jawdat's ideas on the one hand with those of Ibn Sina and his followers on the other. They draw their conceptions from a single source: Aristotelian materialist philosophy.

37. Al-Dhahabi says in *Siyar al-a'lam*: "The famous scholar and philosopher Abu Ali al-Husayn ibn Abd Allah: his father was a scribe and one of the Isma'ili propagators." Al-Dhahabi mentions that Abu Hamid al-Ghazali declared Ibn Sina an unbeliever because of these views.

38. *Dar' ta'arud al-aql wa-l-naql* [Averting conflict between reason and revelation], 1:179.

39. The preceding source.

Jawdat therefore finds nothing strange in describing some philosophers as prophets or as occupying the position of prophets. In his talks he repeatedly says that philosophers are among those who command justice. He bestows signs of respect and esteem upon them, from Socrates to Zoroaster and from Gandhi to Toynbee and Russell. In the Suwayda seminar, however, he showed audacity to the point of contempt for others' minds, inserting the pagan Greek philosopher Socrates into the company of prophets. He said:

"If this is how Adam's son acted, I too honour and revere Socrates' stand. We ought to, and I say that the Qur'an tells us concerning the prophets: *"among them those of whom We have told thee, and some of whom We have not told thee"*. Someone who reads Socrates' life and his stand, and who knows and appreciates the stand of prophets, will, I think, feel that he was among those prophets whose accounts were not told to us, or among those who behaved as prophets did, when he accepted death and rejected violence."

We returned to Socrates' history and positions and found that he was a Greek philosopher in whose age the roots and foundations of philosophy were laid. He was the most important of the philosophers who contributed to establishing philosophical principles, and the most influential. He left no written books; his pupil Plato transmitted most of his views. Socrates and Plato adopted the rationalist, "metaphysical", philosophical approach. Socrates was not a Muslim. He believed in gods in the philosophers' manner, and their conception of the Divine differed entirely from the Islamic creed. His approach rested on seeking knowledge through reason. Since he left no books, his pupil Plato transmitted his philosophical ideas. The prevailing belief is that Socrates founded ancient philosophy before Aristotle and Plato; or, more precisely, that philosophy's roots and foundations were laid in his age.

We are not presently studying the history of philosophy so much as examining the reasons which lead Jawdat to regard the philosopher

Socrates as a prophet, although he did not follow Allah's religion. How did he dare to say:

"I regard Socrates as ranking among the prophets. Noah and Socrates draw from the same source."⁴⁰

One of Jawdat's pupils replied in the Suwayda seminar that Islam did not exist in Socrates' age!! If Islam, the religion of all prophets, did not exist in his age, how could Socrates be a prophet, and where did his prophethood come from?!

Anyone who does not know Socrates' creed should look at Plato's principles and creed. Jawdat's, Shahrur's, Iqbal's and their followers' call to the philosophical approach in this manner constitutes a departure from and exclusion of the Islamic approach.

They want to make philosophy part of religion and place philosophers among the prophets!!

What is well known of Socrates and his opposition to idol worship does not mean that he was a Muslim. In the age of jahiliyyah before Islam, there were people who rejected idol worship, yet this was not regarded as Islam.

Jawdat is eager to bring philosophers' ideas to prominence, spread their views and establish these principles in opposition to prophethood.

He also views the end of prophethood through the emergence of humanity taking hold of civilisation. He states: "With the end and finality of prophethood, however, the cycles ended, and humanity took hold of the regularities of civilisation to make it continuous."⁴¹

40. During his monthly talk at his home, and in an interview with the magazine *Dirasat ishtirakiyyah* [Socialist Studies], published by a faction of the Syrian Communist Party and distributed with the party's publications; the latest issue, 1992.

41. *Iqra* [Read], p. 232.

Jawdat also shares Iqbal's ideas about the attributes of the self and spiritual discipline. He states: "The idea of the end of prophethood should therefore not be understood as presupposing that life's ultimate destiny is the complete replacement of feeling by reason. This is neither possible nor desirable. The idea's intellectual value lies in its tendency to create a free disposition to scrutinise Sufi discipline, by making a person believe that the time has passed in human history for any personal authority claiming a supernatural origin. Such belief is a psychological force which prevents this authority from growing. The function of the idea is to open new paths to knowledge in the sphere of human spiritual discipline. The assertion that signs of the Divine Being are manifested in the selves has created a spirit of criticism towards humanity's traditional knowledge of the external world."⁴²

Shahrur's Conception of Prophethood

Shahrur's conception of prophethood does not depart from what Jawdat and Iqbal adopted through the materialist approach and the stages of history: that Islamic legislation suits the period in which it arose.

Shahrur asks: what is our position towards the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, or towards the Sunnah?

He answers that there are two fundamentally distinct positions towards him: first, as a prophet; second, as a legislator.

His answer concerning the second is that it is "a precise position: what the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, did was the first possible application of Islam"⁴³. The Prophet applied the Shari'ah

42. *Iqra* [Read], p. 231.

43. Shahrur's book, p. 39.

according to the objective circumstances of the Arabian Peninsula, since legislation is capable of development, abolition and replacement⁴⁴. He attacked the definition of the Sunnah as "every statement, action, approval or prohibition of the Prophet", saying that jurists devised it. He therefore arrived at a contemporary conception of the Sunnah, in which the Prophet's role was "to turn the absolute into the relative and move within Allah's limits in the seventh century"⁴⁵.

44. The preceding source, p. 38.

45. The preceding source, p. 39.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Conception of Belief

Jawdat did not treat belief in an independent study or define it according to the Islamic approach. His discussions were scattered throughout his books, and he had a particular understanding of it suited to the foundations of materialism. In this sphere he introduced new and strange terms which nevertheless converge with the views of the deviant sects and depart from the approach of the righteous early generations. He presented these views when defining faith and connecting it to external material realities, saying: "Faith is not merely faith, but the affirmation of oneness: making the human being connected to external realities and freeing him from the world of persons."¹

Jawdat proceeds from a conception of the unseen founded on sense perception. He says: "Thus the unseen becomes knowledge when our manner of believing in heavenly values is like our belief in anything perceptible."²

He then connects faith with the results of causes in the world of reality, negatively and positively, and rejects the rational manner of faith. He says:

"If we grasp the meaning of connecting causes with results, and that this connection is observational rather than rational, we can connect faith with results. If we observe faith and its results, we will have obtained the conditions of knowledge in all its contents concerning faith."³

1. *Iqra* [Read], p. 117.

2. The preceding source, p. 116.

3. The preceding source, p. 119.

He then gives knowledge, for which he has established conditions based on sense perception, dominion over Allah's religion, saying: "Just as science has extended its dominion over astronomy, chemistry and medicine, it will also extend its dominion over religion."⁴

All Muslims hold without doubt that belief in Islam is received from only one source: the path of revelation, the path of prophethood. Allah Most High says: *"And thus have We inspired in thee (Muhammad) a Spirit of Our command. Thou knewest not what the Scripture was, nor what the Faith. But We have made it a light whereby We guide whom We will of Our bondmen. And lo! thou verily dost guide unto a right path, The path of Allah, unto Whom belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Do not all things reach Allah at last?"* (Qur'an 42:52-53).

Just as Jawdat associates the affirmation of divine oneness with external material facts, he also subjects it to a historical stage of development. He says:

"Scholars complain that knowledge, as a human faculty and as understanding of its essence and generalisation, has limited circulation among people. Its historical appearance among humanity is also limited and recent. The affirmation of oneness, in its beginning and its end, is the awakening of the faculty of knowledge and the departure from stopping at idols, images and the worship of imitation."⁵

He then shows the materialist conception of the affirmation of oneness, saying: "Affirming Allah's oneness commands us to look at external facts, connect with external realities, and give a more sacred meaning to the phenomenon of the universe as a process of creation."⁶

4. The preceding source, p. 120.

5. *Iqra* [Read], p. 117.

6. *Iqra* [Read], p. 117.

Jawdat then reaches the fundamental objective of his discussion of the affirmation of oneness and knowledge, the final conclusion in his definition of faith: "Ultimately, knowledge becomes faith and faith becomes knowledge; associating partners with Allah becomes ignorance and ignorance becomes associating partners with Allah. Just as knowledge and faith are two obligations, ignorance and associating partners with Allah are two unforgivable sins whose punishment is inevitable."⁷

These definitions are alien to the Islamic creed. It is not difficult to find the sources from which they are drawn: the record of the deviant sects of speculative theology is filled with such views. An example is the statement of Jahm ibn Safwan, who belonged to the Qadariyyah: "Faith is knowledge, and unbelief is ignorance."

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, explained faith in a manner leaving no room for dispute or deviation. This appears in the famous hadith of Gabriel, when he asked the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, about faith: "He said: 'Tell me about faith.' He replied: 'To believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers and the Last Day, and to believe in divine decree, its good and its evil.' He said: 'You have spoken the truth.'"⁸

This is the belief of the people of Islam concerning faith, past and present, before and after the sciences flourished and spread. It does not change with the passing of time. The scholar believes in it, as do the ordinary and the unlettered person. Jawdat, however, has been so influenced by the materialist approach that the unseen no longer has any standing for him. He, Most High, says: "*Who believe in the Unseen, and establish worship, and spend of that We have bestowed upon them,*" (Qur'an 2:3).

7. *Iqra* [Read], p. 117.

8. Part of a long hadith from Umar; related by al-Bukhari, the chapter on faith, hadith 50, and Muslim, the chapter on faith, 1:1.

This understanding has led him to give human beings power over conceiving the existence of the spirit, through the possibility of discovering cosmic regularities. He said: "This existence governed by regularities is another kind of level of existence, and may be an entry into conceiving the existence of the spirit. To Allah Most High belong creation and command, and the spirit is of Allah's command: "*Say: The Spirit is by command of my Lord*" (Qur'an 17:85). Allah's command, His word and His regularity are expressions which may be close in meaning."⁹

This idea also leads to denying Allah Most High's attributes¹⁰.

The Terminology of Belief

Jawdat mocks Muslims when they attach great weight to belief. He said:

"It is conduct that constitutes unbelief: 'Whoever abandons prayer has disbelieved.' Muslims reversed the matter, making doubt in belief a grave issue while being indulgent towards shortcomings in actions."¹¹

Generalising this principle to encompass all Muslims is extremely dangerous. It reverses the Sunni conception of creed and invalidates Islamic meanings and scriptural terms: "faith", "associating partners with Allah" and "unbelief". Muslims rely on the Qur'anic approach in defining them. He, Most High, says: "*Lo! Allah forgiveth not that a partner should be ascribed unto Him. He forgiveth (all) save that to whom He will.*" (Qur'an 4:48). The Sunni approach is clear through its familiar principle: not declaring anyone an unbeliever except on the basis of an explicit scriptural text. The Khawarij departed from this principle and declared Muslims unbelievers for sins and acts of disobedience, even daring to

9. *Iqra* [Read], p. 93.

10. See the chapter "Regularities" in this study.

11. *Iqra* [Read], p. 116.

declare the Companions unbelievers, disparage them and apply rulings particular to unbelievers to Muslims.

Jawdat has championed the Qadari and Mu'tazili doctrine concerning belief and neglected the sound Sunni approach. This appears in his saying:

"There are two reasons for placing human behaviour outside knowledge, outside control, outside harnessing and outside regularities:

First, a mistaken understanding of religious belief: that Allah does what He wills. *"Yet ye will not, unless Allah willeth."* (Qur'an 76:30). The history of dispute is long between those who see compulsion in human behaviour and those who see people as free to choose their behaviour; between those who regard a person as compelled against his will to fulfil Allah's determination and decree, with no power to depart from them, and those who regard Allah as changing his condition if he changes what is in himself. Some even say that we do not know Allah's determination and decree, and therefore have no part in people's destinies and behaviour, which depend on the unrestricted will of Allah, Lord of the Worlds. There are many such statements indicating obscurity, confusion and darkness of vision. Allah's will does not deprive human beings of their capacity to change and make their destinies. Rather, Allah's will is: *"Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts"* (Qur'an 13:11), and their destinies are in their hands. This is not the place to explain this in detail. We merely wanted to point out that this belief and view, which deprives humanity of choice and the capacity to determine destiny, places humanity and its destiny outside knowledge, harnessing and prediction.

Second, the other reason for placing human behaviour outside knowledge, prediction and harnessing is the dark history and long familiarity through which people lived, seeing no glimmer of hope for

controlling human behaviour or grasping its regularities. Here, once again, the history of the natural sciences helps explain how people lived long in darkness and grew accustomed to it, possessing neither knowledge, control nor prediction. This long history in darkness also led people, at one time, to deny and disbelieve the entry of science into astronomy, chemistry and medicine."¹²

From his words, we understand his support for the doctrine of the Qadari Mu'tazilah, who regard humanity as possessing complete will without connecting or subjecting it to Allah's will. They make their minds the arbiter over Allah's command, saying: Allah must do such-and-such a thing or action, according to their human conceptions of wisdom or justice. This denies Allah the power to do absolutely whatever He wills.

This view of belief leads Jawdat to say: "Although the world of persons provides us with knowledge and the affirmation of oneness, knowledge and the affirmation of oneness must continually undergo correction and adjustment."¹³

He also associates belief with war and economics, giving them the same rulings concerning modification and correction. This leads us to ask what objective is sought through this.

"Protecting a society in war, economics and belief is not subject to chance or arbitrary matters. It is subject to precise measures of the ideas within the selves, to which specialists can make the required quantitative and qualitative modifications within a specified time, based on previous experience of the regularities of earlier or contemporary peoples. All this is knowledge; all this is regularities which can be known and controlled, whose errors can be corrected, racing against time to do so.

12. *Iqra* [Read], pp. 87-89.

13. The preceding source, p. 204.

A terrified mind, however, cannot do this. It has no knowledge of world events, does not know where calamities come from or how to repel them, or how to give societies immunity against intellectual dangers to protect society, let alone establish mechanisms to monitor deviations and correct errors on the basis of the regularities and rules to which societies are subject."¹⁴

Was this combination of belief, war and economics deliberate and planned, or did it arise by chance or through an error of expression? If protecting society during war requires modifications to programmes of action or established plans, and protecting the economy requires studies, appropriate solutions to existing problems and timely modifications, why should belief undergo modification and correction? Is belief subject to what economic programmes and party plans devised by human beings are subject to, requiring reconsideration whenever a new discovery appears?

Belief is neither devised nor chosen by human beings. This is clear to Muslims. The stability of this foundation represents the central axis of Islamic life. Perhaps Jawdat perceived this feeling when he expressed the Muslim's fear for his creed by saying: "A terrified mind cannot do this." Muslims' sense of the stability of the foundation of belief represents security and reassurance for every Muslim, and a firm foundation for confronting incoming challenges to belief. It also expresses the Muslim's love of protecting his creed from distortion and prevents scriptural texts from being rendered inoperative.

We shall place before the reader some statements by people of knowledge concerning the stability of creed and its inability to be developed or modified.

In Khasa'is al-tasawwur al-Islami wa-muqawwimatuhu [The Characteristics and Foundations of the Islamic Conception], in the chapter

14. *Hatta yughayyiru* [Until They Change], p. 162.

on "Stability", Sayyid Qutb defines the original foundation of the conception of belief: movement within a fixed framework around a fixed axis.

"Here we review examples of the stable foundations and values in this conception, which represent the 'fixed axis' around which the Islamic approach revolves within its fixed framework. Everything relating to the divine reality, the foundation of the Islamic conception, is fixed in reality and in meaning, and is incapable of change or development:

The reality of Allah's existence, His eternity, His oneness with all its implications, His power, His supremacy, His governance of creation, His unrestricted will, and the other divine attributes active in the universe, life and humanity.

The reality that the entire universe, its things and living beings, is Allah's creation and handiwork. Allah, glorified is He, willed it, and it came to be. No thing or living being in this universe has any part in its creation, governance or supremacy, or any share whatsoever in the characteristics of divinity.

The reality of servanthood to Allah, the servanthood of things and living beings, and its universality for all people, including the messengers, blessings and peace be upon them. This is absolute servanthood, untouched by any characteristic of divinity, and they are equal in it.

The reality that faith in Allah as He has described Himself, His angels, His books, His Messenger, the Last Day and divine decree, its good and its evil, is a condition for the validity and acceptance of actions. Otherwise, they are invalid from their foundation, incapable of correction, rejected, uncounted and unaccepted.

The reality that the religion with Allah is Islam, that He accepts no other religion from people, and that Islam means recognising Allah alone as divine, with all the characteristics of divinity; submitting to His will; and

accepting His command, approach and Shari'ah as arbiters. This is the religion He has approved, and no other.

The reality that the human being, as a species, is a creature honoured above all other creatures on earth, appointed by Allah as His steward upon it, with everything on it made of service to him. No material value on this earth therefore exceeds the value of the human being or warrants sacrificing his worth.

The reality that people have one origin and are therefore equal in this respect. The sole value through which they surpass one another is piety and righteous action, rather than any other value: lineage, wealth, position, class, race or other earthly values.

The reality that the purpose of human existence is worship of Allah, meaning absolute servanthood to Allah alone, with all its requirements. First among them are following His command alone in every affair of life, great and small, and directing every intention, movement, inner impulse and action to Him alone; and stewardship on earth according to His approach, or, in the Qur'an's expression, according to His religion. These are synonymous expressions of one reality.

The reality that the bond of human association is belief, this divine approach, rather than race, people, land, colour, class, economic or political interests, or any other earthly consideration.

The reality that this world is the abode of trial and action, and the Hereafter the abode of reckoning and recompense. The human being is tried and tested in every movement and action, in every good or evil that reaches him, and in every blessing and harm. All matters return to Allah.

... These and similar foundations and values are all fixed, incapable of change or development. They are fixed so that the phenomena of life and the forms of social arrangements move within their framework and remain bound to them, and so that their requirements are observed in

every development of life's arrangements, every bond established in society and every organisation of people's circumstances, individually and collectively, in all conditions and stages.

The area in which the meanings of these foundations and values are manifested may expand as the aspects of practical life expand, the field of human knowledge broadens and the conceptions in which these foundations and values appear multiply. Their origin, however, remains fixed, and these meanings and conceptions move within its framework."

The existence of such stable criteria and defined controls guarantees the preservation of Islamic life from deviation and distortion, protecting it from disorder and disagreement. He, Most High, says: *"Is he who relieth on a clear proof from his Lord like those for whom the evil that they do is beautified while they follow their own lusts?"* (Qur'an 47:14). He also says: *"And if the Truth had followed their desires, verily the heavens and the earth and whosoever is therein had been corrupted."* (Qur'an 23:71).

The Islamic creed is a coherent whole, with interconnected roots, like a firmly compacted structure. Whoever destroys one of its foundations has, as it were, destroyed the entire structure. Whoever does this is outside the circle of Islam. Muslim scholars have explicitly established consensus on this ruling!!

Change in Belief

To explain Jawdat's position on creation, we find him resorting to reconsidering what the community believes concerning how creation began. Interpreting His saying, Most High, *"Say (O Muhammad): Travel in the land and see how He originated creation"* (Qur'an 29:20), he says:

"This noble verse contains a defined approach to research which encompasses the material and non-material aspects of the world, substances and accidents in the expression of earlier scholars. The subject encompasses all beings, from the atom and what is smaller than it to the galaxy, indeed the whole universe; from organic materials to the human being, who is in the best form physically, intellectually and socially; and from elementary ideas to the most complex."¹⁵

Of his reason for adopting this approach, Jawdat says:

"Knowing how creation began and understanding matters at this level alerts the human being to the possibility that creation may grow, increase and improve. Whoever knows that creation began weak and helpless, then grew slowly, and that this growth required long ages, may be led by reflecting on the beginning of creation to think about its destiny."¹⁶

Jawdat then explained the matters subject to research and enumerated some of them. He said:

"According to this verse, the beginning of every subject should mention how its creation began, even what concerns the manner of faith in Allah: how humanity began to grasp the meaning of divinity. Every subject, then, has a beginning of creation in respect of entering human awareness. According to what the verse requires, we should reconsider everything we see in terms of how its creation began."¹⁷

This reconsideration and renewed examination of matters of belief established in scriptural texts constitutes a departure from these texts and an invalidation of their content. The danger lies not merely in reconsidering

15. *Iqra* [Read], p. 209.

16. The preceding source, p. 212.

17. *Iqra* [Read], p. 210.

these matters, but in changing the location of evidence and of this knowledge!!

He says:

"This verse transfers the subject of examining how creation began from the verses of the Book to the signs in the horizons and in the selves, and to travelling through the earth."¹⁸

What urgent need does Jawdat see for reconsidering the knowledge contained in Allah's Book or the Sunnah of the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace?

We can identify two important subjects in which he asks for reconsideration and a change in previous belief: the beginning of faith in Allah and the beginning of human creation.

How Did Allah Create Humanity?

Which Muslim does not know how Allah created humanity?

Even a small Muslim child understands the clear truth that Allah Most High created humanity directly from dust. He, Most High, says: "*O mankind! if ye are in doubt concerning the Resurrection, then lo! We have created you from dust*" (Qur'an 22:5). He also says: "*He said: O Iblis! What hindereth thee from falling prostrate before that which I have created with both My hands?*" (Qur'an 38:75).

Allah then explains how creation began:

"*Who made all things good which He created, and He began the creation of man from clay;*" (Qur'an 32:7). If Allah Most High has clearly explained how human creation began, the material from which humanity was created

18. The preceding source, p. 215.

and details of the manner of creation, why examine this question in another source? What is the true nature of asking to modify what is established in Allah's Book? Does this not invalidate Allah's verses and exclude them from operation? Does it not deny the capacity of scriptural texts to provide sound scientific knowledge? The Qur'an has explained everything about human creation in detail, and we need not receive this information from other sources. Jawdat has contradicted the Muslim consensus concerning receiving scriptural texts, acting upon them, making them the arbiters in dispute and accepting fully what proceeds from them. If he does not believe in receiving knowledge of how creation began from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, where shall we obtain it? Should we return to those who travelled through the earth, carried out excavations and then advocated the theory of origin and evolution, natural selection or acquired characteristics? Scholars have refuted and rejected these theories, but Jawdat continues to advocate them on every occasion.

Although he believes only in what proceeds from reality and sense perception, in discussing development he departs a little from his approach founded on sense perception and speaks in the language of imagination:

"If it were possible for a person to observe mentally the condition of the earth, the emergence of life upon it and the kinds of animals which lived on it; that at one time all life was in water, then came onto dry land, and then humanity appeared: why does it not occur to us that this creation is still continuing? Why does it not occur to us that creation has not stopped, that things are still being created and added to creation, and that there is another emergence??!"¹⁹

19. *Unzuru 40: al-Lughah wa-l-waqi'* [Look, 40: Language and Reality], p. 10.

He then says, in mockery of Muslims:

"History will compel Muslims to change their understanding of the Qur'an. This is why they take a negative position towards history."²⁰

How Did Humanity Grasp Divinity?

When Jawdat asks us to reconsider how humanity began to grasp the meaning of divinity and how faith in Allah arose, and to receive this matter from outside the Noble Qur'an, we must pause with him over it. The first human being's faith, Adam's, peace be upon him, in the meaning of divinity was never a subject of Muslim disagreement. This truth is clear to them and not absent from their understanding. They receive it from their Lord's Book and their Prophet's Sunnah. The arena of these studies and the dispute surrounding them lies instead among positivist sociologists, who refuse to receive this creed from revelation. Jawdat appears to have sided with their opinion and adopted their approach to this matter, and now calls for its reconsideration. Like them, he believes in the stages and divisions of history. He says of history: "Humanity passed through stage after stage within it, moving from hunting to herding to agriculture. The division of human history into Old and New Stone Ages, and Bronze and Iron Ages, all indicates how the creation of knowledge, control and harnessing began."²¹

Muslims do not doubt, as sociologists do, that Adam, peace be upon him, was a prophet, purely affirming Allah's oneness, and received the creed of divine oneness from Allah Most High. "*Lo! Allah preferred Adam and Noah and the Family of Abraham and the Family of 'Imran above (all His) creatures.*" (Qur'an 3:33). Describing Adam's repentance, He, Most High,

20. *Unzuru 40: al-Lughah wa-l-waqi'* [Look, 40: Language and Reality], p. 10.

21. *Iqra* [Read], p. 90.

says: *"Then Adam received from his Lord words (of revelation), and He relented toward him. Lo! He is the relenting, the Merciful."* (Qur'an 2:37). This was Adam's approach and that of the prophets after him. Whenever deviant beliefs intruded upon it, a new messenger had to be sent. Adherents of the materialist orientation supposed that these deviations in human history were development in the history of belief. On the basis of this mistaken understanding, they devised conceptions of the development of divinity from polytheism to trinitarianism, to dualism and to the affirmation of oneness, denying that the first human being was guided and affirmed divine oneness. These ideas appeared among Muslims, who used the same expressions as positivist sociologists, such as "higher religions" and "lower religions". Thus Jawdat says in Iqra: "For this reason, Toynbee regarded civilisations as a regression from the higher religions. The higher religions are humanity and elevation..."²²

The Qur'an rejects this fabrication. He, Most High, says:

"Mankind were one community, and Allah sent (unto them) prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and revealed therewith the Scripture with the truth that it might judge between mankind concerning that wherein they differed. And only those unto whom (the Scripture) was given differed concerning it, after clear proofs had come unto them, through hatred one of another. And Allah by His Will guided those who believe unto the truth of that concerning which they differed. Allah guideth whom He will unto a straight path."

Qur'an 2:213

Jawdat's Conception of Unbelief

Jawdat tries to frame unbelief and faith through the Western conception of religion and the separation of matters of the Hereafter from worldly

22. The preceding source, p. 193.

matters, or what is known as separating religion from the state, as secularists try to do.

In a cultural seminar²³, Jawdat said:

"Unbelief is not a worldly sin. It is a sin concerning the Hereafter, for which Allah holds a person to account.

The unbeliever has the right to live, and the atheist has the right to live respected. If the atheist can persuade people of his atheism, there is no blame upon him, but he must not impose his view by force. We must eliminate mutual name-calling with charges of unbelief."

He then explains a person's right to atheism: every person may disbelieve. He took no account of Islam's rulings on apostasy: "You have the right to disbelieve. Unbelief is not a worldly fault. The worldly fault is to wrong people and not give the unbeliever the right to live under justice."

When he spoke about the heritage and the text of the Book in this seminar, he said:

"The wording is not sacred; what is sacred is the meaning. We know that meaning is born first. Meanings are born, and then names are assigned."²⁴

The Qur'an is sacred in wording and meaning, because it is Allah's Book revealed to His Messenger in its wording and meaning. He received it through revelation as it is, without contributing any opinion of his own. He, Most High, says: *"Stir not thy tongue herewith to hasten it. Lo! upon Us (resteth) the putting together thereof and the reading thereof. And when We read it, follow thou the reading; Then lo! upon Us (resteth) the explanation thereof."* (Qur'an 75:16-19).

23. A seminar in the cultural centre in Homs, with Na'im al-Yafi and Mahmud al-Akkam.

24. A seminar in Homs; a recorded tape.

The Qur'an is inimitable in wording and meaning. Al-Nazzam and some of the Qadariyyah tried to hold that its inimitability consists in preventing people from matching it, and turning them away, *sarfah*, when challenged to produce its like. They regarded this prevention and diversion as the miracle, rather than the Qur'an itself. This is unsound and contradicts the community's consensus before this deviant group introduced its disagreement.

Ibn Atiyyah said: "The Qur'an's challenge lies in its composition, the soundness of its meanings and the succession of its eloquent expressions. Its inimitability lies in Allah Most High's encompassing everything in knowledge and encompassing all speech in knowledge. Through His comprehensive knowledge, He knows which expression is suited to follow the first, revealing meaning after meaning..."²⁵

What Jawdat has done here, removing sacredness from wording and treating meaning alone as sacred, is uglier and more outrageous than what the Qadariyyah and al-Nazzam did. This is a path to corrupt reinterpretation and distortion of the Qur'an through choosing meanings and then interpreting expressions on their basis. It contradicts the use of Arabic to discover the speaker's intention through his speech.

Orientalists have continually repeated this proposition and spread this slogan among Muslims: reliance on the spirit of the text. They seek to distort Islamic scriptural texts, remove them from their forms and exclude the meanings conveyed by their wording. Jawdat therefore says: "What I want us to understand from this is that the meaning conveyed by the Book can be abolished completely, as though it did not exist... What will teach us, then, is not the Qur'an, but the events of the universe and history themselves..."²⁶

25. *Tafsir al-Qurtubi* [The Commentary of al-Qurtubi], 1:76.

26. *Unzuru* [Look], p. 8.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Will

To explain the relationship between Allah's will and human will, Jawdat devised an invalid mathematical equation and employed an unsound deterministic law, making Allah's will dependent on human will through the verse: "*Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts*" (Qur'an 13:11). Although this verse does not establish the relationship in this form, he removed it from its context and assigned it a meaning which alters its true meaning. This interpretation accords only with materialist principles and the views of the Qadari sect, which denies divine decree. Jawdat says:

"The change made by the people and the change made by Allah must both be present for change to take place.

The change brought about by the people must also come first. Yet these two changes are connected: if the change which Allah creates has taken place, this shows conclusively that the change undertaken by the people has already occurred, because Allah Most High has stipulated this precedence.

Likewise, if the change undertaken by the people occurs, the change which Allah creates will follow, on the basis of the promise of Allah Most High, who never breaks His promise, and His regularity, for which you will find no alteration."¹

This verse addresses punishment for human conduct, like other verses of the Qur'an, and does not address the conception of will. Jawdat, however, made it a constitution for social change, taking the subject outside the

1. *Hatta yughayyiru* [Until They Change], p. 69.

familiar disputes in the history of the deviant sects and the condemned discipline of speculative theology. We can nevertheless restore a correct understanding of the matter. Jawdat equated the people's change, disobedience, which is an act and a form of conduct, with human will and volition. He made Allah's change, punishment and retribution, equivalent to Allah's will concerning what occurs in the universe and His decree, and then made Allah's will dependent on human will. He thus interpreted all the verses concerning will in this inverted manner: human will comes first, and Allah's will follows it. By reversing the operation of divine will in this way, Jawdat departed from the Sunni approach and supported the approach of the Qadariyyah and the Mu'tazilah. The proper basis for discussing will is to refer the matter to the verses which address it and make them the fundamental rule, such as His saying, Most High: *"Yet ye will not, unless Allah willeth."* (Qur'an 76:30), rather than the verse: *"Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts"* (Qur'an 13:11). Furthermore, the context of the latter verse makes Allah's will absolute: command and volition belong to Him. Its context reads: *"Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts; and if Allah willeth misfortune for a folk there is none that can repel it, nor have they a defender beside Him."* (Qur'an 13:11).

The verse clearly indicates the unrestricted nature of divine will. This will is not dependent on human will, as Jawdat portrays it!

Ibn Taymiyyah says: "Allah has affirmed the two wills, Allah's will and the servant's will, and has shown that the servant's will depends on the Lord's will." He then cited Allah Most High's saying: "*Lo! this is an Admonishment, that whosoever will may choose a way unto his Lord. Yet ye will not, unless Allah willeth. Lo! Allah is Knower, Wise.*" (Qur'an 76:29-30).²

Jawdat, who follows the Mu'tazili and Qadari view of will, holds that Allah does not do whatever He wills; rather, this is subject to the conception of justice and wisdom.

"It is a grave error to suppose that Allah grants sovereignty to people who have not prepared themselves for it. Likewise, Allah does not distribute honour and humiliation arbitrarily. The error originates in supposing that Allah resembles human tyrants, rather than even the just among them, and distributes His dominion as oppressors do.

Exalted is Allah far above what they say. Allah is, rather, the wisest of judges. Demonstrating this wisdom is the duty of those from whom He took the covenant, when He gave them the Book, to make it plain to people and not conceal it."³

Here Jawdat explicitly makes Allah's will subject to the conception of justice and wisdom as interpreted by the Mu'tazilah. They make their own minds and opinions the arbiter over Allah Most High. They therefore decide what Allah may do, and also determine for Him what He cannot do, calling themselves the people of justice.

2. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatawa al-kubra* [The major fatwas], 8:238.

3. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 75.

He states this conception in the clearest terms, saying:

"There are two reasons for placing human behaviour outside knowledge, outside control, outside harnessing and outside regularities:

First, a mistaken understanding of religious belief: that Allah does what He wills. "*Yet ye will not, unless Allah willeth.*" (Qur'an 76:30). The history of dispute is long between those who see compulsion in human behaviour and those who see people as free to choose their behaviour; between those who regard a person as compelled against his will to fulfil Allah's determination and decree, with no power to depart from them, and those who regard Allah as changing his condition if he changes what is in himself. Some even say that we do not know Allah's determination and decree, and therefore have no part in people's destinies and behaviour, which depend on the unrestricted will of Allah, Lord of the Worlds. There are many such statements indicating obscurity, confusion and darkness of vision. Allah's will does not deprive human beings of their capacity to change and make their destinies. Rather, Allah's will is: "*Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts*" (Qur'an 13:11), and their destinies are in their hands. This is not the place to explain this in detail. We merely wanted to point out that this belief and view, which deprives humanity of choice and the capacity to determine destiny, places humanity and its destiny outside knowledge, harnessing and prediction."⁴

It was no coincidence that Jawdat directed criticism and mockery at the Sunni approach to will: he did so in agreement with the Qadari doctrine. He therefore regards the Sunni statement, "Allah does what He wills", as a mistaken understanding of religious belief, and faults its adherents for basing this on Allah Most High's saying: "*Yet ye will not, unless Allah willeth.*" (Qur'an 76:30). Jawdat also tries to confuse matters by attributing absolute compulsion to the Sunnis, in a desperate attempt to cast doubt on

4. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 87.

their creed, which opposes the doctrine of compulsion that denies human beings any will at all. We likewise reject the view of those who uphold absolute compulsion, but we do not join Jawdat in championing the doctrine of free choice adopted by the Qadari sect. The doctrine of free choice in which Jawdat believes is founded on defining divine will through purely human conceptions. Its adherents determine what Allah Most High must do and attribute this to the principle of justice and wisdom, as they conceive it.

Al-Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah states:

"His statement, 'He does what He wills', means that He is never unjust. The Qur'an's affirmation that Allah is free of injustice towards His servants requires a position between the Qadariyyah and those who uphold absolute compulsion. What is unjust and ugly when done by the descendants of Adam need not be unjust and ugly when done by Allah, as the Qadariyyah, the Mu'tazilah and others maintain. Such a claim likens Allah to His creatures and measures Him against them."

Jawdat then mocks those who say that we have no part in people's destinies and behaviour, and those who affirm Allah's unrestricted volition and complete will!!

Who Possesses Humanity's Destiny?

Can there be any doubt or hesitation on this subject: that Allah holds humanity by the forelock and determines its destiny?

It may be appropriate to review the Sunni conception of divine decree. This is one of the difficult questions which directly gave rise to deviant sects such as the Qadariyyah, the Mu'tazilah and others.⁵

5. For a fuller discussion, see the chapter "The Principle of Causality in Islam" in this study.

The commentator on *al-Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah* explained this question in detail, saying:

"The origin of divine decree is Allah's secret in His creation: His bringing into existence and destroying, impoverishing and enriching, causing death and giving life, leading astray and guiding...

The position of the Sunnis is that everything is subject to Allah's determination and decree, and that Allah Most High created His servants' acts. He, Most High, says: "*Lo! We have created every thing by measure.*" (Qur'an 54:49). He also says: "*He hath created everything and hath meted out for it a measure.*" (Qur'an 25:2). The Qadariyyah and the Mu'tazilah opposed this, claiming that Allah willed faith for the unbeliever but the unbeliever willed unbelief. They resorted to this claim to avoid saying that He willed unbelief for the unbeliever and punished him for it. Yet they became like someone seeking refuge from scorching ground in fire: fleeing certain things, they fell into something worse! Their view necessarily entails that the unbeliever's will overcame Allah Most High's will. According to them, Allah willed faith for him, whereas the unbeliever willed unbelief; the unbeliever's will occurred, while Allah Most High's will did not!!! This is among the ugliest beliefs. It is a statement without evidence; indeed, it contradicts the evidence."⁶

He had previously said that Allah "wills it to occur in the universe but does not approve it religiously".⁷ Amr ibn al-Haytham related a dialogue between a Qadari and a Magian: "We set out in a boat, accompanied by a Qadari and a Magian. The Qadari said to the Magian, 'Accept Islam.' The Magian said, 'When Allah wills it.' The Qadari said, 'Allah wills it, but

6. *Sharh al-aqidah al-Tahawiyyah* [Commentary on the creed of al-Tahawi], al-Maktab al-Islami edition, p. 249.

7. *Sharh al-aqidah al-Tahawiyyah* [Commentary on the creed of al-Tahawi], al-Maktab al-Islami edition, p. 249.

Satan does not!' The Magian said, 'Allah willed, and Satan willed, but what Satan willed occurred! This is a powerful Satan!!' In another account he said, 'Then I am on the side of the stronger of the two!!'"⁸

It is appropriate to cite passages from Jawdat's interpretation of the verses concerning will in a manner which reverses the Islamic approach. He says:

"Just as the Qur'an sometimes mentions Allah's action and the people's action together, explicitly and in detail, at other times it mentions only one, on the basis that the other is implicitly entailed. This is what Ibn Kathir stated, since this verse apparently mentions only Allah's action. Ibn Kathir therefore cited other verses in which both actions were mentioned in detail.

Among the verses which give rise to serious doubts, when a Muslim overlooks this relationship between Allah's change and the people's change, is His saying, Most High:

"Say: O Allah! Owner of Sovereignty! Thou givest sovereignty unto whom Thou wilt, and Thou withdrawest sovereignty from whom Thou wilt. Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt, and Thou abasest whom Thou wilt. In Thy hand is the good. Lo! Thou art Able to do all things."

Qur'an 3:26

In this verse Allah mentions only granting and withdrawing sovereignty, granting honour and bringing humiliation. He links these matters to will without mentioning human action. Yet we cannot define Allah's will ourselves. Allah, glorified and exalted is He, defines it, saying:

"Yet ye will not, unless Allah willeth. Lo! Allah is Knower, Wise. He maketh whom He will to enter His mercy, and for evil-doers hath prepared a painful doom." (Qur'an 76:30-31). He admits whom He wills

8. *Al-Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah* [The creed of al-Tahawi], al-Maktab al-Islami edition, p. 250.

into His mercy, but has prepared a painful punishment for the wrongdoers...

If some people try to interpret Allah's will as they wish, they are answered that this will is the will on the basis of which Allah established the regularity of human society in His saying, Most High: "*Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts*" (Qur'an 13:11). Adhering to this rule and bringing Muslims back to it is essential to the process of change."⁹

Jawdat tries here to divert attention from the verse concerning will to the verse concerning change, as we have explained, despite the clarity of the verses and their meaning, which leave no room for reinterpretation or distortion. We can identify a particularly subtle and important point: Jawdat's attempt to appear to agree with the Sunni approach by presenting Ibn Kathir's view. This attempt is thoroughly crude. I shall let Ibn Kathir speak about the very verses Jawdat discussed. Ibn Kathir represents here the Sunni approach and the method of the righteous early generations. In interpreting His saying, Most High, "*Say: O Allah! Owner of Sovereignty! Thou givest sovereignty unto whom Thou wilt, and Thou withdrawest sovereignty from whom Thou wilt.*" (Qur'an 3:26), he says: "Say, Muhammad, magnifying your Lord and thanking Him, entrusting your affairs to Him and relying upon Him: '*O Allah! Owner of Sovereignty!*', meaning that all sovereignty belongs to You; '*Thou givest sovereignty unto whom Thou wilt*', meaning that You give and withhold, that whatever You will occurs and whatever You do not will does not occur. This verse calls attention and guides people to gratitude for Allah's favour towards His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, because Allah transferred prophethood from the Children of Israel to the Arab Prophet...

9. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], pp. 74-75.

He therefore says: '*Say: O Allah! Owner of Sovereignty!*', meaning that You govern Your creation and do whatever You will. In the same way, He, Most High, answered those who presumed to judge Him concerning His command, when He said: '*And they say: If only this Qur'an had been revealed to some great man of the two towns?*' (Qur'an 43:31). He, Most High, answered them: '*Is it they who apportion thy Lord's mercy?*' (Qur'an 43:32), meaning that We govern what We have created as We will, with none to prevent or resist Us, and We possess the conclusive word and the complete proof in this matter. Likewise, He grants prophethood to whom He wills, as He, Most High, says: '*Allah knoweth best with whom to place His message.*' (Qur'an 6:124)."¹⁰

As for the other verse which he tried to interpret according to his own inclination, "*Yet ye will not, unless Allah willeth. Lo! Allah is Knower, Wise. He maketh whom He will to enter His mercy, and for evil-doers hath prepared a painful doom.*" (Qur'an 76:30-31), Ibn Kathir says of it: "*Yet ye will not, unless Allah willeth.*"¹¹: "This means that no one can guide himself, enter into faith or bring himself benefit '*unless Allah willeth. Lo! Allah is Knower, Wise.*'. He knows best who deserves guidance, facilitating it for him and providing its means, and who deserves to go astray, turning him away from guidance. His wisdom is consummate and His proof decisive. He, Most High, therefore says: '*Lo! Allah is Knower, Wise.*'. He then says: '*He maketh whom He will to enter His mercy, and for evil-doers hath prepared a painful doom.*'. This means that He guides whom He wills

10. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* [The Commentary of Ibn Kathir], 1:534, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah edition.

11. Al-Raghib al-Isfahani said: "Most regard mashi'ah as identical to iradah. Some hold that mashi'ah originally means bringing a thing into existence and attaining it, although in common usage it may be employed in place of iradah: mashi'ah from Allah Most High is bringing into existence, and from people it is attainment." See *al-Mufradat fi gharib al-Qur'an* [Vocabulary of the Qur'an], and *Fath al-bari* [The Creator's Opening], 13:448.

and leads astray whom He wills. Whoever He guides has no one to lead him astray, and whoever He leads astray has no one to guide him..."¹²

Ibn Kathir explains the verse's meaning so clearly that no further explanation is needed. He makes the subject of the phrase "He admits whom He wills" refer to Allah Most High: the will belongs to Him. Jawdat, however, makes the subject of the phrase refer to the human being. This inversion is adopted by the Qadari sect and also accords with the Marxist materialist approach, which grants humanity absolute freedom on earth, without any restriction imposed by divine decrees, as he expresses elsewhere.

12. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* [The Commentary of Ibn Kathir], 4:718, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah edition.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Creation of Human Acts

Research into the question of "the creation of human acts" examines the relationship between Creator and creature, and whether a creature can be a creator.

We discussed this question in the introduction. Here we examine Jawdat's and Shahrur's positions on it. Jawdat has adopted the Mu'tazili view, but, as usual, tries to confuse matters, create ambiguity for the reader and leave him uncertain.

Jawdat says:

"Here we can say that human behaviour and acts are Allah's work and Allah's creation. This statement does not support what first comes to mind from His saying, Most High:

"When Allah hath created you and what ye make?"

Qur'an 37:96

Nor does it support the surrounding discussion in speculative theology of whether Allah creates His servants' acts. Rather, our subject is that human behaviour is an effect and a result. We have already established that Allah Most High creates the results of causes directly, without any part being played by anyone else:

"Thy Lord bringeth to pass what He willeth and chooseth. They have never any choice."

Qur'an 28:68, excerpt

Here, however, we must take into account the capacity Allah has affirmed for human beings to change what is in their selves. What is within the selves, from which acts result, is subject to human authority."¹

Jawdat states in general terms that human behaviour and acts are Allah's work. Yet when the reader first imagines that Jawdat holds the Sunni view that human acts are created by Allah Most High, he finds himself faced with another approach which differs from it. Jawdat analyses the subject through the Mu'tazili approach, indeed through the ideas of the materialist approach. He holds that a person possesses the power to change what is within himself and within others, while Allah's action is confined to creating what the person determines and chooses. Allah must respond to this person, implement his ideas and create the results of his choice.

Jawdat therefore rejects the clear meaning of the verse: "*When Allah hath created you and what ye make?*" (Qur'an 37:96). If Allah does not create what we do, who creates what we do?

Al-Qurtubi says:

"When Allah hath created you and what ye make?" (Qur'an 37:96): "This is the Sunni doctrine: acts are created by Allah Most High, exalted and glorious is He, and acquired by His servants. This invalidates the doctrines of the Qadariyyah and those who uphold absolute compulsion."²

We must bring this question to light, clarify its meaning and invalidate Jawdat's attempts to obscure matters and conceal the truth. He seeks to make the reader feel that "the creation of human acts" is merely a matter of disputation, discussed only through speculative theology. The truth Jawdat

1. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 89.

2. Al-Qurtubi, 15:96.

tries to conceal is his adoption of the Mu'tazili approach and his desire to keep this obscure.

By presenting the sects' views, we can identify Jawdat's position. The people of truth, the Sunnis, say that their acts make servants obedient or disobedient, that these acts are created by Allah Most High, and that the True One alone creates all creatures.

Jawdat has made acts an effect and a result, with the result created by Allah. His words mean that the effect is created by the human being. Here he converges with the Qadari doctrine, which states that a person creates his own acts.

Jawdat tried to draw on the meaning of the verse: "*Thy Lord bringeth to pass what He willeth and chooseth.*" (Qur'an 28:68), but he confuses matters.

Ibn al-Qayyim explains the verse's meaning clearly and clarifies the choice meant here, which differs from Jawdat's account. In *Zad al-ma'ad* [Provisions for the Return], he says:

"Furthermore, Allah, glorified and exalted is He, alone creates and chooses from among created beings. He, Most High, says: '*Thy Lord bringeth to pass what He willeth and chooseth.*' (Qur'an 28:68). Choice here does not mean the volition which speculative theologians refer to when describing Him as an agent acting by choice, although He, glorified is He, is indeed such. This meaning is not intended here. Such choice is included in His saying: '*Thy Lord bringeth to pass what He willeth*', for He creates only by His choice, and in His saying, '*what He willeth*', for will is choice. Choice here means selection and election: it is a choice after creation. General choice precedes creation and is therefore broader and earlier; this choice is narrower and later. It is a choice from among created beings, whereas the former is a choice to create... Just as He alone

creates, He alone chooses from among His creation. No one other than He can create or choose. He, glorified and exalted is He, knows best the objects of His choice, the recipients of His approval and what is fit or unfit to be chosen. No one else shares in this in any respect..."³

We have an engaging dialogue which demonstrates the failure of the Mu'tazili Qadari approach when confronted by ordinary Sunnis who retain a sound natural disposition:

"Al-Lalaka'i mentioned in *Sharh usul i'tiqad ahl al-Sunnah* [Commentary on the Foundations of Sunni Belief] that a Bedouin came to Amr ibn Ubayd and said: 'My she-camel has been stolen. Pray to Allah to return her to me!'

