بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH,
THE ALL-BENEFICENT, THE ALL-MERCIFUL

قال الله تعالى:

ڎ ڈ ڎ ژ ژ ڑ ک ک ک

**Indeed, Allah desires to repel all impurity from you,
O People of the Household, and purify you with a
thorough purification.**
(*Sūrat al-Aḥzāb* ٣٣:٣٣).

Prophetic traditions, mentioned in most reliable Sunnī and Shī‘īte reference books of *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr* (Qur’anic Exegesis), confirm that this holy verse was revealed to exclusively involve the five People of the Cloak; namely, Muḥammad, ‘Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn, peace be upon them, to whom the term ‘Ahl al-Bayt (People of the House)’ is solely dedicated.

For instance, refer to the following references:

(١) Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. ٢٤١ AH), *al-Musnad*, ١:٣٣١; ٤:١٠٧; ٦:٢٩٢, ٣٠٤. (٢) *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (d. ٢٦١ AH), ٧:١٣٠. (٣) At-Tirmidhī (d. ٢٧٩ AH), *Sunan*, ٥:٣٦١ et al. (٤) Ad-Dūlābī (d. ٣١٠ AH), *adh-Dhurriyyah aṭ-Ṭāhirah an-Nabawiyyah*, p. ١٠٨. (٥) An-Nassā’ī (d. ٣٠٣ AH), *as-Sunan al-Kubrā’*, ٥: p. ١٠٨, ١١٣. (٦) Al-Ḥākim an-Naysābūrī (d. ٤٠٥ AH), *al-Mustadrak ‘ala’ṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, ٢:٤١٦, ٣:١٣٣, ١٤٦, ١٤٧. (٧) Az-Zarkāshī (d. ٧٩٤ AH), *al-Burhān*, p. ١٩٧. (٨) Ibn Hājar al-Asqalānī (d. ٨٥٢), *Fatḥ al-Barī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ٧:١٠٤.

As for Shī‘īte reference books of *ḥadīth*, refer to the following references:

(١) Al-Kulaynī (d. ٣٢٨ AH), *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, ١:٢٨٧. (٢) Ibn Babawayh (d. ٣٢٩ AH), *al-Imāmah wa’t-Tabṣirah*, p. ٤٧, Ḥ. ٢٩. (٣) Al-Maghribī (d. ٣٦٣ AH), *Da’ā’im al-Islām*, pp. ٣٥, ٣٧. (٤) Aṣ-Ṣadūq (d. ٣٨١ AH), *al-Khiṣāl*, pp. ٤٠٣, ٥٥٠. (٥) Aṭ-Ṭūsī (d. ٤٦٠ AH), *al-Amālī*, Ḥ. ٤٣٨, ٤٨٢, ٧٨٣.

For more details, refer to the exegesis of the holy verse involved in the following reference books of *tafsīr*: (١) Aṭ-Ṭabarī (d. ٣١٠ AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (٢) Al-Jassāss (d. ٣٧٠ AH), *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*. (٣) Al-Waḥīdī (d. ٤٦٨ AH), *Asbāb an-Nuzūl*. (٤) Ibn al-Jawzī (d. ٥٩٧ AH), *Zād al-Maṣīr*. (٥) Al-Qurṭubī (d. ٦٧١ AH), *al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*. (٦) Ibn Kathīr (d. ٧٧٤ AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (٧) Ath-Tha’ālibī (d. ٨٢٥ AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (٨) As-Suyūtī (d. ٩١١ AH), *ad-Durr al-Manthūr*. (٩) Ash-Shawkanī (d. ١٢٥٠ AH), *Fatḥ al-Qadīr*. (١٠) Al-‘Ayyāshī (d. ٣٢٠ AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (١١) Al-Qummī (d. ٣٢٩ AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (١٢) Furṭ al-Kūfī (d. ٣٥٢ AH), *Book of Tafsīr*; in the margin of the exegesis of verse ٤:٥٩. (١٣) At-Tabrisī (d. ٥٦٠ AH), *Majma‘ al-Bayān*, as well as many other reference books of *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr*.