Amr ibn Ubayd said: 'O Allah, this poor man's she-camel has been stolen, although You did not will her theft. O Allah, return her to him.'

The Bedouin said: 'Shaykh, now my she-camel is gone, and I have lost hope of recovering her!'

He said: 'How so?' The Bedouin replied: 'Because if He willed that she should not be stolen, yet she was stolen, I cannot rule out His willing her return while she fails to return.' He rose and departed."⁴

Jawdat has consistently excluded Allah's authority and will from all created beings, confining His power to creating the results of ideas originating in human beings. The matter cannot be understood in this way, since this makes Allah's will subject to human will. The origin of the deviant sects lay in equating will and volition with love and approval.⁵

3. *Zad al-ma'ad* [Provisions for the Return], p. 29, Mu'assasat al-Risalah edition.

4. *Shuruh usul i'tiqad ahl al-Sunnah* [Commentaries on the Foundations of Sunni Belief], p. 740.

5. See the Sunni approach to divine decree in this study, p. 30.

Jawdat revealed his Qadari conception when explaining certain verses concerning divine decree. He said, concerning His saying, Most High: *"Destroyed We not the former folk, Then caused the latter folk to follow after? Thus deal We ever with the guilty."* (Qur'an 77:16-18), His saying: *"Thus we save believers."* (Qur'an 21:88), and His saying: *"Then, can they expect aught save the treatment of the folk of old? Thou wilt not find for Allah's way of treatment any substitute, nor wilt thou find for Allah's way of treatment aught of power to change."* (Qur'an 35:43):

"These verses, which affirm the inevitability of Allah's law and regularity, must not be understood as denying human authority to control the course of societies. Allah's regularity in societies rests on a fundamental principle in His saying, Most High: *'Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts'* (Qur'an 13:11). This principle places people's destinies in their hands, as the fruit of their actions."⁶

Humanity's destiny belongs to Allah Most High, who disposes of it as He wills. He, Most High, says: *"He will forgive whom He will and He will punish whom He will. Allah is Able to do all things."* (Qur'an 2:284).

He, Most High, says: *"Then Allah sendeth whom He will astray, and guideth whom He will. He is the Mighty, the Wise."* (Qur'an 14:4).

He, Most High, says: *"He whom Allah guideth, he indeed is led aright, and he whom He sendeth astray, for him thou wilt not find a guiding friend."* (Qur'an 18:17).

6. *Iqra* [Read], p. 133.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Evolution

The theory of evolution is one of the pillars of Marxist materialist theory and one of its essential requirements.

We may need little effort to establish Jawdat's, Iqbal's and Shahrur's positions on this theory and their call to act through it, since their positions are clear.

Adherents of the materialist approach, whether Marxists or positivists generally, rely on Darwin's theory of evolution in their social research. Indeed, they regard it as the foundation of the process of social change.

Jawdat presents the Marxist view of this theory, saying:

"In 'dialectics', and in the third characteristic of Marxist philosophy, just as it has proved possible to know the laws of nature's development, it is possible to know the laws of society's development, which have an objective significance... It acquires the precision found in biology and becomes capable of using the laws of social development in scientific applications; socialism consequently becomes a science."¹ Jawdat also regards this process as the believer's lost possession, which must therefore be adopted as the sound aspect of Marxist theory.

Through selected passages from the books of Jawdat, Iqbal and Shahrur, we can trace the efforts made to render the theory of evolution acceptable to Muslims and establish it among them under the banner of science. We can also discover why they are so tenacious in safeguarding and defending it.

1. *Hatta yughayyiru* [Until They Change], p. 80.

It is striking that Jawdat finds it surprising that the Islamic world rejects and does not accept the theory of evolution.² He has tried to rebuke Muslims for having a particular idea of how creation originated firmly established in their minds through adhering to the literal wording of the sacred texts, the Book and the Sunnah. He says:

"A particular conception of how creation originated has become firmly established in Muslims' minds through adhering to the literal wording of the sacred texts, rather than travelling through the earth. This entrenched conception caused Muslims' hostile attitude towards the idea of evolution, which entered the Islamic world a hundred years ago. It also caused them to neglect and overlook the clear verse which identifies travelling through the earth as the source of knowledge of how creation began: '*Say (O Muhammad): Travel in the land and see how He originated creation*' (Qur'an 29:20). I have not found a single Muslim study which introduces this verse as connected with this subject."³

Jawdat's decision to investigate the origin of creation outside the sacred texts, without remaining within them, demonstrates his choice of the idea of evolution, which also accords with his adherence to the materialist approach.

In fact, Jawdat has not hesitated to assist us with explicit passages indicating his adoption of the method of research devised by positivist sociologists. He nevertheless tends to avoid presenting this directly, using suggestions which an intelligent person will not miss and which will not repel the reader.!

2. The Islamic world rejected the theory of evolution, known as the theory of "origin and development", because Darwin devised a strange conception of the origin of life: it was in water, then on land, then humanity appeared, originating from a group of animals, "the ape".

3. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 154.

What Method of Research Has Jawdat Chosen to Discover How Creation Began?

Jawdat answers this specific question clearly: "Thus the scientific position, that is, the historical position based on regularities, the position of one who travels and seeks to discover how creation began, provides a coherent, effective position free of emotional reaction."⁴

We can identify the principal outlines of the method of research he advocates by examining passages from his books. We may find it surprising that he insists on treating knowledge of how creation began as a fundamental problem which must be understood outside the scriptural texts. We must also recognise that this interest in discovering how creation began through the proposed approach renders inoperative the Qur'anic verses which provide information about the beginning of creation: the creation of humanity, the creation of the heavens and the earth, and, more generally, information about how each created thing began. We may ask why he adopted and advocated this approach, and whether it has any scriptural evidence.

The Origin of Human Life

Before presenting the evidence Jawdat offers for this shift towards discovering how creation began by travelling through the earth, rather than through the verses of the Book, we must pause briefly over Jawdat and his imaginings concerning evolution and the origin of life.

In one of his essays, he says:

"Anyone who has studied much human history knows that people rejected certain things and then acknowledged them, and accepted other things and then abandoned them. Seeing examples of this kind makes a

4. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 155.

person suspect that the things we take for granted now are not everlasting and eternal.

Allah alone is eternal, with nothing like Him, whereas created things change.

If a person could observe in thought the condition of the earth, the origin of life on it and the kinds of animals that lived there, and see that one day all life was in water, then came to exist on land, and then the human being appeared.

Why does it not occur to us that this creation is still continuing? Why does it not occur to us that creation has not stopped, that things are still being created and added to creation, and that there is another bringing into being??!!

Humanity's distinction is that it benefits from history. Knowing how creation began indicates the continuation of creation and its increase. Our human awareness of the earth's history is less than two hundred years old?? What are two hundred years compared with the millions of years through which the earth existed without rational beings??

History will compel Muslims to change their understanding of the Qur'an. Muslims therefore adopt a negative attitude towards history and acknowledge only their own history, rather than general history, whereas their history assumes its true proportions, negatively and positively, only when viewed through general history."⁵

No rational person reading these statements can doubt that they exude the theory of "origin and development" and display the marks of the materialist approach. Jawdat's call to change our understanding of the Qur'an on the basis of these imaginings constitutes a departure from Allah's approach and an exclusion of His verses. Why does Jawdat insist on receiving knowledge

5. Jawdat Said, *Unzuru 40: al-Lughah wa-l-waqi'* [Look, 40: Language and Reality], p. 10.

from humanity's general history and treating it as a source of knowledge, while abandoning and neglecting Qur'anic truths?!?

General history means the stages through which human societies passed: the transition from the primitive communal stage to the stage of organisation, from hunting to pastoralism, then to organisation, from hunting to pastoralism, then to agriculture. It also includes dividing the earth's ages into a Stone Age, a Bronze Age and other classifications devised by adherents of the materialist approach, whose advocacy was taken up by the Marxists.

How astonishing is this call which Jawdat carries, and how strange his imaginative approach, which he has called the scientific approach. How can he call it knowledge when it bypasses the Qur'anic verses, abolishes their meaning and operates apart from them?

How Does Creation Begin?

How does Jawdat dare choose a path to knowing how creation began which differs from the Qur'an's path, explicitly calling for the abandonment of the verses which define how creation began and obtaining this account from another source!!

He bases this on a verse of the Noble Qur'an, makes it a universal rule and describes the earliest Muslims as ignorant and heedless of it. Concerning His saying, Most High:

“Travel in the land and see how He originated creation”

Qur'an 29:20, excerpt

he says: "The words of this verse are clear and contain no ambiguity. Its meaning presents no difficulty to any Arabic speaker; even children can

understand it without trouble. Yet people did not imagine what would emerge from this meaning and the content of this verse, and we have no capacity to encompass this content. Nevertheless, things have become clear and been disclosed to us which never occurred to the earliest people, and those who follow will see what we have not had the opportunity to see... This noble verse contains a defined approach to research encompassing the material and non-material aspects of the world, substances and accidents in the expression of earlier scholars. The subject encompasses all beings, from the atom and what is smaller than it to the galaxy, indeed the whole universe; from the first organic materials to the human being, who is in the best form physically, intellectually and socially; and from elementary ideas to the most complex."⁶

Is it not strange that Jawdat says children can understand this verse, while the earliest people overlooked it, without excluding the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, from this heedlessness? This statement also encompasses the community of the noble Companions, implying that they did not grasp its meaning or pay attention to it!

Where was this verse revealed? To whom was it revealed? Who knows the circumstances of its revelation? How could this verse escape the community's Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, charged with conveying the message, fulfilling the trust and advising the community? Did it escape him, or did he forget it?

Why did this meaning appear only to Jawdat Said? Why did the Prophet's Companions not express this view? Why did the scholars not interpret this verse in this way? Were they heedless of it?

How did Darwin perceive the importance of knowing how creation began, then travel through the earth, excavating and collecting remains, to arrive at

6. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 209.

a strange conception of the origin of life, how humanity came to exist and how it developed from one stage to another?

Why does Jawdat make this verse a slogan and contrive strange positions around it? Why does he claim that resolving it requires us to leave the correct source of knowledge for conjectural, imaginative knowledge, as we found in Jawdat's conception of the establishment of life on earth and his imagining of human origins!!

Stranger still, he believes this verse will overturn conceptions and the foundations of knowledge, as Darwin imagined before him, or as Shahrur tries to find the missing link and remedy the deficiency in Darwin's theory, finding it in the breathing of the spirit.

Jawdat says:

"The verse encompasses everything human beings can study: it is the subject of every science. According to this verse, the beginning of every subject should mention how its creation began, even the manner of believing in Allah: how humanity began to perceive the meaning of divinity. Every subject, then, has a beginning of creation in relation to its entry into human awareness.

According to what the verse requires, we should reconsider everything we see from the standpoint of how its creation began."⁷

Why should this overturning of the foundations of knowledge occur after fourteen centuries? Why should we reconsider? Who asked us to undertake this reconsideration? Why did the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, not ask us to reconsider? Why does Jawdat ask us to reconsider everything? Where did this absurd belief come from, which takes the Qur'anic verses, invalidates them and destroys them for the sake of the theory of those who dig in the earth? All these questions oblige us to define

7. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 209.

the method of research into these matters through the Islamic approach, compare it with Jawdat's proposed method of research and identify the approach to which it belongs. In the introduction we presented the scriptural approach, the rational approach and the materialist approach.

Merely reopening the investigation of human origins and the conception of faith means rejecting the creed held by Muslims from the Prophet's time, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, until now. Anyone who asks to reopen research into material and non-material matters must provide evidence which helps define his view and approach clearly.

The Foundations of Qur'anic Interpretation

Here we must examine Jawdat's request, define it and discuss it with him. Yet it is also essential to consider the views of scholars and commentators concerning this verse, which he claims brought about an upheaval requiring us to reconsider everything we see from the standpoint of how its creation began.

Those best qualified to provide the appropriate interpretation are the scholars whose trustworthiness, integrity and knowledge the community acknowledges, and who deal with scriptural texts through the scriptural approach. Jawdat habitually takes the verse he wishes to cite out of its context, separates it from what precedes and follows it, and then interprets it without considering its place in that context. Through this method of separation and truncation, he becomes like someone who stops at His saying, Most High, "*Ah, woe unto worshippers*", without completing it with His saying, Most High, "*Who are heedless of their prayer;*" (Qur'an 107:4-5).

Jawdat's interpretation of this verse is a complete example of his method of materialist interpretation.⁸

We can seek an interpretation of this verse in the recognised commentaries. Its text occurs in Surat al-Ankabut, in His saying, Most High:

"See they not how Allah produceth creation, then reproduceth it? Lo! for Allah that is easy. Say (O Muhammad): Travel in the land and see how He originated creation, then Allah bringeth forth the later growth. Lo! Allah is Able to do all things."

Qur'an 29:19-20

Al-Qurtubi said:

"Do they not see how Allah originates fruits, which live, then perish, and which He continually brings back, and likewise all living creatures? If you see His power to originate and bring into existence, He is also able to restore them." Al-Qurtubi then says: "Say, Muhammad: travel through the earth, '*see how He originated creation*', despite their multitude, their differing forms, languages, colours and natures. Look at the dwellings, lands and remains of past generations, and how He destroyed them, so that you may thereby know the perfection of His power."⁹

Ibn Jarir al-Tabari said:

"Do they not see how Allah begins the creation of things: a small child, then a growing boy, then a man, then a middle-aged man? He then restores him after his destruction and decay as He began him the first time, as a new creation through resurrection after death." Ibn Jarir also

8. I have devoted a separate discussion to identifying the verses Jawdat removed from their context and gave a different interpretation, in the chapter "Jawdat's Materialist Interpretation of the Noble Qur'an", p. 218.

9. *Tafsir al-Qurtubi* [The Commentary of al-Qurtubi], 13:336.

said: "He, exalted is His mention, says to Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: say, Muhammad, to those who deny resurrection after death and reject reward and punishment: travel through the earth and see how Allah began things, how He brought them into being and originated them. Just as originating them at first was not beyond Him when He brought them into existence, so bringing them into being again is not beyond Him..."¹⁰

Sayyid Qutb says:

"It is an address to everyone who denies Allah and the meeting with Him. Its evidence is this universe, and its field is heaven and earth, according to the Qur'an's method of making the entire universe a display of the signs and evidence of faith. They do see how Allah originates creation: in the growing plant, in the egg and the embryo, and in everything which did not exist and then comes to exist, which human power, collectively or individually, cannot create. The secret of life alone is beyond human power: beyond human power to know its originator and how it came, let alone for anyone to attempt or claim it. Its only explanation is that it is the work of Allah, who originates creation." Sayyid then says: "He then calls them¹¹ to travel through the earth and trace Allah's handiwork and signs in creation and origination, in the inanimate and the living alike, so that they perceive how life begins in plants, animals and human beings everywhere. Travelling through the earth, as we have already said, alerts the senses and feelings through new sights, inviting them to reflect and ponder the manifestations of Allah's power to bring life into being..."¹²

10. *Tafsir al-Tabari* [The Commentary of al-Tabari], 20:138.

11. The call is addressed to everyone who denies Allah and the meeting with Him.

12. *Fi zilal al-Qur'an* [In the Shade of the Qur'an], 5:2729.

These Scholarly Statements Yield the Following Observations

1. Those addressed by these verses are those who reject Allah's signs and deny resurrection after death. The address invites reflection on Allah's creatures, which indicate His power, and learning from the outcome, as in His saying, Most High: *"Say (unto them, O Muhammad): Travel in the land and see the nature of the sequel for the guilty!"* (Qur'an 27:69).

Jawdat tries to generalise the verse's meaning into a call to all people to travel through the earth, excavate it and reconsider what they have learnt from Allah's verses in the Book about how everything we see began to be created. The verse does not indicate this direction.

2. Those addressed by this verse are the Prophet's contemporaries, and those who come after them are included in the address. Jawdat tries to present matters differently by removing and interpreting part of the verse, omitting the word "Say" from its beginning as it appears in the full context, to make the reader feel that the Prophet's contemporaries in particular are not included in this address.

3. Jawdat seems here to accuse the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and his Companions of ignorance and heedlessness of this verse, and of lacking concern to discover how creation began. No report has reached us that the Prophet left Medina and began searching in valleys or seas, or sought to discover anything of this kind through research and excavation. Nor has it been related to us that any Companion, may Allah be pleased with them, tried to discover a religious matter by travelling through the earth and digging. They knew best the intention of the Prophet, who taught them every aspect of their religion, however small. Did the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, overlook this verse, or forget to teach it to his community? Allah forbid that he should forget; that would not befit him. Allah Most High says to him: *"O Messenger! Make known*

that which hath been revealed unto thee from thy Lord, for if thou do it not, thou wilt not have conveyed His message. Allah will protect thee from mankind. Lo! Allah guideth not the disbelieving folk." (Qur'an 5:67). Since the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, did not travel through the earth to investigate how things began to be created, his Companions did not do so, and we have not heard of any Muslim scholar interpreting this verse in the meaning Jawdat invented, should we accept Jawdat's statement or theirs?!!

Why does he interpret this verse in this way? What sources has he relied upon?

Jawdat proceeds from the conception of the materialist approach, which accords with Marxist thought. This becomes apparent in their agreement with the general theory of evolution. He therefore has no hesitation about approaching knowledge of how creation began through their materialist approach, on the basis of their manner of research and investigation. They believe only in what proceeds from matter and accept only what reality establishes. He has therefore consistently declared the meaning of the Book's verses abolished and urged learning outside the Qur'an: travelling through the earth, researching it by digging and excavation, and observing ancient remains to discover humanity's conditions in ancient times...

In his essay, he says: "The meaning conveyed by the Book can be abolished completely, as though it did not exist. What will alert Muslims to this is the Book's concern with history, human conditions and historical events. What will teach us, then, is not the Qur'an, but the events of the universe and history themselves. An example is: '*Travel in the land and see how He originated creation*' (Qur'an 29:20)."¹³

What sources did he rely on to propound this theory, through which he abolished the meaning of Allah's verses in the Book and called for

13. *Unzuru 40* [Look, 40], p. 8.

knowledge to be received from history and from cosmic and historical events? We have established that the verse he advocates as the starting point for changing the source of knowledge and guidance concerns a limited matter and cannot provide evidence for this, as we saw from the statements of scholars and commentators. He has nothing left but the sources of the materialist tendency, which makes reading history and observing the universe the path to truth. Why does he withhold trust from Allah's verses while placing this trust in history, whether written history or history unearthed through excavation?

Is this not a calumny against Allah's established and authentic Book: "*Lo! We, even We, reveal the Reminder, and lo! We verily are its Guardian.*" (Qur'an 15:9)? Is this not support for theories devised by human beings?! Jawdat has been keen to highlight the matters requiring reconsideration. These require a detailed response from us:

1. The Development of the Conception of Divinity

Reconsidering the manner of faith: how humanity began to perceive the meaning of divinity, as he stated in the preceding passage. The question of how humanity began to believe, or perceived the meaning of divinity, has not been a subject of disagreement among Muslims, since this truth is present in Muslim life. Muslims receive this conception from their Lord's Book and their Prophet's Sunnah. This field of research does exist, however, among positivist sociologists, who reject receiving such beliefs from revelation. These discussions therefore arise among them. We have no doubt that Jawdat has sided with the positivist sociologists, deliberately, insistently and knowingly, rather than inadvertently. He shares their views of historical stages, humanity's development and society as a living organism subject to the same laws as individuals, and their view that specialisation is the goal of every development and advance in beings. In tracing Jawdat's ideas, we find the results of this influence clear. No book

or article of his is free of such agreement. We saw this when discussing the abolition of prophethood, which he places in humanity's childhood!!

His insistence on discovering how humanity first perceived divinity raises questions and places the writer under suspicion. This is not a problem for the community and does not require this clamour, unless the aim is to change people's method of thought to suit his materialist, sensory approach and follow sociologists in their conceptions of the first human being and his first perception of divinity. We have statements from these scholars which show their views on the development of religious belief or the idea of God among primitive peoples. They continue to research and study this question. We can summarise some of their views to establish the relationship of these ideas to Jawdat's, and the true meaning of the hints he includes in his books through them.

Herbert Spencer's Views

Jawdat converges with Herbert Spencer¹⁴ on evolution, regarding it as the supreme law of every being: the more a living organism advances, the clearer its individuality and specialisation become. Spencer was enamoured of the law of "origin and development". He defined sociology's function as seeking to discover society's origin, elements, structure and form, the stages of its growth and development, and other phenomena brought about by natural, biological and psychological factors. These factors act together in a unified evolutionary process, which he called "super-organic evolution". He frequently likened society to a living organism, while also inclining strongly towards individualism.

Jawdat's call to discover how creation began may have been drawn from Spencer, who claimed that observing contemporary peoples at a less

14. Dr Zaydan Abd al-Baqi, *al-Tafkir al-ijtima'i* [Social Thought], the chapter "Herbert Spencer and Social Thought".

advanced stage affords the researcher an opportunity to reconstruct the sequence of transformations through which society passed before reaching the advanced stage.

Spencer's conceptions also show similarities in the development of belief. He regards the worship of spiritual beings, represented by gods, angels and the spirits of the dead in primitive societies, as religion's original form, from which the tendency to worship natural phenomena emerged.

Passages in Jawdat's books show similarity in ideas and manner of thought. He says:

"If we now wish to adapt our conception to His saying, Most High, *'Travel in the land and see how He originated creation'* (Qur'an 29:20), we may come to conceive that creation was not simply created and finished. We ourselves are being created now, and the universe is being created. Just as we were small and continue to be created, creation after creation, so the universe continues to be created. It was not created and finished; it is now in certain stages of its creation. It has passed through particular stages, is living through others and will enter further stages.

Likewise, if we imagine the individual human being, how his creation began from a single cell, then how he grew and eventually became a rational living being travelling through the earth, we see that although his cells change and are replaced, he remains one being. Humanity too can be conceived as a single organism, with individuals as its cells, entering and leaving it as cells are born within the individual and leave him. If we view humanity as a single creature, we may be able to imagine it at some point in a stage resembling childhood or adolescence. Perhaps it is still in the prime of youth, for it has certainly not reached the maturity expected of it: *'Nay, but (man) hath not done what He commanded him.'* (Qur'an 80:23). In this sense Iqbal interpreted His saying, Most High: *'Your creation and your raising (from the dead) are only as (the creation and the raising of) a single soul.'* (Qur'an 31:28).

Among the meanings the verse also indicates is that knowing how creation began and understanding matters at this level alerts the human being to the possibility that creation may grow, progress and improve. Whoever knows how creation began weak and helpless, then grew slowly, and that this growth required long ages, may be led by reflecting on the beginning of creation to think about its destiny. This is not its destiny on the Day of Resurrection, but its worldly destiny: the end of this creation whose beginning we have learnt something about. Although this meaning is unfamiliar in traditional cultural settings, understanding Allah's signs in the horizons and within the selves, and understanding something of how creation began, brings this subject into research, thought and reflection. Whoever considers the beginning of creation will imagine its destiny if he understands that creation continually grows and progresses."¹⁵

Since this study does not aim to provide a comprehensive response to philosophers' views or demonstrate the unsoundness of their theories in detail, we confine ourselves here to uncovering the connection between Jawdat's ideas and those of positivist sociologists such as Comte, Spencer, Nietzsche and others. Jawdat acknowledges this influence and does not deny the charge; indeed, he takes pride in it.

Asked how far Malik Bennabi had influenced him and whether he relied on him alone, Jawdat said: "I benefited from Toynbee, Goethe¹⁶ and others." He did not say that he was influenced by Malik, al-Shafi'i, Ibn Taymiyyah or other scholars of the early generations. Although Jawdat sometimes quotes Ibn Taymiyyah, he has not actually been influenced by him, just as he has not benefited from the Qur'anic verses which he removes from their

15. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 212. We have devoted the discussion of the verse here to evolution; its aspect concerning a change in the location of evidence was examined in the chapter on changing the sources of evidence.

16. An interview in the newspaper *al-Liwa* and the magazine *al-Alam*, conducted by Wahid Taja.

context to give them a meaning different from that accepted by the community's scholars. I have found these verses heading the views of Comte, Nietzsche and Toynbee in unparalleled confusion. Sometimes he deliberately mentions a saying of Allah Most High and then connects it to a philosopher's statement, as when citing this verse:

He, Most High, says: "*Our Lord! These led us astray, so give them double torment of the Fire.*" (Qur'an 7:38). Jawdat then says: "This is the fundamental idea in which monotheistic religions differ from civilisations. Toynbee therefore regarded civilisations as a retreat from the higher religions. The higher religions are humanity and elevation; they are not cancers of civilisations, as Frazer and his like imagined. Rather, civilisations are cancers of religions and a retreat from them."¹⁷

We cannot discuss here the idea of higher religions, contrasted with lower or primitive religions according to the positivist sociologists' theory. Our purpose is to show that his manner of treating Qur'anic verses is strange: he presents part of a verse and then applies it to a positivist sociologist's view. This allows us to imagine a lamentable situation: if we tried to return every idea he wrote or disseminated in his books to its owner, nothing would remain but the Qur'anic verses and Prophetic hadiths with which he adorned those views, or which he falsified through those views. This is what he did with the verse: "*Travel in the land and see how He originated creation*" (Qur'an 29:20), making it a slogan for positivist sociology and gathering beneath it views known in the history of sociology as "comparative religion", through which most human philosophies investigate the origin of life and the development of the religious idea. All Jawdat has done so far on this subject is point to the importance of a particular approach, then select verses whose words resemble one of its subjects. He may contrive positions through numerous subjects, some of

17. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 192.

which we discussed in the chapter "Jawdat's Materialist Interpretation of the Noble Qur'an".

Having formed a complete picture of Jawdat's manner of dealing with Qur'anic verses and positivist ideas, we can examine his idea that everything we see must be reconsidered from the standpoint of how its creation began. We have offered some observations on his idea of the development of belief; here we can record another example concerning human creation.

How Did Human Creation Begin?

We begin our discussion with Jawdat where he began, criticising the community's scholars for not referring in their writings to the verse: "*Travel in the land and see how He originated creation*" (Qur'an 29:20), or mentioning it as a starting point for their research. He regards the failure to pursue this subject fully as a deficiency in the Islamic movement, saying:¹⁸

"An indication of the Islamic movement's extreme slowness is that I have not yet encountered anyone who has discussed or referred to the verse: '*Travel in the land and see how He originated creation*' (Qur'an 29:20), although the problem of the beginning of creation was among the first ideas to shock religious thought. Even Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's book on this subject, *al-Radd ala al-dahriyyin* [Refutation of the Materialists], may be regarded as looking backwards rather than forwards. His excuse is that he wrote it in his early youth. From that time until now, we find no one who has made the verse about observing how creation began a starting point for investigating this problem, which troubles students and teachers throughout the Islamic world. Although the problem is pressing and the Qur'anic verse is unlike forgotten books, the dominant idea prevents people from seeing clear matters which almost strike the eye."

18. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], pp. 215-216.

The Response to al-Afghani

In fact, the problem he wishes to raise in the Islamic world will not elicit a response or find suitable acceptance except among secularists whose hearts have embraced purely materialist thought. When these people proceed in this direction, they know their true position, the extent of their departure from the Islamic approach and their distance from religion. The Islamic cultural milieu likewise understands the dimensions of their intellectual transformation.

Jawdat's harsh reproach of his teacher Jamal al-Din al-Afghani stems from al-Afghani's opposition to and confrontation with the theory of human evolution coming from the West. Al-Afghani attacked Darwin's theory and refuted its claims with mockery and sarcasm. In *al-Radd ala al-dahriyyin* [Refutation of the Materialists], al-Afghani¹⁹ accused the theory's advocates among Muslims of unbelief and atheism, saying:

"The foremost exponent of this view, materialism, is Darwin. He wrote a book explaining that the human being was an ape, whose form then underwent gradual refinement and improvement over successive long centuries under the influence of natural and external factors, until he advanced to the intermediate stage of the orangutan, then from that form to the earliest human stages..."

He then says: "According to Darwin's claim, a flea could become an elephant over centuries and ages, and an elephant could turn into a flea..."

These are al-Afghani's statements about evolution, which aroused Jawdat's anger towards him and prompted his harsh criticism of the book.

19. Jawdat drew on al-Afghani's ideas and rationalist school and described him as the great reformer. The true reason for his sudden reversal towards his teacher lies, Allah knows best, in the change in Jawdat's thought, his transition from the rationalist to the materialist doctrine, and his settling upon this in his latest book, *Iqra* [Read], and certain essays. For a fuller discussion, see the chapter on Jawdat Said's intellectual affiliation in this book, p. 265.

Our concern here is less to criticise Darwin's theory than to identify the relationship between Jawdat's belief in evolution and the idea of evolution in Marxist materialist thought. This connection arises through his saying: "Creation increases, and its increase tends towards improvement and progress"²⁰, and his statement that knowledge of how creation began must be obtained outside the Qur'an, from the signs in the horizons and within the selves, and from history. Concerning this, he says: "Seeing examples of humanity emerging from abnormal conditions into a normal condition, such as the transition from eating a dead brother's flesh to recoiling from it. Through knowing Allah's signs in the horizons and within the selves, gaining insight into history, how human creation began and the stages humanity passed through in history..."²¹

At the beginning of this discussion, we mentioned how he invites us to imagine the earth's condition, saying:

"If a person could observe in thought the condition of the earth, the origin of life on it and the kinds of animals that lived there, and see that one day all life was in water, then came to exist on land, and then the human being appeared..."²² Does this sequence in the existence of things come from anywhere but Darwin's theory, positivist sociologists and the theory of "origin and development", which claims that life began in water from a single cell and then the human being appeared? Jawdat's acceptance of this theory puts him in opposition to the Muslims' creed, received from the Book and the Sunnah: that Allah created humanity directly. I shall present several noble verses which make this clear:

20. *Iqra* [Read], p. 214.

21. *Al-Amal* [Action], p. 64.

22. *Unzuru 40: al-Lughah wa-l-waqi'* [Look, 40: Language and Reality], p. 10.

He, Most High, says, explaining that humanity was created from dust:

“Lo! the likeness of Jesus with Allah is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust, then He said unto him: Be! and he is.”

Qur'an 3:59

He, Most High, then describes the dust from which Adam was created:

“Verily We created man of potter's clay of black mud altered,”

Qur'an 15:26

Allah Most High then adds another description of this creation:

“He created man of clay like the potter's, And the jinn did He create of smokeless fire.”

Qur'an 55:14-15

Allah Most High then says that He began human creation from clay:

“Who made all things good which He created, and He began the creation of man from clay;”

Qur'an 32:7

He, Most High, says, describing the clay from which humanity was created:

“Lo! We created them of plastic clay.”

Qur'an 37:11, excerpt

He explains the manner of creation when He says:

“O Iblis! What hindereth thee from falling prostrate before that which I have created with both My hands?”

Qur'an 38:75, excerpt

This was at the beginning of creation. As for the creation of human descendants thereafter:

“And He it is Who hath created man from water, and hath appointed for him kindred by blood and kindred by marriage”

Qur'an 25:54, excerpt

He says, explaining the nature of the fluid from which the child is created:

“He hath created man from a drop of fluid, yet behold! he is an open opponent.”

Qur'an 16:4

Allah Most High describes to us in precise detail how He created humanity. How can we abandon this knowledge from One who is Wise and Knowing, and receive the matter from Darwin's followers, who claim authority in science and excavation?!!

The Theory of Evolution

One point must be noted when discussing evolution. Some people do not explicitly state their belief in Darwin's theory and humanity's descent from animals, but affirm their belief in evolution in every sphere. This is a deception no less outrageous than belief in Darwin's theory, known as "origin and development". Its effects will appear when we discuss the other aspects of Jawdat's idea of evolution. Although we are not concerned here with refuting Darwin's theory, since what has been written about it suffices, we must compare certain ideas on which Darwin and his followers converge with Jawdat and his ideas.

The Theory of Acquired Characteristics

The first attempt to present the theory of evolution came through the theory of acquired characteristics, put forward by Lamarck. He defined it by saying: "The characteristics of a living organism are simply a natural result of the environment's influence since the earliest ages of creation. An environmental change which forces an organism to use or neglect one of its organs is the sole factor in that organ's existence and development, or its degeneration and subsequent disappearance." Lamarck then says: "The disappearance of an organ which the surrounding environment forces an organism to neglect does not remain confined to that organism. Neither development nor disappearance stops there; both become phenomena inherited by successive generations of that organism." Lamarck offered the example of the giraffe's long neck, which he attributed to its surroundings forcing it to stretch its neck to reach the leaves of tall trees. Under environmental pressure, the giraffe's neck vertebrae gradually began to increase.²³ This theory received a familiar answer based on reality: why did this not happen to all the numerous animals living at the time? Why did their vertebrae not develop and their necks lengthen too? Why did sheep retain short necks, although the circumstances were the same?!

The Theory of the Survival of the Fittest

Lamarck conducted his research before Darwin appeared. Darwin, however, adopted this theory and introduced modifications to give it the form of a scientific theory, adding the "law of the survival of the fittest", or natural selection. Among the names under which it appeared was "origin and development". Scholars reacted swiftly. One of the strongest blows it received came when the German scientist Weismann, in 1882, cut off mice's tails over nineteen successive generations without obtaining a single

23. *Al-Ilm yatabarra' min nazariyyat Darwin* [Science Disavows Darwin's Theory], pp. 39-40.

tailless mouse.²⁴ This broke the theory's back at its foundation and made it collapse before experiment and reality.

A student of knowledge told me of an engaging incident concerning this subject at Damascus University. A professor was lecturing on sociology, championing evolution and repeatedly giving examples of its validity. He told the students that if we experimented on dogs, cutting off their tails after each new birth, after two thousand years we would obtain a generation of tailless dogs. The student asked permission to answer the professor, saying: "This experiment requires successive generations, and we do not know its final result. Yet we possess conclusive evidence that this theory is wrong in the practice of circumcision known among Muslims and Jews for more than two thousand years. Not one of their children has been born circumcised, as the theory's conception requires." I cannot now describe the professor's difficult position!!

The point is: how does Jawdat dare revive activity around this theory after it was scientifically refuted more than a hundred years ago!

Quoting Iqbal, Jawdat says:

"In truth, the Qur'an's use of the word revelation shows that it regards revelation as a general attribute of existence, although its reality and nature differ according to the stages of progression and evolution in existence. The plant which grows freely in space, the animal whose evolution produces a new organ enabling it to adapt to a new environment, and the human being who draws inspiration from the light in the depths of existence are all instances of revelation, differing in nature according to the needs of its recipient or the species to which that recipient belongs."²⁵

24. The preceding source, p. 42.

25. Jawdat Said, *al-Amal* [Action], p. 129.

This environmental theory, whose validity Jawdat and his teacher Iqbal claim, could not withstand scientific criticism for a moment. Belief in it has instead become a cause for ridicule and mockery in our countries, and is also described as a departure from science...

Darwin and his followers after him could not reach an acceptable scientific explanation of evolution. Rather, they moved through evident confusion and manifest inability when trying to present suitable evidence to establish its foundations. When Arthur Keith (1866-1955) investigated this theory and could not provide convincing scientific evidence to justify his belief in and enthusiasm for it, he had to acknowledge frankly and clearly that he faced only two paths: either to believe in Darwin's theory of evolution or to believe in direct creation, which holds that Allah created humanity. He chose Darwin's theory despite acknowledging its weakness, solely because he did not believe in Allah!

Jawdat Said's Conception of the Environment

Jawdat shows intense concern to highlight the environment's role in shaping human life. He suggested something extremely dangerous when he gave the environment complete authority to shape the human being as an alternative to the command of heaven. I can only place before the reader statements alien to Islamic feeling, which one cannot imagine coming from someone who believes in Allah and His Messenger. Someone who believes in Allah and His Messenger does not show contempt for the divine name while displaying respect for the environment. His statements allow us to perceive which receives his esteem and respect: Allah's name, exalted and majestic is He, or the environment!!

He said:

"I am no longer intimidated by the clatter of words: spirit, soul, Allah, the Messenger, or so-and-so said this or that. We want to discuss what happens to us. How does understanding occur?? How do we know that

we have understood what we understood?? How does understanding occur?? How did these ideas reach me?? Let us leave talk of heaven and investigate the earth; let us return to the human being born with a natural disposition.

How does the environment shape this newborn?? This happens before us through forces which surround us and proceed from us. They are neither unseen nor supernatural, nor beyond the mind's ability to understand or control."²⁶

This is the inevitable result of this tendency: let us leave talk of heaven and investigate the earth. It shows contempt, mockery and belittlement of Allah's name and the Messenger's name, and magnification of and concern for the environment, what proceeds from it and what belongs to it. Why do the words Allah and the Messenger no longer intimidate him? What has happened to him that these words have lost their sacredness in his soul? Why does he want us to leave talk of heaven and cling to the earth..?

“Recite unto them the tale of him to whom We gave Our revelations, but he sloughed them off, so Satan overtook him and he became of those who lead astray. And had We willed We could have raised him by their means, but he clung to the earth and followed his own lust.”

Qur'an 7:175-176, excerpt

We may ask why he describes the environment in these terms, granting it the capacity to shape and care for the newborn. Why does he multiply the question marks after every phrase inviting love of the environment, adherence to it and a return to it, as though it had become a god to be worshipped!! There is something in his soul which he does not wish to disclose now!!! Why does he make the environment what surrounds and shapes the newborn? Why does he neglect to mention Allah's protection

26. *Unzuru 40* [Look, 40], p. 5.

and care for us?? Why does he not state, precisely here, that Allah cares for and provides for us, and heals us when we are ill? Why does he insist here on the environment? Does he mean the "nature" described by Lamarck and Darwin, with its great influence on humanity, as we explained, or the environment as "matter", which Marxists make the foundation of human life, when Engels declares: "Outside nature and humanity, nothing exists"?

Some may find it surprising that this thought comes from someone who adorns his writings with Qur'anic verses and Prophetic hadiths. How does he combine this sacred speech with this great deviation??!!

The French professor Jean Rostand²⁷ says: "Darwin's theory is trivial...! Charles Darwin claimed that the theory of 'origin and development' rests on what he called the 'struggle for existence' or 'natural selection'. This term means that nature selects the strongest elements, capable of struggle, to keep them alive, while casting out the weaker elements and throwing them into extinction."

Under the striking heading "An Excuse Worse than the Offence", Ziyad Abu Ghanimah quotes Arthur Keith:

"Evolution is unproven and cannot be proved. We believe in this theory because its sole alternative is belief in direct creation, which cannot even be contemplated."²⁸

What prompted Jawdat to seek an understanding of the beginning of human creation outside the scriptural texts? What made him overlook the clear Qur'anic truths and insist on establishing a programme of work through travelling in the earth and discovering how humanity came to exist?

27. *Al-Ilm yatabarra' min nazariyyat Darwin* [Science Disavows Darwin's Theory], p. 85.

28. For a fuller discussion, see *al-Ilm yatabarra' min nazariyyat Darwin* [Science Disavows Darwin's Theory], p. 34, which quotes Arthur Keith from *al-Din fi muwajahat al-ilm* [Religion Confronts Science], by Wahid al-Din Khan.

Jawdat offers a conception of human development throughout every stage of human life. He claims that whoever traces how creation began, grows and increases acquires a new idea of its beginning and destiny, saying:

"Whoever knows how creation began weak and helpless, then grew slowly, and that this growth required long ages, may be led by reflecting on the beginning of creation to think about its destiny: not its destiny on the Day of Resurrection, but its worldly destiny."²⁹

Concerning the first human being's life, Jawdat says: "Human remains from before writing stretch deep into antiquity, millions of years... Knowledge which neglects to investigate how material and non-material creatures began to be created is not free of illusions and desires, and thus resembles superstition."³⁰

Anyone who understands the nature of this investigation perceives Jawdat's conception, what he means here and where he locates the superstitions he has in mind. He suggests that they lie in everything non-material which is not based on travelling through the earth and carrying out excavation and research!!

As we explained in the chapter on the abolition of prophethood, Jawdat believes it is a condition and form of development:

"In humanity's childhood, spiritual power develops into what I call 'prophetic consciousness'. It is a means of economising on individual thought and personal choice by providing people with ready-made judgements, choices and methods of action prepared beforehand."³¹

Jawdat has left nothing outside the conception of development, even describing prophethood through it. He likewise describes belief through

29. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 212.

30. The preceding source, pp. 72-74.

31. *Al-Amal* [Action], p. 130, quoting Iqbal.

development, saying, after reviewing the standing of sages in knowledge throughout history:

"This historical view of the development of belief and behaviour..."³²

From this perspective came his call to reconsider everything we see from the standpoint of how its creation began, whether material or non-material. He expressed the non-material aspect through the need to discover how humanity began to perceive the meaning of divinity.

We can express the positivists' conception of the development of divinity in a brief account. In belief, humanity moved from worshipping nature or some aspect of the environment to worshipping spirits and angels out of fear. It moved from the conception of many gods, trees, planets, the sun and other things, to the familiar doctrine of the Trinity, then to dualism, darkness and light, and then to the affirmation of divine oneness. They regard this last idea as an elevated development in the conception of worship, or, as Toynbee and Jawdat call it, the higher religions arising through the development of religions.

Within this framework we can set out an established development of the conception of divinity and how humanity began to perceive it.

Muslims have no doubt that Adam believed in the pure affirmation of divine oneness and received this belief from Allah Most High.

He, Most High, says: "*Lo! Allah preferred Adam and Noah and the Family of Abraham and the Family of 'Imran above (all His) creatures.*" (Qur'an 3:33).

He, Most High, says: "*And He taught Adam all the names, then showed them to the angels, saying: Inform Me of the names of these, if ye are truthful. They said: Be glorified! We have no knowledge saving that which*

32. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 197.

Thou hast taught us. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Knower, the Wise." (Qur'an 2:31-32).

When Adam and Eve disobeyed the command after Satan caused them to slip, Allah Most High described Adam's return and His acceptance of his repentance: *"Then Adam received from his Lord words (of revelation), and He relented toward him. Lo! He is the relenting, the Merciful."* (Qur'an 2:37).

He, Most High, says, describing human weakness: *"And verily We made a covenant of old with Adam, but he forgot, and We found no constancy in him."* (Qur'an 20:115).

Adam's affirmation of divine oneness, his manner of receiving from Allah and returning to Him after weakness and shortcomings, constituted the approach of the prophets after him.

Certain pagan beliefs intruded upon this approach whenever people departed from it and drew from another source...

What positivist sociologists call development in the conception of belief, the Qur'an calls deviation from the approach and departure from the creed.

"And (He commandeth you, saying): This is My straight path, so follow it. Follow not other ways, lest ye be parted from His way. This hath He ordained for you, that ye may ward off (evil)."

Qur'an 6:153

When Muslims examine the history of religions, they investigate the history of deviation in human life, rather than imagine a condition of development in belief, since the original foundation was the affirmation of divine oneness.

"Mankind were one community, and Allah sent (unto them) prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and revealed therewith the

Scripture with the truth that it might judge between mankind concerning that wherein they differed. And only those unto whom (the Scripture) was given differed concerning it, after clear proofs had come unto them, through hatred one of another. And Allah by His Will guided those who believe unto the truth of that concerning which they differed. Allah guideth whom He will unto a straight path.”

Qur'an 2:213

He, Most High, says, explaining the Qur'an's task through a comprehensive conception of Islam:

“And thus We have inspired in thee a Lecture in Arabic, that thou mayst warn the mother-town and those around it, and mayst warn of a day of assembling whereof there is no doubt. A host will be in the Garden, and a host of them in the Flame. Had Allah willed, He could have made them one community, but Allah bringeth whom He will into His mercy. And the wrong-doers have no friend nor helper. Or have they chosen protecting friends besides Him? But Allah, He (alone) is the Protecting Friend. He quickeneth the dead, and He is Able to do all things. And in whatsoever ye differ, the verdict therein belongeth to Allah. Such is my Lord, in Whom I put my trust, and unto Whom I turn. The Creator of the heavens and the earth. He hath made for you pairs of yourselves, and of the cattle also pairs, whereby He multiplieth you. Naught is as His likeness; and He is the Hearer, the Seer. His are the keys of the heavens and the earth. He enlargeth providence for whom He will and straiteneth (it for whom He will). Lo! He is Knower of all things. He hath ordained for you that religion which He commended unto Noah, and that which We inspire in thee (Muhammad), and that which We commended unto Abraham and Moses and Jesus, saying: Establish the religion, and be not divided therein. Dreadful for the idolaters is that unto which thou callest them. Allah chooseth for Himself whom He will, and guideth unto Himself him who turneth (toward Him). And they were not divided until after the knowledge

came unto them, through rivalry among themselves; and had it not been for a Word that had already gone forth from thy Lord for an appointed term, it surely had been judged between them. And those who were made to inherit the Scripture after them are verily in hopeless doubt concerning it. Unto this, then, summon (O Muhammad). And be thou upright as thou art commanded, and follow not their lusts, but say: I believe in whatever scripture Allah hath sent down, and I am commanded to be just among you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. Unto us our works and unto you your works; no argument between us and you. Allah will bring us together, and unto Him is the journeying. And those who argue concerning Allah after He hath been acknowledged, their argument hath no weight with their Lord, and wrath is upon them and theirs will be an awful doom. Allah it is Who hath revealed the Scripture with truth, and the Balance. How canst thou know? It may be that the Hour is nigh."

Qur'an 42:7-17

The Development of Qur'anic Embryos

The idea of development has dominated Jawdat, overwhelming his method of thought and occupying a large part of his discussions and books, so that he imagines development in everything. I examined the statements with which he opened his discussion of the development of Qur'anic verses and found him using expressions unworthy of the Qur'an's standing and sacredness. He described certain Qur'anic verses as "Qur'anic embryos", saying:

"Iqbal speaks with grief and regret of the neglect of Qur'anic embryos in the spheres of the factors influencing the formation of society. In his letter to Nicholson, he says: 'I am entirely convinced that the conquest of lands was not part of Islam's fundamental programme. Indeed, I regard it as a great loss that Islam's advance as a conquering faith should have halted the growth of its embryos of social, democratic and economic

organisation, which I find scattered through the pages of the Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah.'

We shall discuss verses at the conclusion of our book in this sense: to revive embryos which have long remained latent.