A STRIFE-FREE DIALOGUE

(A Step towards Understanding)

قَـالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ:

إنِّي تَـارِكٌ فِيكُمُ الـثَّقَلَـيْنِ: كِـتَـابَ
اللهِ وَعِتْرَتِي أهْـلَ بَيْتِي، مَـا إنْ
تَـمَسَّـكْتُمْ بِـهِمَا لَنْ تَضِـلُّوا بَعْدِي
أَبـدأً، وَإنَّـهُـمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّى
يَـرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْـحَوْضَ.

The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) said:

"Verily, I am leaving among you two weighty things [*thaqalayn*]: The Book of Allah and my progeny [*'itrat*], the members of my Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*]. If you hold fast to them, you shall never go astray. These two will never separate from each other until they meet me at the Pond [*ḥawḍ*] (of *Kawthar*)."

Some references:

❑ Al-Ḥākim al-Nayshābūrī, *Al-Mustadrak 'alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (Beirut), vol. ٣, pp. ١٠٩-١١٠, ١٤٨, ٥٣٣

❑ Muslim, *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, (English translation), book ٣١, ḥadīths ٥٩٢٠-٣

❑ Al-Tirmidhī, *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. ٥, pp. ٦٢١-٢, ḥadīths ٣٧٨٦, ٣٧٨٨; vol. ٢, p. ٢١٩

❑ Al-Nasā'ī, *Khaṣā'iṣ 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, ḥadīth ٧٩

❑ Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Al-Musnad*, vol. ٣, pp. ١٤, ١٧, ٢٦; vol. ٣, pp. ٢٦, ٥٩; vol. ٤, p. ٣٧١; vol. ٥, pp. ١٨١-١٨٢, ١٨٩-١٩٠

❑ Ibn al-'Athīr, *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl*, vol. ١, p. ٢٧٧

❑ Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. ٥, p. ٢٠٩

❑ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, vol. ٦, p. ١٩٩

❑ Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Albānī, *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah* (Kuwait: Al-Dār al-Salafiyyah), vol. ٤, pp. ٣٥٥-٣٥٨

A Strife-free Dialogue

(*A Step towards Understanding*)

Dr. ‘Isām al-‘Imād

Translator

Sayyid Iraj Razzaqi

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Transliteration Symbols

Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration
ء	'	أ	a
ب	b	ت	t
ث	th	ج	j
ح	ḥ	خ	kh
د	d	ذ	dh
ر	r	ز	z
س	s	ش	sh
ص	ṣ	ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ	ظ	ẓ
ع	'	غ	gh
ف	f	ق	q
ك	k	ل	l
م	m	ن	n
ه	h	و	w
ي	y	ة	ah
Long Vowels		**Short Vowels**	
آ	ā	َ	a
اى	ī	ِ	i
او	ū	ُ	u
Persian Letters			
Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration
پ	p	چ	ch
ژ	zh	گ	g

Introduction

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﷽

In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

The unity of the Islamic nation is, undoubtedly, a pleasant, idealistic and desirable concept that has been advised and emphasized in the original documents of Islam: the Qur'an and the narrations [*ḥadīth*s].

Like many other words such as science [*'ilm*], Imamate, caliphate, wisdom [*ḥikmah*], and piety, the meaning of the word *ḥadīth* has gradually changed and deviated to the extent that now it may mean something quite different from what it was originally meant to convey.

Approximation [*taqrīb*] i.e., closeness of the Islamic sects, denotes the following ideas, whether we desire it or not:

a. Keeping silent in the presence of opponents, and refusing to engage in any scholarly debate with them.

b. Believing that every religion is right.

c. Accepting that the followers of *Imāmiyyah* school of thought are not the only people who will be saved in the hereafter.

d. Saying there is a need to review some of the points in the Shī'ah doctrine and those in the religious texts.

e. Agreeing that various Muslim schools of thought stem from the independent judgements of the *'ulamā'*, viz. their *ijtihād*.

f. Confirming all the Companions [*s□ah□ābah*] as righteous.

Those who hold the above ideas say that "Right" cannot be monopolized by any specific group because it is distributed among all the sects with each entitled to a share. The dictum "the saved group" cannot apply to one particular sect; all ideological differences stem from some sort of desirable personal judgment, viz. *ijtihād*, made on the basis of religious texts. We, the Shī'ah, should, therefore, avoid calling other ideologies "false" or "deviated". Where there is a difference of opinion, we should remain silent and accept that others are also right. We should not call them "malicious" or "those who devise a secret plan"; the Shī'ah community should forget all feelings of enmity towards opponents, because these feelings are utterly undesirable. They say that there is no disagreement between our doctrines and great juridical pillars; the disagreement on Imamate is merely a difference of applicability. Those who claim the above, say, "We do not reject the idea of Imamate, and we have religious proof as to who should occupy the rank of Imamate and Caliphate. Yet, there is no use arguing over the issue of succession to the Prophet (*s□*) these days; it does not concern us what others did or did not.

But as we understand it, our texts take approximation to mean:

a. Creating a peaceful symbiosis among the Islamic sects and schools of thought.

b. Ensuring tension-free social relations.

> c. Reducing tensions in order to prevent any sedition, social and religious unrest, maintain a peaceful and secure life, and simultaneously safeguard inter-sectarian beliefs and religious conventions.

> d. Avoiding any sensitive issue that might harm the religious or worldly affairs of the Shī'ah community.

These will certainly help protect Islam and not be grist to the enemies' mill. When we take for granted the fact that there are differences of opinion among Muslims, we do not imply that we consent to tensions and disruptions within the Islamic society, because such occurrences will serve the interest of the enemies of Islam. Difference of opinions and occurrence of clashes are two separate issues. It is tension along with strife, and not the ideological differences discussed in an entirely scholarly framework that harms the social relations of Muslims.

When I first came to know Dr. 'Is☐ām through the internet and witnessed his discussion with the biased Wahhābī 'Uthmān al-Khamīs, I was fascinated by his method. His serene and solemn voice and his polite and systematic dialogue made his particular manner of discussion more interesting. Sometime later I discovered that Dr. 'Is☐ām himself used to be a biased Wahhābī, conducting anti-Shī'ah activities in Yemen and Saudi Arabia, but with God's favor, later on, converted to Shī'ism. He now attempts to debate with his former co-religionists. He also has a book, *al-Minhaj al-Jadīd wa'l-S☐ah☐īh☐ fi'l-H☐iwār ma'a'l-Wahhābiyyīn*, on ways and methods of conducting discussions with Wahhābīs. It was through a friend that I came to know Dr. 'Is☐ām, and *A Strife-free Dialogue* commenced its documentation after a few sessions of in-depth discussions with him.

The author mainly aims to establish a suitable method of communication with Wahhābīs to familiarize them with Shīʻism, and to prepare a proper ground for their conversion to the school of thought of the Household of the Prophet, peace be upon them.

Also, he believes that a group of the Wahhābīs—those who are not makers of mischief or mercenaries of the colonialists—will adhere to the truth once they know it, just as he did.

By approximation and closeness of the Islamic sects, Dr. ʻIsāām means a gradual progression towards understanding, consequent removal of tension and hope for a global Shīʻism. The present book is in fact a prologue to his detailed book *Rihlatī min al-Wahhābiyyah il'l-Ithnā ʻAshariyyah.*

The present book is not a word-by-word translation of the book *al-Minhaj al-Jadīd*; rather, it is both a translation and an edition done under the supervision of the author himself. The following are examples of the editing carried out:

> a.   Some repetitive points were deleted.
>
> b.   Some long sentences were summarized.
>
> c.   Modifications were made to fit the book in the culture of Persian native speakers.
>
> d.   Long and lengthy footnotes were moved and included in the text.
>
> e.   Key words suitable to the writer's intention were chosen. For example, certain words and phrases such as "understanding" and "peaceful symbiosis" were used instead of "approximation" or *taqrīb* so as to avoid ambiguity. All this was done after the writer was consulted.