We must point out that our manner of approaching the verses differs greatly from the approach which tries to gather hints from the Qur'an indicating particular questions and details in modern science. Our concern is to clarify principles and methods for the production of knowledge and science, rather than investigate scientific questions. From this starting point we chose the following verses:

1. *'Travel in the land and see how He originated creation'* (Qur'an 29:20)...
2. *'We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves'* (Qur'an 41:53).
3. *'And hath made of service unto you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth'* (Qur'an 45:13).
4. *'Lo! Those who believe (in that which is revealed unto thee, Muhammad), and those who are Jews, and Christians'* (Qur'an 2:62)..."³³

I have discussed these verses elsewhere, but here we examine the aspect particular to development. It is worth pointing out that Jawdat did not devise these terms: he took them from Malik Bennabi³⁴, who in turn took them from Muhammad Iqbal's letter to Nicholson. These three could not have converged on a single view by coincidence had they not shared the materialist approach from which they proceed.

33. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 207.

34. *Al-Afro-Asiyawiyah* [Afro-Asianism], p. 43, second edition, Beirut.

Jawdat's choice of "Qur'anic Embryos" as the title of his discussion raises something unfamiliar in the Islamic cultural sphere. Through researching this subject, I have also found agreement in belief between Jawdat and his colleagues and Ibrahim al-Nazzam, and a harmony of ideas. Al-Nazzam was a Qadari Mu'tazili and followed the philosophers' approach. The connection with his ideas contributes to a particular classification linking these writers to his sect: the Qadariyyah in particular and the Mu'tazilah generally. I shall mention some areas in which al-Nazzam and Jawdat converge on development:

1. Al-Nazzam says that Allah created the universe all at once and placed creation in a state of latency, or, as he said, made some things latent within others until the time of their emergence. Al-Shahrastani quoted him: "His doctrine is that Allah created existing things all at once, as they are now: minerals, plants, animals and human beings. The creation of Adam, peace be upon him, did not precede that of his children. Allah Most High merely made some things latent within others; precedence and delay occur only in their emergence from their places of latency, rather than in their origination and existence. He took this proposition from the philosophers who upheld latency and emergence. Al-Nazzam always inclined more towards establishing the doctrine of the natural philosophers among them than that of the metaphysical philosophers."³⁵

2. We observe another point of agreement with al-Nazzam: his inclination to disparage and condemn the leading Companions. Jawdat established a rule for attacking the Companions at the end of *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves]³⁶, under the banner of separating principle from application.

35. Al-Shahrastani, *al-Milal wa-l-nihal* [Religions and Sects], 1:76.

36. For a fuller discussion, see the chapter on the Companions and the righteous early generations in this study, and *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 206.

3. We also observe Jawdat's agreement with al-Nazzam's ideas in his inclination towards the Qadariyyah and the doctrine of free choice in human will, humanity's creation of its own acts and its determination of its destiny by its own hand. Jawdat supports and advocates this.

Is it not strange that Muhammad Iqbal mentions in his letter to Nicholson that the Qur'an contains embryos of democracy and social and economic organisation³⁷?! We shall see this influence through the verses selected as starting points for the development of ideas.

First: "*Travel in the land and see how He originated creation*" (Qur'an 29:20)

Through this verse, Jawdat tried to proclaim to humanity the need to reconsider everything we see from the standpoint of how its creation began. He also uses it as evidence for the development of belief, humanity and the universe. At the end of the chapter, he says:

"This verse transfers research into knowing how creation began from the verses of the Book to the signs in the horizons and within the selves, and to travelling through the earth."³⁸

Second: "*We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves*" (Qur'an 41:53)

Through this verse he proclaims a replacement of the source of evidence and knowledge, locating it in the signs in the horizons. He then makes these signs arbiters over Allah's verses in the Qur'an, which will testify to their validity. He also regards this verse as a starting point for new foundations

37. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 207.

38. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], pp. 209-215.

of religion, treating the recognised foundations as failing to fulfil a fundamental role. This tendency provides a starting point for departure from the community's consensus.³⁹

Third: *"And hath made of service unto you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth" (Qur'an 45:13)...*

Through this verse, he proclaims that humanity has become Allah's deputy on earth. Jawdat says: "In this verse lies humanity's true standing, or, as Iqbal says, 'in the station of divine deputyship'. If everything in the heavens and the earth is made of service to humanity, the deputy of the True One, the human being, commands these things and they obey him when he fulfils their conditions."⁴⁰ Elsewhere he says: "The human being is Allah's limb on earth."

The connection of these conceptions with adherents of the positivist doctrine, who await the "perfect human being" or the "superman", is evident.⁴¹

Fourth: *He, Most High, says: "Lo! Those who believe (in that which is revealed unto thee, Muhammad), and those who are Jews, and Christians, and Sabaeans - whoever believeth in Allah and the Last Day" ...*⁴²

Through this verse, Jawdat proclaims humanity's unity in a single religion. He says the verse remains latent, that is, concealed and hidden, and offers an optimistic view and a vision of tolerance. Although the verse does not

39. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], pp. 217-40.

40. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 223.

41. Among them is the atheist German philosopher Nietzsche, who promoted this theory in his book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

42. Qur'an 2:62.

indicate this subject and means the precise opposite of Jawdat's interpretation, he regards tolerance as a universal human need. He continues praising tolerance to reach the ultimate objective: rapprochement between religions. He says:

"I use these verses as indicators of new directions, starting points for unusual principles and subjects of research which have not received the attention they deserve. Such subjects require a clear historical vision of becoming, encompassing the past, to arrive at a creative vision of the future.

When we look at the People of the Book, we find that they believe in the Creator of the universe, that He sent messengers and revealed laws for righteous action with them, and that they believe in the return on the Day of Resurrection. These great shared foundations, their functions and consequences, should prevent the community of prophethood, the community of belief in Allah and the Last Day, from being torn apart.

These matters, with their great common origin, should not lose their objectives through following desires and limited views. Those who uphold the truth should not be provoked by those who have lost the foundations. They should adhere to the word of piety, to which they have the greater right."⁴³

The purpose of this passage is not to expand the discussion, since each subject has its own chapter. The important observation here concerns the state of latency he adopts as a precursor to new, developed starting points unfamiliar to the early generations, according to him, or which they were unqualified to know in the period of the ancient world.

Through this work, Jawdat has opened a broad door to rendering Allah's verses inoperative and claiming the appearance of new embryos. Allah

43. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 251.

alone knows how many great calamities this will cost Muslims and how many tribulations will descend upon the community as a result!! Some people will dare claim they have discovered another embryo in the Qur'an. Exalted is Allah far above what they say.

Human Origins

To confirm Jawdat's adoption of evolution, its domination of his method of thought and its extension into numerous aspects of his research, we turn here to study a prominent feature: his adoption of the positivist sociologists' position on humanity's appearance on earth and its relationship to the appearance of language among people.

"The capacity for speech made it possible to introduce a superior educational factor in addition to biological inheritance, since human experiences could now be transmitted orally. Science's knowledge of the beginnings of language, articulation and speech in humanity is shallow and limited, although human humanity began with the word and language. Through the word, the human being rose to the human rank. Human history began to be recorded and made known, and earlier people's experiences transmitted to later ones, with the invention of writing and reading, which illuminated humanity's path. Through the capacity to learn names, Adam and his descendants became another creation."⁴⁴

We observe Jawdat's insistence that the human being became human only after learning or devising language, and that before the word and knowledge of language he did not occupy the human rank. He then claims that humanity became qualified for stewardship after learning the names and the unfolding of its latent talents and capacities. He says:

44. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 61.

"This new capacity made Allah Most High's address to Adam, peace be upon him, of another kind. His revelation to humanity, exalted is His majesty, is unlike His revelation to bees. Adam thus became qualified for stewardship on earth, because learning the names unfolded his latent talents and capacities. He learnt the names and would later learn to read, and would read in the name of his most generous Lord."⁴⁵

We observe that Jawdat presents Adam's creation in long stages, relying on sociologists' information without considering the clear Qur'anic truths. In a televised discussion, he says:

"The universe ten thousand years ago: what was the human being like? He lived in a cave, did not yet know agriculture and had not domesticated animals. He walked only on his own feet. When we look at how his creation began weakly, animals hunted him for food, while he hunted animals to feed on them; he was weak and defenceless... The latest creatures are the most advanced. This human being, who walked naked and lived in caves, has now become able to understand, and his destiny is in his hands."⁴⁶

Qur'anic truths present Adam, humanity's father, peace be upon him, as a prophet receiving revelation. No one may claim that Adam or any of his followers, his children and grandchildren who believed in Allah as Adam did, walked naked, as the adherents of evolution claim in "comparative religion". The conditions found among certain equatorial tribes far from settled civilisation represent only abnormal conditions distant from religion. They represent departure from the straight path begun by Adam, peace be upon him, and his righteous descendants. He, Most High, says:

45. The preceding source, p. 62.

46. This discussion took place, in these words, in a televised seminar with Muhammad Said Ramadan al-Buti on Syrian television.

“O Children of Adam! We have revealed unto you raiment to conceal your shame, and splendid vesture, but the raiment of restraint from evil, that is best. This is of the revelations of Allah, that they may remember. O Children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you as he caused your (first) parents to go forth from the Garden and tore off from them their robe (of innocence) that he might manifest their shame to them. Lo! he seeth you, he and his tribe, from whence ye see him not. Lo! We have made the devils protecting friends for those who believe not. And when they do some lewdness they say: We found our fathers doing it and Allah hath enjoined it on us. Say: Allah, verily, enjoineth not lewdness. Tell ye concerning Allah that which ye know not? Say: My Lord enjoineth justice. And set your faces upright (toward Him) at every place of worship and call upon Him, making religion pure for Him (only). As He brought you into being, so return ye (unto Him). A party hath He led aright, while error hath just hold over (another) party, for lo! they choose the devils for protecting supporters instead of Allah and deem that they are rightly guided. O Children of Adam! Look to your adornment at every place of worship, and eat and drink, but be not prodigal. Lo! He loveth not the prodigals. Say: Who hath forbidden the adornment of Allah which He hath brought forth for His bondmen, and the good things of His providing? Say: Such, on the Day of Resurrection, will be only for those who believed during the life of the world. Thus do we detail Our revelations for people who have knowledge.”

Qur'an 7:26-32

Sayyid comments on these verses, saying:

"The story and its accompanying comments point to something rooted in human nature and natural disposition: shame at nakedness and the exposure of private parts. All these verses suggest the importance of this matter and its depth within human nature. Clothing and covering the

private parts adorn the human being and conceal his bodily nakedness, just as piety clothes and conceals his inner nakedness.

A sound natural disposition recoils from the exposure of bodily and inner nakedness, and is concerned to cover and conceal both. Those who try to strip the body of clothing and the soul of piety, and of shame before Allah and people, who use their tongues, pens and every means of guidance and information to establish this attempt in its various wicked, satanic forms and methods, wish to deprive humanity of its natural and human characteristics. They wish to surrender humanity to its enemy, Satan, and his desire to remove its clothing and expose its private parts. They implement the terrible Zionist plans to destroy humanity and spread dissolution within it, so that it submits to Zion's dominion without resistance, having lost its human foundations.

Nakedness is an animal disposition. Human beings incline towards it only when falling back to a rank below the human. Seeing beauty in nakedness is certainly a degeneration of human taste. The backward peoples of central Africa are naked. When Islam enters these regions with its civilisation, the first manifestation of civilisation is the clothing of the naked. In modern, 'progressive' ignorance, however, people fall back into the depths from which Islam rescues the backward, bringing them to the level of civilisation in its Islamic conception, which seeks to rescue, manifest and strengthen human characteristics. The Qur'anic story of human origins suggests these original values and standards and explains them most clearly."⁴⁷

Jawdat continues presenting his ideas of development through every means, holding that this process shapes the universe and humanity. In

47. *Fi zilal al-Qur'an* [In the Shade of the Qur'an], 3:1275.

another seminar⁴⁸, he discussed human evolution through Darwin's ideas, remembering to associate it with the approach of realism from which he draws ideas and obtains information. He regards the earthquake⁴⁹ which occurred as the result of scholars reaching new information about the origin of life on earth through excavation. This information differs from what people received through revelation from heaven!

Here he follows Darwinism in all its forms, saying:

"Another earthquake then occurred when people began to know humanity's history on earth, because the earth spoke in its own language, which no knowledgeable person can deny. We had imagined Adam, the first human being, as having an ox and a plough when he came into existence. Yet it became clear that humanity lived long before knowing the plough or domesticating animals: it lived for millions of years. Perhaps the great remains discovered in Ethiopia indicate the skeleton of 'Lusa' from three or four million years ago. Stone speaks of this through knowledge which no one denies.⁵⁰ This world thus began obtaining its information from its reality, whereas previously people obtained information through revelation from heaven.

48. I have a tape recording of Jawdat Said's voice during the seminar in al-Suwayda.

49. He means the earthquake which shook Islamic belief with the appearance of the theory of evolution.

50. Science has disavowed Darwin's theory and invalidated its foundation. Darwin's ideas have been modified numerous times under the name "neo-Darwinism".

When humanity began learning from reality, reality became a source of knowledge: how life arose on earth, how the earth passed through a time when nothing living existed above the water, everything being beneath it, and then other animals developed, amphibians and then mammals. This knowledge of human history therefore became necessary to perceive humanity's reality."⁵¹

In this seminar Jawdat was remarkably bold, without the restraint of expression usual in his books. We shall observe this clearly in his other statements during the seminar concerning the origin of the universe:

"We human beings, insofar as we know humanity's history on this earth, must acknowledge an initial premise: that it is by virtue of this universe's order, whether it arose by itself, as materialists say, or through a hidden power which people interpret as they wish, that human beings belong to a single kind..."

He went on to say, concerning the development of religion and culture:

"Likewise, no cultures are incapable of development. Those who say that certain cultures, religions or social ideas are incapable of development merely express a conception belonging to a particular stage and place."

Jawdat employs the Marxist principle of contradiction in establishing his ideas, saying:

"Likewise, the fertility of intellectual life results from comparing two ideas, from which a new idea is born, just as practical life arises from capacity and will."⁵²

51. The al-Suwayda seminar.

52. *Al-Amal* [Action], p. 86.

Evolution in Shahrur's Thought

Shahrur's view of evolution rests on the foundations of Marxist materialism, which make development a universal rule of existence. In his book he presents these foundations as premises closed to discussion, choosing Islamic terms from the Qur'an and attaching them to these foundations in a manner which shows contrivance and distance from science.

Internal Dialectics

This is one of Marxism's foundations: internal dialectics within a single thing rests on contradictions or inseparable duality, and this dialectic leads to change in becoming. Marxists call this law negation and the familiar negation of negation. He claims that the Qur'anic term glorification represents the reality of dialectics and continuous movement. On these laws he builds the conception of general development encompassing the universe, things and living beings. He says that in nature one thing is born and develops, while another declines and disappears: an uninterrupted condition of renewal and development.

This law is unsound and cannot be generalised to nature and its events. It has not been established that death and life occur in all things, that the cause of death lies within the thing itself or that it is inseparable from it. Certain things, such as stones and water, are not subject to this law or to a continuous state of death or extinction. They do not change through an internal action: every change in them is due to external factors, rather than an inherent action within the thing itself.

As for human evolution, he bases it on Darwin's theory of "origin and development", without embarrassment.

Shahrur says:

"The dialectical movement between the two internally contradictory elements within the same thing led to evolution, manifested in continual changes of form, the destruction of one thing and the emergence of another form in inanimate things and living organisms. From this we understand that living organisms emerged from one another and were subject to the law of evolution and advancement... The spirit is not the secret of life, but the secret of becoming human, meaning the transformation of the human creature, which belongs to the 'animal group', into a human being. It developed through a dialectical process which continually changed form until the non-rational human creature appeared, and then the rational human being."⁵³

To establish Darwin's theory, he claimed to have found its missing link: the secret of the transformation from animal to human lies in the breathing of the spirit.

He says: "This materialist understanding of the Qur'anic theory of knowledge answers the illusions of those with an idealist understanding of the Qur'an, who reject the theory of evolution and advancement and mock Darwin's theory as unscientific. Their argument rests on the following question: why did humanity evolve from the ape while the ape remained an ape? Our answer is that Allah Most High breathed the spirit into the human creature, a group within the animal kingdom, causing it to become human and rise above the animal kingdom. Had He breathed it into other groups, they too would have advanced. The breathing of the spirit is the missing link in Darwin's theory concerning becoming human."⁵⁴

53. Shahrur's book, p. 228.

54. Shahrur's book, p. 253.

Shahrur thought that the only argument invalidating Darwin's theory was that the ape remained an ape, and therefore imagined that he had found the missing link. In fact, through this link he demolished the foundations of Darwin's theory, which rests on evolution, an unsound law as we have explained. Shahrur introduced the spirit in a weak manner, forgetting that the breathing of the spirit into humanity continues to this day through its breathing into the foetus. This invalidates his claim that breathing the spirit into the human creature, supposedly an animal group, causes it to become human. The breathing of the spirit occurs whenever a foetus has reached four months, as the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, says:

"The creation of each of you is gathered in his mother's womb for forty days. Then he is a clot for the same period, then a morsel of flesh for the same period. The angel is then sent and breathes the spirit into him..."⁵⁵

Our purpose is not to invalidate Darwin's theory now: science has disavowed it, and it has fallen as Marxism itself fell. Shahrur cannot help it by injecting strength through introducing the Noble Qur'an as a supporting factor. Discerning people will mock this outrageous act which Jawdat and Shahrur carry out among Muslims with unparalleled audacity. They will recognise the naked objectives behind the attempt to introduce Darwin's theory into Muslim lands after it has become worn out by time. Some have already perceived this call's true nature through criticism of Shahrur's book. Those who have examined it have recognised the purposes behind this question: it does not concern scientific research, but serves the task of unsettling the Islamic creed and creating intellectual confusion among Muslims. Yet, as the proverb says, "A harmful thing may bring benefit."

55. Agreed upon by al-Bukhari and Muslim; al-Bukhari, hadith 6596.

Muslims have become alert to the successive assaults on the Islamic approach, prompting interest in understanding its foundations and characteristics..!!

He, Most High, says: "*and the evil plot encloseth but the men who make it.*" (Qur'an 35:43).

He also says: "*they plot, but Allah (also) plotteth; and Allah is the best of plotters.*" (Qur'an 8:30).

It is appropriate to establish here a highly important distinction which we need: the difference between a theory or hypothesis and a scientific fact. The British professor Andrews asks what a theory means, saying:

"The word theory derives from a Greek word meaning 'I see'. A theory therefore relates to perception or understanding: what I perceive, encompass, assimilate and see as a conception. A theory can thus be defined as the conception which connects information gathered through observation and establishes appropriate relationships between its elements.

We must always remember that a theory is one thing and the results of observation another. It is not uncommon in science to find different explanations of the same information through different, competing theories."⁵⁶ He then reaches the following conclusion:

"Even the best theories are merely a model of reality, or simply an approximation to reality. This applies to the best, most firmly established and most complete theories." He gives an example:

56. *Al-Nazariyyat al-ilmiyyah wa-nazariyyat al-tatawwur* [Scientific Theories and the Theory of Evolution], p. 16, translated by Orkhan Muhammad Ali.

"Certain scientists, such as Newton⁵⁷, believed that light consisted of spherical material particles. Yet the phenomenon of light scattering soon struck at the heart of this theory and displaced it."⁵⁸

He then says:

"Any theory, however good and strong, does not represent reality itself, but a model of it."⁵⁹

He then explains that the misuse of theories in scientific fields arises from confusing theory with information. He identifies generalisation as the second misuse. This occurs when a theory operates successfully in a particular field and we claim that it encompasses and operates in other fields without fully establishing this. For example, Newton's laws of motion apply successfully throughout most of our world, but if we try to apply them at the atomic level, complex problems arise which cannot be solved.

The third misuse is exaggeration. The fourth, perhaps the worst, is a lack of objectivity.

This becomes apparent when a theory is defended against observations and information which differ from or contradict it: when its defence continues despite new information revealing its inadequacy or invalidity.

The fifth misuse occurs when attempts are made to justify conduct and ideas outside the scientific field, such as politics, society, race and education. We call this the exploitation of theory.⁶⁰ Professor Andrews applies these rules to evolution, saying:

⁵⁷. Isaac Newton (1643-1727), an English scientist in physics and mathematics.

⁵⁸. The preceding source, p. 29.

⁵⁹. The preceding source, p. 31.

⁶⁰. The preceding source, p. 47.

The theory of evolution is treated as a fact rather than a theory, presented to people as explaining actual events which really occurred and were completed. The press presents it in this form. In reality, the information on which it is based is unhelpful and cannot produce or lead to any theory. It is sparse and scattered, contains large gaps, is ambiguous and allows several interpretations. The certain information concerning this subject points to results which lead the researcher to oppose and challenge this theory...

"The theory of evolution has been exploited for political purposes. Nazi racism resorted to and exploited it, and communist atheism also relies upon it."⁶¹

Professor Andrews then says:

"In an earlier edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, I read the article on evolution. It was an ardent defence of the theory, but contained the following admission:

'If the evolution of species proceeded exactly as this theory conceives, the number of mutations occurring in past ages must have been so concentrated that it is impossible to observe them in the laboratory.' I did not find this statement in subsequent editions. Perhaps the admission was considered to exceed what was permitted."⁶²

When we apply these rules to what Shahrur, Jawdat and Iqbal have presented, we face a dangerous and lamentable phenomenon. They have exploited this theory and treated it as an objective fact which may not be discussed. They have abandoned objectivity without providing evidence for it. Shahrur merely says that he believes in Darwin's theory and has found its missing link. Likewise, Jawdat does no more than invite us to imagine the

61. *Al-Nazariyyat al-ilmiyyah* [Scientific Theories], p. 57.

62. *Al-Nazariyyat al-ilmiyyah* [Scientific Theories], p. 53.

earth at its origin, then mention humanity's development from a single cell beneath the water to amphibians and then reptiles, followed by humanity's appearance. He then asks Muslims to change their understanding of the Qur'an on the basis of these imaginative, illusory statements. Is this science?!!

Is it scientific for Muslims to change their understanding of the Qur'an for the sake of imaginings and suppositions going back millions of millions of years, as they claim⁶³? Who can establish this?

Jawdat has not confined himself to advocating evolution, believing in it and relying on it in his research. He has endorsed a new book whose author advocates Darwin's theory. Despite this open declaration, Jawdat has written a foreword to the book.

Its author says:

"Many of us still reject and oppose certain scientific theories, invoking the texts as a pretext. The theory of 'origin and development'⁶⁴ is among these questions..." He goes on to say:

"Indeed, life's emergence through this progression, culminating in the creation of the human being endowed with reason and reflection, who has made everything within his reach serve him, is the greatest indication of the Creator's wisdom and governance. He ordained that atoms wandering on the shores of lakes should interact, combine and arrange themselves

63. This recalls the amusing story of a disagreement between two people, one of them mad, about the earth's halfway point. The madman placed his hand on a point on the ground and told the other: "This is the earth's halfway point. If you do not believe it, you must measure it!!"

64. Darwin's theory concerning the origin of species, in which he claims that humanity originated from a group of animals.

together, finally becoming a well-formed creation of great resourcefulness."⁶⁵

How strange is this author, who has recently joined the supporters of Darwin's theory. What makes him strange is his adoption of an approach different from Jawdat's and Shahrur's. He has devised a new hypothesis, trying to mix evolution with something of religion by claiming that evolution proceeds from Allah's power. The atoms' spontaneous gathering and arrangement on the shores of lakes until they became a living cell, then their development into an aquatic animal, an amphibian, a reptile and then a human being: all this occurred by Allah's decree!! Glory be to Allah for this great discovery!! We thus observe that his concern is to support Darwin's theory, even through imagination, even if this contradicts his Qadari approach in the rest of the book.

Jawdat did likewise when introducing the idea of imagination, saying:

"If a person could observe in thought the condition of the earth and the origin of all life in water, then its existence on land, and then the appearance of humanity."⁶⁶ Shahrur likewise imagined and claimed that the transition from the animal to the human stage occurred through the breathing of the spirit. All this nonsense from these writers seeks to dispense with the meaning of the scriptural texts, the Book and the Sunnah, which state that Allah, glorified and exalted is He, directly created Adam, humanity's father, from dust with His hand, as we explained in detail in this chapter.

These fabricators' views converge with the theory of Iblis. He, Most High, says: *"When thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am about to create a mortal out of mire, And when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My Spirit, then fall down before him prostrate, The angels fell down*

⁶⁵. This book is still in press. I have Jawdat Said's handwritten foreword.

⁶⁶. *Unzuru 40* [Look, 40], p. 10.

prostrate, every one, Saving Iblis; he was scornful and became one of the disbelievers. He said: O Iblis! What hindereth thee from falling prostrate before that which I have created with both My hands? Art thou too proud or art thou of the high exalted? He said: I am better than him. Thou createdst me of fire, whilst him Thou didst create of clay." (Qur'an 38:71-76).

It suffices here to uncover Jawdat's conduct and his manner of hiding behind other people's personalities to pass on his deviant ideas. After taking an interest in and promoting Shahrur's book, he now returns to promote a new book because of its audacity in displaying Marxist materialist thought and Qadari Mu'tazili thought, particularly its open advocacy of Darwin's theory of evolution and the origin of species.

It is lamentable that a whole group of adherents of materialist thought now openly advocate Darwin's theory in the lands of al-Sham: Jawdat Said, Muhammad Shahrur and their followers. I do not know when this sequence of deviations will end, with Jawdat Said and his materialist school of change behind it!!

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Jawdat's Materialist Interpretation of the Noble Qur'an

First: Knowledge

Jawdat acknowledges that he cannot provide a clear definition of knowledge, saying:

"I do not claim that I shall offer an easy definition of knowledge which makes it possible to distinguish it from falsehood, and reason from desire..."¹

He then declares his rejection of and unease with the Muslim conception of knowledge, saying:

"I find that the conception of knowledge, whether among Muslims or the non-Muslims we read, particularly in the West, is not one with which I feel at ease."²

He then disparages the Muslim conception of knowledge, past and present, saying:

"The Muslim conception of knowledge, particularly among contemporaries, differs from the conception I understand from the Qur'an..."³

1. *Iqra* [Read], p. 17.

2. *Iqra* [Read], p. 18.

3. The preceding source, p. 18.

Through his unique understanding of the Qur'an! he declares both Muslim and Western understandings of knowledge inadequate:

"According to my Qur'anic learning, I find both views deficient. Muslims should reach complete confidence in knowledge and in its always serving truth..."⁴

We can assess his view of the Muslim understanding of knowledge on the basis of his materialist approach, which accepts only sensory knowledge. He therefore makes this sensory knowledge an arbiter and witness over Allah's verses in the Book, saying:

"Religion will become a science and become universal when the signs in the horizons and within the selves testify to it; these signs have the right to know the truth..."⁵

He sets sensory conditions for this knowledge and grants it authority over Allah's religion, saying:

"Just as science has extended its dominion over astronomy, chemistry and medicine, it will also extend its dominion over religion."⁶

Confining knowledge to a single source, the signs in the horizons and within the selves, history or cosmic events, makes it purely material.

In defining knowledge, Ibn Taymiyyah says: "The foundations of knowledge are three: sense perception, reason and report, such as widely transmitted reports and the prophets' reports through revelation."⁷ The materialist approach, however, accepts only what proceeds from matter.

4. The preceding source, p. 18.

5. *Iqra* [Read], p. 284.

6. The preceding source, p. 120.

7. *Dar' ta'arud al-aql wa-l-naql* [Averting conflict between reason and revelation], 1:178.

This appears clearly in Jawdat: he accepts faith in Allah only through observing results. He says:

"If we grasp the meaning of connecting causes with results, and that this connection is observational rather than rational, we can connect faith with results..."⁸

In Jawdat's recent writings, *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], or the Unzuru [Look] essays, I have found no recognition of the Qur'an as an independent source of knowledge. He likewise excludes the Prophetic Sunnah, citing both only to persuade Muslims of his materialist approach.

He says: "The arbiter in dispute is knowledge, and nothing else."⁹

Jawdat reveals something dangerous when he makes history the source of knowledge in place of prophethood:

"Allow me to say that Islam regards history as the source of knowledge, the source of science. I say that revelation ceased, that prophethood ended, because history became a source of knowledge..."¹⁰

Through these passages, we see Jawdat adopting a conception of knowledge different from that familiar to Muslims. It may be a great surprise to learn that he confines knowledge to particular matters, mentioned in his saying:

"After its contact with the West, Muslim thought departed from the Qur'anic conception, which regards true knowledge as knowledge of the selves, knowledge of consequences and wisdom drawn from history. It

8. The preceding source, p. 119.

9. *Al-Amal* [Action], p. 45.

10. He said this on Syrian television during a seminar on the Islamic awakening.

also departed from al-Jahiz's conception, which connected forbearance to knowledge and knowledge to eloquence, and took Russell's direction."¹¹

He confines knowledge to knowledge of the selves, consequences and history. Elsewhere, concerning knowledge, he says:

"Harnessing increases as knowledge increases. We have already seen this clearly in the signs in the horizons, which are called 'technology'."¹²

Confining knowledge in this way, falling short of the foundations of knowledge identified by Muslim scholars, leads to abolishing the other foundations.

Just as he excludes Allah's verses in the Book as an independent source of knowledge, he excludes reason as independent evidence for knowledge. He says:

"There is no rational relationship between cause and effect."¹³ He explains this by saying: "Reason cannot connect causes with results before observing this connection in external reality" (387). He generalises this rule to everything, neglecting the receipt of ready-made information through revelation which requires neither testing nor observation.

His attempt to merge science into religion, or the materialist approach into the Islamic approach, to use the experimental approach in matters of the unseen and generalise it, constitutes a great departure from the Islamic approach!!

This tendency has led him to absorption in the material aspect and an imbalance in his standards of comparison.

11. *Iqra* [Read], p. 20.

12. *Al-Amal* [Action], p. 57.

13. *Iqra* [Read], p. 109.

He says: "A person feels small before someone who reads more than he does. This is Allah's regularity: '*Are those who know equal with those who know not?*' (Qur'an 39:9). To see its truth among people, consider how they look at a scholar or someone holding a higher qualification. This regard sometimes rises to the level of superstition.

Yes, whoever reads more obtains more. It is Allah's law: '*It will not be in accordance with your desires, nor the desires of the People of the Scripture. He who doeth wrong will have the recompense thereof*' (Qur'an 4:123). Allah does not look at people's statements, appearances or names. Whoever follows Allah's regularity receives Allah's promise: '*Each do We supply, both these and those, from the bounty of thy Lord. And the bounty of thy Lord can never be walled up.*' (Qur'an 17:20)."¹⁴

He says that a person feels small before someone who reads more. This is a great fallacy. He has become captive to materialism to the furthest extent and departed from objectivity. The issue is not who reads more, nor the number of books read. A person respects someone more knowledgeable than himself, rather than looking to whoever reads more: that reading may be of no benefit and yield no knowledge. Let us consider the comparison which the author of *Fi zilal al-Qur'an* draws, in his beautiful, expressive manner, concerning the translation of Qur'anic verses into tangible reality.

He says: "Beside this wretched image of humanity¹⁵, another appears: the image of a fearful, trembling heart which remembers Allah and does not forget Him in prosperity or adversity, living its earthly life in fear of the Hereafter and hope for its Lord's mercy and bounty. From it arises sound knowledge which grasps the realities of existence: '*Is he who payeth adoration*', up to His saying, '*Are those who know equal with those who*

14. *Iqra* [Read], p. 28.

15. He refers to the preceding verses: "*and setteth up rivals to Allah that he may beguile (men) from his way. Say (O Muhammad, unto such a one): Take pleasure in thy disbelief a while. Lo! thou art of the owners of the Fire.*" (Qur'an 39:8).

know not?' (Qur'an 39:9). It is a radiant, sensitive image: devotion, obedience and turning towards Allah while prostrating and standing; this delicate sensitivity, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Lord's mercy; this purity and transparency which open insight and open the heart to the blessing of seeing, apprehending and receiving. All this depicts a bright, luminous human image, contrasting with the wretched, obscured image drawn by the preceding verse. It therefore establishes this comparison: '*Say (unto them, O Muhammad): Are those who know equal with those who know not?*'. True knowledge is recognition, perception of truth, the opening of insight and connection with the fixed realities of existence. Knowledge is not the isolated, disconnected pieces of information which crowd the mind without leading to the universe's great truths or extending beyond the perceptible surface.

This is the path to true knowledge and enlightened understanding: devotion to Allah, sensitivity of heart, awareness of fear of the Hereafter, hope for Allah's mercy and bounty, and this trembling, humble awareness of Allah. This is the path. Through it the understanding mind perceives and knows, benefits from what it sees, hears and experiences, and reaches the great, fixed truths beyond observations. Those who stop at individual experiments and outward observations are collectors of information, rather than scholars."¹⁶ This is the clear truth of the comparison between those who know and believe in Allah and those who do not know and disbelieve in Allah and His messages.

Jawdat Said, however, holds a view opposed to everything mentioned. He makes those who know the readers, and those who do not know those who do not read, calling this Allah's regularity...!! Is this not a great calumny?!

16. *Fi zilal al-Qur'an* [In the Shade of the Qur'an], 5:3042.

He also says: "Some people may incline towards assigning intelligence a higher rank than reading..."¹⁷

Instead of comparing reading and action, he compares reading and intelligence. This comparison is unnecessary. His purpose, Allah knows best, is to direct the matter towards his objective of establishing the principles of the materialist approach.

It is striking that the writer presents two examples of earlier readers. Concerning al-Jahiz, he says:

"Al-Jahiz occupies a place in Islamic civilisation whose star shines across time. He died beneath the books which collapsed upon him: he is the martyr of books and reading. He was a reader at a civilisational, human and universal level. His books have a particular flavour and taste because of the universality of his reading and the humanity of his culture. He addresses matters with openness, far from narrowness, because alongside the verses of the Book he appreciated the signs in the horizons and within the selves. Ibn al-Amid therefore said of his books: 'Al-Jahiz's books teach reason first and literature second.' Although a leading figure in literature, he also held a doctrine in belief."¹⁸

Al-Jahiz's true character may escape some students of knowledge today, because the source of information is confused. Most people offering such observations do not consult the reliable books of scholars specialising in the assessment of transmitters, such as al-Bukhari, Muslim, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Uyaynah and others. I shall quote scholarly statements concerning this man whom Jawdat makes his model, accords the foremost place in Islamic civilisation and claims to have held a creed.

17. *Iqra* [Read], p. 28.

18. The preceding source, p. 31.

Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani said: "Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz, the author of numerous works: Tha'lab said that he was neither trustworthy nor reliable. I, Ibn Hajar, say that he was among the leaders of religious innovations. Abu al-Ayna related that al-Jahiz said: 'Al-Asma'i was a Manichaean.' Al-Abbas ibn Rustam told him: 'No, by Allah, he was no Manichaean. Do you remember sitting with him to ask questions, when he took his patched sandal in his hand and said: What a fine covering for a Qadari! You knew he meant you.' That is, al-Jahiz was a Qadari. Al-Khatib related through a chain of transmission that he did not pray. Ibn Shaybah called him a liar. Al-Khattabi said that his religious standing was obscure. Abu al-Faraj mentioned that he was accused of heresy. Ibn Hazm said that he was one of the licentious and misguided, dominated by jest.

Abu Mansur al-Azhari said in the introduction to *Tahdhib al-lughah* [The Refinement of Language]: 'Among those who spoke about languages using what their tongues could encompass, and attributed to trustworthy people things which were not their words, was al-Jahiz. He was given expansive speech, sweet eloquence in discourse and breadth in the arts, yet scholars condemned him and denied his truthfulness.' Tha'lab said: 'He lied about Allah, His Messenger and people.'"¹⁹ Al-Dhahabi said: "The deeply learned scholar, versed in many arts, the Mu'tazili, took from al-Nazzam." He also said: "Al-Jahiz's characteristics suggest that he fabricates..."²⁰

I have listed these observations only to show the personalities on whom the writer Jawdat Said relies, takes an interest in and prefers to many Islamic scholars whose names shone in the historical record.

19. *Lisan al-mizan* [The Tongue of the Balance], 4:409.

20. *Siyar a'lam al-nubala* [Lives of the Noble Figures], 11:526.

Here I wish to mention an essential observation: the clear connection between al-Jahiz's and Jawdat's ideas, particularly the Qadari Mu'tazili ideas disseminated in his books.

The other personality Jawdat respects is Abd Allah ibn al-Muqaffa:

"He was notorious for heresy. Ibn Abd al-Hadi said of him: 'I have seen no book of heresy of which he was not the origin.' Al-Jahiz himself related that Ibn al-Muqaffa was under suspicion."²¹

Despite this accusation, Jawdat describes his expressions as luminous and eloquent. We too have the right to ask: why does the writer insist on making these men the support of his views and the source of his ideas despite their being accused of heresy....!?

During this study I became aware of a prominent criterion for classifying thinkers: observing the personalities a thinker respects and treats as exemplary models. This is the case here with Jawdat, whose personality I was able to connect with those of al-Jahiz and Ibn al-Muqaffa. Here I discern a particular approach in Jawdat: he makes history the arbiter and treats it as knowledge, while excluding the scriptural text itself from this role. He says: "History, the laboratory of values and the balance for judging civilisations, must be studied and scrutinised in time and space, historically and geographically. The command to travel through the earth, observe how creation began and observe the regularities of those who passed away before us requires reckoning Allah's days among humanity. Human actions on this earth have acquired a value for knowledge, since deriving knowledge of soundness and corruption depends on examining the consequences of past and present affairs, whether before the Qur'an's revelation, contemporary with it or after it. The Qur'an offers examples of drawing lessons to derive regularities and the laws of the science of soundness and corruption from history preceding its revelation and from

21. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Lisan al-mizan* [The Tongue of the Balance], 3:449.

contemporary human conditions. When judgements cannot be derived from the past, the Qur'an supplies them by referring those addressed to the future, because Allah's regularities will become manifest. If proof of this judgement's truth does not appear now, wait: time will reveal it. *'Whether We let thee see something of that which We have promised them, or make thee die (before its happening), thine is but conveyance (of the message). Ours the reckoning. ... The disbelievers will come to know for whom will be the sequel of the (heavenly) Home.'* (Qur'an 13:40, 42).

Referring judgement to history, past, present and future, to distinguish sound values from unsound ones is a Qur'anic approach and Qur'anic knowledge: *'And ye will come in time to know the truth thereof.'* (Qur'an 38:88); *'We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifest unto them that it is the Truth. Doth not thy Lord suffice, since He is Witness over all things?'* (Qur'an 41:53). The Gospel contains something similar. In Matthew, chapter 7: 'Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits.' In the same sense, Matthew 21:43 states: 'Therefore I say to you: the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation which produces its fruits.'²²

He makes the Qur'an's function the referral of those addressed either to the past or to the future, and assigns the Gospel the same function. This shows that he does not make the Noble Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah the sources of knowledge. He also makes the rules derived from the Qur'an equivalent to those derived from the Gospel.

This is a calumny against religion. Allah Most High says: *"Lo! religion with Allah (is) the Surrender (to His Will and Guidance). Those who (formerly) received the Scripture differed only after knowledge came unto them, through transgression among themselves. Whoso disbelieveth the*

22. *Iqra* [Read], pp. 138-139.

revelations of Allah (will find that) lo! Allah is swift at reckoning." (Qur'an 3:19).

He, Most High, also says:

"And whoso seeketh as religion other than the Surrender (to Allah) it will not be accepted from him, and he will be a loser in the Hereafter."

Qur'an 3:85

We must recognise that Islam does not acknowledge the Gospel circulating among people, but regards it as distorted. It may not be drawn upon or regarded as coming from Allah. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, would become angry with anyone he found examining something from the Torah or Gospel.

Jawdat makes knowledge of the universe the appropriate starting point, saying: "Every matter of life requires a launching base. The truth existing in the universe provides the basis for growth and increasing capacities. The history of the beginning of creation speaks of this in the universe's eloquent language, through its fixed, prevailing regularity, overcoming obstacles."²³

Second: Reading

When we examine the subjects the writer highlights, we find a particular manner of interpreting them and explaining their meaning. His interpretation never departs from the materialist approach which characterises all his intellectual projects.

Concerning his approach to reading, he says: "Through reading, humanity rises to the highest ranks. Concerning this, the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, says: 'Read and rise.' This means that in proportion to reading, one attains the highest ranks, advancement, elevation and ascent.

23. *Iqra* [Read], p. 141.

The traditional use of this noble hadith confines it to the Noble Qur'an and ascent on the Last Day alone. Yet, as is said in the principles of jurisprudence, the matter concerns the generality of the circumstances rather than the particularity of the occasion. On this basis it can be generalised to encompass reading the Noble Qur'an and other works, since the Qur'an commands us to travel through the earth and observe how creation began. The results of travelling and observing can be obtained through reading. The Qur'an thus expands our field of reading, and reading any book opens the door to reading another. The reader's ascent is not confined to the Hereafter: the signs in the horizons and within the selves indicate that the reader also advances and rises in this world.

We often render the social content of Qur'anic verses inoperative through this kind of restriction, truncation and separation from the reality of life."²⁴ I shall offer brief observations on this question:

1. The writer removed a part of a long Prophetic hadith, "Read and rise", and treated it as sufficient to interpret the whole hadith. As recorded in the books of the Sunan, the hadith is related from Abu Said, who said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"When the bearer of the Qur'an enters Paradise, he is told: 'Read and ascend.' He reads and ascends one rank for every verse, until he reads the last of what he knows."²⁵

24. *Iqra* [Read], p. 24.

25. Ibn Majah, hadith 3780, and *Musnad Ahmad*; also in *Sahih al-Jami al-sahih* [The Authentic Collection], hadith 8122.

In another account from Abd Allah ibn Amr, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, says:

"The bearer of the Qur'an is told: 'Read, ascend and recite with measured delivery as you recited in the worldly abode, for your station is at the last verse you used to read.'"²⁶

We may ask: what has the writer done with these hadiths?!

1. He generalised the rule of jurisprudential interpretation which the hadith delimited. The hadith makes advancement and ascent dependent on reading the Qur'an in the Hereafter; Jawdat applied this to the worldly abode.

2. He expanded reading to encompass the Qur'an and other works, suggesting that he places those who read other works at the same rank of advancement as those who read the Qur'an. No Muslim can undertake such a rendering of the Prophetic hadiths inoperative and then claim to do so with good intentions..!!

Had the writer confined himself to saying that people benefit from the signs in the horizons and within the selves in this world, the matter would have been straightforward, since this does not contradict the Islamic approach to purely material affairs.

What the writer has done, however, rendering the rules of reward and punishment inoperative and changing Islam's conception of action, represents a clear deviation.

In *Iqra* [Read], he declares: "Historically and geographically, those who read are the most honoured in the world." He lists peoples once distinguished in knowledge, such as the Greeks²⁷, and says: "They received the Lord's generosity and honour among the peoples of the world." This is

26. *Sunan Abi Dawud*, hadith 1464, and Ahmad, al-Hakim and others. It is an authentic hadith.

27. *Iqra* [Read], p. 26.

an explicit violation of the Shari'ah and clear evidence of Jawdat's belief in the materialist approach. How can honour belong to people who disbelieved and died associating partners with Allah? Rather, Hell is filled with them, and Allah Most High's saying applies to them: "*(Saying): Taste! Lo! thou wast forsooth the mighty, the noble!*" (Qur'an 44:49).

He, Most High, likewise says of those who obtained abundant knowledge and great production: "*Then, when they forgot that whereof they had been reminded, We opened unto them the gates of all things till, even as they were rejoicing in that which they were given, We seized them unawares, and lo! they were dumbfounded.*" (Qur'an 6:44). The writer praises the Greek peoples and their civilisation, displaying admiration for the conquests of Alexander, Aristotle's pupil, and calling Aristotle the First Teacher..!

Has Jawdat forgotten what Aristotle's views did to Islam and Muslims, spreading division and disseminating the philosophical approach among them? The effects of these ideas continue to this day, like a pickaxe destroying Islam and dividing Muslims. Has Jawdat forgotten that he himself is a remnant of this production..?!

His fascination with Europe's scientific progress nevertheless continues. He praises peoples which adhered to the sciences and reading despite not following Allah's approach, saying:

"If we look around us in the age in which we live, those who enjoy the world's good things and attain generosity and honour are this age's readers, those most connected with reading and its associated activities. This is shown by statistics counting authors, books, newspapers, magazines, libraries and each individual's share of printed paper. Toynbee was compelled to state: 'An increase in the proportion of readers of the printed word is the civilisational basis for classifying countries as backward,

developing or advanced."²⁸ Is it not strange that a writer "calling to Islam" describes these peoples who depart from Allah's approach as a people of honour?

We have abundant texts exposing this falseness through which he flatters Western peoples. What honour from the Lord, glorified is He, has descended upon them, when we observe their dissolution and deviation, their oppression and tyranny? Is it not strange that Jawdat, who advocates change, is captivated by Western technology and superiority in sciences and inventions, knowing that Allah's regularity will overtake and destroy them as it destroyed earlier peoples: the Greeks, Romans, Pharaohs and others....!

Why, then, does he advocate adherence to their materialist approach and replacing an upright religion with their views and ideas..! Jawdat also tells us that the Qur'an does not teach us; travelling through the earth and cosmic and historical events do. The Qur'anic expression is clear: "*We opened unto them the gates of all things*" (Qur'an 6:44). Sciences, inventions and good things come to them from everywhere. The harvests of weak peoples are subject to their authority. They respond with arrogance, violence, deception and exploitation. Their abundant reading avails them nothing: they live in torment, indeed in misery. Diseases escape control, and boasting of conquering nature and eliminating epidemics is a deadly mirage for those among our own people dazzled by their power and tyranny. Each of us must recognise that they are being drawn gradually towards punishment. Abundant reading, increased research and a flood of discoveries will not benefit them unless they adhere to Allah's Shari'ah, revealed for humanity's welfare and happiness in this world and the Hereafter.

Let no one imagine this is a call to abandon reading or reduce it..! I call instead for distinguishing what we read and recognising that it should bring

28. *Iqra* [Read], p. 27.

happiness in this world and the Hereafter, rather than become a path to misery and unhappiness.

Distinguishing beneficial knowledge from falsehood is an elevated matter requiring scriptural standards and controls, so that no one may manipulate it as he wishes!!

Third: Fighting

Jawdat tries to connect all religious affairs with the materialist approach. By this I do not mean preparing strength and a person's preparation to enter the struggle of jihad against unbelievers through His saying, Most High, *"Make ready for them all thou canst of (armed) force and of horses tethered, that thereby ye may dismay the enemy of Allah and your enemy"* (Qur'an 8:60). I mean his treatment of the distinction between believers and unbelievers through confrontation and perseverance in fighting. He says: "Allah Most High says:

"If there be of you twenty steadfast they shall overcome two hundred, and if there be of you a hundred (steadfast) they shall overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve, because they (the disbelievers) are a folk without intelligence. Now hath Allah lightened your burden, for He knoweth that there is weakness in you. So if there be of you a steadfast hundred they shall overcome two hundred, and if there be of you a thousand (steadfast) they shall overcome two thousand by permission of Allah. Allah is with the steadfast."