The writer has, throughout the book, used the phrase "*Madhhab al-Ithnā ʻAshariyyah*" demanding that the same should be used. He believes that Wahhābīs are less sensitive to this phrase.

Besides, the words "Shī'ism" and "Shī'ah" are wider in scope, and cover other sects that the Imāmiyyah consider rejected. In rendering the text into Persian, I have, however, used "Shī'ism", "Shī'ah", "Imāmiyyah", "Imāmī Shī'ism" and "Twelver Shī'ism" to introduce a variety of terms; however, I would like to say that I have always meant the "*Ithnā 'Asharī Madhhab*" and "*Twelver Shī'ah*".

May God's blessing be on the one who follows guidance when he finds it. ✍

<div align="center">

Qum, ٢٠٠٣

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<div align="right">

Cultural Affairs Department
Ahl al-Bayt (*'a*) World Assembly

</div>

The Primary Discourse

All praise belongs to Allah; we glorify Him and from Him we seek help and beg forgiveness; in Him we take refuge from the evils of our soul and wrongdoings of our behavior; anyone who is guided by Allah will never go astray; and anyone whom God lets go astray will have no patron beyond Him.

I testify that there is no god except Allah, the One, the Unique, and that Muḥammad is His faithful servant.

"O you who believed! Observe your duty to Allah with right observance, and die not save as those who have surrendered unto Him." (٣:١٠٢)

"O People! Be careful of (your duty to) your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same kind and spread from these two, many men and women; and be careful of your duty to Allah, by whom you demand one of another (your rights), and the ties of relationship; surely Allah ever watches over you." (٤:١)

I believe that it is impossible to reach an understanding and maintain a peaceful symbiosis among Muslims unless a fair dialogue is conducted in the best manner. The earlier manners of argument, if not framed scientifically, will not produce a mutual understanding, but will widen the split still the further.

The scopes of the dialogue among the religious schools of thought that need to be developed are:

١) A strife-free discussion is the only correct manner to an understanding among the Islamic sects. It can solve many of the Muslims' problems.

٢) The dialogue prevents divisions of the Islamic *ummah*.

The present book is, in fact, an attempt to remedy the negative outcomes of improper talks among the religious schools. My twelve-year-long discussions with the Wahhābīs, my previous experience of this sect, the instructions I received from eminent Wahhābīs in Yemen, my trip to Saudi Arabia where I became so biased that I wrote a book "*Al-S☐illatu bayn al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah wa Firaq al-Ghulāt*"[1] accusing the Shī'ahs of heresy, and my later conversion to the Ithnā 'Asharryah School of thought and the book "*Rih☐latī min al-Wahhābī ilā al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah*"[2] which I wrote to explain the facts and distinguishing factors of the latter school of thought, all justify my assertion that I know the best manner of argument, for I am familiar with the Wahhābī community, of which I was formerly one of the most biased members.

Important points to bear in mind

١) We should bring the Wahhābī interlocutor around to understand that the point being discussed is not the whole religious system, but merely one verse of the Qur'an, one tradition, *h☐adīth*, or even a single part of it, since a Wahhābī's mind is unable to grasp all of the facts regarding the Imāmiyyah School of thought at one time. We should, therefore, take gradual steps and move from one Qur'anic verse and tradition to the next.

---

[1] Undetachable Link between the Shī'ahs and the *Ghālī*s.

[2] My Departure from the Wahhābīsm to the Imāmiyyah.

We should also clarify the need to observe a systematic procedure.

The systematic approach mentioned above is applied to university discussions in which a limited point, not a general one, is raised and scrutinized. A Wahhābī's mind will be unable to grasp all facts and realities of the Shī‘ah, if we aim at extensive questions.

٢) It will be a mistake if we begin with anything other than the *thaqalayn ḥadīth*, because if you begin mentioning the virtues of the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī (*‘a*), they will also do the same for others. This will bring the discussion to a standstill.

The Wahhābīs should come to understand that when they mention virtues for people other than the Commander of the Faithful (*‘a*), they themselves do not consider these virtues as something that compels them to stick to the words and follow the deeds of those people, but the *thaqalayn* tradition indicates the need to follow the Commander of the Faithful (*‘a*).

If the Wahhābī interlocutor refers to the Qur'an, you should begin with the *taṭhīr* verse and not with the issue of *wilāyah* because there is a close connection between the *taṭhīr* and the *thaqalayn* verses. You will see no Muslim raising the *taṭhīr* and *kasā* points, unless he sees the two as interlinked. Also, there is no Muslim who will repudiate or ignore the link between the *thaqalayn ḥadīth* and the *ḥadīth-e kasā*. The discussion on the *taṭhīr* verse will lead to the *kasā* and *thaqalayn* traditions respectively.

I insist that the dialogue should begin with the *thaqalayn* verse before attempting anything else because the Holy Prophet (*s*) himself greatly emphasised this *ḥadīth*. He (*s*) himself said that if you hold onto the *thaqalayn* you will not be misguided; this is the point he (*s*) stressed until the last moments of his life, a trust he (*s*) placed with his *ummah* before he departed.

I have recognized through experience that the *thaqalayn* tradition is the fundamental factor that brings the change in the mind of a Wahhābī and converts him to Shī'ism. This is why I believe it is a good starting point, since any other conversation will be fruitless, if it does not follow this trend. Our aim in these dialogues is nothing except bringing Wahhābīs round to follow the Ahl al-Bayt's (*'a*) law. There is no doubt Wahhābīs will do so once they have recognized the truth.

In my discussions I have never viewed the Wahhābī interlocutor with distrust, and I never consider him as hostile, but as one in need of a doctor. I always remember my own case when I was a Wahhābī, but became a follower of truth when I came to know it. The present book is also based on a sense of trust in Wahhābīs, a presupposition quite effective in bringing the dialogue to a desired conclusion.

During the twelve years of debate with Wahhābīs, I have always felt an unprecedented sharpness prevailing in the discussions. There have always been differences (of opinion) between the Shī'ahs and Sunnīs, but these have never been as extensive as the disagreements between the Shī'ahs and Wahhābīs. These disagreements have been so vehemently intensified by the advent of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, that we feel we are put in a fire of sedition by the extremist hands of Wahhābīs, who became the cause of this tension which had initially been instigated by non-Muslim foreigners. The resulting disorder, the lack of understanding and the tension within the Muslim society are, of course, all grist to the enemies' mill. We should, therefore, base our discussions on a scientific and logical basis in order to reduce the bleak mood prevailing in the discussions and bring the barren arguments to fruition.

٣) In your discussions you should try to unveil the role which the Umayyads and the Hypocrites played in creating divisions among Muslims so the interlocutors will understand how distant Wahhābīs are from the *thaqalayn*, the two precious constituents.

Ever since I deserted Wahhābism and adhered to *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah* Shī'ism, I have been doing my best to establish a correct manner for conducting discussions with the Islamic sects, and I believe that talks will not be productive unless they are based on a proper foundation.

Based on the fundamentals of sociology and psychology, I have proposed a three-stage scheme that ought to be followed as it is ordered.

One of the problems arising during religious discussions is a different and even dissimilar word connotation that each of the interlocutors has in mind. For example, a Wahhābī's interpretation of the words *'is□mah* [infallibility] or *taqiyyah* [dissimulation] is quite different from that of an Imāmiyyah. I believe that proper interpretation and explication of the sense of religious words plays an important part in advancing the dialogues.

Also, the Wahhābī interlocutor should certainly recognize the Imāmiyyah as one of the Islamic sects, just as the Sunnīs have done, and remember that they is two Muslim schools that are exchanging ideas. However, if the interlocutor calls the Shī'ah apostates, and insists on this application, he should then be made to understand that he is not following the usual Sunnī approach in dealing with the Shī'ah. It is useless to talk to such a person.