Qur'an 8:65-66, excerpt

We understand from this verse that the perseverance of a small number, such as ten against a thousand, does not necessarily secure victory. The verse seems to discuss a balance of quantity and quality within two limits. There may be disagreement on the basis that the number has no restrictive implication. Yet there can be no disagreement about the balance of quantity and quality, and increasing quantity when quality

weakens. This is clear in His saying, Most High: *'Now hath Allah lightened your burden, for He knoweth that there is weakness in you. So if there be of you a steadfast hundred they shall overcome two hundred'* (Qur'an 8:66), after they had previously overcome a thousand.

From this we understand that the victory obtained by the society or community addressed by 'of you' is not achieved through one individual's steadfastness or a change in what is within one individual. A particular number must remain steadfast, with a lower and upper limit. Although this verse of Surat al-Anfal defines quantity and introduces quality in the particular subject of steadfastness in battle, this specificity is not confined to armed battle. Life's battles are numerous, and building society requires the same balance."²⁹

For Jawdat, however, the criterion which makes the balance appropriate is the unbelievers' understanding. He says: "The struggle to deal consciously with Allah's regularities encompasses unbelievers and believers. Understanding Allah's regularities yields results even for unbelievers. Thus, when He, Most High, said:

'they shall overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve', He followed it with *'because they (the disbelievers) are a folk without intelligence.'* This shows that unbelievers' understanding also enters into the matter, quantitatively and qualitatively, particularly understanding the regularities of worldly life."³⁰

Here he regards the numbers mentioned in the Qur'an as subject to the criterion of unbelievers' understanding and their difference from the unbelievers of the Prophet's time, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This renders inoperative the clear meaning of the scriptural text and its fixed numerical sense. The text shows that unbelievers always lack

29. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 39.

30. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 40.

understanding, whether in the Prophet's time, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, or our own. *Sahih al-Bukhari* relates from Ibn Abbas concerning this verse:

"He said: twenty were commanded not to flee from two hundred. Allah then lightened their burden, saying: '*Now hath Allah lightened your burden, for He knoweth that there is weakness in you.*' (Qur'an 8:66). A hundred should therefore not flee from two hundred."³¹

Al-Bukhari also relates from Ibn Abbas: "When this verse was revealed, it weighed heavily upon Muslims, who regarded it as a great burden for twenty to fight two hundred and a hundred to fight a thousand. Allah lightened their burden and abrogated it through the other verse: '*Now hath Allah lightened your burden, for He knoweth that there is weakness in you.*' (Qur'an 8:66). When they numbered half their enemy, they were not permitted to flee. When they numbered less, fighting was not obligatory and they could withdraw."³²

Explaining the verse in his commentary, Ibn Kathir says:

"He, Most High, urges His Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and the believers to fight, confront their enemies and engage their opponents. He informs them that He suffices them, supporting and assisting them against their enemy, however numerous their opponents and successive their reinforcements, even if the believers are few."³³

Sayyid Qutb explains the unbelievers' understanding and its effect in battle:

31. Al-Bukhari, 6:79.

32. Al-Bukhari, 6:79.

33. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* [The Commentary of Ibn Kathir], 2:508, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah edition.

"The explanation of this disparity is surprising and remarkable, but true and profound: '*because they (the disbelievers) are a folk without intelligence.*' (Qur'an 8:65).

What apparent connection is there between understanding and victory? Yet the connection is real and strong. The believing group is distinguished by knowing its path, understanding its approach and perceiving the reality of its existence and purpose. It understands the reality of divinity and servanthood: that divinity must be exclusive and supreme, and servanthood must belong to Allah alone, without partner." He goes on to say: "All this is understanding which pours light, confidence, strength and certainty into the Muslim group's hearts, driving it to jihad in Allah's path with strength and reassurance concerning the outcome, which multiplies its power. Its enemies, by contrast, are 'a folk without intelligence': their hearts are closed, their insights obscured, and their strength blunt and impotent, however superior it appears. It is a strength cut off and isolated from the great source! This ratio, one to ten, is the original balance of power between believers who understand and unbelievers who do not. Even in the weakest condition of steadfast Muslims, the ratio is one to two." Sayyid then says: "In our view, these verses most probably contain a truth concerning the believers' strength against their enemy in Allah's balance, which is the truth..."³⁴

We must therefore not overlook a fundamental truth: if unbelievers understood, they would believe in Allah. We cannot describe unbelievers as possessing understanding and faith, however extensive their sciences and weapons.

34. *Fi zilal al-Qur'an* [In the Shade of the Qur'an], 3:1550.

Explaining the understanding possessed by believers and absent among unbelievers, al-Qurtubi says:

"You understand what you fight for, namely reward, whereas they do not know what they fight for."³⁵

Jawdat has been dazzled by Western countries' progress in means and equipment and their production of weapons and armaments. He has thus reversed the verse's meaning into a materialist conception, rendering Qur'anic verses inoperative and referring them back to his materialist approach. In doing so, he has departed from the foundations of the Islamic approach and the sound method of interpretation.

The battles between Muslims and unbelievers, whether at Badr and the Trench or at Yarmuk and al-Qadisiyyah, testify to the true balance founded on firm certainty that victory comes from Allah. When Muslims became conscious of their numbers and increased equipment, were dazzled by them and forgot the source of victory, harsh lessons awaited them.

Their Lord, glorified is He, addressed them, saying:

"Allah hath given you victory on many fields and on the day of Hunayn, when ye exulted in your multitude but it availed you naught, and the earth, vast as it is, was straitened for you; then ye turned back in flight;"

Qur'an 9:25

Allah granted victory to believers when they had neither strength nor equipment. At Hunayn they were defeated despite their great numbers; Allah then granted them victory at the battle's end through His power, their return to His covenant and their seeking forgiveness. This continually reminds believers that devotion to Allah and steadfastness upon His

35. *Tafsir al-Qurtubi* [The Commentary of al-Qurtubi], 8:45.

covenant form the basis of victory: *"If ye help Allah, He will help you and will make your foothold firm."* (Qur'an 47:7).

In every battle between Muslims and unbelievers, Muslims gained victory only when fewer in number and less well equipped than their opponents.

We must recognise, however, that defeat in our present age arises from these people's abandonment of their Lord's approach and their Prophet's Sunnah, their distance from the source of victory and place of honour, and their failure to make Islam the approach governing their lives. Preparation follows rectitude, and establishment in power follows adherence.

Fourth: The Purpose of Creation

When Jawdat sought to explain the purpose of creation, he did not adhere to the recognised scriptural foundations for answering this important question. He resorted instead to concealment and deception to establish the materialist approach in this dangerous subject. This appears in his saying:

"A third question arises here: what is the purpose of creation?

People may differ in perceiving the wisdom and objectives. This question cannot be called pointless: it is the object sought by people of knowledge and wisdom, even if hidden from many of them:

"He giveth wisdom unto whom He will, and he unto whom wisdom is given, he truly hath received abundant good."

Qur'an 2:269, excerpt

It is not humanity's task to create regularities: it cannot do so. Humanity must discover them and strive to investigate them, longing to uncover and benefit from them, and thank the Creator who bestowed them.

The characteristic Allah Most High affirms for the self, the possibility that people may change what is within their selves, is His handiwork and inspiration. From the ideas people place within the self arise characteristics relating to the people. These characteristics, too, are Allah Most High's creation, such as wealth and poverty, honour and humiliation..."³⁶

We may ask about Jawdat's position on this matter and his determination of this great purpose!! Where is the correct answer to this specific question, which he posed to himself, rather than being asked by others? Were we to ask a small child in primary school about the purpose of creation, the child would neither hesitate nor be confused! It appears in Allah Most High's saying: "*I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me.*" (Qur'an 51:56). Commentators unanimously agree on this answer: the purpose of creation is worship in its broadest meanings.

I shall mention some scholarly statements to clarify the complete picture.

Sayyid says in his *Fi zilal al-Qur'an*:

"This short text contains an immense truth, among the greatest cosmic truths, without understanding and certainty of which human life on earth cannot be sound: the life of an individual, a community or all humanity, in every stage and age.

It opens numerous aspects and perspectives of meanings and purposes, all included within this immense truth, the cornerstone upon which life rests. Its first aspect is that the existence of jinn and human beings has a particular purpose, embodied in a function. Whoever fulfils it achieves the purpose of his existence; whoever falls short or refuses it invalidates that purpose, becomes without a function, and leaves his life empty of intention and its original meaning, from which it derives its primary

36. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 65.

value. He has escaped the law through which he came into existence and ends in the absolute loss which befalls every being escaping the law of existence that binds and preserves it and guarantees its survival.

This particular function connecting jinn and human beings to the law of existence is worship of Allah, or servanthood to Allah: that there should be a servant and a Lord, a servant who worships and a Lord who is worshipped, and that the servant's entire life should rest on this understanding. It thus becomes clear that servanthood, the purpose of human existence and humanity's primary function, is broader and more comprehensive than rituals alone. Stewardship is certainly included in the meaning of worship. The reality of worship therefore consists of two principal matters:

First, the meaning of servanthood to Allah must become established within the soul: the settled awareness of a servant and a Lord, a servant who worships and a Lord who is worshipped; of nothing beyond this and no other situation or understanding. In existence there is only the worshipper and the worshipped: one Lord, and all others servants.

Second, every movement in the conscience, every movement of the limbs and every movement in life must be directed to Allah alone, stripped of every other feeling and every meaning other than worshipping Him.

Through this the meaning of worship is fulfilled..."³⁷

Jawdat, however, confines worship to one matter: knowing and uncovering regularities, that is, discovering the laws of life in peoples and nature alike. He makes no reference, near or remote, to the purpose of creation in its comprehensive meaning, nor mentions worship as its purpose, as expressed in the Noble Qur'an in the finest form and clearest wording, and as we saw in Sayyid's eloquent statements...

37. *Fi zilal al-Qur'an* [In the Shade of the Qur'an], 6:3386.

We may ask why Jawdat takes this position despite the explicit text of the Noble Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah, and the commentators' consensus..?

Our astonishment will not last, since the writer adopts the materialist approach to thought and the positivist, materialist method of interpreting the Qur'an and events. Confining creation's purpose to discovering regularities, "the divine signs", makes this a general approach encompassing all peoples, believing and unbelieving. Distinctions disappear, matters become confused and creation's purpose is confined to developing the earth and benefiting from its good things. Humanity's function then becomes securing the material requirements of life, and human life resembles animal life..!

If the writer does not grasp the purpose of creation, he nevertheless advocates adherence to the materialist approach, which brings believer and unbeliever together on a single path: concern for life's requirements, preserving survival and satisfying bodily instincts. He, Most High, says:

“while those who disbelieve take their comfort in this life and eat even as the cattle eat, and the Fire is their habitation.”

Qur'an 47:12, excerpt

What distinguishes humanity from animals is the lofty purposes and elevated objectives which human beings strive to fulfil in servanthood to Allah upon this earth.

“Say: I am commanded only that I serve Allah and ascribe unto Him no partner. Unto Him I cry, and unto Him is my return.”

Qur'an 13:36, excerpt

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Conception of Western Democracy

In an essay addressed to Muslim youth in Algeria¹, during the political crisis there arising from the practice of democracy, Jawdat called on Algerians to adhere to democracy and resolve their problems through it:

"Causes of conflict have existed throughout time, but history has taught us how to resolve the problem. The Western world resolved it through democracy. We Muslims, believers and secularists alike, refuse to submit to democracy."²

We have the following observations on this passage:

Jawdat calls on people and Islamists to adopt democracy and submit to its approach. He does so although we all know that democracy differs completely from the Islamic approach. Indeed, democracy is a product of the positivist materialist approach and one of its practical effects, whether appearing in the Western world in the garb of capitalism or in the Eastern bloc in the form of communist Marxism.

1. This essay does not examine the Algerian problem, but concerns defining the positions of materialist thinkers generally, and Jawdat Said particularly, on democracy.

2. Jawdat Said, *Unzuru 43* [Look, 43], p. 3.

The Meaning of Democracy

Democracy has nothing to do with Islam, nor is there any similarity between them, as some imagine. It is Greek in origin, a product of Greek philosophical thought and a human creation. We can therefore classify it as a humanly devised doctrine unrelated to divine revelation.

Islam, by contrast, is a divine religion founded on ruling by the Book and the Sunnah. The democratic system rests on government by the people: the people govern themselves and choose whatever systems of government they wish. The authority to issue laws and formulate rulings lies with representatives of the people, irrespective of their creed. Although democracy appears as an approach preserving personal freedom, it does not permit society to be founded on an approach grounded in belief.

The democratic system does not consider the true nature of the choice or its soundness, but whether it was chosen by the majority. Those deceived by democracy, as Jawdat is here, imagine that they can use it to resolve the community's problems without being affected by its negative aspects, just as he previously called for benefiting from Marxist theory. This is consistent with neither the Islamic nor the democratic approach. In principle, the democratic system³ does not permit restrictions on human freedom in any activity, nor accept intervention in the personal lives of society's members or the regulation of social relationships, such as the mixing of men and women or controlling their relations. Such matters proceed according to the inclinations of those with influence.

3. Reality nevertheless shows that the democratic system does not permit the replacement of democracy, even through a majority, as occurred in Algeria.

Democracy accompanies secularism and was born alongside it: through both, religion was separated from the state. Although we need not criticise all democracy's foundations⁴ or compare it with Islam, since this is clear to many, we need to ask why Jawdat or some engaged in Islamic advocacy seek solutions to Muslim problems through approaches imported from the materialist West. At the same time, they exclude judgement by scriptural texts as a means of offering suitable solutions to contemporary problems.

Jawdat says:

"Our love of ourselves must not make us reject democracy. Otherwise, we shall be like our opponents, who disgraced themselves by rejecting democracy, the universal demand of the present age."⁵

Jawdat's psychological defeat and fascination with Western material achievements and economic and military superiority thus become apparent. Here he advocates imitation, just as Taha Husayn earlier called for following the Western path, saying:

"We should live as Europeans live and follow their path, to become their equals and partners in civilisation, in its good and its evil."⁶

Taha Husayn's approach and ideas were concealed from people only briefly. Jawdat's ideas must likewise not remain concealed from us. We must understand this tendency's reality and danger, and possess the restraint which prevents us from accepting Western ideas, receiving its approaches or borrowing its patterns of thought. Those ideas are tailored to

4. A friend living in America told me that American television showed a young man entering a classroom in an American university completely naked, without anyone preventing this shameful conduct or even objecting. Likewise, a girl's father cannot prevent her from conducting her personal life as she wishes, otherwise he faces court and prison.

5. *Unzuru* 43 [Look, 43], p. 3.

6. *Mustaqbal al-thaqafah* [The Future of Culture], pp. 42-44.

wandering, misguided societies distant from Allah's command and refusing His approach.

One fact deserves attention, which Jawdat neglected and passed over in silence: democracy did not resolve the Western world's problems, as he claimed, achieve its stability, spread security and reassurance or bring happiness to Western humanity, which lives in constant psychological misery and continuing social disorder.

In response to Jawdat, we ask: how does the Islamic community resolve its problems? Has Islam identified the path of resolution for it?

This question is settled among Muslims through His saying, Most High:

“And in whatsoever ye differ, the verdict therein belongeth to Allah.”

Qur'an 42:10, excerpt

He, Most High, says: *"and if ye have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the messenger"* (Qur'an 4:59). This is the Muslims' reference in dispute. Returning to Allah's and the Messenger's judgement when disagreement arises constitutes a condition of faith and the boundary of Islam. Accepting judgement by it likewise constitutes a condition of the creed's validity and clarity.

He, Most High, says:

“But nay, by thy Lord, they will not believe (in truth) until they make thee judge of what is in dispute between them and find within themselves no dislike of that which thou decidest, and submit with full submission.”

Qur'an 4:65

Despite this clarity concerning the Islamic approach's reality and its difference from Western approaches, Jawdat advocates adopting democracy and refraining from rejecting it: "We should not reject democracy; we should increase its effectiveness by spreading knowledge and science. Without knowledge and understanding behind it, democracy will fail to resolve problems. People want not merely leaders, but the resolution of problems, the spread of justice and the alleviation of pain."⁷

Jawdat then offers a strange view unrelated directly to democracy: a call for unilateral Muslim disarmament. He says:

"An example both small and great is that if Muslims attain government, they will seek to strengthen the armed forces and purchase weapons. This is the very essence of ruin, because its time has passed: the army and weapons ruin the economy. The age of weapons is past; they no longer protect a nation. Russia is the greatest example.

We should therefore immediately reduce and finally dispense with the army and weapons, particularly advanced weapons.

Nations defend themselves with light weapons if an enemy attacks. Japan liberated itself without weapons or armed forces."⁸

This is an explicit call to helplessness, indeed to a dangerous condition of humiliation and weakness. No one before Jawdat dared issue this suspicious ruling calling for Muslim disarmament, dispensing with the army and advanced weapons and refraining from purchasing them, through flimsy reasons and invalid arguments: that purchasing advanced weapons ruins the economy. No one before him dared render the verses concerning jihad inoperative in this way and abolish their role in Islamic life, as though this solution were all the community lacked in facing its problems!!

7. *Unzuru 43* [Look, 43], p. 3.

8. *Unzuru 43* [Look, 43], p. 3.

Whose interests does Jawdat serve with this ruling? What is the purpose of presenting this slogan among Muslims at this stage of the conflict between the Islamic world and the Zionist entity?

Has Jawdat Said not considered the reality of the enemies⁹ and the Zionist enemy's forces lying in wait for Muslims at the borders? Has he not seen their advanced weapons, which enabled them to seize our land, destroy our weapons and shed our innocents' blood?!!

How, then, does he ask Muslims to abandon their weapons and face enemies with exposed chests and empty hands?!

Has he forgotten Allah Most High's saying:

"Make ready for them all thou canst of (armed) force" (Qur'an 8:60)? What wisdom, then, lies in this open call to dispense with armed forces and advanced weapons?

Nor has Jawdat explained the source of his other wisdom when he says: "Nations defend themselves with real weapons."¹⁰

A small child perceives this statement's error and knows that resisting force requires equivalent force, and that only iron defeats iron. Jawdat then gives the strange example of Japan liberating itself without weapons or armed forces!!

9. Jawdat lives in Bi'r Ajam, a small village near Syria's border with the Zionist enemy in the Quneitra region. He withdrew there for a long period before returning to the public arena. No one enters the village without a permit.

10. *Unzuru* 43 [Look, 43].

Has Japan really been liberated from American and Allied control? Does it possess freedom of political decision or complete sovereign action? It cannot even establish a complete army fit to preserve dignity and honour¹¹, since it remains subject to the peace conditions imposed after its defeat in the Second World War. These conditions also apply to Germany.

Jawdat then surprises us with a view still stranger than the others recorded in this essay:

"The army and weapons are an obstacle to the liberation of nations."¹²

Jawdat's preferred method of confrontation is:

"We do not strike, we do not flee, and we do not demand prisoners' release."¹³ We do not know where he obtains these ideas, alien to the Prophet's approach and mission!! The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, gathered his Companions in al-Arqam's house, surrounded them with affection and protection, and concealed them from the enemy for fear that they would be subjected to persecution. When he perceived their suffering and torture intensifying, he advised migration to a safe place.

His presentation of Abu Dharr al-Ghifari was strange and laughable: "Abu Dharr opposed those who differed in this way until he was exiled and died in exile. Muslims, whether in Abu Dharr's time or now, have not understood this well. They should have joined Abu Dharr..." (424). In Jawdat's view, none of the Companions understood, with a single exception: Abu Dharr!!

11. Jawdat quotes the Japanese writer Shintaro Ishihara: "Japan, this country which can say no, does so because it possesses culture, rationality and knowledge, rather than missiles. It liberated itself without a war of liberation." Jawdat comments: "These people are closer to Allah and closer to humanity." We say that it cannot say no to the extortion of the Allied countries, which continue to drain Japanese wealth and the good things of their country.

12. *Unzuru* 43 [Look, 43], p. 5.

13. *Unzuru* 43 [Look, 43], p. 5.

What is this farce issuing from this man? How can he attack the Messenger of Allah's Companions in this way, disparage them and describe them as silent about the truth, when He, Most High, said of them:

“Allah is well pleased with them, and they are well pleased with Him. They are Allah's party. Lo! is it not Allah's party who are the successful?”

Qur'an 58:22, excerpt

Every Muslim must behave respectfully towards the Companions and not belittle their minds. Abu Dharr spoke in fulfilment of the duty of sincere counsel which Islam imposes on every Muslim. He was neither an opponent nor a dissenter, and those he advised were not dissenters, as Jawdat tried to depict them. Abu Dharr obeyed the Commander of the Faithful when ordered to retire to al-Rabadhah. He did not permit rebellion against a Muslim ruler unless there was manifest unbelief. He was among the virtuous Companions, although others surpassed him, such as the Rightly Guided Caliph Uthman ibn Affan, Ali ibn Abi Talib and others promised Paradise. May Allah Most High be pleased with them all.

Jawdat has dared attack the Messenger of Allah's Companions. His purpose was to make Abu Dharr's personality¹⁴ a measure of democracy which the Companions failed to observe. In reproaching them, he used the Orientalists' approach and methods of targeting points of suspicion in the Islamic community's life, choosing, as they did, the period of tribulations to direct criticism and arouse doubts.

14. It is striking that Arab communists frequently cite Abu Dharr's positions and sayings as though he founded socialism, of which he is innocent. Jawdat imitates them!!

As usual, he imagines the Companions' circumstances in his obscure manner, saying:

"As I imagine it, the four caliphs were called rightly guided because they did not obtain government and authority through force and coercion." He then says: "Their circumstances and the historical state of knowledge in their time did not enable them to think of restoring government by mutual consent. They accepted reality and acknowledged domination and coercion in assuming authority."¹⁵

Through this imagining, Jawdat seems to suggest that religion did not organise Muslim affairs or provide suitable solutions from the outset.

This is another fabrication on which Orientalists and their followers have long concentrated, describing Islamic government as devised by the caliphs through their own judgement. Some Muslims have been influenced by this and promote the claim through various means. I can state conclusively that all the caliphate's fundamental rulings rest on clear scriptural evidence.¹⁶

Jawdat may try to give the reader the impression that evidence for democracy exists in the Noble Qur'an, that democracy belongs to Islam and is an Islamic demand, just as he called it a universal demand at the beginning of his essay. He praised Muhammad Iqbal's claim in his letter to Nicholson that democracy originated in the Noble Qur'an. This appears in his saying:

15. A lecture by Jawdat Said in Sudan, 12/8/93.

16. See *Mu'jam al-mustalahat al-Islamiyyah* [Dictionary of Islamic Terms], the entry "Caliphate", by the author of this study.

"Indeed, I regard it as a great loss that Islam's advance as a conquering faith should have halted the growth of its embryos of social, democratic and economic organisation, which I find scattered through the pages of the Qur'an..."¹⁷

The Conception of Violence

No book of Jawdat's is without reference to violence: this idea dominates his research and seminars. He has become known as an advocate of renouncing violence, being greatly pleased with this garb!! I chose not to address violence from the outset, deliberately, to establish a fundamental truth concerning this study: its criticism is directed towards adherents of the materialist approach, rather than Jawdat's political personality or personal conduct. I have no doubt that he is one of them, drawing from their source and following their method.

I can explain to the reader the reality of Jawdat's call to renounce violence. It is not the fundamental question in his method of thought, but provides an apparently objective covering for his materialist ideas and Western starting points in social and psychological studies. Establishing the false theories of positivist sociology was no easy task: others more capable and courageous than he had failed, since their calls to accept Western approaches and ideas were open. The Islamic world rejected these theories entirely and refused these suspicious appeals. Jawdat acknowledges this when objecting to Muslims' rejection of evolution, which had almost infiltrated the Islamic world:

"A particular conception of how creation originated has become firmly established in Muslims' minds through adhering to the literal wording of the sacred texts, rather than travelling through the earth. This entrenched

17. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 207.

conception caused Muslims' hostile attitude towards the idea of evolution, which entered the Islamic world a hundred years ago."¹⁸

Through his call to renounce violence, Jawdat explicitly urged Muslims to adopt the theories of positivist sociology founded by Auguste Comte, particularly the theory of historical stages, which regards prophethoods as a primitive stage unfit to provide knowledge. He also called on Muslims to believe in evolution. We know that its foremost advocates were Charles Darwin and, before him, Lamarck. Jawdat likewise adopted the approach to change devised by Karl Marx, founder of the materialist doctrine.¹⁹

18. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 154.

19. See the chapters on materialism, the approach to change and evolution in this study.

Jawdat thus began his lessons and lectures by calling for the renunciation of violence, then presented these dangerous ideas, which would find no attentive audience without his preparation through expressions of tolerance, patience and non-violence. Although I find no need to enter a complete discussion of violence, I regard it as my duty to clarify the truth: Jawdat's use of this term departs from Islamic conceptions. In the form he presents, it is an imported term. Its use has had harmful effects in advocacy and among those working in the Islamic field, contributing to rendering jihad inoperative as a scriptural ruling with scriptural conditions. Jihad is not described as violent or non-violent, nor may the erroneous practices of some Islamists be imposed upon its conception. Jihad is sufficiently clear to need no concepts alien to the Shari'ah to refute it or draw its course. Every attempt to exclude jihad and substitute the term "non-violence" departs from the Islamic approach and scriptural texts. Jawdat constantly does this, as we explained in the chapter on changing the sources of evidence. As is known, jihad has stages, not all of which involve fighting: there is advocacy, conveying the message and striving to establish Muslim society. All proceed through knowledge of the scriptural ruling applicable to the particular situation.

We are not here reviewing jihad's rulings and purposes. Jawdat presented some in Madhhab ibn Adam al-awwal [The Doctrine of Adam's First Son], but mixed truth with falsehood and did not continue to uphold them. His latest books reveal his true ideas: he connects jihad only to coercion in religion, so that there is no jihad unless a Muslim is forcibly subjected to persecution for his religion. He extends this to all people, even non-Muslims: if compelled to change their belief, Muslims must undertake jihad for them.²⁰ This clearly renders inoperative the conception of jihad whose objectives are defined through the Book and the Sunnah, rather than philosophers' or Jawdat's opinions!!

We observe Jawdat openly advocating Gandhi's ideas and deriving his conceptions of non-violence from them. He has repeatedly called on young people to emulate Gandhi, read his books and act through his ideas.

To clarify Gandhi's personality, sacred among Buddhists, which has become a symbol of renouncing violence: those who know the realities of affairs and how prominent personalities are formed in developing, "backward", societies understand these models of leadership, the danger of their calls among their peoples and their effects better than others. Gandhi urged his people, numbering millions, not to confront the British coloniser with armed force. This led the Indian people to submission and compliance with the British will.

I feel that this will continues to operate against the Indian people's interests through their long association with the Commonwealth.²¹ The British have mastered dealing with colonised peoples and arranging leaders who serve British interests, often against their peoples' interests. The modern pioneer

20. This appeared in a seminar with Dr Muhammad Said Ramadan al-Buti, in an open discussion on Syrian television.

21. This association has weakened until the organisation's meetings have become merely formal.

of this method was Mustafa Kemal, who abolished the caliphate and replaced it with Western approaches, customs and traditions. We cannot examine every similar example now, but can mention Gandhi, who remains within this framework. He advocated avoiding confrontation with India's enemies, although they shed his people's blood without restraint. Whatever Muslims may forget, they must not forget what Gandhi's followers did to the Muslim minority: entire Muslim villages were, and still are²², destroyed and burnt with their inhabitants.

Jawdat does likewise, advocating the renunciation of violence in certain places while simultaneously advocating its use elsewhere. In a cultural seminar²³, he declared that "violence may not be used against local governments". In the same seminar he advocated violence against United Nations representatives visiting Iraq.²⁴

Although I am not concerned with Jawdat's political positions and their dimensions, such a call reveals the purposes for which he works and explains why he excludes adopting jihad's rulings, through which better results could have been reached.

Through the same approach he adopted towards violence, Jawdat treated arrogant domination and subjugation through positivist materialism. He defined the arrogantly dominant according to Marxist principles as the powerful who possess strength, exploit and obtain surplus value. The proper definition should proceed through faith, dividing societies into believers and unbelievers: unbelievers are the arrogantly dominant, whether powerful or weak. He thus repeats slogans of the communist and Iranian revolutions and abandons the Qur'anic differentiation of people. He,

22. The Babri Mosque was demolished in a provocatively fanatical manner.

23. A seminar he held in al-Suwayda governorate in Syria.

24. He called on the Iraqi people to kill these representatives, perhaps to provoke the United Nations against himself.

Most High, says: "*Thus do We expound the revelations that the way of the unrighteous may be manifest.*" (Qur'an 6:55).

Jawdat does not conceal his concern to exclude the Soviet Union and China, both adherents of Marxist materialism, from the description of arrogant domination²⁵, in accordance with his materialist idea. Yet these countries exploit and humiliate their peoples still more severely and crush subjugated Muslims more intensely.

Let an experienced writer tell us of the infernal means of violence inflicted on the Muslim population under Chinese rule.

He is Isa Yusuf Alptekin, who was granted life anew after fleeing that terrifying administration, and wrote al-Muslimun wara' al-sitar al-hadidi [Muslims Behind the Iron Curtain]. I shall mention some means so that Jawdat and his followers who believe in materialist thought remember materialists' crimes against Muslims. Concerning forms of torture, he says:

1. Driving long nails into the head until they reach the brain.
2. Burning the prisoner after pouring petroleum over him and setting it alight.
3. Making the prisoner a target for soldiers practising their shooting.
4. Confining prisoners in prisons without air or light and starving them to death.
5. Placing metal helmets on the head and passing electric current through them.
6. Fastening the head to one machine and the rest of the body to another, then operating the machines in opposite directions.

25. The al-Suwayda seminar.

7. Burning every part of the body with a piece of iron heated until red-hot.
8. Pouring boiling oil over the victim's body.
9. Piercing the nails with an iron nail.

Isa continued listing forms of torture. We have omitted some, since their filth silences every sense of human decency. Women's fate was no less severe.²⁶

Anyone who has not heard of the killing and displacement in the Soviet Union and China can see today what occurs in Bosnia and in the republics which separated from the Soviet Union: the persecution of Muslims in the ugliest forms.

We also remind Jawdat that relations between the Soviet Union on one side and America and its allies on the other were not founded on enmity. They are friends and allies. Their respective positions form part of a division of roles to control weaker peoples' destinies, exploit them and dominate their will.

Jawdat should have organised a broad campaign exposing communist materialists' violence before and after attaining government. It would have been better for him to do so as someone harmed by communist terror and better able to grasp the brutal methods practised against Muslims. Yet he did not! He instead praised them, their revolution and their approaches.

26. For details, see Sayyid Qutb, *Dirasat Islamiyyah* [Islamic Studies].

Jawdat likewise failed to highlight the relationship between communists and Jews, and that Marxist materialist thinkers were the first to recognise the Zionist entity on Palestinian land. Indeed, he declares that Palestine²⁷ is not the Muslims' issue now. Instead, he urges Muslims to disarm and adhere to the positivist materialist approach²⁸, which will remove their backwardness!!

The Emergence and Development of Individualism

Jawdat regards the emergence of individualism as an important matter in the history of human development, quoting al-Gharb wa-l-alam [The West and the World]:

"We are not accustomed to viewing the emergence of individuality as a historical process. We tend to believe that individuals have existed since people first inhabited the earth. This is of course true in one sense: every human being who ever lived was an individual. What is striking, however, is that most people throughout most human history possessed only the slightest awareness of their individuality. The idea of individuality, as a fact of human life or an ideal for which a person lives, developed during human history."²⁹

He then agrees with the author's view, saying:

"The meaning which the author of the preceding quotation wishes to bring out through 'the emergence of individuality' is the meaning I wished to illuminate with this faint light."³⁰

27. He stated this in the al-Suwayda seminar.

28. If Jawdat's and similar calls to pursue material creativity and abandon jihad succeed, and enemies continue expanding at the expense of the land, those concerned with material creativity will find no land on which to realise it!!

29. *Iqra* [Read], p. 182.

30. *Iqra* [Read], p. 183.

He then quotes the author of *al-Gharb wa-l-alam* [The West and the World], in the chapter "Individuality and Culture": "Individuality and a person's awareness of private responsibility were absent in primitive hunting tribes. When speaking of individuality and individualism in modern society, it is important to recognise that we are dealing with ideas possessing a limited, defined history of meanings. Even at our greatest degree of individuality, we cannot express ourselves except through words received from our cultural history" (p. 152).³¹

Jawdat conducts a lengthy discussion between supporters of individuality or individualism and its opponents: in other words, the individual's subjection to state authority, or the reverse. This appears in his saying:

"We quoted these words to indicate a view of the sequence of the human problem: how restoring humanity's standing and individuality, or restoring the affirmation of oneness to humanity, is regarded by Frazer as an obstacle to civilisation, while Toynbee regards Frazer as returning to paganism. How each expressed his view is clear, but how much is correct, where did history begin, and where is it heading?"³²

In his characteristic treatment of terms, he merges the affirmation of divine oneness with the emergence of individualism, then reaches his objective:

"The idea of affirming oneness is a departure from ancestral authority and the worship of the forefathers. This idea, departing from imitation of the forefathers, is the ground in which all human achievements grew, even those opposed to religion. They were not opposed to religion's essence, but clearly to ancestral authority."³³ He gives the example of the Companion Bilal, may Allah be pleased with him, proclaiming "One, One" under

31. The preceding source, p. 184.

32. The preceding source, p. 186.

33. The preceding source, p. 189.

torture, and another example: "Galileo, declaring before the tribunal that he had abandoned heresy, carried within himself the burning flame of truth and knowledge, although he chose the position of one compelled while his heart remained assured in faith."³⁴

We observe this description, impassioned with love for Galileo, whose heart remained assured in faith!

He then quotes Toynbee's *Tarikh al-bashariyyah* [The History of Humanity]: within no more than four generations, five great sages appeared in the ancient world. He lists them: Zoroaster, Second Isaiah, the Buddha, Confucius and Pythagoras. "They continue today to influence humanity directly more than any living human being. The most important characteristic of these five sages is that the individual human being reaches a personal relationship with ultimate reality. Through their call, the vision of truth and human behaviour changed irreversibly."³⁵

What matters to us is Jawdat's comment: "This historical view of the development of belief and behaviour is distinguished by highlighting two important matters. First, seeking guidance outside society, in the sense of leaving servitude to society and passive acceptance of ancestral traditions. Second, death is not the end of life."³⁶

34. *Iqra* [Read], p. 190.

35. The preceding source, pp. 196-197.

36. The preceding source, pp. 196-197.

These passages show Jawdat's enthusiasm for the emergence of individualism, to which he devotes nearly thirty pages. Although the chapter's title is "Knowledge and the Affirmation of Divine Oneness", that subject receives only a short passage alongside the presentation of Western sociologists' views. He affirms the tendency towards individualism, treats it as a sign of the affirmation of oneness and equates its absence with paganism.

We observe Jawdat's standards for judging men as sages, confined to two matters:

First, seeking guidance outside society; second, that death is not the end of life. He therefore assigns the rank of wisdom to philosophical personalities without faith in religion. Muslims continue suffering from their error today in China and India, while the world continues suffering from Zoroaster's ideas, deviations, sexual permissiveness and communism.

At the discussion's conclusion, Jawdat reaches a fundamental rule concerning the relationship between the affirmation of divine oneness and knowledge. Yet the knowledge he means will prove to be something other than the Qur'anic truths a Muslim might imagine: it is the signs in the horizons and within the selves, history, cosmic events and historical events.

"Knowledge and the affirmation of oneness share certain matters, making them identical in meaning or two aspects of one subject. First, the affirmation of oneness cannot be achieved without knowledge: it follows knowledge as harnessing follows knowledge. Second, error in either knowledge or the affirmation of oneness brings an unforgiving punishment, even after a time. In Islam, the unforgivable sin is known to be associating partners with Allah: *'Lo! Allah forgiveth not that a partner should be ascribed unto Him. He forgiveth (all) save that to whom He will.'* (Qur'an 4:48). Likewise, error in knowledge has an immediate,

inevitable result. If you misuse medicine or electrical energy, or provide false information in social life, the punishments arrive inevitably and without tolerance: poisons kill, electricity shocks, and false information in social life makes people's relationships tragic."³⁷

Jawdat's manner of explaining the relationship between individualism and the affirmation of divine oneness is alien to Islamic conceptions. He presents it through the starting points of Western sociology, filled with materialist ideas, and connects it to the individual's role in bringing about change. He says: "Among the social reformer's greatest tasks is making individuals aware of the capacities and possibilities they squander."³⁸

He says: "Highlighting the individual's possibilities and capacities to change and contribute to change is among the most radiant and sacred efforts humanity has made in its long history."³⁹

Here he exaggerates humanity's role in life and overestimates it. He draws these conceptions from his adherence to Western sociologists' views and their concern with individualism, without considering divine will. Most of their research rests on development in human history, without any effect from conceptions of belief or consideration of the unrestricted divine will in existence: that Allah guides whom He wills and leads astray whom He wills, and provides without reckoning for whom He wills.

In the chapter on change, we saw the transgression in understanding divine will through Qadari and Mu'tazili conceptions. We explained that the Prophet could not change what was within his uncle Abu Talib or guide him to Islam, and how the declaration came from heaven: "*Lo! thou (O*

37. *Iqra* [Read], p. 203.

38. The preceding source, p. 182.

39. The preceding source, p. 183. Did the Prophet's efforts, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, consist in highlighting individuals' possibilities, or directing them towards sound belief and fruitful, righteous action?

Muhammad) guidest not whom thou lovest, but Allah guideth whom He will." (Qur'an 28:56). This means that you cannot guide someone you wish to guide and love; Allah possesses this matter. The Sunnis agree unanimously on this, unlike the deviant sects which make this task an individual prerogative, as Jawdat does in his attempt to proceed through individualism.

This perspective influences his discussion of ancestral authority. He rejects the world of persons, or the role of the community of the righteous early generations and its future influence, as though seeking to sever the community's present from its past. He does not examine the matter as a condemnation of blind imitation or following forefathers without considering their condition. He is instead influenced by his fundamental conception of prophethood, the necessity of its cessation and the abolition of its role in guidance and direction, since it represents a childhood stage in his division of historical stages.

He does not proceed from examples in Islamic life as suitable models to emulate, but generalises the rule, saying:

"When the world frees itself from the idolatry of fathers and great masters, it will recall days in human history when principles of human dignity were proclaimed as duties which cannot be renounced, rather than merely rights, and which must be proclaimed wherever a person is..."⁴⁰ He says this after listing the five sages' enduring works and their effect on the emergence of individuality in society, also mentioning Bilal, Galileo and Abu Bakr. Yet the rule and starting point must be referred to his general idea: refusing to accept what the early generations upheld, indeed Allah's verses in the Book, until obtaining the testimony of the signs in the horizons and within the selves, which he makes the arbiters over these foundations.

40. *Iqra* [Read], p. 199.

He praises unbelieving historical personalities such as Zoroaster, Socrates, Gandhi and others.

Like Iqbal, Jawdat views humanity as Zoroaster does and awaits the emergence of the superior human being as Nietzsche did.

Jawdat says:

"How do human beings contribute to making this history through the authority of harnessing bestowed upon them by Allah? This authority raises humanity from the world of things to the other creation which Iqbal calls 'divine deputyship'⁴¹: the state of perceiving one's possibilities as an individual to save oneself and others..."⁴²

Jawdat also says:

"The verse contains the station of divine deputyship to which humanity rises, commanding and being obeyed."⁴³

Divine deputyship converges with the idea of union and indwelling, and with the Christian and Jewish idea of a son of Allah, glorified is He, on earth to act as His deputy!!

41. Iqbal views the self as one, appearing as the greater ego, Allah, and appearing again as the smaller ego, the human being. See the section on Iqbal in this study, p. 278.

42. *Iqra* [Read], p. 200.

43. The preceding source, p. 285.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Companions and the Early Generations

Jawdat devoted a separate chapter in his book *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves] to the society of the Companions. He disparaged them in a manner inviting ridicule, under the slogan of separating the principle from its application, in order to scrutinise individuals and distinguish those in error from those in the right. He did not address the subject directly, but enlisted Sayyid Qutb as a scapegoat in this important matter, quoting the following words of his:

"Allah's approach is fixed, and its values and standards are fixed. Human beings draw further from or nearer to this approach. When people err in conception or conduct, it describes them as being in error; when they deviate from it, it describes them as deviating. It does not overlook their error, whatever their standing and stature, nor does it deviate in order to accommodate their deviation.

We learn from this that exonerating individuals is not worth distorting the approach. It is better for the Islamic community to keep the principles of its approach sound and unsullied, and to describe those who err and deviate from it, whoever they may be, as they deserve. Their errors and deviations must never be justified by distorting the approach or changing its values and standards. Such distortion and alteration are more dangerous to Islam than describing prominent Muslim figures as being in error and deviating."¹

1. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 199.

He then quotes Sayyid's grave statements concerning the Companions, in which he says:

"It is difficult to question the spirit of Islam within Uthman, but it is equally difficult to absolve him of error: the error of the unfortunate coincidence that he assumed the caliphate as a frail old man, surrounded by an evil Umayyad entourage of ill-omened disposition." Shortly afterwards, he says of the tribulation that arose: "Yet anyone who views matters through the eyes of Islam and apprehends them in its spirit must conclude that this revolt, in its general character, was closer to the spirit and orientation of Islam than Uthman's position, or, more precisely, that of Marwan and the Umayyads behind him, whose souls had never been touched by the spirit of this religion."²

I have chosen to reproduce the words of Sayyid which Jawdat cited in order to show that Jawdat did not observe the scholarly integrity required in such a delicate situation. He violated the most elementary rules of trustworthy quotation, a trustworthiness essential when dealing with the Companions as individuals. Relying on Sayyid's words could not rescue him from the disgrace of violating the sanctity of the Companions and disparaging them. Depicting the Companions as ignorant, accusing them of deviation and casting doubt on their intentions and positions constitute a departure from the Islamic approach to scriptural texts, which call for honouring and revering them.

As for Sayyid, who has passed away, he repented of what he had said concerning the Companions and apologised for his error. He explicitly announced this in abandoning that approach to criticism of the Companions. He did not leave the matter ambiguous: he disavowed the entire book after his approach had become sound, and sought to purify his other books of lingering cultural residues incompatible with the approach

2. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 206; *al-Adalah al-ijtima'iyah* [Social Justice], p. 191.

of the righteous early generations. What concerns us here is Jawdat's admiration for this deviant approach to disparaging the Companions and his call for Muslim youth to act and write in accordance with it. Of Sayyid's manner, he said:

"By doing this, he opened a door towards resolving the problem, made it easier for us to undertake the inquiry, and set this sign as a landmark on the road. Muslims concerned with the Islamic problem must take the findings which the professor reached as their point of departure, to carry forward what he achieved. We must, however, recognise that entering through the door he opened is an arduous, difficult task requiring immense experience."³

This passage shows that Jawdat adopted Sayyid's idea and his approach in the book *al-Adalah* [Social Justice]⁴ to dealing with the Companions. Whether or not Sayyid disavowed his statements, we condemn and reject this approach as an explicit violation of scriptural texts. Jawdat challenged Muslim scholars to apply it to the well-known leading Islamic figures of the Companions' period, saying:

"This principle is easy to accept theoretically. But who are those whom Sayyid described as prominent Muslim figures? Can we enter into details and mention certain individuals by name? Here we find that this principle, and accepting it, have resolved only a very small part of the problem. Naming individuals and identifying prominent figures who were in error cause eyes to redden and neck veins to swell, because

3. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 201; *al-Adalah al-ijtima'iyyah* [Social Justice], p. 191 onwards.

4. When Sayyid disavowed what he had written concerning the Companions, he removed from the final edition of *al-Adalah al-ijtima'iyyah* [Social Justice] the pages containing observations incompatible with the Companions' great standing. He then disavowed *al-Adalah* and other books. I am astonished that new editions of this book continue to appear after its author disavowed it! I direct this reproach personally to Muhammad Qutb.

entering into this subject brings a loss of reason and self-control, and emotions begin to operate."⁵

Jawdat's manner⁶ and his incitement to depict the Companions as deviating and to disparage them have now become apparent. His description of those who show them respect and refrain from disparaging them as having suspended reason and acted on emotion lays bare his position and makes his purpose plain. Jawdat and those who follow his approach have overlooked the true nature of the Companions' society: how they lived with the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and how revelation corrected their positions so that they would provide a good example for those after them. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, died pleased with them, and Allah was likewise pleased with them, as expressed in His words: "*Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him*".

The position of Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah is that the Companions are upright and that it is impermissible to impugn or disparage them, as Jawdat attempts to do. Only misguided sects, such as the Kharijites, the Rafidah, the Mu'tazilah and the Qadariyyah, have attacked the Companions. We are not surprised that Jawdat does this, insists on confronting the approach of the righteous early generations, and urges people to move away from it. Of al-Jabiri's view concerning the early generations, he says:

"In his book al-Khitab al-arabi al-mu'asir: dirasah tahliliyyah naqdiyyah [Contemporary Arab Discourse: An Analytical Critical Study], Dr Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri discusses the position of contemporary Arabs towards the problem of revival and development, or overcoming backwardness. He presents the problem clearly and simply, and concludes his inquiry with an important finding: 'Salafis, liberals and all

5. The preceding source, p. 202.

6. It is not scholarly integrity to quote Sayyid's words concerning the Companions despite his disavowal of these ideas. Jawdat's book appeared seven years after Sayyid's death.

the other Arab ideological groupings: none of us Arabs can understand, be conscious of or practise authenticity and contemporaneity. We cannot renew our thought or construct an appropriate vision of revival so long as we remain governed by the authority of the model, the predecessor, whether it consists of the inherited tradition, contemporary thought or some part of either.

Yes, human beings naturally think through a model. But there is a difference between a model taken as a companion to consult and a model taken as an original against which to measure things. When a model is taken as an original, a predecessor, it becomes an oppressive, coercive reference authority which wholly subsumes the self and deprives it of personality and independence. The starting point must therefore be knowledge of the self: releasing it from the model's, the predecessor's, grip, so that we can deal critically with all models. That is the path to both authenticity and contemporaneity' (pp. 56-57).