"I entrust my affair to Allah, surely Allah sees the servants." (٤٠:٤٤) ✍

'Is□ām 'Alī Yah□yā al-'Imād
1412 AH

How to Persent the Imāmiyyah School of Thought to the Wahhābīs

In the book "*Rihlatī min al-Wahhābiyyah ilā al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah*", I explained the reason as to why I left Wahhābīsm even though I used to lead prayers in a Wahhābī mosque myself. In the present book, however, I attempt to clarify the facts and peculiarities of the Twelver Shī'ah, Imāmiyyah, in a manner that will set a Wahhābī's confused mind right, and give him a clear understanding of the Imāmiyyah faith. So long as the confusions are not settled, any discussion with the Wahhābīs will be barren.

The Imāmyyiah faith, I believe, should be introduced to a Wahhābī at three essential levels, duly sequenced. If done otherwise it will be impossible to treat his mental perplexity or make him understand the relevant facts and peculiarities.

The Wahhābīs should also understand that because they have not heeded the three immediately-linked stages (explained below), they have drifted away from the method which the Sunnīs follow when investigating the Imāmiyyah school. This, in turn, has resulted in an entirely different image from the one the Sunnī forerunners had of Shī'ism.

The present research gains further importance because no scientific framework has yet been offered for the proper method of discussion with the Wahhābīs nor has there been one to show why their approach differs from the one the Sunnīs followed when confronting other Islamic schools with whom they had

sharp differences. I have no doubt, however, that differences stem from the dissimilarity inherent in these two approaches. There is evidently a close link between the method that the Wahhābīs advocate and their conception of the Imāmiyyah. Therefore, the application of a non-scientific procedure—one containing invisible errors—will result in a distortion and falsification of the Imāmiyyah's real beliefs.

We cannot grasp how important research methodology is in depicting and presenting the realities of Shī'ism, unless we take up a scientific method that contrasts the Sunnīs' conception of the Shī'ahs with that of the Wahhābīs.

It is apt for an objective researcher examining the Imāmiyyah school of thought to make a distinction between the school itself and the erroneous methods that lead to the misunderstanding of the realities of Shī'ism. We ought to remember that these two are different. This is the point where "the proper method of doing research on the Imāmiyyah school of thought" acquires value.

Our method of framing the peculiarities of the Imāmiyyah Shī'ism will move through three stages, the immediate pacing of which ought to be observed if we desire to keep away from the pitfalls into which Wahhābīs have fallen while displaying the Shī'ah peculiarities. The three stages that ought to be followed are:

Stage one: an understanding of the Imāmiyyah's link

In this stage we examine the reasons why the Wahhābīs stick to their study of the Imāmiyyah's origin, and the mistake they make in identifying the Imāmiyyah with the extremists, the *Ghulāt*. The two major factors contributing to the above mistakes are:

    ١.   The Wahhābīs' lack of knowledge;

    ٢.   The Wahhābī's method of study.

The first factor itself stems from three other causes:

a)   Not understanding what *Ghulāt* means;

b)   Not understanding what the Twelver Shī'ism means;

c)   Being unaware of the Immayyiah's position towards the *Ghulāt*.

The second factor, too, stems from two causes:

a)   The Wahhābīs' mode of thinking;

b)   The Wahhābī's with the Sunnīs' approach of treating the Twelver Shī'ism.

Stage two: a meticulous understanding of the Imāmiyyah faith

The four significant facts to be analyzed here are:

۱. Divinity and Prophethood as the Imāmiyyah views them;

۲. The reality of the *sharī'ah* and religious injunctions from the Imāmiyyah's viewpoint;

۳. The reality of the goals of the Imāmiyyah faith;

٤.   The purport of some common expressions used by the Imāmiyyah.

Stage three: the Imāmiyyah's roots

The points to be studied here are:

۱   The Shī'ah's source of Jurisprudence;

۲.   Successorship to the Prophet (*s*□); Imamate;

۳.   The Imāmiyyah's identity;

٤.   Advent of the Imāmiyyah: source and causes.

Having finished these three stages, the reader shall enter the final stage and begin investigating the particularities of the Imāmiyyah.