What Dr al-Jabiri calls the model and the predecessor here is what we call in this study the world of individuals as opposed to the world of ideas. We also express it as dealing with external existence rather than mental images, or as independent reasoning as opposed to imitation."⁷

Jawdat adopts al-Jabiri's view of abolishing the model, adding that he deals with external material existence rather than mental images. His application of materialism to the society of the Prophet and the righteous early generations thus becomes apparent. Al-Jabiri and Jawdat object to Muslims having a sound model which they take as an original. They reject dealing with this model and call for leaving it behind. They have indeed left it behind and sought a path in materialist philosophy. Jawdat therefore asks in his book:

7. *Iqra* [Read], p. 40.

"Now, if I were to ask Dr al-Jabiri⁸: how can we escape the model and the predecessor?" He then says: "If we agree that the model does not resolve our problem, I say here that the solution lies in extensive reading which surveys and takes stock of human experiences."⁹ He also says: "The way to escape ancestral authority, imitation, the model, the predecessor and individuals is extensive, deep reading."¹⁰

When Jawdat rejects the model of the early generations, he does so through no scholarly criticism, but through the materialist approach, which deals solely with reality rather than the world of individuals. Although the principle of separating the rule from its application is sound in origin, it remains subject to the principle itself, which requires scriptural texts to be the point of departure for comprehensive Islamic conceptions. When we return to those texts, Allah, Most High, tells us:

“Verily in the messenger of Allah ye have a good example for him who looketh unto Allah and the Last Day, and remembereth Allah much.”

Qur'an 33:21

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8. Despite Jawdat's hostility towards the approach of the righteous early generations and his mockery of them, some who identify with those generations show him respect and adorn their books with his views, imagining him to be a Salafi opposed to innovations. They have overlooked Jawdat's true nature, contenting themselves with his praise of Ibn Taymiyyah and his frequent quotations from him.
 9. Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri is a Moroccan writer of nationalist orientation and a follower of the philosophical school. He concerned himself with studying the inherited tradition through his philosophical ideas and calls for moving away from the approach of the early generations.
 10. *Iqra* [Read], pp. 42-43.

He, Most High, also says:

“There is a goodly pattern for you in Abraham and those with him, when they told their folk: Lo! we are guiltless of you and all that ye worship beside Allah.”

Qur'an 60:4, excerpt

The good example consists in following the prophets and proceeding in accordance with their approach.

He, Most High, says:

“Verily ye have in them a goodly pattern for everyone who looketh to Allah and the Last Day.”

Qur'an 60:6, excerpt

This addresses believers, calling on them to make Abraham, peace be upon him, and our master, the Messenger of Allah, examples to follow.

Following the prophets' approach does not constitute ancestral authority, as adherents of materialist thought attempt to portray it!! Following the first society as the model of a great generation, educated according to the Qur'anic approach under the care of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, does not constitute deviation, as adherents of the materialist approach claim!!

No one should imagine that this example consists in following their personal circumstances, imitating their tools of work or means of transport, or adopting the level of their scientific research into industry, agriculture and commerce. Rather, it consists in following their approach to thinking and their reliance on the Book and the Sunnah as an approach to life. This is because they applied that approach, rather than devised it. Jawdat, and adherents of materialist thought generally, seem to be trying to present the matter in reverse, as though the call to resume Islamic life on the basis of

scriptural texts embodied in the Book and the Sunnah meant returning to the Companions' means of livelihood or imitating them in everything.

This is no surprise! Someone who calls for removing scriptural texts from the path and abolishing their significance, and who considers that scriptural evidence from the Book, the Sunnah, analogy and consensus does not perform a role comparable to the verse "*Travel in the land and see how He originated creation*"¹¹, can scarcely be expected to refrain from calling for abandonment of the concept of the early generations and the model!! Someone who adopts history and events in the universe as a source of knowledge, and holds that the Qur'an does not teach us, sees no difference between believers and unbelievers. Indeed, he sometimes censures and mocks believers while praising unbelievers and elevating their standing. Anyone who tracks this phenomenon in his discussions and books will find strange things!!

Like Orientalists, Jawdat uses the period of tribulation as a means of attacking the Companions and depicting them as ignorant. He says that it was the community which killed¹² Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah, Most High, be pleased with him.¹³

Following the Companions and the model of their society does not fall under the rejected concept of blind imitation which we condemn today, as the Companions themselves condemned it.

11. *Iqra* [Read], p. 223.

12. The community did not kill Ali, may Allah, Most High, be pleased with him: it stood with him. He was killed by Allah's enemy, Ibn Muljam, who belonged to the Kharijites. They do not act according to scriptural texts, but make their own reason the judge of matters, as Jawdat does today when he makes history, events in the universe or regularities judge scriptural texts.

13. This was said at the al-Suwayda seminar.

When we follow the Companions, we follow their approach and their manner of dealing with scriptural texts, rather than their private ways of life concerning patterns of living such as transport and building.

We possess sufficient evidence in the Qur'an and the Sunnah concerning the Companions' merit and uprightness to turn adherents of materialist thought back in defeat. Al-Bukhari, Muslim and the compilers of the Sunan devoted entire chapters to the Companions' merit, the obligation to adhere to their approach and the necessity of following their way in confronting misguided adherents of deviant sects, such as the Mu'tazilah, the Kharijites and the Rafidah. He, Most High, says:

“And whoso opposeth the messenger after the guidance (of Allah) hath been manifested unto him, and followeth other than the believer's way, We appoint for him that unto which he himself hath turned, and expose him unto hell - a hapless journey's end!”

Qur'an 4:115

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, explained to us the excellence of the earliest generations. Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "The best of people are my generation, then those who follow them, then those who follow them..."¹⁴

14. Agreed upon by al-Bukhari and Muslim; the wording is al-Bukhari's, hadith no. 3651. In another narration of his: "The best of my community are my generation, then those who follow them, then those who follow them", hadith no. 3650.

He, Most High, says:

“And the first to lead the way, of the Muhajirin and the Ansar, and those who followed them in goodness - Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him, and He hath made ready for them Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide for ever. That is the supreme triumph.”

Qur'an 9:100

The Prophet called on the community to follow his Sunnah and that of the Rightly Guided Caliphs after him. Al-Irbad ibn Sariyah said: the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, led us in prayer one day, then turned towards us and delivered an eloquent exhortation which brought tears to our eyes and fear to our hearts. Someone said: Messenger of Allah! This seems like a farewell exhortation. What do you enjoin upon us? He replied:

"I enjoin you to fear Allah, and to listen and obey, even if it is an Abyssinian slave. Whoever lives after me will see much disagreement. Adhere to my Sunnah and that of the rightly guided caliphs who follow right guidance. Hold firmly to it and grip it with your molar teeth. Beware of newly introduced matters, for every newly introduced matter is an innovation, and every innovation is misguidance."¹⁵

The Companions of the Messenger of Allah used to advise:

"Whoever among you wishes to follow an example should follow the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. They were the purest of this community in heart, the deepest in knowledge, the least pretentious, the most upright in guidance and the best in condition. They were people whom Allah chose to accompany His

15. Reported by Abu Dawud, hadith 4607, al-Tirmidhi and others.

Prophet and establish His religion. Recognise their merit and follow in their footsteps, for they followed straight guidance."

It may be useful to quote from a chapter which Sayyid wrote on the Companions' society and its importance, entitled "A Unique Qur'anic Generation":

"There is a historical phenomenon before which those engaged in Islamic advocacy, in every land and at every time, should pause, and pause for a long time. It has a decisive effect on the approach and direction of that advocacy. This call brought forth a generation, the generation of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, which was distinctive throughout the whole history of Islam and of humanity. It never again brought forth this type. Yes, individuals of that type have existed throughout history, but never has such a vast number come together in one place as occurred in the first period of this call's existence."¹⁶ On this occasion, it is fitting that I mention some statements of the righteous early generations concerning how to deal with the Companions. Their statements include:

"We love the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. We do not go to excess in loving any one of them, nor disavow any of them. We hate those who hate them or speak ill of them, and speak of them only well."¹⁷

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "Do not abuse my Companions. Were one of you to spend gold equal to Mount Uhud, he would not attain a mudd spent by any one of them, nor even half of it."¹⁸

16. *Ma'alim fi al-tariq* [Milestones], p. 11.

17. *al-Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah* [The Creed of al-Tahawi], p. 467.

18. Reported by Muslim, 4:1967, hadith no. 2540.

Finally, we must draw attention to an observation deserving consideration:

Jawdat's statements concerning the Companions appeared in his earlier books, when he was influenced by the idealist philosophical approach and the rationalist school. What he said afterwards, however, is very different!

Adherents of the materialist approach who believe in the stages of history, Jawdat among them, regard the period of the Prophet and his Companions as representing primitive stages, or what they call the "childhood stage"¹⁹ of human life. They therefore consider this period unsuitable as a sound model to follow or a supreme ideal providing a good example for subsequent Muslims, as we observed a little earlier in his comment on al-Jabiri's words.

He quotes Iqbal as saying:

"If we view the matter from this angle, we find that the Prophet of Islam appears to stand between the ancient and modern worlds. He belongs to the ancient world in respect of the source of his message, and to the modern world in respect of the spirit it contains."²⁰

Mocking Muslims

No essay by Jawdat or Shahrur is without criticism directed at ordinary Muslims and their leading figures, mocking them and speaking of them in ways which diminish their standing.

This section contains examples of the manner in which Jawdat mocks Muslims, without distinguishing between the learned and the ignorant!

Jawdat has a single example in his repertoire which he has continued to repeat to his companions and disciples since returning from al-Azhar forty

19. See the section on sociology, p. 76.

20. *al-Amal* [Action], p. 130.

years ago. He never tires of drawing attention to that incident which occurred to him in Egypt, repeating it until the listener imagines that it happened only yesterday. Jawdat says:

"In the late fifties of this century, I was with a good man who worked as a judge, deciding matters of property and bloodshed. One day he said to me: Shaykh, how can these unbelievers say that the earth rotates? Do they not see how the sun goes round us? It was not, in fact, a very great surprise to me, but I was surprised. Out of that surprise came my sudden decision to tell him: yes, they are unbelievers; they do not understand. I found that my position and his condition were incompatible with my intellectual capacities."²¹

Such an example is not improbable, especially in the fifties. We must not forget how the unbelieving colonial powers kept people in ignorance. Indeed, this incident could occur today in circles unfamiliar with sound Islamic learning or contemporary sciences. We might find people in Europe and America with this distorted view of the universe. Thousands of American citizens live on rubbish heaps and feed from them, or live and sleep in public sewers. This information is not my invention: it comes from the statistics of international organisations, local newspapers and well-known research centres. We would therefore not be surprised to find among such people someone ignorant who denies certain scientific facts²². Nor should we forget the circumstances of the hippies.

Perhaps this ignorant judge, Jawdat's friend, found no one to explain the truth to him, just as Jawdat concealed it from him. Perhaps he found no one to tell him: your great forebears believed in the earth's sphericity from the

21. I possess recordings in which Jawdat repeats these stories in the manner of an amusing, mocking joke!!

22. Newspapers nowadays publish reports of Western scientists who question whether the Russians and Americans landed on the moon. Jawdat ought to follow the matter, respond to them and expose them, instead of contenting himself with mocking Muslims!!

time this question was first raised among people. Here is Ibn Taymiyyah announcing it before the Renaissance appeared in Europe.

Jawdat and his companions cite these examples to belittle and disparage Muslims while praising and honouring unbelievers. During the period Jawdat spent at al-Azhar, young men left Muslim lands in pursuit of learning. They spent years in Western and Eastern countries acquiring contemporary sciences, then returned to manage nuclear reactors and factories producing military aircraft.²³

Jawdat, however, has continued ever since to cite examples depicting people as ignorant. He says in al-Amal [Action]:

"We laugh at the ostrich when it buries its head and falls into the trap because of its foolish behaviour. But are we able to see eminent figures of the Islamic world committing the same error when they bury their reason and display their emotions? This can occur, for example, with the muezzin who delayed the commencement of the dawn prayer until the sun was almost rising. Someone told him: your watch is slow; you have delayed us?! He replied quite simply: my watch is right, but the sun rose too quickly."²⁴

He then claims that Muslims suffer from colour blindness, without adding "some Muslims" to make an exception:

"This matter has become well known, but we Muslims suffer from intellectual colour blindness, because of which we fail to perceive many ideas." He then cited Allah's words, Most High: *"For indeed it is not the*

23. Orders came from the enemies, the unbelievers, to dismantle the reactors and turn aircraft factories into factories producing washing machines and refrigerators!! Their workers were removed!! Jawdat pays no attention to these matters, being occupied with depicting Muslims as ignorant and mocking them!

24. *al-Amal* [Action], p. 97.

eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts, which are within the bosoms, that grow blind." (Qur'an 22:46). "This shocks the Muslim in whose thought the idea has become entrenched that blindness of the heart belongs exclusively to the unbeliever, as though the Muslim possessed immunity merely through his affiliation to Islam. This very naivety is one of the most conspicuous manifestations of blindness of the heart."²⁵

Commenting on the event of reaching the moon, Jawdat said:

"A friend told me that some people doubted whether people had reached the moon, so they met to take a decision about it. During their discussion, one asked: if it became clear, for example, that they had reached the moon, what would we say? They replied: we would say that our understanding of the Qur'an was mistaken??!! This example and this conversation do not matter, whether or not they happened. Reality nevertheless indicates that this recurring pattern has occurred throughout history."²⁶

Jawdat follows this course to reach an essential objective of his: that Muslims must not object to any theories, because science may prove them correct and Muslims will find themselves in contradiction. From this conception he calls for acceptance, rather than rejection, of Darwinian evolution. He believes that Muslims will one day change their understanding, as stated in the *Unzuru* pamphlet [Look]: "If people could mentally observe the condition of the globe, the emergence of life on it, and the types of animals which lived on it; how at one time all life was in water, then came onto land, and then human beings appeared..." He then says:

25. *al-Amal* [Action], p. 224.

26. *Unzuru* [Look], pamphlet, p. 9.

"History will force Muslims to change their understanding of the Qur'an."²⁷

I do not know which astonishes me more: the person who did not believe that people had reached the moon or that it is the earth which rotates, or Jawdat, who asks people to believe that millions of years ago life was underwater, then developed on land, and that human beings emerged through these stages²⁸, and to change their understanding of the Qur'an, which tells them that Allah created Adam with His hand from dust?!!

27. The preceding source, p. 10.

28. These stages accord with Darwin's theory of the origin of species and their evolution into human beings from earlier animal forms.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1. Doctrinal Affiliation

Having studied Jawdat's ideas and approach, it is fitting to classify his doctrinal affiliation precisely, reviewing the intellectual stages through which he passed until he adopted the materialist approach in its entirety. We shall find ourselves confronting a strange phenomenon which deserves lengthy consideration. At the same time, it offers a clear explanation of the instability and contradiction evident in his books, or, more precisely, the differences between his earlier and later works.

The attentive reader can trace the sudden change in Jawdat's approach to thinking over his intellectual journey, during which he moved between various doctrines. This matter did not appear clearly because of its considerable obscurity and the proximity of the doctrines between which he moved. There were qualitative leaps from Ash'arism to the doctrine of the Mu'tazilah and finally to that of the Qadariyyah; or, in philosophical terms, from rational idealism to positivist and materialist philosophy. All these doctrines share a conspicuous characteristic: their origins lie in Greek philosophy.

As is well known, Jawdat began Islamic work through the Islamic movement and was active in presenting Islamic ideas. His other ideas, however, appeared after his return from studies at al-Azhar, when he began advocating philosophical thought of a European type through the rational philosophical school led by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani¹ and his pupil Muhammad Abduh. He subsequently appeared in opposition to the

1. Jamal al-Din was an Iranian Shi'i, rather than an Afghan. He appeared as a Sunni scholar calling for the unity of the Islamic world. His true nature emerged, however, after his affiliation to Masonic lodges was established; indeed, he established a lodge affiliated to French Masonic lodges after abandoning the English lodge.

foundations of the Islamic movement's approach, presenting slogans which called for public Islamic advocacy, individual activity as opposed to collective work, and a peaceful manner of confrontation. He wrote his first book, *Madhhab Ibn Adam al-awwal* aw mushkilat al-unf fi al-amal al-islami [The Doctrine of Adam's First Son, or the Problem of Violence in Islamic Work]. Confrontation with Islamic groups was heated, but their response did not take a scholarly form. This enabled Jawdat to win over individuals from those groups, who began receiving ideas from him, particularly concerning contemporary sociology.

We are not concerned here with Jawdat's activity within the movement, which is marked by obscurity. At first, he drew from the rational philosophical school and the ideas of al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh. Jawdat regarded them as pioneers of revival in the East; indeed, he called al-Afghani the saviour of the East.

If we wish to identify the points of change in Jawdat's thought, we can trace them in many places, including, for example, his transition from rational philosophical doctrine to materialism. He says:

"It is difficult for the Muslim to perceive the place of power, since the operation of the idea has remained hidden from him, and material power is born of the idea. Reversing the relationship complicates matters, yet it is deeply rooted and absorbed into people's souls..."²

He also said: "We discussed the importance of clear communication in the process of bringing together reason and the supreme ideal... Once we know the innate relationship between reason and the supreme ideal, the importance of clear communication becomes apparent..."³

2. *Madhhab Ibn Adam al-awwal* [The Doctrine of Adam's First Son], p. 128.

3. *al-Amal* [Action], p. 138.

He then reveals his perplexity concerning reason and matter and the nature of their relationship, saying:

"We can say that reason is connected with matter in a way which science has not yet discovered. This is not important; what matters is making reason perform its function as fully as possible. We do not know how or when the breathing of spirit into matter began: *'Then He fashioned him and breathed into him of His Spirit; and appointed for you hearing and sight and hearts.'* But we know that perceiving the relationship between two things belongs to reason's innate disposition. When we go beyond matter and thought, nothing remains for us, given that we are Muslims, except Allah, unto Whom nothing is like."⁴

This passage represents a phenomenon in Jawdat's intellectual development. He relied on the rational philosophical approach to analyse events, then expressed his perplexity between matter, spirit and thought, before adopting the materialist approach completely, as we have seen.

Jawdat abandoned the approach of rationalist philosophical thinking and adopted materialist thinking. He rejected the principles of the rationalist school and attacked Jamal al-Din al-Afghani for rejecting evolution, after previously regarding him as a pioneer of revival in the East. He says:

4. *Madhhab Ibn Adam al-awwal* [The Doctrine of Adam's First Son], p. 128.

"An indication of the Islamic movement's extreme slowness is that, to this day, I have encountered no one who has discussed or referred to the verse '*Travel in the land and see how He originated creation*', although the problem of the beginning of creation was among the first ideas to shock religious thought. Even Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's book on this subject, *al-Radd ala al-dahriyyin* [A Refutation of the Materialists], may be regarded as looking backwards rather than forwards. His excuse is that he wrote it in his early youth."⁵

Al-Afghani thus came to be looking backwards because he did not accept the theory of evolution in which Jawdat believes.

We do not share Jawdat's doubt concerning the creation of humanity, nor his illusion regarding the connection between matter and spirit or the breathing of spirit. We know that Allah created Adam and breathed spirit into him, and that he possessed reason, sight and hearing. We reject his view that humanity passed through lengthy stages before rational human beings appeared.⁶

Jawdat then turned to the materialist approach when he announced his adherence to the Marxist materialist idea, saying:

"The external existence of matter or society has an actual reality, people's conceptions of which vary according to their intellectual backgrounds. In disagreement, reference is made to external existence."⁷

Jawdat was asked about the source of his ideas: had he relied solely on Malik Bennabi's ideas, or benefited from others? He replied: "I benefited

5. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 215.

6. See the chapter on evolution in this study for a fuller discussion, p. 178.

7. *Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram* [Read, and your Lord is the most generous], p. 226. See the chapter on materialism in this study for a fuller discussion.

from Toynbee, Goethe and Faust."⁸ He was influenced by these philosophers, as by others. Indeed, Malik's ideas no longer had much influence in his books after he had gone beyond them.

This study has shown the extent of Jawdat's influence by positivist philosophical thought as a whole. We can identify some of the principal ideas which influenced him:

1. Jawdat adopted positivist sociology. I devoted an entire chapter to explaining its effects in his books, particularly his belief in the stages of history.
2. Jawdat was also influenced by Marxist materialism, as I explained in the chapter on materialism.
3. Jawdat showed a great attachment to the doctrine of evolution and Darwin's ideas.
4. Jawdat also adhered to the philosophical doctrine of pragmatism, which reduces truth to utility. Every pragmatist, or advocate of utility, regards utility, value and success as the sole criterion of truth.

One of the most prominent philosophers who advocated this doctrine was William James (1842-1910). The principle of his philosophy is a reaction against idealism and scientific determinism. It also rests on a dynamic conception: the world is incomplete and contains no fixed essences, but exists in perpetual, continuous becoming. We can clearly discern these ideas in Jawdat. He constantly affirms that a proposition succeeds when it produces useful results. We also observe in Jawdat a humanist tendency which regards humanity as the measure of all things.

8. This appeared in an essay published in *al-Alam* magazine and the Jordanian newspaper *al-Liwa*. *Faust* is a philosophical narrative written by Goethe.

Jawdat attempted to combine pragmatism with the Islamic approach by presenting certain Qur'anic verses and prophetic hadiths, citing them on every occasion to announce his approach founded on utility: *"Say: Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Almighty. He sendeth down water from the sky, so that valleys flow according to their measure, and the flood beareth (on its surface) swelling foam - from that which they smelt in the fire in order to make ornaments and tools riseth a foam like unto it - thus Allah coineth (the similitude of) the true and the false. Then, as for the foam, it passeth away as scum upon the banks, while, as for that which is of use to mankind, it remaineth in the earth. Thus Allah coineth the similitudes."* (Qur'an 13:16-17).

Despite these verses' clarity in explaining the true nature of the examples concerning truth and falsehood, guidance and misguidance, certainty and doubt, Jawdat extracts a part of them and takes it as the starting point for his materialist doctrine of utility. He says: "An approach to knowledge founded on history and regularities, because what will remain in the earth is what is useful. Whatever performs no useful role will pass away as scum, however firmly its adherents cling to it. We need only gaze into the reality of the earth to see how the foundations of science and approaches to knowledge become established throughout history on the basis of benefit and harm. It is what is better and more enduring. The principle which returns us to such an approach trusts past history and trusts the future, because the truth in this universe is that foam passes away as scum and what benefits people remains in their hands."⁹

Through this materialist conception, stripped of the true nature of what is useful and of a definition of its purpose, Jawdat sets out to interpret Qur'anic verses so that they accord with the familiar Darwinian law of evolution, "survival of the best".

9. *Iqra* [Read], p. 152.

Jawdat was also influenced by the philosopher John Dewey and adopted his instrumentalist tendency, which holds that an idea's value depends on the extent of its success, and that, ultimately, the true is an aspect of the good. Jawdat went so far as to make instrumentalism an approach of the Qur'an, as he had previously done with utility, saying:

"In discussing the 'evidence of knowledge' and its being what is better and more enduring, we should also shed some light on instrumentalism, meaning utility or benefit. This doctrine is not wholly mistaken. Instrumentalism is true if characterised by being better, more enduring and more comprehensive. This is the instrumentalism of the Qur'an, religions, those among humanity who enjoin justice, and rational people among the children of Adam, as Ibn al-Muqaffa mentioned."¹⁰

Jawdat sought to trace every verse mentioning benefit, in order to make it evidence and testimony for his instrumentalist idea of advantage.

Jawdat's idea of instrumentalism does not accord with the concept of benefit in Islam. The benefits which Islam accepts do not conflict with scriptural texts. Where they conflict, they are disregarded, whatever material advantages they may bring.

The Companions recognised and condemned this materialist tendency. This occurred "when the land-tax revenue of Iraq came to Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. Umar went out with a freedman of his and began counting the camels. When there were more than expected, Umar began saying: praise be to Allah, Most High. His freedman said: this is from Allah's bounty and mercy. Umar replied: you are mistaken. This is not what Allah, Most High, means when He says:

10. *Iqra* [Read], p. 145.

'Say: *In the bounty of Allah and in His mercy: therein let them rejoice. It is better than what they hoard.*'. This wealth is among the things they hoard."¹¹

It is useful to quote the verses being cited so that the matter becomes clear. He, Most High, says: "*O mankind! There hath come unto you an exhortation from your Lord, a balm for that which is in the breasts, a guidance and a mercy for believers. Say: In the bounty of Allah and in His mercy: therein let them rejoice. It is better than what they hoard.*" (Qur'an 10:57-58).

Explaining this verse, Ibn Kathir says:

"'Let them rejoice': let them rejoice in what has come to them from Allah of guidance and the religion of truth, for it is most worthy of their rejoicing. 'It is better than what they hoard': better than worldly goods and their perishing, vanishing splendour."¹²

The Qur'an forbids instrumentalism when this means preferring this world to the Hereafter. He, Most High, says: "*Nay, but ye do love the fleeting Now And neglect the Hereafter.*".

Following our general review of Jawdat's books and extensive examination of his ideas, we now possess a clear body of material through which we can classify his approach precisely. I have mentioned some of it in this study, and can now determine his position with confidence. It has become established for us that Jawdat adopts the Marxist materialist approach, in addition to embracing the principles of positivist sociology and Darwinian evolution. His connection with ancient and contemporary philosophical principles is clear to us, and he can also be classified within the ideas of the Qadariyyah and the Mu'tazilah.

11. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* [The Commentary of Ibn Kathir], 2:422.

12. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* [The Commentary of Ibn Kathir], 2:422.

If we wish to compare Jawdat's ideas with those of certain well-known historical figures, there is a resemblance between him and Ibn al-Muqaffa¹³, as well as between his ideas and those of Ibn Sina¹⁴. His influence by al-Jahiz, who held Qadari and Mu'tazili ideas, is also clear.

We can also discern a resemblance between Jawdat and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, his first pioneer during one stage of his life. Jamal al-Din initially appeared among the Ottoman state's subjects advocating Islamic unity, and became renowned as a distinguished figure among advocates of Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah. His true nature then emerged and his position was exposed: he was an Iranian Shi'i, rather than an Afghan Sunni. It became apparent that he was fanatically devoted to his Shi'i affiliation. For this reason, he was expelled from the capital of the caliphate and lived under pursuit. He settled in Egypt and established Masonic lodges.¹⁵

13. Jawdat does not conceal his great admiration for Ibn al-Muqaffa. See *Iqra* [Read], pp. 143 and 145. Ibn al-Muqaffa was an obscure personality who played a prominent role in spreading heresy in the Islamic world during the early Abbasid period.

14. Ibn Sina professed the esoteric Isma'ili doctrine while outwardly showing agreement with Sunnis and serving their rulers. His position was then exposed, and he spent a period of his life under pursuit because of his esoteric views.

15. See *Haqiqat Jamal al-Din al-Afghani* [The Truth about Jamal al-Din al-Afghani] for a fuller discussion.

We can also discern Malik Bennabi's influence¹⁶, and Jawdat's following him during a particular period of his intellectual life. He nevertheless passed beyond him to more distant stages of belief, moving from his tutelage to the ideas of Kant, Darwin, Toynbee, Russell and others like them. Nor do we forget Jawdat's praise for the ideas of another group whom he regards as pillars of wisdom in the ancient world, such as Zoroaster, the Buddha, Confucius and Pythagoras. We likewise remember his embrace of Gandhi's principles and his explicit advocacy of them.

Although in this study we assess Jawdat's ideas through his writings and lectures, or his television discussions, movements and activities, we leave the other side of his personality and relationships to the realm of the unseen.

Nor is it our task to judge whether he is destined for Paradise or hell: that belongs to the Lord of the worlds, Who calls all people to account. Here we deal solely with reliable information¹⁷ which we can examine or make available to anyone who wishes to examine it.

16. Malik Bennabi is an Algerian writer and an adherent of the materialist approach. He nevertheless did not free himself from the residues of rational idealist philosophy. He also has nationalist interests through his work with the Algerian Liberation Front.

17. For every selected passage in this study, I possess evidence establishing its attribution to the writer, whether recordings, books or pamphlets.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Materialist Tendency in Muhammad Iqbal

Biographical Profile

Muhammad Iqbal was born in the Indian city of Sialkot in 1873. He belonged to a family of pagan Brahmin ancestry. His grandfather, known as Pandit, was guided to Islam by a Sufi¹ in Kashmir.

Iqbal undertook his early studies in Sialkot, then at Government College in Lahore. He excelled, showed signs of exceptional ability, surpassed his peers and gained honours, gold medals and free tuition.

On the platform of the Society for the Protection of Islam, he began reciting his poems. His fame spread far and wide, and people near and far heard of him. Iqbal's encounter with philosophy began at Lahore College, where he met his teacher, the philosopher and Orientalist Thomas Arnold. This Orientalist supervised his education in the philosophical approach and was an excellent guide and helper to him. The bonds of friendship and affection between them soon became firmly established.²

1. The Sufi tendency continued to predominate among members of the family, until Muhammad Iqbal was subsequently influenced by it.

2. Everyone who writes about Iqbal's life mentions with pride his relationship with leading Orientalists and Western philosophers, and the Western media's interest in him!!

Iqbal graduated from Lahore College with a qualification in philosophy, then was appointed there as a teacher of philosophy and English. He went to England and enrolled at Cambridge University, obtaining a qualification in philosophy and ethics. He then went to Germany, studied at Munich University and obtained a doctorate in philosophy.

Iqbal's Ideas

Before beginning the criticism of Iqbal, it is essential to understand the motives which led me to include him in this study and shed light on his ideas after he had been laid in the earth and time had passed. Initially, I wished his image in Muslim hearts to remain as it was. I almost decided to leave him out of this study, had certain interested parties among adherents of materialist thought not sought to exploit Iqbal's standing, which is accepted in the Islamic world. They attempted to bring out his ideas, revive them and give them prominence, until it seemed that he was living among us and that his intellectual work had appeared only today.

The Islamic world in the Arab region came to know Iqbal through his poetry before his thought. The translated versions of his poems³ were influenced by literary style and conveyed splendid Islamic feelings more than they concerned themselves with identifying ideas and bringing principles into focus.

In this study, I have addressed Iqbal's ideas through passages cited by Jawdat Said. To make the picture complete, I shall address further passages from his books or from studies of his thought.

It must be stressed that this does not encompass all Iqbal's books or his entire intellectual production. The focus is on explaining deviations in his approach to thinking, the aspect which represents his materialist tendency. Iqbal believes in the philosophical approach and considers it the

3. *Diwan Iqbal* [The Collected Poetry of Iqbal], translated by Abd al-Wahhab Azzam.

appropriate field for presenting Islam to people. During his life, he moved between various philosophical doctrines. He relies on materialist philosophy, yet does not abandon idealist philosophy, remaining unsettled between them. In this respect, he shares the views of most European philosophers. He nevertheless did not move beyond the doctrine of the Qadariyyah who deny divine determination and the doctrine of free choice.

He regarded Jalal al-Din al-Rumi as his supreme ideal and guide in life. He also revered al-Hallaj, Ibn Arabi and other adherents of union and indwelling, and adopted their ideas.

The Conception of the Self

Iqbal approached existence through the materialist approach and the Qadari doctrine. His thought concerning the self showed the influence of union and indwelling. This idea also proceeds from Platonic philosophy. He described the self as one in existence, saying:

"The origin of the world is the self. The succession of life in existence rests solely on strengthening and supporting the self. The self is one, although it appears in the universe in multiple manifestations. Some seem to struggle against others, but this struggle is in reality merely a manifestation of the universe. To achieve the purposes of action, the self becomes the agent, the object acted upon, the causes and the grounds. It rises and stirs, flies, radiates and recoils, or burns, kindles, kills and brings death..."⁴

Iqbal's philosophy of the self rests on two points:

"1. Personality is the central reality of the universe, embodied in the Supreme Self. The Old Testament referred to it when it described

4. Muhammad Iqbal, *Asrar-i Khudi* [The Secrets of the Self], p. 13. I quoted these statements from Dr Ahmad Muawwad, *al-Allamah Muhammad Iqbal: hayatuhu wa-atharuhu* [The Scholar Muhammad Iqbal: His Life and Works], p. 242.

absolute reality as the 'greater ego'. The Noble Qur'an, however, refers to it with greater reverence, as expressed in the attributes of the Supreme Self:

“there is no God save Him, the Beneficent, the Merciful.”

Qur'an 2:163, excerpt

Iqbal discussed this point at length in *Asrar-i Khudi* [The Secrets of the Self], explaining the meaning of the self as the origin of existence.

2. Personality is the central reality in the constitution of the human being, embodied in the human self. It concerns the 'smaller ego', which depends on another. It has been described in various ways: the human being is weak, miserly and ungrateful, yet is also described as having the finest constitution.

This weak ego, liable to perish, may be granted permanence as an element in the constitution of the universe if it adopts a particular form of life in which it can choose its own path.

This self can expand by absorbing not only the elements of the universe but also divine attributes, and by assuming the qualities of Allah. It thereby acquires the capacity to act as Allah's deputy on earth."⁵ We need to point out an essential truth: the succession mentioned here does not mean acting as Allah's deputy, for Allah needs no successor. The verse is clear and does not convey this meaning. He, Most High, says:

“And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth”

Qur'an 2:30, excerpt

5. Dictated by Muhammad Iqbal to Nazir Niyazi. See Dr Ahmad Muawwad, *al-Allamah Iqbal* [The Scholar Iqbal], p. 334, for a fuller discussion.

The explanation of this verse appears in another surah, in His words, Most High:

"He it is Who hath placed you as viceroys of the earth", and in other verses referring to this subject.

Iqbal, however, intends succession here to represent divine deputyship. This accords with his conception of the self as one, with various manifestations, which he described as the greater and smaller egos. We should not overlook that the origin of this idea exists among Jews and Christians. He, Most High, says:

"And the Jews say: Ezra is the son of Allah, and the Christians say: The Messiah is the son of Allah. That is their saying with their mouths. They imitate the saying of those who disbelieved of old."

Qur'an 9:30, excerpt

The origin of this theory also lies among philosophers: existence is one, and creatures came from it through emanation.⁶

These ideas passed through philosophy to the Qadariyyah and appeared most clearly among extreme Sufis of union and indwelling, such as al-Hallaj, al-Rumi and Ibn Arabi.

Iqbal gave the human being a divine standing as the deputy of the Real on earth, on the basis that he and Allah belong to a single self.

Here is his description of the human being:

"Indeed, he is truly the master of his destiny, the axis of life and its absolute purpose. He can shape his life so as to rise to those heights

6. Plotinus and his school are among the advocates of emanation.

where Allah, glorified and exalted is He, asks what the human being wishes before the determination is completed."⁷

1. In this idea, Iqbal converges with the Qadariyyah who deny divine attributes and regard the human being as master of his destiny and possessor of absolute freedom. Indeed, Iqbal goes further, to the unity of existence.

2. In Iqbal's portrayal of Allah, Most High, He seems ignorant of human purposes. This distorts the conception of Allah's knowledge as encompassing what has been and what will be.

3. In this idea, he converges with Muhammad Shahrur, who believes that Allah's knowledge falls into two parts: one actual and the other probabilistic.⁸

I addressed these subjects at length in the discussion with Jawdat Said, and need not repeat them.

Iqbal regards the human being as the deputy of the Real on earth, saying:

"The deputy of the Real is like the spirit to the world;
his existence is the shadow of the Greatest Name.
He knows the mysteries of the part and the whole,
and in this world fulfils Allah's command."⁹

7. This is what Iqbal dictated to Mr Nazir Niyazi in the summer of 1937. See Dr Ahmad Muawwad, *Iqbal: hayatuhu wa-atharuhu* [Iqbal: His Life and Works], p. 337, for a fuller discussion.

8. See the section on knowledge in Muhammad Shahrur in this study, p. 317.

9. *Asrar-i Khudi* [The Secrets of the Self], p. 44; the preceding source.

Iqbal goes to excess in describing the perfect human being in the Qadari, Sufi manner of indwelling:

"To humankind he is a bearer of good tidings and a warner,
a soldier, a commander and a prince.

He is the purpose of the knowledge of the names,
the secret of '*Glorified be He Who carried...*'.

By the staff of his white hand he is inspired;
complete power is the twin of his knowledge.

When that rider takes the reins in hand,
the horse of time quickens its pace.

His awe makes the Nile run dry,
and he carries Israel out of Egypt.

At his word 'hum', bodies rise within the graves,
and the world's barren places become like pines in a grove.

His self restores the self of the world,
and gives this vision a new interpretation."¹⁰

He says: "The human being bears within himself the seeds of divine deputyship."¹¹

This deviation, portraying Allah as resembling humanity, appeared in Jewish and Christian beliefs and spread among philosophers. Ibn Arabi and his followers in indwelling adopted it. In the chapter "Divine Wisdom in an Adamic Word", Ibn Arabi says: "When the Real, glorified is He, wished, through His Beautiful Names which cannot be enumerated, to see their concrete realities, or, if you wish to say so, to see His own concrete reality in an all-encompassing being which contains the whole matter, since it is characterised by existence, and His secret directed towards it.

10. *Asrar-i Khudi* [The Secrets of the Self], pp. 44-45; the preceding source.

11. *Asrar-i Khudi* [The Secrets of the Self], p. 40 onwards.

A thing's seeing itself through itself is only prior to its seeing itself in another thing which is like a mirror to it."¹²

He then said: "Adam was the very polishing of that mirror and the spirit of that form. The angels were among the powers of that form, which is the form of the world, described in the terminology of these people as the great human being."¹³

Ibn Arabi then described the human form as Iqbal did:

"He called this being a human and a successor. As for his humanity, it is because his constitution is universal and encompasses all realities. In relation to the Real, he occupies the place of the pupil in relation to the eye. He is the originated, beginningless human being, the permanently, eternally developing being."¹⁴

He then said: "Succession was valid only for the perfect human being. He fashioned his outward form from the realities and forms of the world, and his inward form according to His form, Most High."¹⁵

12. Ibn Arabi, *al-Fusus* [The Bezels], p. 48.

13. Ibn Arabi, *al-Fusus* [The Bezels], p. 49. See *Masra al-tasawwuf* [The Downfall of Sufism], by Burhan al-Din al-Biq'a'i, who died in 885 AH, for a fuller discussion.

14. The preceding source.

15. *al-Fusus* [The Bezels], p. 55.

Concerning divine attributes, Ibn Arabi says, using equivocation:

If you affirm transcendence, you are bound;
if you affirm likeness, you impose a limit.

If you affirm both, you are rightly guided,
a leader and master in knowledge.

Whoever affirms duality¹⁶ associates partners;
whoever affirms singleness affirms oneness.

You are not He¹⁷; rather, you are He¹⁸, and see Him
in the very things, unconfined and bound.¹⁹

Iqbal does not differ from Ibn Arabi, al-Hallaj or Jalal al-Din al-Rumi in presenting these meanings.

Iqbal concerned himself with presenting his own personality and attributed manifestations of divine sanctity to it, as did the famous Sufi poles, who claimed extraordinary acts and strange states such as flying in the air, walking on water or communicating with the highest assembly. Iqbal did not depart from this rule!

He described himself in this poetry:

"I soar so high that, upon the peaks of the highest sphere,
creatures of light circle round me thousands of times."²⁰

16. That is, whoever believes in the existence of the Real and the existence of creation as two distinct existences. Singleness here means affirming oneness by believing that the Real is identical with creation in existence and essence.

17. With regard to absoluteness.

18. With regard to certainty.

19. *Masra al-tasawwuf* [The Downfall of Sufism], p. 44.

20. Dr Ahmad Muawwad, *al-Allamah Iqbal* [The Scholar Iqbal], p. 88; *Zabur-i Ajam* [Persian Psalms], p. 127.

The translator explained these lines:

"That lofty flight reached the summit of the heights of spiritual substance beyond the heavens. The angels themselves, the creatures of light, had to circle him thousands of times, to watch him closely and learn his course and purpose... The human being ascends to such stations that the angels themselves fear to tread there" (519).

Iqbal derives this conception from the principles of human evolution and superiority, the conception of the perfect human being, the unity of the self, the idea of passionate love and the principles of love. Such extravagant utterances spread among extreme Sufis, whose disciples exalt and sanctify the poles.

Among Iqbal's well-known extravagant utterances is his ascent to heaven. The poetic work *Javid Nama* [The Book of Javid] represents his principles in Sufism, philosophy and history. In it, he described his ascent through the heavens, guided and directed by the famous Sufi Jalal al-Din al-Rumi, an adherent of the unity of existence. Al-Rumi leads him on this stage to the "living river" and takes him up through several heavens, after which he is honoured with nearness to the Divine and comes into contact with divine lights. Iqbal modelled this ascent on that of Abu Yazid al-Bistami and Ibn Arabi's ascent known as *al-Futuh al-Makkiyyah* [The Meccan Revelations], as well as *Risalat al-ghufran* [The Epistle of Forgiveness], written by Abu al-Ala al-Ma'arri.

The Sufi idea of ascent to heaven rests on deviant conceptions of the relationship between Creator and creature, or a defect in understanding the sound creed's distinction between divinity and servitude. Through this deviation in belief, these people imagine that a human being can communicate with Allah through the idea of passionate love found among ancient philosophers, whereby the human "lover" and the divine "beloved" meet in the highest heavens!!

Such imaginary journeys to the highest heaven are not free from superstition, nonsense and departures from accepted standards of reverence towards Allah, exalted is His majesty. We have heard in Iqbal's and his teachers' conversations with Allah, Most High, words which one would be ashamed to address to a human being of higher rank!!

Iqbal was influenced by Sufi principles and worked through their extravagant utterances and sources of inspiration. He always declared, indeed swore, that he was commanded to convey these ideas to people and that the matter lay outside his will!!

Iqbal may become emotionally stirred while presenting the qualifications of the perfect human being, Allah's deputy on earth. He says:

"From your dust, build a human being,
and for that human being build a world.
The substance of life lies hidden in action;
the delight of creation is the law of life.
Rise and create a new world,
bear the flame²¹ within your breast,
and advance like the Friend."²²

21. Iqbal takes pride in his Brahmin ancestry, one of his forebears having embraced Islam. He mentions this origin in his poetry: "Look at me: you will find no other in India, Brahmin in origin, who knows the mysteries of Rum and Tabriz." *Zabur-i Ajam* [Persian Psalms], p. 13; *Kulliyat Iqbal* [The Collected Works of Iqbal], p. 405. By Rum he means Jalal al-Din al-Rumi, and by Tabriz he refers to Shams al-Din al-Tabrizi, Jalal al-Din's guide and pioneer.

22. *Asrar-i Khudi* [The Secrets of the Self], p. 49; Dr Ahmad Muawwad, *Muhammad Iqbal*, p. 357. He means Allah's Prophet Abraham here.

Iqbal's emotion intensifies until it reaches a struggle between heaven and earth, revealing the superiority of the human being capable of reshaping life anew. He says:

"If the world does not proceed as he wishes,
let him wage war against heaven,
tear down the edifice of existing things
and give the atoms a new arrangement."²³

Iqbal shows great belief in evolution, adopting the theory of natural selection or acquired characteristics. On the development of the conception of revelation, he said:

"Revelation is a universal attribute of existence, although its reality and nature vary with the stages of gradation and development in existence: the plant which grows freely in space, and the animal whose development produces a new organ enabling it to adapt to a new environment."²⁴

He describes moments of development through longing, saying:

"At every moment, a new stage,
a new flash of manifestation.
My God, may the stage of longing
never reach its end."²⁵

23. The preceding source.

24. *al-Amal* [Action], p. 149; the chapter on evolution in this study, p. 178.

25. It appears that Darwin's idea of evolution from the animal stage to the human stage was not new, but has roots in ancient philosophy. Dr Ahmad Muawwad, *Muhammad Iqbal*, p. 396.

Iqbal shares al-Rumi's ideas. Describing development, al-Rumi said:

"My life rises continually:
it began as decomposed dust,
passed through the stages of mineral, plant and animal,
then reached the station of the human being" (524).

Quoting al-Rumi's words concerning the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, Iqbal said:

"The entire world will lose itself in him." Iqbal goes beyond these words of al-Rumi to say of the human being's pleasure: "In his pleasure, the pleasure of the Real is lost. How can people accept this statement?!!"²⁶

The expression of astonishment is Iqbal's. Since Iqbal believes that the self is one, he is not astonished by this statement: the human being participates in making and developing this universe. He says:

"The universe is therefore not a completed chapter, but is in the course of formation. There can be no complete truth concerning it, because it has not yet become an 'integrated whole'. Creation is still continuing, and the human being contributes his share insofar as he helps to introduce order into a part of this primal matter."²⁷ Jawdat also adopted this idea.

Iqbal became absorbed in the conception of passionate love familiar among Sufis of indwelling, meaning annihilation in existence, contact and union. He says:

"At the lover's glance, stone splits;
the end of true love is to attain the Real in full."²⁸

26. *Asrar-i Khudi* [The Secrets of the Self], p. 62.

27. *al-Islam wa-l-sufiyyah* [Islam and Sufism], p. 250. See Dr Ahmad Muawwad, *al-Allamah Iqbal* [The Scholar Iqbal], p. 378.

28. *Asrar-i Khudi* [The Secrets of the Self], p. 18.

Iqbal represents this state using Sufi expressions and terms, saying:

"Through its love, dust becomes
a companion of the Pleiades."²⁹

Of the self's attainment, he says:

"When love strengthens the self,
its power rules the world.
Its grasp becomes of the grasp of the Real,
and at its finger the moon splits."³⁰

Iqbal's Conception of Symbolism

Of the story of Adam, he says:

"We thus see that the story of Adam's descent, as given in the Qur'an, has no connection with the first human being's appearance on this planet. Rather, it was intended to explain humanity's ascent from instinctive desire to the consciousness of possessing a free self capable of doubt and disobedience."³¹

He likewise proceeds from a symbolic conception in defining Paradise and hell, describing the condition of the wretched and that of the blessed.

29. The preceding source, p. 19.

30. The preceding source, p. 25.

31. *Tajdid al-fikr al-dini* [The Reconstruction of Religious Thought], p. 99. Jawdat Said and Muhammad Shahrur share Iqbal's view.

He says:

"Paradise and hell are two states, rather than two places. Their description in the Qur'an is a sensory representation of a psychological matter."³²

His view of death is:

"Death is the passage of the ego from a state connected with the existence of a body to a new consciousness in which the world of sense perception, dimensions, time and space disappears."

Iqbal concerned himself with time and formulated a particular philosophical idea of it, saying:

"True time is pure duration, change without succession, which thought has divided into parts. Time is a composite in which the past is not left behind, but moves with the present and influences it. The future is connected with this composite whole, not as something existing ahead of it yet to be traversed, but as present in its nature in the form of a possibility capable of realisation. It is the very essence of things, the latent power which becomes realised externally."³³

When Iqbal visited France and met the philosopher Bergson³⁴, their conversation concerned philosophy. When Iqbal mentioned the noble

32. The preceding source, p. 141. See Dr Ali Hassun, *Falsafat Iqbal* [The Philosophy of Iqbal], p. 125. He may have derived this idea from Ibn Sina, whose doctrine of resurrection is spiritual resurrection, without affirming bodily resurrection. Although he attempted to refer it to evidence from the Shari'ah's approach, this was for deception.

33. Dr Ali Hassun, *Falsafat Iqbal* [The Philosophy of Iqbal], p. 88.

34. Dr Ahmad Muawwad, *al-Allamah Muhammad Iqbal* [The Scholar Muhammad Iqbal], p. 66.

prophetic hadith "Do not revile time, for Allah is time"³⁵, Bergson sprang from his chair in astonishment at the hadith through which Iqbal constructs his view of time. Iqbal became captive to his materialist approach in interpreting this hadith, construing it here as material time. The danger of a materialist interpretation of divine determination among adherents of materialist thought is clear.

This conception, which astonished Bergson, accords with neither the Shari'ah nor the language. Some without knowledge imagined that al-dahr, time, is one of Allah's names.

In *Maqayis al-lughah* [Measures of Language]³⁶: "Dahr means overcoming and subjugation. Time is called dahr because it comes upon everything and overcomes it. Abu Ubayd said of this hadith: its meaning is that when calamities struck the Arabs, they said: time has destroyed us; time has come upon us.

Their poet said:

The daughters of time assail me from where I cannot see;
what then of one who strikes, yet is no archer?

Had arrows been shot at me, I could have warded them off;
but I am struck without any arrows.

35. Reported by Muslim, 4:1762, hadith no. 2246. Muslim also reports the hadith in other wordings: "The son of Adam offends Me, saying: woe to time! None of you should say: woe to time! For I am time; I alternate its night and day, and if I wished I would withhold them." Narrated by Muslim.

36. Ibn Faris, *Mu'jam maqayis al-lughah* [The Dictionary of Measures of Language], 2:306.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, explained that it is Allah, exalted is His praise, Who does this to them. Time, meaning temporal duration, does not act, but is one of Allah's creations. Whoever reviles the agent of calamities and misfortunes is therefore as though he reviled his Lord, blessed and exalted is He."

Iqbal regards "the centre of life in the human being as the self or the person. Personality is a state of tension which can continue only if that tension continues. Indeed, people should not seek repose and relaxation, but remain in a state of tension, humanity's most important achievement, which leads us to immortality."³⁷

Iqbal's philosophy of the self holds that after death it continues in activity and perpetual striving.

Muhammad Iqbal encountered severe criticism for adhering to ideas concerning the perfect human being which converge with the ideas of Nietzsche, Darwin, Marx and other philosophers. He did not deny the convergence, but denied having adopted these ideas from them, saying:

"I wrote about the Sufi principle of the perfect human being before reading or hearing anything about Nietzsche."³⁸

We are not concerned with the source of Iqbal's ideas, nor do we investigate where he drew their inspiration. What matters is the extent of their connection with Islam or departure from it.

37. *Asrar-i Khudi* [The Secrets of the Self], p. 28 onwards.

38. Dr Ahmad Muawwad, *Muhammad Iqbal*, p. 392.

We deal with Iqbal as a philosopher who relied on the philosophical approach to determine his ideas. He declares this, indeed affirms philosophy's authority over religion, saying:

"There is no doubt that philosophy has the right to judge religion."³⁹

We also deal with Iqbal as a Sufi who made the Sufi Jalal al-Din al-Rumi his guide and pioneer, one of the followers of the Qadariyyah who believe in the unity of existence.

Muslim scholars subjected Iqbal to severe criticism. I shall quote here a passage directed at Iqbal in particular and the philosophical school generally.

Sayyid Qutb says:

"We do not attempt to borrow the 'philosophical mould' to present the 'truths of the Islamic conception', convinced as we are of the close connection between the nature of the subject and the nature of the mould. The subject is affected by the mould; its nature may change and become distorted if presented in a mould whose nature is hostile and alien to its own.

We disagree with Iqbal's attempt to formulate the Islamic conception in a philosophical mould borrowed from those familiar in Hegel, among the rational idealists, and Auguste Comte, among the sensory positivists.

The creed must be presented in the manner of the creed. Attempting to present it in the manner of philosophy kills it and extinguishes its radiance and inspiration. We are not anxious to have an 'Islamic philosophy' or for this mould to exist. Its absence diminishes Islam in no way; rather, it offers strong evidence of its originality, purity and distinctiveness.

39. *Tajdid al-fikr al-dini* [The Reconstruction of Religious Thought], p. 7.

We do not bring before ourselves a particular deviation in Islamic thought or reality and allow it to absorb all our attention, so that responding to and correcting it becomes our sole motive.

As for studies written to respond to a particular deviation which in turn produced another, the closest examples we can cite are the teachings of the Professor and Imam, Muhammad Abduh, and Iqbal's lectures on the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam."⁴⁰

Sayyid discussed the rational philosophical school's attempts to magnify reason's role in relation to revelation, quoting Muhammad Abduh as saying:

"Revelation through the divine message is one of Allah's effects, and human reason is likewise one of His effects. Allah's effects must harmonise with one another, rather than oppose one another."⁴¹

Sayyid then took issue with Muhammad Abduh and his school for their commitment to the necessity of interpreting the text to accord with reason's conception.⁴²

I shall confine myself here to Sayyid's criticism of Iqbal's attempts, since Iqbal belongs to the materialist sensory approach.

Sayyid says:

"In the Eastern world, Iqbal confronted an environment lost in the stupor of the 'illuminations' of what he calls 'non-Arab' Sufism. He was horrified by this annihilation in which the human self has no existence, and by the passivity in which humanity has no action or effect on this earth. This,

40. *Khasa'is al-tasawwur al-islami* [Characteristics of the Islamic Conception], pp. 15-18.

41. Muhammad Abduh, *Risalat al-tawhid* [The Treatise on Divine Oneness]; *Khasa'is al-tasawwur al-islami* [Characteristics of the Islamic Conception], p. 19.

42. I briefly addressed the conception of the rational philosophical approach in the introduction, since this study is devoted to criticising the materialist approach.

naturally, is not Islam. On the other hand, he confronted sensory thinking in positivism and the empiricist doctrines of the Western world. He also confronted Nietzsche's proclamation in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* of the birth of the higher human being, the 'superman', and the death of God, in those epileptic ravings which Nietzsche wrote and some called 'philosophy'!

He wished to shake that loss, annihilation and passivity from Islamic thought and Islamic life. He also wished to establish for Islamic thought the reality of experience, on which empiricism and subsequently positivism rely.

The result, however, was an unrestrained emphasis on human selfhood, which forced him to interpret certain Qur'anic texts in a way rejected by their nature and by the nature of the Islamic conception. He sought to establish that death is not the end of experience, nor even the Resurrection: experience and growth in the human self continue, according to Iqbal, even after Paradise and hell. Yet the Islamic conception is decisive that this world is the abode of trial and action, and the Hereafter the abode of reckoning and recompense. The human soul has no opportunity for action except in this abode, and no scope for new action in the Hereafter after reckoning and recompense. This excess arose from the overwhelming desire to establish the existence and continuity of selfhood, or the 'ego', as Iqbal borrowed from Hegel's philosophical terminology.

On the other hand, he was forced to give the term 'experience' a wider meaning than it bears in Western thought and its history, to extend its scope to the spiritual experience which a Muslim practises and through which he tastes the supreme truth. Experience, in its technical Western philosophical meaning, cannot encompass the spiritual aspect at all. It originated precisely to reject every means of knowledge not founded on sensory experience.

The attempt to borrow the Western term led to this endeavour, in which strain, tension and dryness are evident, despite Iqbal's living, moving, fluttering poetic sensibility!

I do not wish to diminish those great, fruitful efforts to revive and awaken Islamic thought made by the Professor and Imam and his pupils, and by the poet Iqbal, may Allah grant them abundant mercy. I wish only⁴³ to point out that enthusiasm for resisting a particular deviation may itself produce another, and that the preferable course in Islamic inquiry is to present the truths of the Islamic conception in their comprehensive integration and calm harmony, in accordance with their particular nature and manner."⁴⁴

Although we share Sayyid's criticism of Iqbal's and Muhammad Abduh's ideas and philosophy, we do not share his view of their efforts. Today we suffer from the effects of those efforts, and the work required to correct the deviation their ideas produced in the Islamic world is no small matter. We cannot treat the deviation reached by Iqbal and Muhammad Abduh as merely slight, or view it as Sayyid did, as an attempt to correct a particular deviation. Allah knows best, but the matter is greater and more far-reaching. We see the fruit of efforts by Orientalist circles and their followers, and continuing attempts to establish these ideas in the Islamic world.

A group of scholars presented Iqbal's ideas to the Islamic world and exported them beyond the Indian subcontinent.

43. Sayyid Qutb, *Khasa'is al-tasawwur al-islami* [Characteristics of the Islamic Conception], p. 20.

44. See Bistami Said, *Maḥmūl tajdīd al-dīn* [The Conception of Renewing Religion], p. 135.

Some did so with good intentions; others helped establish these ideas because they supported the efforts of the rationalist school led by al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh.

Abu al-Ala al-Mawdudi praised Iqbal and his efforts, believing that he "declared an uncompromising war against the West and its materialist civilisation", and was "the only man of his age whom no one could equal in his profound understanding of Western philosophy and his knowledge of its civilisation and life. When he arose to refute its philosophy and materialist ideas, the spell of Western civilisation began to dissolve" (543).

Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi's praise of Iqbal's personality and ideas, and his books about Iqbal's work and outstanding achievements, likewise helped people overlook and disregard his deviations. Considerable efforts were also made to present, praise, translate and focus attention on Iqbal's thought, as al-Aqqad and Abd al-Wahhab Azzam did. Such testimonials carry weight among the Islamic community's youth.⁴⁵ This is how Iqbal entered the heart of the Islamic world despite the evident deviation in his thought. Perhaps al-Mawdudi did not examine his ideas fully. Perhaps these people were deceived by the praise, acclaim and attention he received, and the cloud of publicity concealed his ideas' true nature. Or perhaps they looked to his efforts in political activity, in the arena of conflict between Muslims and Hindus, where Iqbal emerged as a defender of Muslim rights.

Other Islamic figures were not deceived by this contrived publicity, nor influenced by al-Mawdudi's praise or al-Nadwi's commendation. This appeared in Sayyid Qutb's severe criticism of Iqbal's thought and philosophical school, connected with Hegel's rational idealism and Auguste

45. Abu al-Ala al-Mawdudi and Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi have their standing among Muslim advocates, as al-Aqqad and Azzam have theirs in thought and literature.

Comte's sensory positivism. If these are Iqbal's ideas, how can Muslim scholars be deceived by him?!⁴⁶

Western media attention undoubtedly played an effective role in promoting Iqbal's personality and highlighting his ideas. Western cultural and media centres, expert in making heroes, circulated his thought. Visits to scholarly centres were arranged, where he was received as a great philosopher. He met leading European figures in cultural, political and media circles, as well as certain heads of state, some of whom he praised, such as Mussolini.

Like other advocates of developing the Islamic Shari'ah, Iqbal raises a pressing question: "Is the Islamic Shari'ah capable of development?"

Iqbal therefore called for renewal through the conception of change. For him, renewal means changing the foundations, rather than what Muslims understand by it: reviving what has fallen into disuse of acting according to the Book and the Sunnah.

This call emerged through his book *Tajdid al-fikr al-dini fi al-Islam* [The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam].

Iqbal's philosophy of renewal proceeds through the Turkish model, which rejected the old foundations and adopted contemporary approaches.

He says:

"The revival of Islam must follow the Turkish example and do what the Turks did: reconsider the Islamic heritage."⁴⁷

46. One factor is the absence of a comprehensive Islamic critical approach.

47. *Tajdid al-fikr al-dini* [The Reconstruction of Religious Thought], pp. 175-185.

Iqbal mocks Muslim nations which call for adherence to the doctrine of the early generations, saying:

"Certain Muslim nations today repeat mechanically the values affirmed by the early generations."⁴⁸

He describes the Turkish initiative as a basis for change, saying that it:

"awoke from intellectual sleep and alone proclaimed its right to intellectual freedom."⁴⁹ He also says:

"Turkey must bring about situations which suggest new views and require fresh interpretations of the foundations and principles" (548).

Iqbal explicitly advocated adopting socialist ideas. In his letters to Jinnah, he says:

"It is clear to my mind, however, that if Hinduism accepts the idea of socialist democracy, it must cease to be Hinduism. For Islam, however, the appropriate acceptance of democratic socialism, in accordance with the foundations of the Islamic Shari'ah, is a return to the purity of original Islam rather than a revolution."⁵⁰

After condemning atheistic socialism, he says:

"As for socialism, Islam itself is a form of socialism."⁵¹

Anyone who reads his dialogues with Tolstoy, Karl Marx, Hegel and Mazdak, and his discussion of Einstein, Nietzsche and al-Rumi, will find that he regards philosophers as the world's sages. He conducts a dialogue

48. *Tajdid al-fikr al-dini* [The Reconstruction of Religious Thought], pp. 175-185.

49. The preceding source.

50. *Rasa'il Iqbal ila Jinnah* [Iqbal's Letters to Jinnah], pp. 17-18. He is Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the first president of the state of Pakistan, independent of India.

51. *Iqbal Nama* [The Book of Iqbal], vol. 1, p. 319.

between the French sage Comte and a hired worker, and between the Tsar and Lenin, presenting his philosophical ideas through them.

Iqbal criticised socialism because it lacks a spiritual aspect and refuses to believe in Allah, Most High.

We are not concerned with Iqbal's criticism of Marxist socialism. What concerns us is his adoption of its foundations and principles.

He admired the founder of socialism, Karl Marx, praising him and regarding him as a prophet despite his misguidance:

"The author of Capital⁵² came from Abraham's lineage:

I mean the prophet who did not know Gabriel.

He bears the truth within his misguidance;

his heart believes, though his reason doubts.

The religion of that prophet who did not know the Real

is founded on equality among human beings."⁵³

In one of his books, he addressed Marx and implored his spirit to proclaim its condemnation of the exploitation prevailing in Western Europe.

Lenin also occupies a place in Iqbal's thought. He mentions him in a poem, imagining him in heaven delivering speeches condemning capitalism and asking the Lord to destroy the houses and fields of the rich and improve the condition of slaves throughout the world.

52. *Capital* was written by Marx and is among his most important books in presenting materialist principles. It also alludes to Marx's Jewish origin.

53. From Dr Ali Hassun, *Nida Iqbal* [Iqbal's Call], p. 168.

CHAPTER TWENTY

The Materialist Tendency in Muhammad Shahrur

Biographical Profile

He is Muhammad ibn Dib Shahrur, born in Damascus in 1938. He undertook his early education in Damascus and obtained his general secondary qualification there.

He travelled to the Soviet Union to study civil engineering (1958-1964). During that period, he met his friend Jafar Dakk al-Bab, who was studying linguistics. Shahrur then returned to Damascus and was selected for a government scholarship. He left for the Irish university in Dublin, sent by Damascus University to prepare for a master's degree and doctorate in civil engineering (1970-1980).

He met his friend Jafar Dakk al-Bab again in 1980-1986, and they collaborated on the conception of the Book and its linguistic aspect. The Marxists' interest in linguistics is evident: they regard it as an essential link in their materialist outlook and its relationship with their theory of humanity's emergence and development from other species.

We also observe Jafar Dakk al-Bab's influence by these questions and his attempt to impose Marxist linguistic principles on the approach to Arabic. The strain appeared in his faltering steps in this matter, as we shall see when discussing his formulation of a linguistic theory through the school of Abu Ali al-Farisi.

Jafar Dakk al-Bab's doctoral thesis concerned Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani's¹ linguistic theory.

We must nevertheless ask about the purpose of magnifying the linguistic question in Shahrur's book!

Several reasons became apparent to me. A specific objective lies behind the book, seeking to unsettle the established Islamic creed held by Muslims, with language forming a decisive factor in this matter. This concern also provides suitable cover for the suspect esoteric intellectual activity practised by Jawdat Said's school of change.

When Shahrur published *al-Qira'ah al-mu'asirah* [The Contemporary Reading] in 1990 with an introduction prepared by Dr Jafar Dakk al-Bab, some critics showed that the linguistic introduction was an attempt to intimidate the reader by suggesting that the book's linguistic subject had received due care and scrutiny under the supervision of a doctor of linguistics. He imagined this "game" would succeed in concealing the gross linguistic distortions which appeared in the introduction and the book.

After graduating, Muhammad Shahrur worked in engineering design through an office with several engineers.

He is now occupied with responding to his critics through publication in newspapers and magazines or holding certain private seminars.

Jawdat Said and his followers participate with him in intellectual activity and promoting his book. Shahrur has become a distinguished member of their circle.

1. A scholar renowned in rhetorical studies, of Ash'ari creed, and a theologian, jurist and exegete. Al-Dhahabi said that he was a marvel in grammar. His many books include *Dala'il al-i'jaz fi al-ma'ani wa-l-bayan* [Proofs of Inimitability in Semantics and Rhetoric], *Asrar al-balaghah* [The Secrets of Eloquence], and *al-Shafiyah fi al-i'jaz* [The Sufficient Work on Inimitability]. He was born in Jurjan and died in 471 or 472.

Section One

The Particular Objectives of The Contemporary Reading

Many writers have subjected Dr Muhammad Shahrur's *al-Qira'ah al-mu'asirah* [The Contemporary Reading] to criticism and investigation. Over a period, the resulting studies reached a scale unmatched by any other book at this time. This book caused considerable controversy in various cultural circles, among supporters and opponents. Some responded to these ideas, supported them and found them congenial; others criticised and censured them and launched a major attack on them.

This controversy arose through deliberate provocation rather than the value of Shahrur's book. People were unaccustomed to hearing statements concerning religion so audacious in opposing the Book's explicit wording and the authentic Sunnah, overturning consensus, mocking and ridiculing the Companions, and disparaging the Islamic community's scholars in this degrading manner.

Shahrur's manner of addressing established Muslim juristic views also contributed to this contrived provocation. He approached points capable of arousing various social circles and shocked general Islamic sensibilities and the community's sense of its own identity. Human creation and Muslim women's veiling provided the desired objects of provocation.

Although we recognise the dimensions behind publishing such a book, with these provocative characteristics, at this stage of the Islamic community's life, we also recognise that the other questions it raised received no appropriate attention. They were not affected by the violent shock produced by the issues of veiling and human origins. If this indicates anything, it indicates the absence of the Islamic approach from the confrontation, and reveals ignorance of the rules governing how to deal with another opinion.

What supports my view is the existence of many people who hold Marxist ideas and work in Islamic advocacy, yet have not received criticism comparable to that directed at Shahrur's book.

Since our purpose is to trace the materialist tendency and determine the writer's affiliation to the materialist approach, I shall confine this study to criticising the foundations of Shahrur's book and addressing general questions. I shall leave aside subsidiary matters except where the inquiry requires them, because what is built on falsehood is false. I shall follow the same manner in which I addressed selected passages from Jawdat Said's and Muhammad Iqbal's books.

Most of those who undertook to criticise Shahrur's book neglected this aspect. They entered into lengthy dialogue and violent confrontation with him over particular questions, and numerous volumes were produced to encompass these details.

He, Most High, says: *"or he who founded his building on the brink of a crumbling, overhanging precipice so that it toppled with him into the fire of hell?"* (Qur'an 9:109).

One may be astonished to find that most who responded to Shahrur's book adhere to the materialist approach itself or follow the rational philosophical approach. They were angered by this audacity, perhaps never imagining that the practical results of this approach could reach the extent seen in Shahrur's book. They are not far from his philosophical conceptions: in the end, they will converge on accepting the philosophical approach, proceeding from it and making it a source of knowledge.

Most of these responses, therefore, even if some are severe in manner, amount to commendations of Shahrur's book rather than refutations. Indeed, this is what Shahrur himself seeks, to help produce the anticipated controversy.

To this day, I have found no one who has responded methodically in the light of the Book and the Sunnah. Shahrur wished to enter history through his book!! He has indeed entered history, gaining in a short time a fame which others like him did not attain over many years! Yet in doing so, he was no pioneer for his community, as pioneers are who raise the banner of knowledge or carry the banner of jihad!

He entered history in the manner of the Indian Ahmad Khan and the Egyptian Ali Abd al-Raziq. Their characteristics resembled one another in the arenas of conflict between jahiliyyah and Islam.

This conflict between the Islamic approach and Western approaches has remained an object of deliberate provocation. Throughout history, the community has been afflicted by those who help stir this confrontation for the enemies' benefit. Its long history has also contained those who work to stir tribulations and widen disagreement among Muslims, in order to obscure conceptions and upset standards.

Two prominent events in our contemporary history stand before us, in which we can trace contrived provocation and its effect on society.

The first example is the phenomenon of Ahmad Khan in India. He was the first Muslim to call for adopting Western approaches and adapting Islam to Western material civilisation. He advocated a new interpretation of Islam founded on progressive, emancipatory principles. Through his efforts, an independent intellectual school carrying the materialist tendency developed.

Islamic scholars everywhere confronted these attempts, and the first controversy arose. The matter became a focus of attention. Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi described the objectives of Ahmad Khan's intellectual school and the purpose of raising this question, saying that it:

"rested on imitating Western civilisation and its material foundations, adopting modern sciences in their entirety with all their defects, and interpreting Islam and the Qur'an to conform to what civilisation and modern information had reached at the end of the nineteenth century, and to Westerners' desires, views and tastes. It disparaged those unseen truths which sense perception and experiment do not establish, and which the natural sciences do not acknowledge at first sight."²

Shahrur's role does not differ from Ahmad Khan's role and task.³ Indeed, we can say that Ahmad Khan has been brought back to life in the lands of al-Sham!!

The second event represents the controversy in the Islamic world following the publication of *al-Islam wa-usul al-hukm* [Islam and the Foundations of Government], by Ali Abd al-Raziq, who was an al-Azhar scholar. "This was the most dangerous work to appear on the question of the caliphate. Its danger does not lie in the precision of its research: the book is more distinguished by the beauty of its style than by adherence to scholarly method. It relies on Orientalists in matters where they cannot be trusted, while manifestly neglecting original Arabic sources despite their abundance, importance and availability."⁴ The reader scarcely finds a new idea: it revolves around establishing that the caliphate is a system

2. *al-Sira bayna al-fikrah al-islamiyyah wa-l-fikrah al-gharbiyyah* [The Conflict between the Islamic Idea and the Western Idea], p. 17. See *Mafhum tajdid al-din* [The Conception of Renewing Religion], p. 120.

3. This provocation became less intense when Ahmad Khan's mask fell and he called for understanding and coexistence with the British, who awarded him honours and grand titles. See the discussion of Ahmad Khan in this study.

4. For example, the author relies on Sir Thomas Arnold in claiming that there is no Qur'anic text for the jurists' view that establishing the caliphate is necessary.

customary among Muslims, with nothing in the Shari'ah's foundations requiring it.⁵

The book's danger lies in neither its precision nor importance, but in the circumstances surrounding its appearance, its audacity in confronting people's emotions and challenging their feelings, and its sometimes mocking doubts about what reassures their souls. It offers no strong, clear evidence for its unusual claims. Moreover, it appeared after Mustafa Kemal abolished the caliphate, when people were almost unanimous in condemning his act."⁶

Controversy arose around this book's author as it had around Ahmad Khan and as it now does around Shahrur. Petitions appeared against the book and disparaging its author. These circumstances ended with the author's trial before the Council of Senior Scholars, which issued its judgement: "It requires the removal of Shaykh Ali Abd al-Raziq, an al-Azhar scholar and judge at the Mansurah court, from the body of scholars."⁷

Despite the danger of this book, which calls for dismantling the caliphate already dismantled by Mustafa Kemal, we are not examining that subject now. We are examining the element of provocation in this matter and its clear purpose.

Does the Shahrur phenomenon, however, fall under the principle from which Ahmad Khan and Ali Abd al-Raziq proceeded?

Ahmad Khan and Ali Abd al-Raziq were exposed before people through conclusive evidence. Their dealings with the British were established and their masks fell. But do we now possess conclusive evidence establishing

5. Thomas Arnold is the Orientalist who supervised the formation of Muhammad Iqbal's cultural personality. He taught at the university in India.

6. *al-Ittijahat al-wataniyyah* [Nationalist Tendencies], 2:86.

7. *al-Ittijahat al-wataniyyah* [Nationalist Tendencies], 2:86.

this concerning Shahrur and his subordination to a particular party, as is rumoured?!!

We face another possibility, however, about which we can speak: does the Shahrur phenomenon serve a particular party?!

If someone can establish this, he will have spared everyone the effort of investigating what lies behind the ideas. Here we may need to explain an extremely important matter: the conception of disagreement. This leads us to examine its types.

Scholars have examined this question and divided disagreement into two types:

First: Disagreement of Diversity, Which Has Several Forms

A. When each of two actions is true and prescribed, as with the Qur'anic readings over which the Companions differed until the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, rebuked them, although both were correct.

B. Differences of form, such as the manner of the call to prayer, the testimonies recited in prayer, and the takbirs of the Eid and funeral prayers. All are prescribed, although some are better than others.

C. Cases where each statement in reality conveys the meaning of the other, but their expressions differ, as people differ in the wording of boundaries and definitions.

D. Cases where the meanings differ but are not incompatible: this statement is correct and that statement is correct, although their meanings are not the same.

E. Cases where two courses are prescribed, some people having followed one and others the other, with both being good in religion.⁸

In principle, such matters should not lead to disagreement. If it occurs, however, reference must be made to scholars, who are better able to explain this truth.

The fighting which occurred between groups arose through ignorance of the texts, rather than because of the texts themselves.

He, Most High, says:

"And if any tidings, whether of safety or fear, come unto them, they noise it abroad, whereas if they had referred it to the messenger and to such of them as are in authority, those among them who are able to think out the matter would have known it. If it had not been for the grace of Allah upon you and His mercy ye would have followed Satan, save a few (of you)."

Qur'an 4:83

Injustice, ambition for leadership, envy and arrogance are also motives leading to disagreement.

He, Most High, therefore says: *"And if two parties of believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them. And if one party of them doeth wrong to the other, fight ye that which doeth wrong till it return unto the ordinance of Allah; then, if it return, make peace between them justly, and act equitably. Lo! Allah loveth the equitable. The believers are naught else than brothers. Therefore make peace between your brethren and observe your duty to Allah that haply ye may obtain mercy."* (Qur'an 49:9-10).

We observe that Allah, Most High, punishes wrongdoing in disagreement.

8. See Ibn Taymiyyah, *Iqtida al-sirat al-mustaqim* [Following the Straight Path], p. 38 onwards, adapted.

Second: Disagreement of Opposition, Consisting of Two Incompatible Statements, in Either Foundations or Subsidiary Matters

A. Disagreement over foundations:

This includes cases where the Book of Allah censures one group and praises the other, the believers.

He, Most High, says: *"Of those messengers, some of whom We have caused to excel others, and of whom there are some unto whom Allah spake, while some of them He exalted (above others) in degree; and We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs (of Allah's Sovereignty) and We supported him with the holy Spirit. And if Allah had so willed it, those who followed after them would not have fought one with another after the clear proofs had come unto them. But they differed, some of them believing and some disbelieving. And if Allah had so willed it, they would not have fought one with another;"* (Qur'an 2:253).

He, Most High, says: *"And only those unto whom (the Scripture) was given differed concerning it, after clear proofs had come unto them, through hatred one of another."* (Qur'an 2:213).

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "You will follow the ways of those before you as closely as one feather matches another, so that even if they entered a lizard's hole, you would enter it." They asked: "Messenger of Allah, the Jews and Christians?" He replied: "Who else?" In al-Bukhari's narration: "My community will follow the course of the generations before it, span by span and cubit by cubit." They asked: "Persia and Rome?" He replied: "Who among people except those?"

Doctrines concerning divine determination arose from disagreement over the creed's foundations. People disputed the grounds of Allah's action,

glorified and exalted is He. Some compared His action with that of creatures, falling into extreme misguidance and setting His action against His command. One group affirmed divine determination and denied the command; another affirmed the command and denied divine determination, believing that the two could not coexist. Each was in error by denying what the other affirmed.

The Qadariyyah deny Allah's attributes and names, which renders revealed laws inoperative. The disagreement between the Islamic approach and that of the Qadariyyah is disagreement of opposition, rather than diversity.

We now use our discussion of the types of disagreement to explain an extremely important matter: what type of disagreement is ours with Shahrur? Is it diversity or opposition?

After studying Shahrur's book, it became apparent that disagreement with him is disagreement of opposition: two discordant statements and two incompatible approaches which cannot converge.

The principal subjects of our dialogue with Shahrur in this study will therefore be questions which determine his position, reveal his approach to thinking and acquaint us with his doctrinal affiliation.

We shall not respond to Shahrur's provocations and interest in juristic disputation, for this obscures the question and disperses thought. His book encompasses all branches of jurisprudence, leaving no stray matter outside it. Perhaps this prolixity is intended to occupy people with particulars and mislead them about general questions.

I counted more than a thousand instances in Shahrur's book representing departure from the Islamic approach.⁹ When it appeared, I prepared criticism of many of these ideas, but abandoned it after several books on it were published, because readers gain nothing from repeated criticism. I nevertheless found shortcomings in most of those responses. This led me to include Shahrur's book in this general study of the materialist tendency and reduce the subjects of criticism as far as possible.

The shortcoming I found lay in responses which did not proceed from the approach of Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah.

1. One group of critics approached the book through Mu'tazili thought, the doctrine of rational philosophy. This differs from Shahrur's materialist approach, although rational and materialist philosophy converge at certain points, and their disagreement takes place within the philosophical approach itself.
2. Another group offered criticism bearing the character of the materialist approach itself, but differed with Shahrur over certain questions which he went too far in presenting at such a time.
3. Another group accused Shahrur of adapting his position or eclecticism. By this they meant that he became absorbed in using scriptural texts and went to excess in referring to them.¹⁰
4. One group criticised him through Sufi views, and some criticism also came through Islamic groups.

9. This number is small in relation to the subjects raised in his book! Shahrur founded his book on the materialist approach, so departures will correspondingly occur in everything he presents on that basis. This encompasses his entire book, because what is built on corruption is corrupt. The Muslims' principle of interpretation is: "Whoever speaks about the Qur'an by his own opinion has erred, even if he reaches the right result."

10. This group is represented by Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, who excludes the scriptural text from the theory of knowledge.

I observed a general accommodation of Shahrur's book through excluding the Sunnah from the response. Certain questions cannot receive a complete response without reliance on the prophetic Sunnah. Neglecting this produces shortcomings in any confrontation with the materialist approach. The focus will therefore be on the following subjects:

1. Determining Shahrur's affiliation to the materialist approach.
2. Shahrur's denial of Allah's names, Most High.
3. Shahrur's denial of Allah's attributes, Most High.
4. Criticising Shahrur's linguistic foundation.
5. Explaining Shahrur's distortion of certain Islamic terms.
6. Other questions are distributed among the general chapters, such as evolution, the end of prophethood and regularities.

Section Two

Shahrur's Approach to Materialist Thinking

Before discussing with Shahrur his connection with the materialist approach, we must understand the terms he devised for interpreting the Qur'an. He became captive to these terms, expressing no opinion or statement except through them.

Shahrur does not deny this materialist orientation. He announced it in explaining the approach followed in his book¹¹, setting out the materialist foundations he adopts and on which the book rests.

First, he defined the materialist conception by saying:

"The relationship between consciousness and material existence is the fundamental question of philosophy. In determining that relationship, we proceeded from the position that the source of human knowledge is the material world outside the human self."¹²

This is the materialist approach itself. Explaining it requires no lengthy exposition: we identified its foundations in the introduction.

Our observation concerning these statements is that they clearly identify the foundations of the materialist approach. For Shahrur, matter represents the source of knowledge, the source of ilm.

This principle, which Shahrur acknowledges, is the very principle in which Marx, Lenin and materialists generally believe. In our discussion of "Refuting the Law of Philosophy", we explained the invalidity of this principle, whose distant roots extend to Aristotle's approach and his followers. We also explained that the Islamic approach conflicts completely with the materialist approach and shares no common ground with it. From this, we recognise the danger posed by Shahrur, Jawdat and all Marxist materialists concealed among Muslims, in imposing the Marxist materialist approach on the interpretation of the Noble Qur'an.

Through this definition of philosophy's fundamental question, explaining the relationship between material existence, or matter, and consciousness,

11. The author did not give this approach prominence in his introduction, assign it a conspicuous heading or number it in the contents. This suggests that he is attempting to pass over it; Allah knows best.

12. Shahrur's book, p. 42.

or reason, Shahrur attempts to remove revelation from the sources of knowledge. Accordingly, he does not regard religion as a source of knowledge.

Shahrur therefore regards philosophy as the mother of sciences, saying: "There is no conflict between what appears in the Noble Qur'an and philosophy, which is the mother of sciences."¹³

We have explained that philosophy is the mother of evils, because its conceptions are unstable, its approaches fluctuate and it relies on mistaken conceptions. Its source is human reasoning, which is limited by the limitations of the human being, from whom both correctness and error proceed. The history of knowledge reveals this truth: whenever philosophers formulate a theory, something subsequently comes to overturn it. As we explained in discussing the foundations of knowledge, philosophical approaches are limited because they rely on a material or rational source and exclude other sources of knowledge.

Shahrur then sets out the other materialist foundations in which he believes, saying:

"The universe is material, and human reason can perceive and know it. There are no limits at which reason stops... Science does not recognise the existence of a non-material world which reason cannot perceive."¹⁴

Faced with Shahrur's deification of reason, we can only pity him for this claim which he cannot establish, and which contradicts the most elementary rational principles. He has not troubled himself to verify his words, but casts out ideas arbitrarily, without a clear scholarly method. Scholars confronted this idea concerning reason's limits when the deification of reason reappeared in Europe.

13. Shahrur's book, p. 43.

14. Shahrur's book, p. 43.

The Qur'an and the Sunnah mention certain creations which limited human reason cannot encompass, such as the Footstool and the Throne.

He, Most High, says of the Footstool: "*while they encompass nothing of His knowledge save what He will. His throne includeth the heavens and the earth, and He is never weary of preserving them. He is the Sublime, the Tremendous.*" (Qur'an 2:255).

These are unseen matters whose reality no one can perceive, although their meaning is clear. We apply to them the approach of the righteous early generations. When Malik was asked about Allah's words, Most High:

"The Beneficent One, Who is established on the Throne."

Qur'an 20:5

he said: "Establishment is known; its manner is unknown." That is, we understand the explanation of the meaning of the Footstool and Throne, but cannot know their manner except through what revelation supplies, since reason cannot perceive or encompass these creations.

No one should be deceived by science's invention of spacecraft, through which people have reached certain celestial bodies. This does not go beyond the lowest heaven, according to Allah's words, Most High: "*And verily We have beautified the world's heaven with lamps, and We have made them missiles for the devils*" (Qur'an 67:5). These stars and galaxies are millions of light years away, and we cannot conceive how distant the Throne is, above all the heavens. Whoever claims otherwise must establish sensory evidence or scriptural evidence from the texts.

Shahrur, however, is not concerned with establishing evidence. He merely cites verses, which may oppose his view, as he did here when interpreting the Throne as meaning command and prohibition. This meaning is derivative, rather than original. Ibn Faris, on whose view Shahrur relies, says: "Ayn, ra and shin constitute one sound root¹⁵, indicating elevation in something built, then used metaphorically for other things."¹⁶ What matters to Shahrur here is attacking the established Muslim principle concerning Allah's words, Most High, "*The Beneficent One, Who is established on the Throne*". Statements concerning it came from the Companions and the Successors, from whom Imam Malik ibn Anas took his famous saying: "Establishment is known; its manner is unknown."

Shahrur nevertheless disregards Qur'anic verses and prophetic hadiths without sound evidence, concealing the conception of elevation in the Throne's meaning. The Qur'an contradicts his interpretation of the Throne as command, since the two appear together in one verse. He, Most High, says: "*then He established Himself upon the Throne, directing all things*." (Qur'an 10:3).

Shahrur cannot distort every verse concerning the Throne to suit his opinion and desire. He, Most High, says:

"And thou (O Muhammad) seest the angels thronging round the Throne"

Qur'an 39:75, excerpt

15. Shahrur says: the Throne in Arabic derives from arsh, with two sound meanings. First, a man's arsh is the mainstay of his affairs. Second, the Throne is what one who commands and prohibits sits upon. He did not state his source, and I did not find it. Rather, we found Ibn Faris saying that there is one root. Shahrur nevertheless presumed to challenge Arabic scholars and devised another root himself to enable him to distort truths.

16. Ibn Faris, *Maqayis al-lughah* [Measures of Language], entry arsh, 4:264.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "Do not prefer me to Moses. People will fall unconscious on the Day of Resurrection, and I shall be the first to regain consciousness. There will be Moses, grasping the side of the Throne."¹⁷

Of the martyrs, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "Their spirits are within green birds, which have lamps suspended from the Throne."¹⁸ The Sunnah also contains hadiths conveying certain attributes of the Throne. Shahrur's statement is thus invalidated: the Throne is a creation and does not mean command and prohibition.

Shahrur says:

"After the first cosmic explosion and the formation of the various material elements, the entire universe consisted of one element, hydrogen, the generator of water... At this stage, Allah's command was over the generator of water, so He said: '*and His Throne was upon the water*'. "¹⁹ To reach this view, Shahrur had to distort many terms, alter their meanings and depart from scholarly integrity in quoting dictionaries. Nor does he adhere to one linguistic method. He treats Arabic childishly, taking what he wishes from it and leaving what he wishes. What matters, as became established for me, is that he formulated a general rule to oppose the approach of Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah. He catalogued these views and then tries to address them one by one, without their being relevant or necessary to the inquiry. His aim becomes clear through his attempt to demolish the foundations supporting the edifice of the Islamic approach.

17. Al-Bukhari, hadith 7472; *Fath al-Bari*, 13:447.

18. Muslim, 3:1502, hadith 1887.

19. Shahrur's book, p. 165. Water consists of the two elements oxygen and hydrogen, rather than one. Shahrur distorts the meaning of the prophetic hadith "His Throne was upon the water".

We need to pause with Shahrur here to identify his illusions and contradictions concerning the unseen.

He speaks excessively of the first explosion on every occasion, proceeding from a principle accepting that the universe emerged through a great cosmic explosion. He says:

"We adopt the scientific theory and hold that the material universe appeared through an immense cosmic explosion which changed the nature of matter. We hold that another immense explosion, comparable in magnitude to the first, will inevitably destroy this universe and change the nature of its matter, so that another material universe, a 'world', replaces it. This means that the universe did not arise from nothing, while affirming that none is beginningless except Allah, but from matter of another nature. This universe will disappear, to be replaced by another composed of matter of a different nature. This is what we call the life of the Hereafter."²⁰

First, Shahrur must have been dreaming when he discussed this supposed scientific theory. We must ask: was he conscious or unconscious?! Anyone who speaks in this manner about unseen matters of the past or future must possess knowledge encompassing past, present and future, and encompassing and comprehending this universe. This is unavailable to Shahrur or anyone more knowledgeable than him. Moreover, what he calls a scientific theory is merely illusion and imagination²¹, supposition and conjecture which avail nothing against truth. It addresses fields which cannot be verified or investigated by limited reason. How has Shahrur's diminutive reason ventured to investigate this vast, far-reaching universe when scientists today, despite enormous resources, cannot determine the

20. Shahrur's book, p. 46.

21. Perhaps Shahrur heard that film-makers anticipate scientists in presenting matter and ideas concerning the universe through imagination. His ideas about this explosion are no more than such imaginings.

actual distances between certain great stars and the earth? They therefore give approximate figures, sometimes reaching millions of light years. The approximate nature of these figures and scientists' disagreements in estimating them indicate that Shahrur's discussion of the universe's origin and the first and second cosmic explosions is mere conjecture, guesswork and sophistry.

Second, throughout his book, Shahrur does not mention who causes this explosion, as though he points to an autonomous process, neglecting that the Lord of the worlds created the universe. Neglecting this truth confirms his materialist creed, in which matter moves the world. His affirmation that none is beginningless²² except Allah does not help him. Someone who believes in Allah returns to His Book to learn the universe's origin, while Allah's Qur'anic verses contradict Shahrur's conjectures and imaginings concerning the universe.

Of the unseen of the heavens and earth, and the return of the matter to Him, He, Most High, says: *"And Allah's is the Invisible of the heavens and the earth, and unto Him the whole matter will be returned. So worship Him and put thy trust in Him. Lo! thy Lord is not unaware of what ye (mortals) do."* (Qur'an 11:123).

The entire matter, in this world and the Hereafter, returns to Allah. We therefore do not conceive the immense cosmic explosion imagined by Shahrur as occurring, and regard his discussion of it as illusion and imagination.

22. The Beginningless is not among Allah's Beautiful Names.

Of the creation of the heavens and earth, He, Most High, says:

“Lo! your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, then mounted He the Throne. He covereth the night with the day, which is in haste to follow it, and hath made the sun and the moon and the stars subservient by His command. His verily is all creation and commandment. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!”

Qur'an 7:54

Of His continual preservation of the heavens and earth, He, Most High, says:

“Lo! Allah graspeth the heavens and the earth that they deviate not”

Qur'an 35:41, excerpt

Shahrur's theory of the first and second cosmic explosions entrenches a conception of purposelessness²³ in this universe. Fair-minded scholars have contemplated its strange phenomena without offering a decisive view: each scholar gives his opinion. The Qur'an must not be interpreted through these conjectural views, founded on neither conclusive nor scriptural evidence. Otherwise, it becomes a plaything in the hands of irresponsible people such as Shahrur, Jawdat and others like them, with their imaginings and illusions.

Refuting Shahrur's "scientific" theory of the cosmic explosion requires no great effort. A person of sound reason will not concede these conjectures in the field of Islamic belief, for which he has offered no evidence. His manner has succeeded with some readers, but he cannot confront scholars

23. The theory of the cosmic explosion is mere supposition. It has not reached the status of a scientific proposition founded on scientific evidence, proof. It is imagination and did not address the second explosion claimed by Shahrur. Just as he supplied the missing link in Darwin's theory, he supplied the second explosion here, the missing link in the great lie concerning the immense cosmic explosion!!

and those familiar with contemporary sciences who know the reality of these claims, which avail nothing against truth.

Someone who builds an entire interpretation²⁴ of the Qur'an on theories and hypotheses which have not attained the status of knowledge cannot be trusted in his learning, which merits no consideration. His approach must be exposed, rather than entering into juristic dialogue with him concerning subsidiary matters.

Shahrur's neglect of Allah's direct governance of the universe's affairs represents a grave gap in his approach and clearly reveals his doctrinal affiliation.

He says: "Through the laws of al-Rahman, among whose fundamentals are the laws of dialectics, namely the law of evolution and change in becoming, the law of pairing, and adaptation, this universe was born and became things: that is, distinct things differentiated from one another." He then says: "This dual material existence was designated by the term 'Allah's words' in its essence, and 'Allah's signs' in its phenomena."²⁵

Do Marxist materialists say anything other than this?

Shahrur then calls for introducing philosophy into religion, saying:

"Knowledge comes from outside the human self. We therefore call for a contemporary Islamic philosophy relying on rational knowledge which proceeds from perceptible things through the senses, foremost hearing and

24. Those of materialist orientation call their studies "readings", although they are actually interpretations of the Qur'an. This helps them escape confrontation with Muslims, who do not trust people like them to venture to interpret the Qur'an without knowledge, as Shahrur and Jawdat have done.

25. Shahrur's book, p. 252. We observe the expression "designated by the term Allah's words", as though the matter were terminological rather than fundamental, and as though existing things were already present and the term merely applied to them.

sight, to reach abstract theoretical knowledge in the light of humanity's scientific achievements at the beginning of the fifteenth Hijri century."²⁶ This is another acknowledgement that knowledge, ilm, lies outside the self. Here he adopts the sensory doctrine, discarding other aspects of knowledge.

Shahrur's call for a philosophical approach thus becomes apparent. Calling it "Islamic philosophy" changes nothing. This does not accord with the foundations of knowledge, because philosophy has an approach resting on specific rules in which reference is made to matter or reason. In the Islamic approach, what comes through revelation takes precedence, without impugning what is reached through reason or sense perception.

When Shahrur addressed the establishment of a theory of knowledge, he began imposing the materialist approach's foundations on the Qur'an, saying:

"What is the theory of human knowledge?

It is resolving the confusion between objective reality and illusion, truth and falsehood, by perceiving the objective world of al-Rahman, reality as it is, since the existence of things outside consciousness is their very reality."²⁷

He then explained the intended objectivity of human knowledge: "Images in minds must correspond to things existing concretely, outside consciousness. Here lies the fundamental confusion between truth and falsehood."²⁸

26. Shahrur's book, p. 43.

27. Shahrur's book, p. 252.

28. Shahrur's book, p. 253.

Here Shahrur chooses to criticise materialist theory and object to it as incapable of explaining the two elements of contradiction in the human brain and how that contradiction was removed. He proposes that materialist theory introduce another party into the process, so that he can complete Darwin's theory and claim to have discovered its missing link. He says:

"The Qur'anic theory, which converges with materialist reflection theory only in its point of departure, offers the scientific explanation capable of answering those questions by proposing the breathing of spirit from Allah, Most High, from outside the dual material universe. This carried Allah's attribute of singleness, distinguished by the absence of contradiction."²⁹ He therefore declares his materialism fully, saying:

"This materialist understanding of the Qur'anic theory of knowledge answers the illusions of those with an idealist understanding of the Qur'an, who reject evolution and ascent and ridicule Darwin's theory as unscientific. Their argument rests on this question: why did human beings evolve from apes while apes remained apes? Our answer is that Allah, Most High, breathed spirit into the human creature, a species of the animal kingdom, leading it to become human and rise above that kingdom. Had He breathed spirit into other species, they too would have risen. The breathing of spirit is the missing link in Darwin's theory concerning becoming human."³⁰

Shahrur nevertheless lives amid illusions and empty boasting, for he has supplied no evidence for this theory. He claimed that his opponents' argument rests on asking why human beings evolved while apes remained apes. He imagined this to be the only argument possessed by opponents of Darwin's theory. The poor man thought he had silenced them with words

29. Shahrur's book, p. 253.

30. The preceding source, p. 253.

subject to no scholarly or rational method, merely confusion and a clear muddling of matters. Combining Darwin's materialist theory with the Islamic approach is absolutely invalid, because the two approaches cannot meet. The first rests on conjecture, guesswork, imagination and certain studies in regions of the earth which remain theories and hypotheses unable to withstand scholarly criticism.³¹ The second rests on the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger.