Particularities of the Imāmiyyah

These particularities, though a part of stage two, are knowingly raised at this stage since they are the last points the Wahhābīs can understand in regard to Shī'ism. There are three particularities which consist of the following:

١. A positive Twelver Shī'ah believes in the members of the Household of the Prophet [*Ahl-al-Bayt ('a)*];

٢. The Imāmiyyah's realistic view on the Companions of the Prophet (*s*□);

٣. The Imāmiyyah's views concerning the Twelfth Imām's (*'a*) occultation.

These are the procedures to conduct research on the Imāmiyyah. The methods and their strict sequencing, I repeat, is a must when presenting the Twelver Shī'ah faith to the Wahhābīs.'

The pyramid I have sketched below lucidly expounds all the earlier stages. The pyramid clearly shows our method of introducing Shī'ism; it also requires us to go through the first stage, i.e. the Shī'ah link, before the second one. Stage one is where we attempt to cure the disease of identifying Shī'ism with the *Ghulāt*. The first stage has been placed at the top to emphasize its importance. Any miscalculation will bring a downfall. Stage one is what the Wahhābīs always have before their eyes.

' This is the scheme I have worked out in order for the Wahhābīs to acquire a sound knowledge of the Shī'ism. My previous experience with Wahhābism clearly showed me that unless the disease of identifying the Shī'ism with *Ghulāt* is cured and the issues of divinity, Prophecy, *sharī'ah* (precepts of religion), Shī'ah sources of jurisprudence, the occultation of the Twelfth Imām (*'a*) are made clear meticulously and in detail, it will be impossible for a Wahhābī to appreciate the reality of the Prophet's (*s*□) succession and the Imamate. This is why I placed "Imamate" and "Occultation" in the final stage. This explanation will bar the illusion that I may have downgraded the issues of the Imamate and Occultation.
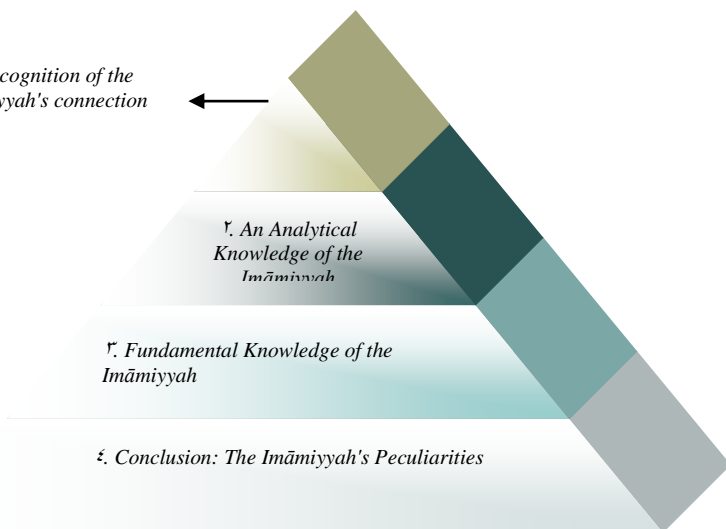
The Imamiyyah Pyramid

١. Recognition of the Imāmiyyah's connection

٢. An Analytical Knowledge of the Imāmiyyah

٣. Fundamental Knowledge of the Imāmiyyah

٤. Conclusion: The Imāmiyyah's Peculiarities

A reconsideration of the pyramid highlights the stage of secondary importance, ranked next to the peak, i.e. a careful examination of the Imāmiyyah faith. This stage should not be displaced: it should not come before the peak nor should it be presented after the third stage.

Then comes stage three, i.e. the roots of the Imāmiyyah, the third in importance. Each stage is inclusive of facts that need to be examined in their proper places.

The final stage is the particularities of the Imāmiyyah. This denotes that a thorough understanding of the traits and particular features of the Imāmiyyah faith is dependent on a survey of the previous stages. This pyramid shows the hierarchy of importance.