Shahrur then proposes the terms al-Rahman and Satan, to make this idea accord with the materialist theory of conflict between opposites. He makes his book revolve around this axis. This proposal treats people's minds with contempt, particularly those of Muslims. His attempt to conceal his aim while displaying his materialist manner constitutes considerable deception: he has not disclosed all his ideas. We therefore call on anyone attempting to criticise his book to pause at general questions and address the approach first, rather than become absorbed in particulars.

I shall examine this deception in some detail through the subject of conflict between al-Rahman and Satan.

The Term al-Rahman

Shahrur does not deny that al-Rahman is Allah's name. He nevertheless supplies descriptions of his own which suit his materialist approach, saying:

"Allah's name al-Rahman represents the laws of lordship: control, consolidation and generation, and consequently evolution in this dual material universe. They operate objectively."³² That is, mechanically or autonomously. For him, Allah's name equals the law of control or the

31. See the chapter on evolution in this study, p. 178.

32. Shahrur's book, p. 254.

generator. His only evidence was that al-Rahman derives from rahim, the womb, whose function is generation.

He tried to cite Qur'anic verses mentioning the divine name al-Rahman, trifling with them as he pleased and apportioning their meanings as he wished, like a small child who takes hold of a knife and injures himself and others.

Shahrur seems to have acquired no Islamic learning, for he did not grasp the value of Allah's Beautiful Names and behaved as the people of jahiliyyah did when they neglected this matter.

Of them, He, Most High, says: "*And they measure not the power of Allah its true measure*" (Qur'an 6:91).

We can therefore examine the meaning of Allah's name al-Rahman, beginning with its linguistic meaning.

It is appropriate to mention Ibn Faris's view here, since Shahrur made him his authority in language. Yet he seems not to refer to him in every linguistic question. In *Maqayis al-lughah* [Measures of Language]³³, he says:

"Ra, ha and mim constitute one root, indicating tenderness, affection and compassion. Rahim is the relationship of kinship, from which the female womb was then called rahim." This is precisely the reverse of Shahrur's understanding and conclusion: the womb was named for mercy and affection. Yet he rejects this meaning and claims: "The Noble Qur'an added another meaning: the womb's function is generation." Where did he obtain this addition? From his own ideas and endless conjectures. Allah mentioned the Beautiful Names in His Book so that we might call upon Him by them. They are His names and must not be altered as Shahrur did. He entered into the denial of Allah's names and attributes to conform to the

33. Ibn Faris, *Maqayis al-lughah* [Measures of Language], 2:497, entry rahim.

materialist approach and Marxist dialectics, so that al-Rahman, the generator, enters a dialectical relationship with Satan, the idealist enemy of materialism. This clearly indicates that Shahrur's deity is material existence: the matter which Marxists regard as the generator of life and creator of everything, from which everything proceeds.

Shahrur states this more precisely, saying:

"Since the fa'lani Satan is one party to the dialectical process in human thought, the other party is the material al-Rahman. The fa'lani Satan represents illusion and the illusory aspect of human thought, while al-Rahman represents its objective material aspect."³⁴

He then ridicules the reader and mocks believers when applying the Marxists' theory of conflict between materialism and idealism³⁵, explaining the reason for seeking refuge in Allah from Satan the outcast: "*And when thou recitest the Qur'an, seek refuge in Allah from Satan the outcast.*" (Qur'an 16:98).

He says: "We hold that what is meant here is the fa'lani Satan, because its task is to turn the understanding of the Qur'an from a material reading, of al-Rahman, into an idealist reading, of Satan."³⁶

We observe that he uses the divine name Allah here to indicate the material al-Rahman. This reveals the reality of Shahrur's ideas concerning divinity: Allah is matter, but with particular characteristics!!

34. Shahrur's book, p. 262.

35. Idealism is the rational approach which Marxist thought overturned, constructing Marxism in its wake.

36. Shahrur's book, p. 262.

His view becomes clearer in defining the term al-Haqq, the Real, when he says:

"The Real: in the first part, 'The Reminder', we defined the Real as objective material existence outside human consciousness... The Qur'an expressed the Real through two terms. The first is Allah: it described Allah as objective existence³⁷ outside human thought."³⁸

He then describes divine existence through the following attributes:

1. Laws 1 and 2 of dialectics do not apply to Him: "*Naught is as His likeness;*" (Qur'an 42:11).
2. He is single rather than dual in quality: "*Say: He is Allah, the One!*" (Qur'an 112:1).
3. He is one in quantity: "*that your Allah is only One Allah.*" (Qur'an 18:110).
4. The absence of contradiction: single objective existence contains no contradictions within itself, and therefore cannot undergo corruption and change, "perishing": "*Everything will perish save His countenance.*" (Qur'an 28:88).
5. The equation of time does not apply to Him, since time and space in their present conception are attributes of changing dual matter: "*He is the First and the Last, and the Outward and the Inward;*" (Qur'an 57:3).³⁹

Applying materialist terms such as quality, quantity and others to define divine attributes represents a departure from the Islamic terms established in the Book and the Sunnah, and a distortion of words from their proper

37. Objective existence outside the self means matter, and corresponds precisely to the Marxist definition of matter. See the materialist approach in this study.

38. Shahrur's book, p. 263.

39. Shahrur's book, p. 264.

places. Affirming oneness in names and attributes cannot occur in this materialist manner. Revering Allah, Most High, means mentioning the attributes with which He described Himself in the Qur'an, or with which His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, described Him in hadiths: the Tremendous, the Great, the Mighty, the Compeller, the Guardian, the Supreme and the Wise. These are attributes of perfection befitting Allah, Most High. Shahrur's negative descriptions do not represent the positive attributes in which every Muslim must believe. Here he converges with the Qadariyyah and the Mu'tazilah, who denied Allah's attributes and relied on negative descriptions. This led Ahl al-Sunnah to describe them thus: "Those who deny the attributes worship a nonentity; those who affirm likeness worship an idol." Strangely, Shahrur fell into contradiction, combining the views of the Qadariyyah, who deny attributes, with those who liken Allah to His creation. This appears when he offers a purely material conception of the Real, bringing together Allah and created beings, saying:

"The second term for the Real is Allah's words, which are the very created existents... We Muslims therefore believe in a real existence of Allah and a real existence of His words, which are the very existents. Both lie outside human consciousness."⁴⁰

It is appropriate to observe Shahrur's unification of the term the Real through objective material existence, and its connection with the unity of existence affirmed by adherents of union and indwelling among the Qadariyyah. It derives from the roots of materialist philosophy and statements of atheistic philosophers.

40. Shahrur's book, p. 264.

Shahrur also proposes the Marxist materialist idea that matter precedes thought in existence:

"From what has been said, we conclude that objective existence outside consciousness is real existence rather than illusory or conceptual. This existence preceded the human being's existence as a living, rational creature.

We therefore say that assent precedes conception: existents preceded humanity in existence, and human knowledge is knowledge of that existence as it is. Human knowledge divides here into two parts:

A. Knowledge of existents, the dual material existence, things.

B. Knowledge of Allah through His words and signs.⁴¹ As human knowledge of existents, Allah's words and signs, the world of al-Rahman, increases, knowledge of Allah increases through His Beautiful Names, the 'marks'.⁴²

This conception of Allah's existence, Most High, and the comparison of His Beautiful Names to marks reveal Shahrur's materialist creed.

He then applies this materialist conception to matters of the unseen, saying:

"The total unseen consists of material things or events known only to Allah. This unseen is relative⁴³, because what humanity does not know today it may know tomorrow... The total and partial unseen constantly move towards knowledge, and consequently towards contraction. This became clear after advances in information and the enormous progress in its transmission."⁴⁴ This fascination with contemporary science led him to

41. These are cosmic signs; he does not mean Allah's verses in the Book.

42. Shahrur's book, pp. 265-266.

43. By the relative unseen, he means that it may become complete knowledge in the future.

44. Shahrur's book, p. 268.

specify unseen things which human reason can perceive as life develops, saying:

"In the world of al-Rahman there are no 'irrational things', but rather human reason's inability to perceive at a particular historical period, for example, jinn and angels."⁴⁵

Here Shahrur adds another matter to his many conjectures, claiming something he cannot demonstrate. Fascination with scientific progress has made him lose his balance and proclaim what is irrational. He imagines that human beings will comprehend angels, their reality and their unseen manner of existence! This is an unsupported claim. Angels are created with a nature different from ours, and jinn from material different from ours. How can we perceive their reality when they belong to the unseen, and we know of them only what comes through revelation? The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"Angels were created from light, jinn from a mingled flame of fire, and Adam from what has been described to you."⁴⁶

Through this claim, Shahrur attempts to unsettle the Islamic creed and diminish the concealed unseen. He attempts to establish that unseen matters will lie within human reach and that humanity will be capable of uncovering and knowing them. This shows presumption and arrogance towards Him Who knows the secrets of the heavens and earth. Shahrur's claim requires scriptural or scientific evidence: mere words and heresy are unacceptable. Nevertheless!! Allah, glorified is He, revealed in His Mighty Book a sufficient answer to people like Shahrur.

Of Satan, He says: "*Lo! he seeth you, he and his tribe, from whence ye see him not.*" (Qur'an 7:27).

45. Shahrur's book, p. 255.

46. Muslim, 4:2294, from Aishah.

Of angels, He says: *"And those who look not for a meeting with Us say: Why are angels not sent down unto us and (Why) do we not see our Lord! Assuredly they think too highly of themselves and are scornful with great pride. On the day when they behold the angels, on that day there will be no good tidings for the guilty; and they will cry: A forbidding ban!"* (Qur'an 25:21-22).

Angels are seen only at death, giving good tidings to believers and striking unbelievers and those who associate partners with Allah until their souls depart.⁴⁷

He, Most High, says: *"If We sent down an angel, then the matter would be judged; no further time would be allowed them (for reflection)."* (Qur'an 6:8).

He, Most High, also says:

"And they say: O thou unto whom the Reminder is revealed, lo! thou art indeed a madman! Why bringest thou not angels unto us, if thou art of the truthful? We send not down the angels save with the Fact, and in that case (the disbelievers) would not be tolerated. Lo! We, even We, reveal the Reminder, and lo! We verily are its Guardian."

Qur'an 15:6-9

Angels are Allah's messengers and hosts. He, Most High, says:

"Praise be to Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, Who appointeth the angels messengers" (Qur'an 35:1). He, Most High, also says: *"We have appointed only angels to be wardens of the Fire"* (Qur'an 74:31), then: *"None knoweth the hosts of thy Lord save Him. This is naught else than a Reminder unto mortals."* (Qur'an 74:31).

47. See al-Qurtubi, 13:20.

Merely thinking of reaching the world of angels and uncovering their circumstances means placing humanity in a position to learn heaven's secrets and know everything about existence. This conflicts with the characteristics of divinity. He, Most High, says:

“(He is) the Knower of the Unseen, and He revealeth unto none His secret, Save unto every messenger whom He hath chosen, and then He maketh a guard to go before him and a guard behind him That He may know that they have indeed conveyed the messages of their Lord. He surroundeth all their doings, and He keepeth count of all things.”

Qur'an 72:26-28

Allah, Most High, has not left heaven's secrets for irresponsible people to manipulate. He appointed protectors and mighty guards for this unseen.

As stated in the revelation:

“And (the jinn who had listened to the Qur'an said): We had sought the heaven but had found it filled with strong warders and meteors. And we used to sit on places (high) therein to listen. But he who listeneth now findeth a flame in wait for him;”

Qur'an 72:8-9

Explaining the preservation of heaven through meteors, He, Most High, says:

“Lo! We have adorned the lowest heaven with an ornament, the planets; With security from every froward devil. They cannot listen to the Highest Chiefs for they are pelted from every side, Outcast, and theirs is a perpetual torment; Save him who snatcheth a fragment, and there pursueth him a piercing flame.”

Qur'an 37:6-10

Shahrur disregards Qur'anic verses and determines his ideas before referring to their meanings. He mentions them in his book only to give readers the impression that he knows them and has not overlooked them!

He addressed unbelief and faith in terms of conflict between the materialist and idealist approaches, saying:

"Atheism, from the Qur'an's perspective, is therefore a product of human thought and a purely idealist position."⁴⁸

Thus, from the beginning of the book to its end, he continues applying Marx's materialist outlook to every inquiry he presents!

After discussing Iblis and regarding him as the fi'yali Satan, a material existence outside consciousness, he summarises the subject through the materialist approach:

"The task of the fa'lani Satan is therefore to turn reality into illusion in human thought and plant thought with idealist illusions. It is purely a task concerning knowledge, unrelated to the lawful and unlawful."⁴⁹

Throughout his inquiry, Shahrur thus remains within the system of Marxist ideas, imposing the law of conflict between materialism and idealism on everything!!

When Shahrur sought to explain the Islamic state's creed, he distorted Islamic terms and classified demands to apply the Islamic Shari'ah and the Noble Qur'an as common errors.

He said: "I draw attention here to two very common errors among Muslims:

48. Shahrur's book, p. 264.

49. The preceding source, p. 314.

A. Calling for the Qur'an to be the state's constitution.

B. The error of calling for the application of the Islamic Shari'ah's rulings."⁵⁰

We may need no comment here: the matter is too apparent to escape ordinary people, let alone their scholars.

While denying that the Qur'an is the community's constitution, he makes matter the foundation of the Islamic creed.

He says: "For the desired Arab state, or any state, to become Islamic, its constitution must contain the creed of affirming oneness. This creed is expressed as follows:

1. The Arab Islamic state's creed concerning existence is that the universe in which we live is a real material existence, founded on duality through contradictions, pairs and change in becoming, 'evolution', in things and societies... This state therefore develops, founded on material evidence supplied by objective science and on reason. In this article lies the creed of affirming the oneness of lordship: '*Everything will perish save His countenance.*'" (602).

For Shahrur, the materialist creed is thus the Islamic state's foundation. He therefore says: "Any proposal for justice outside this law is utopian and illusory. Justice can only be relative and dependent on the stage" (602).

Shahrur's vocabulary contains only two conceptions. If a law is materialist and positivist, he praises and commends it. If it is neither materialist nor positivist, it is utopian, illusory and idealist. He therefore rejects any proposal for justice outside materialist law. His complete ignorance of

50. Shahrur's book, p. 724.

Allah's attributes also leads him to exclude the possibility of perfect justice! Claiming that Allah's justice is relative and His knowledge probabilistic⁵¹ impugns and denies His Beautiful Names, and departs from the Islamic approach to approaches of deviation and misguidance.

Section Three

Denial of the Names: Allah's Knowledge

Shahrur began his inquiry concerning Allah's knowledge, Most High, by asking:

"Is Allah's knowledge certain or probabilistic?" He answered: "We say that it is both."⁵²

Through his expression of these divisions, we recognised the reality of his ideas and the origin of the question he examines. He connected it with the familiar question of the creation of human acts and the well-known disagreement between the Mu'tazilah and the Qadariyyah on one side and Ahl al-Sunnah on the other. He made conscious human choice a reason why Allah does not know everything: Allah does not know from eternity every possible action of this human being, but knows these possibilities when the human being thinks of them, after they exist. He said:

51. Shahrur claimed that Allah's knowledge is probabilistic. See the section on knowledge in this study, and Shahrur's book, p. 386.

52. Shahrur's book, p. 386.

"The confusion lies in this: if Zayd intends tomorrow to do something, Allah knows from eternity that Zayd will intend to do it on such a day, at such an hour and second. We view the matter differently."⁵³

That is, he does not consider that Allah knows every possibility from eternity. He accuses Muslims of evasion because they believe that Allah knew from eternity that Abu Lahab would be an unbeliever and among the people of hell.

It is Shahrur who evades and alters Islamic terms and the meanings of Allah's attributes and Beautiful Names. He does not acknowledge that Allah, Most High, knows everything, what has been and what will be, and replaces the term knowledge, *ilm*, with another term, knowledge, *ma'rifah*.⁵⁴ He says: "Allah possesses complete knowledge of things and their events, nature and its phenomena⁵⁵, because His knowledge is mathematical."⁵⁶

In a childish manner, he attempts to persuade the reader that this mathematical knowledge with which he describes Allah, Most High, is the highest type of knowledge.

It is preferable to pause briefly with Shahrur on denying Allah's comprehensive knowledge, a matter of immense importance in the Islamic creed. This conduct represents a grave deviation in belief, leading to denial of divine determination and invalidation of a pillar of faith. Shahrur has thrust himself into a dangerous pitfall. Does he know this question's importance and what denying Allah's comprehensive knowledge means for the creed? His materialist orientation suggests to me that he recognises it.

53. The preceding source, p. 389.

54. We explained in the introduction that *ma'rifah* does not carry the meaning of *ilm*. Muslim scholars customarily use *ilm*, while philosophers customarily use *ma'rifah*.

55. Observe the exclusion of human acts from the comprehensiveness of Allah's knowledge.

56. Shahrur's book, p. 389.

He adheres to the Qadari doctrine and does not fear doing this deliberately and insistently.

Whoever denies Allah's complete knowledge attributes ignorance to Him, glorified and exalted is He above that, and denies His Beautiful Names in which we must believe, such as the Knower of the Unseen and the Seen, and the All-Knowing. It also denies other names founded on knowledge, such as the Powerful and the Aware, because complete power requires comprehensive, encompassing knowledge.

Shahrur has violated the objectivity he claims, as though the expression he places at the beginning of every section were for decoration rather than practice!!

The mathematical knowledge to which he attributes Allah's knowledge is limited, probabilistic knowledge. The Creator, mighty and majestic is He, must not be described thus. Mathematical results rest originally on pre-established rules and judgements whose validity we accepted at the outset, called mathematical postulates or axioms. We do not belittle this immensely important knowledge, but cannot measure Allah's comprehensive knowledge against knowledge resting on probability in certain fields and results!!

Shahrur was not the first to claim that Allah's knowledge is mathematical. This is an ancient philosophical principle. Ancient philosophers conceived divinity through reason, a theory familiar to scholars: existing things proceed from Allah, or multiplicity proceeds from the One. Plotinus and his Alexandrian followers affirmed this theory, regarding the origination of things as merely the diffusion of the First Cause's power of intellection and influence, while its essence remains.

Some followers of Plato regard the deity as pure intellect contemplating itself, then enumerate ten intellects proceeding from the first intellect.

Some contemporary philosophers also call the deity a "mathematical mind". James Jeans says: "It is possible to discern an absolute mathematical mind behind this universe."⁵⁷

Muslim scholars of earlier times answered philosophers who claimed their sciences were sound and established because they rested on mathematics. Those philosophers presumed upon this knowledge, as contemporary philosophers also attempt to do.

Ibn Taymiyyah says:

"Nothing unites the philosophers. Their disagreements are greater than those of all groups of Muslims, Jews and Christians. The philosophy adopted by al-Farabi and Ibn Sina is merely that of the Peripatetics, followers of Aristotle, the author of the teachings. The disputes and disagreements between him and his predecessors would take a long time to describe, as would those between his followers. As for the other groups of philosophers, recounting their disagreements in astronomy alone would reveal more disagreement than within any group of those who face the qiblah.

Astronomy is a mathematical, arithmetical science, among their soundest sciences. If this is their disagreement in it, what of their disagreement in natural philosophy or logic, let alone theology?"⁵⁸

57. Professor Andrews, *al-Nazariyyat al-ilmiyyah* [Scientific Theories], p. 34.

58. *Dar' ta'arud al-aql wa-l-naql* [Averting conflict between reason and revelation], 1:158.

The New Ghaylan al-Dimashqi⁵⁹

To explain the conception of Allah's knowledge, it may be important to mention the story of the historically renowned Ghaylan al-Dimashqi, a leading Qadari who lived during Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz's time. He denied divine determination, as Shahrur and his companions do today.

Abu Jafar al-Khatmi said:

"I was present when Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz summoned Ghaylan al-Dimashqi concerning something he had heard about divine determination. He said to him:

'Woe to you, Ghaylan! What is this I have heard about you?'

He replied: 'Lies are told about me, Commander of the Faithful, and words I do not say are attributed to me.'

He asked: 'What do you say about knowledge?' He replied: 'Knowledge has taken effect.'

Umar said: 'Your argument is defeated. Go now and say what you wish. Ghaylan, if you acknowledge knowledge, you are defeated in argument; if you deny it, you disbelieve. Acknowledging it and being defeated is better for you than denying it and disbelieving.' He then asked: 'Do you recite Ya Sin?' He replied: 'Yes.'

59. He is Ghaylan ibn Abi Ghaylan, executed for his doctrine concerning divine determination, a misguided, wretched man. He was among the companions of al-Harith the liar and believed in his prophethood. When al-Harith was killed, Ghaylan took his place. Khalid ibn al-Lajlaj told him: "Woe to you! Did you not, in your youth, throw apples back and forth with women during Ramadan? Then you served the wife of al-Harith, the lying claimant to prophethood, and claimed she was the Mother of the Believers. Then you changed and became a heretic. I see you leaving one desire only for something worse." He was neither trustworthy nor reliable. Makhul told him: "Do not sit with me", and Malik prohibited sitting with him. Ibn Hajar said: "Al-Awza'i was the one who debated him and ruled that he should be killed." See *Lisan al-mizan* [The Tongue of the Balance], 4:492.

He said: 'Recite.'

He recited: '*Ya Sin. By the wise Qur'an,*' ... as far as: '*Already hath the judgment, (for their infidelity) proved true of most of them, for they believe not.*'

He said: 'Stop. What do you think?'

He replied: 'It is as though I had not read this verse, Commander of the Faithful!'

Umar said: 'Continue.'

He recited: '*Lo! We have put on their necks carcans reaching unto the chins, so that they are made stiff-necked. And We have set a bar before them and a bar behind them,*'. Umar told him: '*Say: a bar behind them, and (thus) have covered them so that they see not. Whether thou warn them or thou warn them not, it is alike for them, for they believe not.*'

He asked: 'What do you think?'

He replied: 'It is as though I had never read these verses. I pledge to Allah never again to speak of anything I used to discuss.'

He said: 'Go.' When Ghaylan turned away, he said: 'O Allah, if he is lying in what he says, make him taste the heat of weapons.'

He did not speak during Umar's time. Then came Yazid ibn Abd al-Malik, a man who did not concern himself with this or examine it.

Ghaylan spoke again. When Hisham assumed rule, he sent for him and said: 'Had you not pledged to Allah before Umar never to speak of any of this again?'

He replied: 'Pardon me. By Allah, I shall not return to it.'

He said: 'May Allah not pardon me if I pardon you. Do you recite the Opening of the Book?'

He replied: 'Yes.'

He said: 'Recite: *Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds,*'

He recited: '*Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, The Beneficent, the Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgment, Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we ask for help.*'

He said: 'Stop. For what did you seek His help: something in His hands which you cannot accomplish, or something in your hands?'

'You two, go and cut off his hands and feet, behead him and crucify him.'"⁶⁰

In another narration: "Ghaylan said: 'I testify, Commander of the Faithful, that I repent of my doctrine concerning divine determination.'

Umar said: 'O Allah, if he is truthful, accept his repentance. If he is lying, make him a sign for believers.'"⁶¹

"The Muslims established the argument against Ghaylan, debated him and explained the truth to him, as we saw Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz do in calling on him to repent. He subsequently broke his repentance, and they killed him.""⁶²

60. Hibat Allah al-Lalaka'i, *Sharh usul i'tiqad Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah* [An Explanation of the Foundations of the Belief of Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah], 4:715; Abd Allah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *al-Sunnah* [The Sunnah], 3:429.

61. The preceding source, 4:713.

62. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar' ta'arud al-aql wa-l-naql* [Averting conflict between reason and revelation], 7:173.

Our purpose here is to direct attention to the importance of belief in divine determination and the early Muslims' concern with drawing a decisive distinction on its basis, rather than to review the history of the Qadariyyah. This also helps expose the true nature of adherents of materialist thought who deny divine determination.

Section Four

Denial of the Attributes: Allah's Speech

Shahrur says: "This dual material existence was designated by the term 'Allah's words' in its essence, and 'Allah's signs' in its phenomena. The conception of Allah's speech in the Qur'an therefore means material existence."⁶³ He then says: "Existence is the very speech of Allah, and is created and not beginningless."⁶⁴ For Shahrur, this means that Allah's speech is created.

Shahrur's words fall within the denial of Allah's attributes, Most High. In the introduction, I mentioned the conception of denial⁶⁵, which concerns Allah's attributes, including speech. This view is attributed to the Qadariyyah and the Mu'tazilah, invalidating his claim that his reading is contemporary. He adopts the extreme Mu'tazilah's view, follows their approach and praises them, while attacking all jurists, saying:

⁶³. Shahrur's book, p. 256.

⁶⁴. The preceding source, p. 257.

⁶⁵. The introduction.

"With the jurists' victory over the Mu'tazilah, rational Islamic thought was broken... Reason was lost, and transmitted texts⁶⁶, rather than reason, became Islam's foundation... We do not say that the jurists erred, but that they eliminated free thought's role... Determinist belief became the official creed of ordinary Muslims."⁶⁷

We accuse Shahrur, who claims to offer a contemporary reading, of reviving and stirring questions of speculative theology among people. Every Muslim of Ahl al-Sunnah has the right to warn against this new tendency, which relies on the foundations of disputation in speculative theology. Shahrur attempts to use the familiar methods of disputation of the Mu'tazilah and the Qadariyyah. These are feeble methods founded on no scholarly evidence. They adhere to them through their philosophical approach concerning the levels of existence, as we explained in refuting the law of philosophy⁶⁸: reason existed before speech and is therefore its foundation. We established that this law is invalid when applied to Allah's speech, because speech is an attribute of Allah, Most High, inseparable from His sacred essence. His attributes cannot be conceived as separated from Him. The Qur'an's explicit wording establishes that Allah spoke to Moses: "*and Allah spake directly unto Moses;*" (Qur'an 4:164).

Since Allah, Most High, revealed to Moses as He revealed to the prophets, there is a distinction between revelation and direct speech. He, Most High, explained that His speech to Moses represented a special choice: "*He said: O Moses! I have preferred thee above mankind by My messages and by My speaking (unto thee).*" (Qur'an 7:144). He, Most High, also said: "*And when*

66. Transmitted texts means the texts of the Book and the authentic Sunnah.

67. The preceding source, p. 259. Shahrur erred in this generalisation. See the chapters on the Islamic approach and the principle of causality in this study, where you will find that compulsion and free choice are invalid doctrines, p. 19.

68. See "Refuting the Law of Philosophy" in this study, p. 57.

Moses came to Our appointed tryst and his Lord had spoken unto him," (Qur'an 7:143).

We can trace something in Shahrur's view deserving attention, which represents the philosophical origin of denying the Creator's attributes, mighty and majestic is He. It appears in his treatment of the attributes through returning to their philosophical origin, rather than through the Mu'tazilah alone, and regarding Allah's speech as material existence or the very existents. Confusion appeared when he proposed an imaginary example likening Allah to a creature:

"If we say that a creature knows the forms and possibilities of existents, and every sound and its possibilities, it sees without an eye and hears without a physiological ear."

These words address those who liken Allah to His creation and claim that He has an eye like created beings' eyes, and other such things. Ahl al-Sunnah affirm Allah's attributes without specifying their manner, because that manner is unknown to us, as Malik said: "Establishment is known; its manner is unknown." Shahrur, however, denies of Allah what He did not deny of Himself, constructing a conception of this denial suited to his materialist approach. He made Allah's speech dual matter, just as he made Allah, Most High, single matter. Exalted is Allah far above that.

The arbitrariness of Shahrur's manner and his extraordinary strain appear when he seeks to explain Adam's repentance and the Lord's address to him: *"Then Adam received from his Lord words (of revelation), and He relented toward him."* He interpreted this repentance crudely, without scholarly foundations: "He heard abstract sounds bearing the meaning of repentance."⁶⁹ Here he inclines towards the Qadariyyah in denying Allah's attribute of speech: Allah created speech, which Adam heard.

⁶⁹. Shahrur's book, p. 307.

Elsewhere, he indicated the same meaning when interpreting Allah's speech as linguistic formulation, saying:

"To teach humanity, Allah formulated absolute reality, existence and its general laws and His Beautiful Names, in human linguistic form."⁷⁰ He seems also to indicate that Allah's Beautiful Names are created. Some readers of Shahrur's book may imagine this idea contemporary! It is, in fact, old and worn out, representing ancient philosophers' views and those of a Mu'tazili group.

Jawdat Said shares Shahrur's denial of Allah's attributes, although each expresses the matter in his own manner. Jawdat claims:

"Allah's word, Allah's command and Allah's regularity may be close in meaning."⁷¹ This passage converges with Shahrur to the point of identity and accords with the Mu'tazili and Qadari approach in denying Allah's attributes, such as speech, power and knowledge. This is addressed fully in the introduction and chapters of this study.

To establish that Allah's speech is not eternal, Shahrur said: "We conclude that the view that Allah's speech is eternal is unacceptable. Existence is the very speech of Allah, created and not beginningless. Were His speech eternal, the universe and Allah would become one, and the Messiah would become Allah's son because he is a word from Him."⁷²

He then says weakly: "If eternity means the Qur'anic text before us, recited in recitation and part of the Reminder, '*By the sun and his brightness, And the moon when she followeth him*', then it is an Arabic text. This would mean that Allah is Arab and His language Arabic, which is rejected."⁷³

70. The preceding source, p. 72.

71. *Iqra* [Read], p. 93.

72. Shahrur's book, p. 257.

73. The preceding source, p. 258.

Shahrur found only these feeble arguments for his claim that the Qur'an is created. He attempts here to conceal the real intended meaning, that Allah's speech is created. The foundation for the Mu'tazilah and Shahrur is denying Allah's attribute of speech. If, for Shahrur, Allah is single matter, how can He speak?!! He therefore resorts to formulation, saying:

"To teach humanity, Allah formulated absolute reality, existence and its general laws and His Beautiful Names, in linguistic form."⁷⁴

Allah says: "*And verily Our word went forth of old unto Our bondmen sent (to warn) That they verily would be helped,*" (Qur'an 37:171-172).

He also claimed that the Mu'tazilah, like him, affirm that the Qur'an is created!

"The Mu'tazilah affirmed the creation of the Qur'an. I believe they meant the Qur'an in the conception proposed in this book, rather than the whole Book: they meant the ambiguous passages, rather than the definitive revelation."⁷⁵

This is a great fabrication and another falsification of the truth. The Mu'tazilah do not divide Allah's Book into Book, Qur'an and Reminder as Shahrur does. We challenge him to establish a single statement indicating such a division among them. We nevertheless recognise that the aim of denying Allah's attribute of speech is the same for Shahrur and the Mu'tazilah, connected with the familiar question of denying the attributes.

74. Shahrur's book, p. 72.

75. The preceding source, p. 257.

Section Five

Denial of Divine Determination: Lifespans and Sustenance

Shahrur says:

"Many have imagined that a person's lifespan, sustenance and action are written for him beforehand, with 'written' meaning predetermined. He thereby loses his will and has no choice in his actions or sustenance. Treatment and surgery become meaningless, and prayer to Allah becomes a kind of futility and frivolity."⁷⁶

Examining this question falls under examining the pillar of faith in divine determination: good and evil in divine determination were determined by Allah, Most High, before the heavens and earth were created.

This matter, which Shahrur denies, is settled for the Islamic community through clear, manifest texts from the Book, the Sunnah and the community's consensus. Yet Shahrur, following the approach of the denying Qadariyyah, rejects this evidence and denies divine determination in broad daylight, like Ghaylan al-Dimashqi, al-Jad ibn Dirham and other Qadariyyah, the Magians of this community.

The Qadari and Islamic approaches cannot converge, because each rests on different foundations and treats the scriptural text differently. Shahrur excludes the Sunnah from the theory of knowledge, attempting to establish it from the Qur'an alone. By Qur'an, however, he does not mean Allah's Book as Muslims understand it, but the part concerning signs in the horizons, or cosmic signs, unrelated to matters of belief. The response will therefore be decisive and comprehensive, including evidence from the Sunnah as well as the Qur'an. Muslims do not separate the Book from the

⁷⁶ Shahrur's book, p. 411.

Sunnah. Whoever excludes the Sunnah from inquiry opposes the law of the Lord of the worlds.

Shahrur and other contemporary Qadaris imagine that Muslims' belief in divine determination from Allah, the Originator, Creator, Provider and Powerful, alone deprives people of freedom to act, obtain treatment, undergo surgery or pray to Allah, Most High.

The Qur'an affirms a will for human beings, but Allah made it subject to His will, as befits the perfection of His power and knowledge, so that nothing He does not will occurs in His dominion.⁷⁷

In the Islamic approach, there is no conflict between human action and acquisition through the will expressed in the Shari'ah, and Allah's decree and determination through the will concerning what occurs in the universe.

The Qadaris, adherents of materialist thought, therefore reject any restriction of human freedom or connection of it with Allah's will. This produced among them the idea of divine deputyship: a part of Allah's spirit dwelt in this human being, who began acting through it as absolute master of the universe. Exalted is Allah far above what wrongdoers say.

Shahrur addressed actions, sustenance and lifespans extensively. Examining one question is sufficient to clarify this idea through a sound conception of the Islamic approach to these matters.

Lifespans

He, Most High, says: "*No soul can ever die except by Allah's leave and at a term appointed.*" (Qur'an 3:145).

77. See the chapter on will, p. 167.

Shahrur says afterwards:

"When people study the book of death and their knowledge of it increases, they can postpone these conditions and lengthen lifespans."⁷⁸

Shahrur's task here is clear: shaking the community's belief by maintaining that death is outside Allah's hands and depends on objective conditions which humanity possesses, enabling it to lengthen lifespans whenever it obtains those conditions!!

Throughout his book, Shahrur therefore persists in transferring every matter which Muslims believe lies in Allah's hands into human hands. He does so through his Qadari materialist approach and the claim that, after spirit was breathed into him, the human being acquired control over the laws of lordship, meaning control over the universe's material existence. He therefore says that they are subject solely to human study and responsibility.

Shahrur quoted the Prophet's words, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, reported by Muslim:

"The creation of one of you is gathered in his mother's womb for forty days. Then he becomes a clinging clot for a similar period, then a lump of flesh for a similar period. The angel is then sent to breathe spirit into him and commanded concerning four matters: to write his sustenance, lifespan, action, and whether he will be wretched or blessed."⁷⁹ Shahrur stopped before quoting the rest of the hadith, because completing it supplies an argument against him and explains the meaning of writing the lifespan.

78. Shahrur's book, p. 412.

79. Reported by Muslim, 4:2036; al-Bukhari, hadith 6594; Abu Dawud, 4708; al-Tirmidhi, 2:19; Ibn Majah, 1:29; Ahmad, 1:382; and al-Tayalisi, 298.

In any event, I shall quote the expressions which he removed from their context so that he could manipulate wording and distort words from their proper places.

The remainder of the hadith is:

"By Him besides Whom there is no deity, one of you acts as the people of Paradise act until only a cubit remains between him and it. Then what is written overtakes him, and he acts as the people of hell act and enters it. One of you acts as the people of hell act until only a cubit remains between him and it. Then what is written overtakes him, and he acts as the people of Paradise act and enters it" (631).

The expression "what is written overtakes him" explains the meaning clearly: the effect of this writing will cause the person's final action, so that writing and action accord.

I discussed this matter at length in the introduction.⁸⁰ It is useful to mention certain prophetic hadiths which help us understand this principle.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, says: "... Allah sends an angel to it, who shapes it and creates its hearing, sight, skin, flesh and bones. He then asks: Lord, male or female? Your Lord decrees what He wills, and the angel writes. He then asks: Lord, its lifespan? Your Lord says what He wills, and the angel writes. He then asks: Lord, its sustenance? Your Lord decrees what He wills, and the angel writes. The angel then departs with the document in his hand, neither adding to nor subtracting from what he was commanded."⁸¹

80. No collection of prophetic hadiths is without a separate chapter on divine determination.

See the chapter on the principle of causality in Islam, which discusses divine determination, p. 30.

81. Reported by Muslim, 4:2037.

It is also appropriate to examine the Companions' and Successors' dialogue, how they received discussion of divine determination and held it in reverence.

Muslim narrated from Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali: "Imran ibn Husayn asked me: 'What do you think of what people do and strive for today? Is it something decreed for them and settled through a prior determination, or something they face through what their prophet brought them and through the argument established against them?' I replied: 'It is something decreed for them and already settled.' He asked: 'Would that not be injustice?' I was greatly alarmed and replied: 'Everything is Allah's creation and in His possession: *He will not be questioned as to that which He doeth, but they will be questioned.*' He told me: 'May Allah have mercy on you. By my question, I intended only to test your understanding. Two men of Muzaynah came to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, asking: Messenger of Allah! What do you think of what people do and strive for today? Is it something decreed for them and settled through a prior determination, or something they face through what their prophet brought them and through the argument established against them? He replied: No, it is something decreed for them and already settled. Its confirmation is in the Book of Allah, mighty and majestic is He: *And a soul and Him Who perfected it And inspired it (with conscience of) what is wrong for it and (what is) right for it.*'"⁸²

A dialogue also occurred between prophets concerning divine determination and prior predetermination.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "Adam and Moses, peace be upon them, debated before their Lord, and Adam prevailed over Moses in argument. Moses said: 'You are Adam,

82. Reported by Muslim, 4:2041.

whom Allah created with His hand, breathed into you of His spirit, made His angels prostrate before you and settled you in His Garden. Then through your sin you brought people down to the earth?" Adam replied: 'You are Moses, whom Allah chose through His message and speech, gave you the tablets containing an explanation of everything, and drew you near in private discourse. How long before my creation did you find that Allah had written the Torah?' Moses said: 'Forty years.' Adam asked: 'Did you find in it: *And Adam disobeyed his Lord, so went astray.*?' He replied: 'Yes.' Adam said: 'Do you blame me for an act which Allah wrote for me to perform forty years before creating me?'" The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "Adam prevailed over Moses in argument; Adam prevailed over Moses in argument."⁸³

The Prophet's prayer, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was therefore: "O Allah, Director of hearts, direct our hearts to obey You."⁸⁴

When the Muslim brother reads the Messenger's authentic hadiths, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, he will find an answer to every question.

We also need to explain that prior divine determination does not conflict with the reality of the trial which Allah determined for us. His determination accords with causes and operates through them, because He created everything, human beings and causes. Allah alone creates, while the human being acquires, through Allah's facilitating causes for him: "Everyone is facilitated towards that for which he was created."⁸⁵

83. Muslim, 4:2043.

84. Muslim, 4:2044.

85. Muslim, 4:2041, from Imran ibn Husayn, from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

As explained in the introduction, the Qadari sect's error here arises from confusing the will concerning what occurs in the universe with the will expressed in the Shari'ah.

Human beings cannot act contrary to Allah's will concerning what occurs in the universe, since everything occurs according to it. Love and approval have no bearing here: the matter is determination, because everything which occurs proceeds from this will. This is the pillar of divine determination in which every believer is required to believe.

As for the human being under the will expressed in the Shari'ah, concerning obligations through command and prohibition, he is facilitated in his action according to love and approval: "*Allah desireth for you ease; He desireth not hardship for you;*". Human acquisition does not mean that anything in that acquisition, or in everything occurring in the universe, opposes Allah's absolute will. Human will is subject to Allah's will.

"Yet ye will not, unless Allah willeth."

Qur'an 76:30, excerpt

Shahrur and his companion Jawdat adopt the Qadari sect's view. Our disagreement with them therefore concerns foundations from the outset!!

Shahrur proceeds in his corrupt belief through the instability of lifespans and their not being subject to Allah's determination from eternity. He says:

"The instability of lifespans explains why the killer's punishment is execution: the killer shortened the victim's lifespan, so his punishment is the shortening of his own."⁸⁶

The penalty of execution rests on a scriptural Qur'anic text applying only to one who kills wrongfully. Not every killer is executed. Someone who kills

⁸⁶. Shahrur's book, p. 413.

another on the basis of a scriptural text is not regarded as a murderer, such as the caliph who enforces prescribed punishments.

Shahrur also places death in human hands and within human capabilities in nature and medicine, saying:

"The inevitable occurrence of any event, its appointed term, must be preceded by the book of that event: the set of objective conditions which inevitably lead to it and are subject to human study. As human knowledge of natural books increases, the ability to harness and manipulate them for human benefit increases..."⁸⁷ He then says: "Money spent on medical research worldwide is neither wasted nor useless: it is spent on investigating the conditions of long and short life" (639).

One verse defeats Shahrur's attempt to affirm his materialist doctrine, in which he maintains that people possess the capacity to heal themselves and others, and that "lifespans are not fixed".⁸⁸

He, Most High, says:

"And when I sicken, then He healeth me,"

Qur'an 26:80

We thus reach the absolute, certain truth that death, life, illness and healing lie in Allah's hands alone, glorified and exalted is He. They are not bound to the availability of the objective conditions which Shahrur defined and made the cause of death or healing. These causes belong to Allah's determination. Allah gives life and death, and whoever denies this truth denies the Islamic creed. He, Most High, says:

⁸⁷. Shahrur's book, p. 413.

⁸⁸. The preceding source, p. 413.

“Lo! Allah! Unto Him belongeth the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He quickeneth and He giveth death. And ye have, instead of Allah, no protecting friend nor helper.”

Qur'an 9:116

Through manifest verses, Allah explained that the cause of death is the end of the appointed term. He, Most High, says:

“And every nation hath its term, and when its term cometh, they cannot put it off an hour nor yet advance (it).”

Qur'an 7:34

Allah, Most High, explained that He retains souls, possesses them, gives them life and brings them death. He, Most High, says:

“Allah receiveth (men's) souls at the time of their death, and that (soul) which dieth not (yet) in its sleep. He keepeth that (soul) for which He hath ordained death and dismisseth the rest till an appointed term. Lo! herein verily are portents for people who take thought.”

Qur'an 39:42

Allah is likewise the One Who determined death among us, saying:

“We mete out death among you, and We are not to be outrun, That We may transfigure you and make you what ye know not.”

Qur'an 56:60-61

Allah determined creatures before bringing them into existence and created them as He determined. He possesses life and death. Human beings possess neither death nor life for themselves: this belongs solely to the One, the Almighty. He, Most High, says:

“and possess not hurt nor profit for themselves, and possess not death nor life, nor power to raise the dead.”

Qur'an 25:3, excerpt

If human beings possess neither death nor life for themselves, they likewise possess neither for others.

Allah, Most High, warned humanity against belittling this matter and threatened them in a manner expressing condemnation:

“How disbelieve ye in Allah when ye were dead and He gave life to you! Then He will give you death, then life again, and then unto Him ye will return.”

Qur'an 2:28

It is appropriate to mention the dialogue between Abraham, peace be upon him, and the man to whom Allah had given kingship. This tyrant imagined that, to outward appearances, he held certain people's lives in his hands. He claimed divinity and attributed to himself the capacity to give life and death. He, Most High, says:

“Bethink thee of him who had an argument with Abraham about his Lord, because Allah had given him the kingdom; how, when Abraham said: My Lord is He Who giveth life and causeth death, he answered: I give life and cause death.”

Qur'an 2:258, excerpt

He brought two men condemned to death, ordered one killed and pardoned the other, then said this amounted to giving life and death. He uttered the very expression reported by the Lord of the worlds: "I give life and cause death." This is undoubtedly a claim to divinity!!

So it is whenever a new Nimrod appears, frightening people through his violence and treating them contemptuously through his power. They obey

him in disobedience to Allah as fear creeps into their hearts, imagining that the matter lies with him and that he possesses their lives and deaths. Allah nevertheless warns them:

“Fear them not; fear Me, if ye are true believers.”

Qur'an 3:175, excerpt

The Noble Qur'an attributes the act of bringing death to Allah, Most High, Who says:

“Or (bethink thee of) the like of him who, passing by a township which had fallen into utter ruin, exclaimed: How shall Allah give this township life after its death? And Allah made him die a hundred years, then brought him back to life.”

Qur'an 2:259, excerpt

The act of bringing death is also attributed to the "angel of death". He, Most High, says:

“Say: The angel of death, who hath charge concerning you, will gather you,”

Qur'an 32:11, excerpt

Believers acknowledge that Allah, Most High, gives life and death in this world and the hereafter. The unbelievers' acknowledgement in the hereafter is also stated.

He, Most High, says:

“They say: Our Lord! Twice hast Thou made us die, and twice hast Thou made us live. Now we confess our sins. Is there any way to go out?”

Qur'an 40:11

It is a characteristic of lordship that death and life lie in Allah's hands and are subject to no one else. Otherwise, the reality of the trial would be nullified. He, Most High, says:

“Blessed is He in Whose hand is the Sovereignty, and, He is Able to do all things. Who hath created life and death that He may try you which of you is best in conduct; and He is the Mighty, the Forgiving,”

Qur'an 67:1-2

The correct concepts of Islamic culture have disappeared from the scene because belief in Allah's most beautiful names has been rendered inoperative, their true meanings have not been brought out, and people do not act in accordance with them. The supposition that human beings possess these divine characteristics leads some people to turn to other human beings like themselves to seek healing or sustenance, or to believe that they can benefit or harm them. They fear them as they fear Allah!! Explaining the believers' path in this matter, He, Most High, says:

“Say: Naught befalleth us save that which Allah hath decreed for us. He is our Protecting Friend. In Allah let believers put their trust!”

Qur'an 9:51

The Qur'an therefore censures those who suppose that apparent causes determine the appointed term of life. He, Most High, says:

“O ye who believe! Be not as those who disbelieved and said of their brethren who went abroad in the land or were fighting in the field: If they had been (here) with us they would not have died or been killed: that Allah may make it anguish in their hearts. Allah giveth life and causeth death; and Allah is Seer of what ye do.”

Qur'an 3:156

Death and life thus lie in Allah's hands: He bestows them upon whomever He wills, taking back what He bestowed and reclaiming what He gave

whenever He wills, when the appointed term arrives, at the inevitable moment, in peace or war, in bed or on the battlefield.

He, Most High, says:

"thought wrongly of Allah, the thought of ignorance. They said: Have we any part in the cause? Say (O Muhammad): The cause belongeth wholly to Allah. They hide within themselves (a thought) which they reveal not unto thee, saying: Had we had any part in the cause we should not have been slain here. Say: Even though ye had been in your houses, those appointed to be slain would have gone forth to the places where they were to lie."

Qur'an 3:154, excerpt

Here we must bring out a fundamental truth: Islam does not conflict with benefiting from scientific achievements in medicine and the treatment of disease. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "Allah has sent down no disease without sending down a cure for it."⁸⁹ He also said: "Seek treatment, servants of Allah, for Allah has established no disease without establishing a cure for it, except one disease: old age."⁹⁰ He also said: "Every disease has a remedy. When the remedy for the disease is correctly applied, recovery occurs by the permission of Allah, Most High."⁹¹ Another hadith states: "Do not seek treatment with what is forbidden", reported by Abu Dawud. Taken together, these expressions affirm recourse to causes and its compatibility with the concept of divine determination: Allah is the One Who permits healing, for recovery from disease is attributed to Him rather than to the medicine. Recourse to causes

⁸⁹. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, from Abu Hurayrah, hadith 5678; *Fath al-bari* [Commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhari*], 1:141.

⁹⁰. From Usamah ibn Sharik; reported by Ahmad, al-Bukhari in *al-Adab al-mufrad* [The Separate Book of Manners], and the four compilers of the Sunan.

⁹¹. Reported by Muslim in his *Sahih*.

does not contradict trust in Allah, but all of this depends upon Allah's determination and will.

Concerning honey, He, Most High, said: "*There cometh forth from their bellies a drink divers of hues, wherein is healing for mankind.*" (Qur'an 16:69).

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "This black seed is a cure for every disease except al-sam."⁹² Al-sam means death; the black seed is shuniz, or habbat al-barakah.

Ibn Taymiyyah says: "Relying on causes alone is associationism in divine oneness; denying that causes are causes is a deficiency of reason; and turning away from causes commanded by the Shari'ah impugns the Shari'ah. The servant's heart must therefore rely on Allah, rather than on any cause. Allah facilitates causes which benefit him in this world and the hereafter. If the causes are determined for him and he is commanded to employ them by the Shari'ah, he employs them while placing his trust in Allah..."⁹³

Sustenance

The question of sustenance is no different from that of lifespans, for sustenance too lies in Allah's hands. We need not repeat here what we said concerning death. It is appropriate, however, to allow the decisive Qur'anic verses to explain this clear truth.

92. Al-Bukhari, from A'ishah, no. 5687; *Fath al-bari* [Commentary on Sahih al-Bukhari], 10:150. The benefit of black seed in treating immunodeficiency disease has become apparent.

93. Al-Fatawa al-kubra [The Major Fatwas], 8:238.

Allah, Most High, explains that sustenance comes from Him, saying:

“Say: Who giveth you provision from the sky and the earth? Say: Allah,”

Qur’an 34:24, excerpt

He says that He is the One Who determines sustenance:

“Allah enlargeth livelihood for whom He will, and straiteneth (it for whom He will);”

Qur’an 13:26, excerpt

Allah alone favours some people above others in sustenance:

“And Allah hath favoured some of you above others in provision.”

Qur’an 16:71, excerpt

The Qur'anic verses also indicate a fundamental truth concerning sustenance: Allah provides for all people, believers and unbelievers alike:

“And there is not a beast in the earth but the sustenance thereof dependeth on Allah. He knoweth its habitation and its repository. All is in a clear Record.”

Qur’an 11:6

Although Allah urges the human being to strive to obtain sustenance, He has not made sustenance dependent upon that striving. Allah, Most High, is the Provider and the cause of sustenance. The human being possesses no power to provide for himself or anyone else.

“Or who is he that will provide for you if He should withhold His providence?”

Qur’an 67:21, excerpt

Just as Allah alone possesses sovereignty and alone creates, He likewise alone provides sustenance:

“Lo! Allah! He it is that giveth livelihood, the Lord of unbreakable might.”

Qur'an 51:58

The clarity and manifest character of this truth constitute an established foundation of belief and a fundamental pillar of the Islamic creed. One must believe that Allah is the Provider: this is a necessary implication of belief in Allah's most beautiful names.

The true Muslim believes that the matter lies in Allah's hands: He provides for whomever He wills without reckoning:

“And whosoever keepeth his duty to Allah, Allah will appoint a way out for him, And will provide for him from (a quarter) whence he hath no expectation.”

Qur'an 65:2-3, excerpt

Acts

The question of acts is no different from that of lifespans and sustenance. I devoted a separate chapter to it, entitled "The Creation of Human Acts".⁹⁴

94. See the chapter on the creation of human acts, p. 174.

Section Six

Divine Deputyship

The Concept of Divine Deputyship

Shahrur says: "When humanity matured into a being of al-Rahman, and Allah, glorified and exalted is He, wished to make the human being His successor on earth, to succeed Him first in the laws of lordship, meaning the capacity to control this material existence, and secondly in divinity, meaning the capacity to legislate, He gave him some of His own unitary attributes, free from contradiction, namely the spirit: '*and have breathed into him of My Spirit*',". The human being alone is therefore indebted to Allah, glorified and exalted is He, for his humanisation and departure from the animal kingdom. From this comes the term *din*, derived from *dana*, *yadin*; from it come *din*, *madinah* and *madaniyyah*: religion, city and civilisation."⁹⁵

We offer several necessary observations concerning this text:

A. The human being is not Allah's successor. Allah's words are clear: "*And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth*," (Qur'an 2:30). The Qur'anic text does not indicate that this successor is "Allah's successor", nor does it contain a contextual indication supporting such an understanding. Neither do other texts provide evidence that Allah intended, through this address, to establish a successor to Himself on earth. The matter is stated without qualification. Indeed, the assertion that the human being is Allah's successor on earth conflicts with the Shari'ah, reason and language.

B. Shahrur claims that the human being is Allah's successor in the laws of lordship, meaning that he can control this material existence. This means

95. Shahrur's book, p. 259.

that the human being possesses the attributes of lordship and acts upon the universe through them. This is false in every respect.

The human being possesses no power to act upon this existence except through the principle that it has been made of service to him.⁹⁶ This is defined and known. The Qur'an mentions the creatures made of service to humanity.⁹⁷ This occurs only by Allah's will, and human will is subject to Allah's will.

The idea which Shahrur presents here, succession in the laws of lordship, derives from the approach of ancient and modern philosophers. It differs from the familiar theory of emanation⁹⁸ only in its names. Shahrur employs the breathing of spirit and considers that Allah gave the human being some of His own unitary attributes,⁹⁹ free from contradiction. Having obtained this unitary attribute, the human being became Allah's successor, or Allah's deputy on earth, as Iqbal and Jawdat call it.

This idea also converges with the Christians' conception of Christ as the son of God.

“And the Jews say: Ezra is the son of Allah, and the Christians say: The Messiah is the son of Allah. That is their saying with their mouths. They imitate the saying of those who disbelieved of old. Allah (Himself) fighteth against them. How perverse are they!”

Qur'an 9:30

96. See the discussion of the relationship between humanity and the universe.

97. There are also creatures which have not been made of service to humanity and over which humanity has no power of control, whether from the perspective of the Shari'ah, as with magic, or from that of capacity and prohibition, as with perceiving angels, jinn, the Throne, the Chair, and similar things!

98. See "Refuting the Law of Philosophy" in this study.

99. Shahrur believes that Allah, exalted is His majesty, is a unitary material existence.

Among Christians, this atrocious assertion and great fabrication also arose through the breathing of spirit. They claimed that this breathing confers the divine attribute upon Christ. They were misled by the miracles which Allah permitted Jesus son of Mary to present to people, such as raising the dead and reporting matters of the unseen.

He, Most High, said: "... *Lo! I come unto you with a sign from your Lord. Lo! I fashion for you out of clay the likeness of a bird, and I breathe into it and it is a bird, by Allah's leave. I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I raise the dead, by Allah's leave. And I announce unto you what ye eat and what ye store up in your houses. Lo! herein verily is a portent for you, if ye are to be believers.*" (Qur'an 3:49).

As for the meaning of His words, "*They imitate the saying of those who disbelieved of old.*", referring to the assertion of previous nations, Allah knows best, this indicates the philosophers who adopt the theory of emanation, which entered Christianity through philosophers.

From these observations we conclude that Shahrur's assertion that the human being is Allah's successor in the laws of lordship imitates the assertions of Jews and Christians, and of philosophers before them, however much he attempts to claim that his reading is contemporary and that these ideas are the product of his own thinking.

Moreover, the context of the verse "*Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth,*" does not accord with the concept of succession in its complete sense, meaning that people succeed one another, century after century and generation after generation, as He, Most High, said: "*He it is Who hath placed you as viceroys of the earth*". Here it appears as one plurality succeeding another, rather than as people succeeding Allah, Most High, in matters belonging exclusively to Him, as Shahrur and his associates claim.

This idea of Shahrur's has appeared in the world in several forms:

1. Adherents of illumination and inspiration claim connection with the divine essence. They consider attainment of this stage exclusive to the spiritual poles, and grant those who attain "the station of the ghawth"¹⁰⁰ cosmic capabilities and power to control the material universe.

We observed this in Muhammad Iqbal: the self is one¹⁰¹ in existence, represented by God in heaven and the human being on earth.

2. In the Western world, this idea appears in the assertion that the human being is master of this universe, acting upon it as he wills. Among philosophers arose the idea of the perfect human being, or the "Superman",¹⁰² as they like to call him, on the understanding that he will possess a great intellect, extensive knowledge and mighty attributes. Jawdat says:

"The human being will ultimately be able to bridle time."¹⁰³ Elsewhere he also says: "The station of divine deputyship to which the human being ascends, where he commands and is obeyed."¹⁰⁴

Infatuation with human power arose through certain achievements which enabled humanity to make some gains in industry, agriculture and medicine. These people supposed that humanity's entry into this scientific field would bring it complete control over the universe.

In reality, these achievements, within the principle that the universe has been made of service to humanity, do not constitute control over the laws of life, as those with a materialist orientation claim, and as Shahrur claimed

100. Followers of certain orders believe that their ghawth can move the celestial spheres and bring the sky down upon the earth. Some of these followers have told me of these extravagant utterances.

101. See the chapter devoted to Muhammad Iqbal in this study.

102. As the atheist Nietzsche said in his book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

103. *Hatta yughayyiru ma bi-anfusihim* [Until They Change What Is in Themselves], p. 52.

104. *Iqra* [Read], p. 285.

here, extending this control to encompass material existence without exception. Let us give an example:

In interpreting His words, Most High: "*Lo! Allah! With Him is knowledge of the Hour. He sendeth down the rain, and knoweth that which is in the wombs. No soul knoweth what it will earn to-morrow, and no soul knoweth in what land it will die. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware.*" (Qur'an 31:34).

Some people have attempted to restrict Allah's knowledge to knowledge of the Hour.¹⁰⁵ They supposed that humanity possesses the capacity to know the other matters, such as the descent of rain and what is in wombs.

This illusion arose through the empty claims of those infatuated with material power and scientific achievements. Marxists in particular boasted of this, saying that they could dispense with heaven's mercy.¹⁰⁶ To explain the truth of this matter and clarify its obscurities, I ask: what does it mean that Allah sends down rain?

Allah is the One Who acts upon this universe as He wills and directs the world's affairs as He wishes. Nothing occurs in His dominion except by His permission: "*but Allah doeth what He will.*" (Qur'an 2:253). Allah produces heavy clouds throughout the earth through a process familiar to scientists: converting water into vapour, with the water and sunlight this requires. Allah, Most High, sends the winds which carry clouds to the places He chooses, from one end of the earth to the other. This requires the presence of suitable conditions and the absence of impediments, all of which He determines and brings about. No rational person can conceive of humanity possessing such a capacity, which requires comprehensive knowledge of

105. Some without knowledge have claimed that humanity can determine the Day of Resurrection through knowing the secrets of the Qur'an or the letters at the beginnings of surahs and calculating their numerical values. Rashad Khalifah announced a particular day.

106. The communist government in the Soviet Union failed to secure its wheat requirements and could not achieve self-sufficiency, forcing it to import wheat from its enemies. Before the communist revolution, Russia supplied Europe with wheat.

many matters and immense powers possessed only by Allah, exalted is His majesty. He created the heavens, the earth and all that lies between them; He directs their affairs, rather than the human being.

This invalidates the claim of Shahrur and his associates that the human being has been made successor in the laws of lordship and divinity, and acts upon the material universe as he wills.

Shahrur says:

"and knoweth that which is in the wombs." Allah, glorified and exalted is He, programmed the laws of pairing and fertilisation beforehand in the Preserved Tablet... He did not programme in the Preserved Tablet who would marry whom: we human beings are not programmed beforehand... We therefore do not say that a particular woman has been destined for a particular man from eternity." He then says: "Medicine can determine and direct the sex of the foetus beforehand, male or female, and obtain knowledge of the foetus while it is in its mother's womb."¹⁰⁷

Shahrur attempts to disparage Allah's power, asserting that Allah has not determined that a particular woman should be destined for a particular man, through his belief that Allah does not know who will choose whom. This denies divine determination in the manner prevalent among proponents of the Qadari doctrine, such as Ma'bad al-Juhani and Ghaylan al-Dimashqi. As for the question of programming, through which Shahrur attempts to liken Allah to His creation, it is as though the matter concerns a computer, no more and no less. Shahrur also states that, were this programmed in the Preserved Tablet, scientists could determine it. Through this treatment he seems to place the Preserved Tablet under scientists' control in a derisive manner.

107. Shahrur's book, p. 406.

Shahrur and his associates have ignored the Noble Qur'an and the prophetic Sunnah. He, Most High, says: "*Nay, but it is a glorious Qur'an. On a guarded tablet.*".

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "Allah wrote the determinations of creatures fifty thousand years before creating the heavens and the earth."¹⁰⁸

It is heedlessness for some who claim learning to state that humanity now knows what is in wombs, and that Allah does not exclusively possess this knowledge, merely because human beings have partial knowledge, such as the sex of the foetus. The same applies to the assertion that humanity can now send down rain merely because of partial attempts, such as dropping bombs on clouds spread across the sky, causing some rain to fall without control over where it falls. This is limited, and it is not new.

These people do not realise that the statement that Allah knows what is in wombs or sends down rain signifies comprehensive knowledge, encompassing the whole matter in every respect, so that no drop in the heavens or on earth escapes Allah's knowledge, whereas human knowledge remains limited and human power deficient. Whoever claims that human knowledge is like Allah's knowledge has fallen into the prohibited likening of Allah to His creation: "*Naught is as His likeness*";. This is general and encompasses all matters.

As for Shahrur's claim that Allah made the human being His successor in divinity, meaning the capacity to legislate, this is graver and more disastrous than the first. What has Shahrur left for Allah on this earth if the human being possesses the laws of lordship and has also become Allah's successor in divinity? This renders the concepts of lordship and divinity inoperative. We discussed this matter in the chapter on the characteristics

¹⁰⁸. Reported by Muslim, 4:2044.

of the Islamic approach, when examining the denial of Allah's names and attributes.

This idea of Shahrur's converges with the mechanistic doctrine, a positivist doctrine which holds that the world's mechanism was established once and for all: it is an immense assembly of gears from which nothing is lost and in which nothing is created.

This doctrine conflicts with the Islamic approach and has also been subjected to severe criticism by other philosophical doctrines.

Shahrur repeats the assertion that the human being contains a divine part, which made him worthy of succession to Allah.

He says:

"As for conscious human behaviour, to understand this conscious behaviour we must not forget that the human being is Allah's successor on earth, and that this human being, unlike other living creatures, contains something of Allah's essence: the spirit. Through it he became Allah's successor on earth, acquired knowledge, and became capable of knowing and legislating."¹⁰⁹

Section Seven

The Materialist Interpretation of Events

I examined certain texts in which Shahrur attempts indirectly to establish something impugning religion. I found many such matters, which he subjects to a materialist interpretation of events. I shall mention some by way of example:

109. Shahrur's book, p. 390.

1. Loss of Consciousness

He attempts to establish that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to lose consciousness, saying:

"They said that the Prophet suffered epileptic seizures. This misconception arose because the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to lose consciousness and perspire when revelation came to him. After revelation left him, he would awaken and regain consciousness."¹¹⁰

When he sought to establish the error of this assertion, he fell into the same misconception, claiming: "The Arabs who lived with the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, believers and unbelievers alike, knew that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to lose consciousness during revelation."¹¹¹

He then attempted to establish this misconception scientifically, maintaining that the external senses cease to function when the brain is addressed directly. He said: "We cannot give a human being information directly to his brain while his senses are functioning."¹¹²

He then said: "Accordingly, from a scientific perspective, there is absolutely nothing strange in the Prophet's losing consciousness during revelation, may Allah bless him and grant him peace."¹¹³

Shahrur's claim that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, lost consciousness during revelation is a great fabrication and a cunning attack upon the Prophet. Here he adopted the manner of pretending to

110. Shahrur's book, p. 383.

111. Shahrur's book, p. 383.

112. The preceding source. This is an imaginary supposition which has not occurred in reality.

113. Shahrur's book, p. 383.

defend the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, while directing his attack at the Prophet's state during revelation.

The Prophet's state during revelation is described in authentic hadiths. Al-Bukhari narrated that al-Harith ibn Hisham asked the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace: "Messenger of Allah, how does revelation come to you?" The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, replied:

"Sometimes it comes to me like the ringing of a bell, and this is the hardest for me. It then leaves me, and I have understood what was said. Sometimes the angel appears to me as a man and speaks to me, and I understand what he says." A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, said: "I saw revelation descend upon him on a bitterly cold day. When it left him, his forehead was streaming with perspiration."¹¹⁴

The Companions could perceive when revelation descended upon the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. None of them mentioned that he lost consciousness or his balance.

Al-Bulqini said concerning the reason for the hardship which the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, endured during revelation:

"The reason is that momentous speech has preliminaries indicating its greatness, so that it receives due attention." Some said: "It was hard for him so that his heart would be wholly attentive, making him better able to comprehend what he heard."¹¹⁵ Shahrur, however, captivated by materialist ideas, sees the matter as though it involved an electrical connection device or a computer.

114. Al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Revelation, hadith 2; *Fath al-bari* [Commentary on Sahih al-Bukhari], 1:26.

115. *Fath al-bari* [Commentary on Sahih al-Bukhari], 1:28.

We therefore content ourselves with what the texts of the Shari'ah state concerning revelation. I have found no one who mentions the Prophet's loss of consciousness, subtly likening it to epilepsy, except Shahrur.

2. Corruption

Shahrur attempts to confront established matters on which Islamic scholars are agreed, impugning them through his materialist approach, whether in interpreting a verse or explaining a ruling. He addresses these matters without any necessity to discuss them. This shows how far Shahrur has gone in plotting against fundamental Islamic matters. An example is his strange interpretation of *hirabah*, saying:

"We must not corrupt improvements to the earth, such as the construction of bridges, roads, streets, farms, buildings and gardens. He therefore said:

'The only reward of those who make war upon Allah and His messenger and strive after corruption in the land will be that they will be killed or crucified, or have their hands and feet on alternate sides cut off.'"¹¹⁶ (Qur'an 5:33). Through this ludicrous interpretation of the Qur'anic verse, he attempts to conceal its true meaning: the punishment for "*hirabah*", familiar to everyone acquainted with Islamic jurisprudence, near or far. This verse concerns those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger by rebelling against His order and law. Ibn Kathir said: "It applies to unbelief, highway robbery, terrorising travellers, and unlawful sexual violation (rape)." For Shahrur, however, the end justifies the means, according to the Marxist system through which he interprets the Qur'an. He attempted to turn the verse's meaning from belief and morals to the purely material subject of destroying buildings and bridges, as though these gardens were more important than unbelief and apostasy, or frightening and terrorising Muslims.

116. Shahrur's book, p. 137.

He then interprets corruption as relating only to material things. Thus, concerning His words, Most High, "*and do not act corruptly, making mischief in the earth.*" (Qur'an 2:60), he said:

"Athw means residing somewhere and corrupting it as a result of that residence. From this comes the word athth or aththah, the insect which lives in woollen clothes."¹¹⁷ We discern his error through *Lisan al-Arab*, which gives corruption a general meaning: "Corruption is the opposite of soundness; detriment is the opposite of benefit. They say: this matter is detrimental to such-and-such, meaning that it contains corruption."

It cites the poet's words:

Youth, leisure and wealth
Corrupt the mind, and how they corrupt it!¹¹⁸

We observe that Shahrur determines words' meanings without referring to language dictionaries.

3. When he sought to interpret the verse "*And the messenger saith: O my Lord! Lo! mine own folk make this Qur'an of no account.*", he said: "The Messenger's people are the Arabs, all Arabs. This verse applies to the Arabs, including the Companions and the Rightly Guided Caliphs, from Abu Bakr to Ali ibn Abi Talib." He says this to establish that the Companions did not interpret the Qur'an and therefore believed in it through submission without understanding it. He said: "This reflects the scientific and historical development of understanding the Qur'an. Those who believed in the Qur'an through submission when it descended constituted the overwhelming majority, if not all of them. After scientific progress, however... people, unbelievers and believers alike, now believe in them through assent rather than submission."

117. Shahrur's book, p. 137.

118. *Lisan al-Arab* [The Tongue of the Arabs], entry f-s-d.

He gave this example: "*He hath loosed the two seas. They meet. There is a barrier between them. They encroach not (one upon the other).*" (Qur'an 55:19-20), saying: "The Arabs did not grasp these verses. The unbeliever said they were magic, while the believer believed in them through submission."¹¹⁹

Documented historical facts show Shahrur's error in maintaining that the Arabs, believers and unbelievers, did not grasp the Qur'an, that unbelievers called it magic, and that believers believed in it through submission without understanding it. Muslim children perceive the error of this conception through accounts of the Prophet's life. Here are some:

Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, a leader among his people, said one day, while sitting in Quraysh's assembly and the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was sitting alone in the mosque: "People of Quraysh, shall I go to Muhammad, speak to him and offer him certain things? Perhaps he will accept some of them, so that we give him whichever he wishes and he leaves us alone..." Utbah went and sat beside the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, saying: "Nephew! You know your position among us in tribal authority and ancestry. You have brought your people a momentous matter, dividing their community, disparaging their understanding and finding fault with their gods and religion..." The account continues until the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: "Then listen to me", and recited Surah Fussilat (al-Sajdah) to him. Utbah returned to his companions. Some said to others: "We swear by Allah that Abu al-Walid has returned with a different expression from the one with which he left." When he sat with them, they asked: "What news do you bring, Abu al-Walid??" He replied: "I bring news that I have heard words

119. Shahrur's book, pp. 129-131.

the like of which, by Allah, I have never heard! By Allah, they are neither magic, nor poetry, nor soothsaying. People of Quraysh! Obey me and leave this to me. Leave the man to what he is engaged in..."¹²⁰

Quraysh called the Qur'an magic only after meeting to agree upon a single opinion which they would express during the pilgrimage season. Pre-Islamic zeal seized Quraysh in opposing the Messenger and fighting Islam. They therefore called the Qur'an magic to plot against Islam, knowing that it was not magic.

Now intellectual zeal seizes Shahrur and his associates, adherents of the materialist approach, in denying the Qur'an through distortion, alteration and misrepresentation, portraying the Companions as ignorant and mocking them at every opportunity.

Shahrur has thrust himself onto a difficult path and entered a matter from which he has no escape. Critics therefore assailed him when they saw his weakness, contradiction and confusion. None of his opinions stood secure, and none of his arguments proved firm. His companion Jawdat, meanwhile, has worked for fifty years in the same direction, yet critics have not noticed him, and no one has thought to direct criticism at him.

120. Reported by Ibn Ishaq in *al-Sirah* [The Life of the Prophet]. It has transmission routes mentioned by Ibn Kathir in his *Tafsir* [Qur'an Commentary], 4:92, Maktabat al-Riyad al-Hadithah edition.

Section Eight

Synonymy in the Language

Shahrur says:

"I became acquainted with the views of al-Farra, Abu Ali al-Farisi and his pupil Ibn Jinni, and Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani. At that time I realised that words are the servants of meanings, that the Arabic tongue contains no synonymy, that synonyms are no more than a deception... and that there is a crisis in teaching Arabic in schools and universities."¹²¹

It is no coincidence that Shahrur combines here the approach of Marxist materialism with the Qadari Mu'tazili approach. He found what he sought in this convergence, employing the linguistic aspect to classify and distribute Qur'anic verses so that they would accord with the materialist approach. He then denied the existence of synonymy in language to enable him to divide the Qur'an into parts and books, claiming that there are "the Book, the Qur'an, the Reminder, the Criterion, and others". This division is distinguished by its starting point in the concepts of the Marxist materialist approach.

This is not the first time that some human beings have attempted such divisions. The history of nations and peoples contains examples of this condition. The Qur'an refers to their actions. He, Most High, says:

"Such as We send down for those who make division, Those who break the Qur'an into parts. Them, by thy Lord, We shall question, every one, Of what they used to do."

Qur'an 15:90-93

121. Shahrur's book, p. 47.

The verse means those who made the Qur'an into categories. Idah means a part, from adda al-shah, meaning to separate a sheep's limbs. What else has Shahrur done? He has made Allah's Book into diverse categories which he manipulates as he wishes through a great deception, claiming that synonymy does not exist in language. He did not mention that this is a disputed question, nor present strong evidence establishing his opinion. Instead, he sought to inflate the matter through the study of his teacher Jafar Dakk al-Bab. This shows that he adopted his companion's theory without scrutiny or examination.

It has become established to me that his teacher deceived him¹²² in constructing his false theory, which accords with the materialist approach. Shahrur did not trouble himself to consult the sources, examine these studies in their authors' books, or investigate the truth for himself. We therefore testify that Shahrur's study is unscholarly and far removed from the objectivity which he invokes at every opportunity.

We also recognise that his treatment of language was directed towards a predetermined end, rather than scholarly and precise. Through this division he aimed to remove the rulings of the Shari'ah from the Qur'an and regard them as open to alteration and falsification, replacement and abolition. He treated this question, as he treated every question, through deception or "evasion and circumlocution".

His teacher Jafar Dakk al-Bab formulated a theory patched together from different opinions and claimed that it represented the school of Abu Ali al-Farisi¹²³ and his pupil Ibn Jinni. He sought to persuade the reader that his materialist linguistic theory was formulated by these leading authorities in

122. Unless there was collusion between them.

123. No school exists with the characteristics claimed by Jafar Dakk al-Bab. Rather, these scholars expressed scattered Mu'tazili opinions suited to the materialist approach adopted by Shahrur and his teacher. See the introduction to Shahrur's book, pp. 19-26, by Jafar Dakk al-Bab.

language. Many readers and critics failed to recognise this fabrication, except those upon whom Allah had mercy.

Here I shall confine myself to examining the aspect concerning synonymy. I shall present the points of disagreement between two leading authorities in language, Ibn Faris and Ibn Jinni, exposing the deception of Shahrur and his teacher and the reality of the claim that Ibn Jinni's school denies synonymy. I shall do so through two linguistic questions:

The First Question: The Development of Language, and Whether It Is Divinely Instituted or Conventional

Arab linguists divide into two groups: one, represented by Ibn Faris, holds that language is divinely instituted; the other, represented by Ibn Jinni, holds that language arises through human agreement.

Ibn Faris wrote a chapter on this subject entitled "Discussion of the Arabs' Language: Is It Divinely Instituted or Conventional?" He said: "The Arabs' language is divinely instituted. The evidence is His words, exalted be His praise: '*And He taught Adam all the names*,'"¹²⁴

He then explains his evidence, saying: "The proof of the correctness of our position is the scholars' consensus on invoking those people's language as evidence in matters upon which they disagree or agree. If language were established by agreement and convention, invoking them as evidence would have no greater claim than invoking us, were we to agree upon a language today. There would be no difference."¹²⁵ Ibn Faris holds that language reached completion in the Messenger's time, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, from the descent of His words, Most High: "*This day*

124. Al-Sahibi [Arabic Philology], p. 31.

125. The preceding source, p. 33.

have I perfected your religion for you". Ibn Jinni, meanwhile, presented language's origin in a separate chapter entitled "Discussion of the Origin of Language: Is It Inspiration or Convention?" He said: "This is a matter requiring further reflection. Most thinkers, however, hold that language's origin is agreement and convention, rather than revelation or divine institution."¹²⁶

At the chapter's end, Ibn Jinni gave an explanation indicating that he remained hesitant concerning this matter and uncertain between the two views.¹²⁷

Our purpose in presenting this question is not to exhaust discussion of it, but to show the extent of falsification and manipulation in scholarly matters by Shahrur and his brilliant teacher Jafar Dakk al-Bab!!

The other question on which Ibn Faris and Ibn Jinni¹²⁸ disagreed concerns synonymy in language.

Ibn Faris expressed his opinion concerning synonymy by denying complete synonymy. He gave an example, saying: "Qa'ada contains a meaning absent from jalasa... Do you not see that we say: he stood and then sat down, qa'ada; and he was lying down and then sat up, jalasa? Qu'ud thus follows standing, while julus follows a position lower than sitting."¹²⁹

Ibn Jinni's opinion on this question differed from Ibn Faris's. In his book *al-Khasa'is*, he devoted a chapter to it entitled "A Chapter on the

126. *Al-Khasa'is* [Characteristics], 1:40.

127. The preceding source, 1:41.

128. He is Uthman ibn Jinni al-Mawsili. He remained with Abu Ali al-Farisi; both held Mu'tazili beliefs and inclined towards the Shi'ah through serving Adud al-Dawlah of the Buyids, who helped manifest the Rafidi doctrine and weaken the Islamic caliphate. Adud al-Dawlah was a staunch Shi'i and established the emblems of Rafidi and Mu'tazili doctrines in Baghdad.

129. *Al-Sahibi* [Arabic Philology], p. 12.

Convergence of Meanings despite Differences in Roots and Forms". He said:

"This is a fine aspect of Arabic, of great benefit and strong indication of the nobility of this language: you find many names for one meaning, investigate the origin of each name, and find that it leads to the meaning of the other."¹³⁰

Through this contradiction between leading authorities in language, we find that the fabrication of Shahrur and his teacher concerning Arabic was great. He obtained his linguistic information through Marxist linguistic studies and positivist sociologists, rather than scholars of Arabic.

We must, however, examine the question of synonymy and its absence through linguists themselves, rather than through the illusions of Shahrur and his teacher.

Ancient and modern linguists have differed over the occurrence of synonymy, dividing between those who affirm and those who deny it.

Those affirming synonymy approached it through unity of meaning and multiplicity of words. They held that it demonstrates Arabic's characteristics, distinctive qualities and breadth in encompassing reality.

It is useful to review the names of scholars who affirm synonymy. They wrote many books on the subject, including, for example:

1. Al-Asma'i: *Ma ikhtalafat alfazuhu wa-ittafaqat ma'anihi* [What Differs in Wording and Agrees in Meaning].
2. Al-Qasim ibn Sallam: *al-Asma' al-mukhtalifah li-l-shay' al-wahid* [Different Names for the Same Thing].

130. Al-Khasa'is [Characteristics], 2:113, edited by Muhammad Ali al-Najjar, Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyyah.

3. Ibn al-Sikkit and his book al-Alfaz [Words].
4. Al-Hamzani and his book Kitab al-alfaz al-kitabiyyah [The Book of Words Used in Writing].
5. Ibn al-Marzuban and his book al-Alfaz al-kitabiyyah wa-l-ta'bir [Words Used in Writing and Expression].
6. Ibn Khalawayh, who wrote a book on the names of the lion.
7. Abu al-Faraj Qudamah ibn Jafar and his book Jawahir al-alfaz [Jewels of Words].
8. Al-Rummani: al-Alfaz al-mutaradifah al-ma'na [Words Synonymous in Meaning].
9. Ibn Jinni: "A Chapter on the Convergence of Meanings despite Differences in Roots and Forms", from *al-Khasa'is* [Characteristics].
10. Sibawayh: "Know that among their usages... two words differ while the meaning is one"; and his pupil Qutrub.
11. Ibn Sidah, who wrote al-Mukhassas [The Specialised Lexicon], saying in it: "Synonymous names which multiply a category without their multiplicity producing a different nature."

Some scholars denied the existence of complete synonymy because there are differences between words. They did not maintain absolute difference, and therefore called their books "books of distinctions".

Among them are:

1. Abu Hilal al-Askari and his book al-Furuq al-lughawiyyah [Linguistic Distinctions].
2. Ibn Faris in his book al-Sahibi [Arabic Philology].

3. Al-Raghib al-Isfahani, *Mufradat al-Qur'an* [Vocabulary of the Qur'an]. He explained his method of inquiry, saying: "I shall follow this book, Allah willing, with a book giving a precise examination of words synonymous in one meaning and the obscure differences between them. Through this, one may recognise why each statement is particular to one synonymous word rather than another..."¹³¹ Those denying synonymy also include Thalab and Ibn al-A'rabi.

Our purpose in listing this evidence was to establish the error of Shahrur's theory denying synonymy, and to give preference to the views of those affirming synonymy over those denying it.

Despite this difference of opinion, we have heard of no opponent of synonymy who assigns diverse divisions to the Qur'an or voices Shahrur's false assertion. No disagreement arose among them in Qur'anic interpretation on the basis of this question. In interpreting the Qur'an and addressing Allah's most beautiful names and attributes, the approach of those denying synonymy does not differ from that of those affirming it.

Scholars who accept synonymy say that synonymous words are names for one referent. Scholars who deny complete synonymy say that one is the name, while the other synonyms are attributes of that name. A dialogue between Ibn Khalawayh and Abu Ali al-Farisi supports this. Ibn Khalawayh said in Sayf al-Dawlah's assembly: "I know fifty names for the sword." Abu Ali al-Farisi replied: "I know only one name for it: al-sayf, the sword." Ibn Khalawayh asked: "Then what of al-muhannad, the Indian sword, al-sarim, the cutting sword, and such-and-such?"

131. *Mufradat al-Qur'an* [Vocabulary of the Qur'an], p. 6, Dar al-Ma'rifah edition.

Abu Ali said: "These are attributes,¹³² as though the shaykh does not distinguish between a name and an attribute."¹³³

No leading authority in language or Qur'anic interpretation paid heed to this disagreement. Its effects did not appear among commentators or reach the public; the disagreement remained among authors. Before us is a clear example refuting and invalidating Shahrur's theory. He, Most High, says:

"He is Allah, the Creator, the Shaper out of naught, the Fashioner. His are the most beautiful names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifieth Him, and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

Qur'an 59:24

These are names of Allah stated without conjunctions. Can Shahrur deny that these are names of Allah, Most High, by which we call upon Him? Indeed, I have seen Shahrur himself employ these names as names of Allah, Most High. Shahrur says:

"Allah's name al-Rahman represents the laws of lordship: control, consolidation and generation, and consequently evolution in this dual material universe. They operate objectively."¹³⁴

Shahrur has fallen into contradiction concerning synonymy and its use. Denying synonymy in Allah's names leads to associationism. Shahrur, however, has not concealed his materialist starting point concerning Allah's

132. In grammar, an attribute belongs to the category of nouns.

133. Al-Suyuti, *al-Muzhir* [The Blossoming], 1:405. For further discussion, consult *Dirasat fi ta'sil al-mu'arrabat wa-l-mustalah* [Studies in the Origins of Arabised Words and Terminology], by Dr Hamid Sadiq Qunaybi. Ali al-Jarim also treated this question comprehensively in a study published by the Academy of the Arabic Language in Cairo, volume 1, 1935.

134. Shahrur's book, p. 254.

names: he assigns each a purely material conception. He also applies a material term to these names, calling them "marks",¹³⁵ indicating the material embodiment of divine existence in which he believes, as we explained in the section on materialism.

Shahrur says:

"In this material existence of al-Rahman, Allah's most beautiful names appeared as meanings distinct from one another and in a dual form. He therefore first said: '*Allah's are the fairest names. Invoke Him by them.*' (Qur'an 7:180). Since Allah's most beautiful names can be understood only through the material existence of al-Rahman, He said: '*Say (unto mankind): Cry unto Allah, or cry unto the Beneficent, unto whichever ye cry (it is the same). His are the most beautiful names.*' (Qur'an 17:110)."¹³⁶

No sin surpasses this distortion!!

No sin surpasses this distortion!!

How strange is Shahrur's opposition to the Islamic approach in every matter!! Here he embodies Allah's names and calls them "marks", while denying embodiment to the created thing, as we saw when discussing the Throne, which he interprets as command.

Section Nine

Shahrur's Knowledge and Culture

We need make no great effort here to expose the shallowness of Shahrur's knowledge and the confusion of his culture. He declared this himself when

135. Simat is the plural of simah, meaning a mark. See *Lisan al-Arab* [The Tongue of the Arabs], entry w-s-m.

136. Shahrur's book, p. 259.

explaining that his acquaintance with the creed came through the views of the Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyyah. He said:

"I considered Islam as a creed through an inherited Mu'tazili or Ash'ari school,¹³⁷ and jurisprudence through an inherited adherence to schools: 'the five jurists'. I reached this dangerous point, fatal to the serious scholarly researcher: no human being can make a fundamental qualitative leap in knowledge and inquiry unless he breaks through the schools, because adherence to schools is a fatal point in scholarly inquiry."¹³⁸

His words confirm that Shahrur did not acquaint himself with the approach of Ahl al-Sunnah, but encountered the creed through the approaches of misguided sects, and that he rejects them. The truth is otherwise, however: he adopted the views of the Qadariyyah and Mu'tazilah and praised them in more than one place. He attacks the approach of Ahl al-Sunnah and plots against it. Indeed, he has left no matter in this approach, great or small, without seeking to distort, replace, reinterpret or impugn it!!

Here we establish Shahrur's failure to observe scholarly integrity, as well as his tendentiousness in writing. He has addressed many matters in opposition to the Islamic approach. This approach is cohesive as steel: no part can be separated without the effects of separation becoming apparent and the other parts being affected. Through this, Shahrur fell into great contradictions, omitted many texts and ignored entire verses, although they are the decisive factor in those subjects. These instances appeared through responses which certain writers made to Shahrur's book.

As for Shahrur's criticism of the inheritance of "the five jurists", we do not know why he restricts himself to five or six jurists. There are thousands of

137. Some people think that the Ash'ari doctrine represents the approach of Ahl al-Sunnah.

This is a grave error: the Ash'ari doctrine is a mixture of Mu'tazili doctrine and the approach of Ahl al-Sunnah. Al-Ash'ari personally returned to the approach of Ahl al-Sunnah late in his life, while some followers continued upon his former approach.

138. Shahrur's book, p. 46.

learned jurists whose knowledge and independent reasoning Muslims can benefit from. To attempt instead to bypass the community, make a great leap into the arms of Marxism, replace inherited schools with the communist intellectual system, and present it to the community is a great fabrication. This is the fatal point which brings its adherent into perdition!!

We need to bring out here that the ideas raised by Shahrur are neither his invention nor the product of his own inner reflection. He drew them from identifiable sources and obtained them ready-made:

First, the record of misguided sects and speculative theology, rich in such ideas: the Qadariyyah and Mu'tazilah. We explained some of these in the preceding sections.

Secondly, Orientalist sources and references, operating through institutions. We have many examples exposing this matter, including, though not limited to, the following:

Garaudy says: "The Prophet's Sunnah was not established for the future, for the period after the Prophet's death."¹³⁹

Shahrur says: "What the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, did in the seventh century in the Arabian Peninsula was the first possibility for Islam's interaction with a particular historical stage, rather than the last."¹⁴⁰

Garaudy says: "The concept of Sunnah was introduced from outside the Qur'an only after the Prophet's death."¹⁴¹

139. Al-Usuliyyat [Fundamentalisms], p. 82, by the French Orientalist Garaudy, who announced his Islam while retaining his Marxist belief and Christian religion.

140. Al-Qira'ah al-mu'asirah [The Contemporary Reading], p. 549.

141. Roger Garaudy, *al-Usuliyyat* [Fundamentalisms], p. 82.

Shahrur says: "From here comes the erroneous definition of the Sunnah as everything issuing from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in word or deed... although the Prophet and his Companions did not define the Sunnah in this manner."¹⁴²

Garaudy and Shahrur have forgotten Allah's words, Most High: "*And whatsoever the messenger giveth you, take it. And whatsoever he forbiddeth, abstain (from it). And keep your duty to Allah.*"... (Qur'an 59:7).

Garaudy says: "The Qur'an commands obedience to the Prophet... rather than imitation of him..."¹⁴³

Shahrur says: "Our position concerning the Prophet as legislator is extremely precise... We can say that what the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, did was the first possibility for applying the message."¹⁴⁴

Thus Shahrur treated the Prophet's person, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, particularly concerning legislation, as merely a practitioner of independent reasoning for the stage in which he lived. He said: "Legislation is open to development, abolition and replacement."¹⁴⁵

Thirdly, we must not forget Shahrur's borrowing of the system of Marxist and Hegelian ideas.

142. Al-Qira'ah al-mu'asirah [The Contemporary Reading], p. 548.

143. Garaudy, p. 82.

144. Al-Qira'ah al-mu'asirah [The Contemporary Reading], p. 39.

145. The preceding source, p. 38.

A Principle of Criticism and Accreditation

Some brothers reproached me for not mentioning the merits of the figures whom I criticised, confining myself to their faults!

In truth, the matter is not as they describe it. This study is not concerned with highlighting merits or faults. My concern was to explain the materialist tendency among these figures and establish their connection with the materialist approach.

The basic principle in the approach of Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah is to mention people's merits and warn against their errors without doing them injury. This principle is well known in the science of criticism and accreditation. Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him, says:

"Whoever possesses faith and wickedness is accorded allegiance in proportion to his faith and hatred in proportion to his wickedness... In one person there thus combine grounds for honour and humiliation..."¹

Here, however, we must distinguish between those who follow the Islamic approach and those who follow the approaches of deviant, misguided sects.

The first group is Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah: we mention their errors, explain them and warn against them, so that anyone looking at their righteousness and piety is not deceived by those errors. The other group consists of leading innovators and proponents of corrupt doctrines. They oppose the Islamic approach in its foundations. Their condition must therefore be explained, their corruption exposed and the community warned against them. This is obligatory by the agreement of Muslims, and it is not regarded as backbiting them.

1. Al-Fatawa al-kubra [The Major Fatwas], 28:229.

In this study I have followed a clear critical approach: I quote the proponent's text verbatim, then criticise and analyse it and explain its reality through the criteria of distinction adopted in the Islamic approach.² I have made a sustained effort to trace and enumerate opinions, collect a writer's scattered views and bring texts together to ascertain his approach and definite opinion. I have not considered passing errors, slips of the tongue or slips of the pen, nor have I concerned myself with the writer's conduct or private life.

The brother who checked this study wrote the following words:

"I suggest the following: since this study aims to explain the doctrinal pitfalls of certain thinkers, especially Jawdat and his followers, and to discourage and warn against such materialist approaches, I see no impediment to exposing their actual practical pitfalls and deviations, and their transgressions in conduct, education and politics. These are displeasing to Allah and His Messenger, and strange and objectionable to ordinary Muslims, let alone their distinguished members and scholars. Many people are more concerned with the practical conduct of such thinkers and members of their groups than with their intellectual starting points."

With sincere thanks and appreciation to the respected brother who kindly offered these observations, I preferred to concentrate on ideas and identifying approaches, without addressing conduct, whether concerning political allegiances or social matters. These positions are things which people can perceive through observation and attention, or someone concerned with this subject may undertake the work.

In conclusion, it must be stated that this study is not directed at Jawdat or Shahrur as individuals in themselves. The matter is greater and more

2. See the criteria of distinction, or the rules for dealing with the text of the Shari'ah, in the introduction.

momentous: it concerns deviant approaches which have gained advanced positions in Muslim lands, with institutes undertaking to advocate them and institutions assuming responsibility and costs for promoting their ideas.

Through the obligation of sincere counsel to every Muslim,³ I present this study as an open letter to Jawdat Said and his disciples, Muhammad Shahrur and his supporters, and Iqbal's advocates and those influenced by him...

It is an explicit call to everyone holding these ideas to adhere to the texts of the Shari'ah, hold fast to the Book and Sunnah, and reject false materialist approaches.

It is a heartfelt call to adhere to piety and act upon it. Let everyone who holds affection for any of these figures excuse the complete candour which distinguishes this study. Before passing judgement, every Muslim concerned with this matter has a duty to review it fully through a careful scholarly reading.

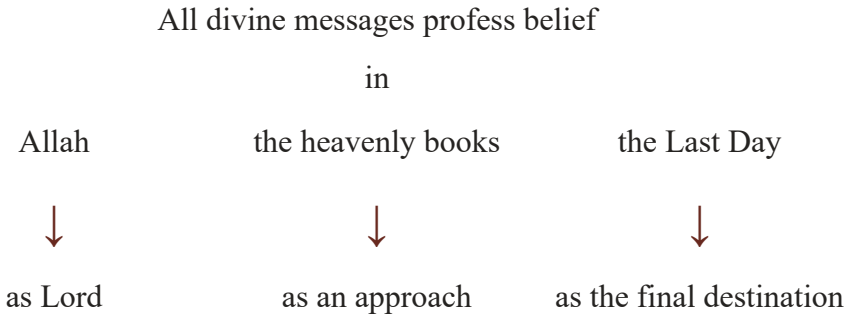
Let it be known that I am ready to accept all observations and advice on this matter. I also thank everyone who offered assistance, expressed an opinion, contributed advice or reviewed this study.

I ask Allah to make this work righteous and devoted purely to His sake.

O Allah, we seek refuge in You from the trial of speech and action. Glory and praise be to You, O Allah. I testify that there is no deity but You; I seek Your forgiveness and turn to You in repentance.

3. Every Muslim who is able must explain the truth to his community and offer it sincere counsel. This is what the Prophet's Companions, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, pledged: "... that we establish, or speak, the truth wherever we are, and fear no reproacher's blame in Allah's cause." Reported by al-Bukhari, 7199.

This diagram represents one of the posters distributed by Jawdat's group under the heading "A Gift from the Unzuru [Look] Letters". It contains a call to unite religions!



Before Accepting an Interpretation...

Ask about the Approach

An idea may be presented in Islamic language while resting upon materialist foundations which change the understanding of the text of the Shari'ah. What matters is the approach from which ideas issue, and the manner of dealing with the texts of revelation.

Adel al-Tal criticises the writings of Jawdat Said, Muhammad Iqbal and Muhammad Shahrur. He traces the roots of the materialist tendency and its effect upon the creed and the interpretation of the Qur'an, from the perspective of Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama'ah and in the light of the Book and Sunnah.

He presents the texts of those holding these views, gathers their scattered statements, then analyses and criticises them according to the criteria for dealing with the texts of the Shari'ah. He makes ideas and approaches the focus of the study, in a message of sincere counsel to their proponents and those influenced by them.

"It is a heartfelt call to adhere to piety and act upon it."

From the author's conclusion