We have placed our first stage of discussion at the peak to remind the reader of the strong influence it has over other levels, and "the reality of divinity and prophethood as viewed by the Imāmiyyah" at the head of the second level to explain that an understanding of other realities is subject to a thorough and correct understanding of this very fact. This is the stage insisting on a clear separation of the rank of divinity from that of serving God, and the different plane the creatures occupy from the station of the Creator.

The point to be made here is that "the reality of the Imamate" and "the occultation of the twelfth Imām (*'a*)" are two issues admittedly transcending the position they have been placed at in the pyramid. This is because my past experience with the Wahhābīsm has taught me that a Wahhābī is unable to comprehend these two realities, unless he passes through the previous stage of study. As long as he has not, he will not easily understand these delicate truths. This explanation will bar the illusion that I may have desired to downgrade the two issues of the Imamate and the Occultation of the twelfth Imām (*'a*).

The vertical lines joining the peak and the base denote that there is a close link between the various stages of investigation and the existing realities, that each layer is generated by the one before it, and that there is a need to conduct a step-by-step research.

The stages depicted above are coherent, pointing to the indivisibility of the Imāmiyyah beliefs and realities signifying that the investigator should take all the Imāmiyyah realities as a coherent, unified whole, made up of identical constituents.

The realities and the particularities should never be studied individually—separated from other facts—otherwise it will be impossible to appreciate the grand and angular spirit this coherent system embodies. Perhaps the perilous error the Wahhābīs commit when investigating the Shī'ism is that they place the Shī'ah belief system and realities in isolation.

The pyramid also exhibits a succession and a sequence of the topics of discussion. That is, each stage is both a prelude to the next debate and a conclusion of the preceding one, somehow denoting that only belief in the first reality results in a belief in the second reality.

The horizontal lines of the pyramid also signal that each stage requires a comprehensive study, and it should not be mingled with the one following it. We cannot expect to enter the second stage and arrive at a proper understanding after having made an imperfect study of the previous level.

The sharp peak and the broad base of the pyramid reminds us that a mistake, or a slip, expands and broadens in scope as it progresses, however slight it may be at the beginning. ✍

Stage One: There is No Association between the Shī'ism and the *Ghulāt*

In order to avoid instances that incorrectly introduce Shīʿah beliefs, a non-Shīʿah research worker should, in the first place, consider the above issue and take it for granted.

At this important and indispensable stage, we learn that there is a serious disagreement between the Shīʿism and Extremism and that there is a wide gap between the two. In fact the Imāmiyyah's lofty Islamic realities are completely different from the low, menial designations belonging to the perverted *Ghulāt* sects: *"And do not mix up the truth with the falsehood."* (٢:٤٢)

At this sensitive stage we acquire knowledge of the far-reaching consequences and the greatest influence on the Wahhābism that have stemmed from the unjustified combination of the Imāmiyyah Islamic thought with that of the extremists, because they have attributed various matters to the Shīʿahs that are totally foreign to the realities of the Shīʿah school of thought. Thus, it is perhaps because of this particular section—presently being discussed—that "the proper method of discussion" has often been reiterated. Also, it is because of the Wahhābīs' insufficient knowledge of this very stage that they have felt free to ascribe whatever is left from Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity to the Shīʿah school of thought, thus presenting a chaotic visage of the Shīʿism.

I believe that the purely unblemished realities and particularities of the Shīʿism cannot be understood without analysing this alleged Shīʿah association. Before anything else, we have to

make a distinction between the Shī'ah profundity (of learning) and the exaggerative substance found in the *Ghulāt*. It is the mingling of the two that has encouraged the Wahhābīs to ascribe the Shī'ahs with the false legends coming from the perverted *Ghulāt* sects.

In this chapter we extensively deal with what is, in reality, the *Ghulāt* belief, but has been attributed to the Shī'ah. This stage has been titled "recognition of the Shī'ah's association" because the profane and polytheistic views borrowed from the Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity should be totally removed from the realities of the Imāmiyyah school of thought that have stemmed from the Holy Qur'an and the lofty Sunnah of the blessed Prophet (s□). Unless the Wahhābīs are freed from the nuisance of mingling the Shī'ism with Extremism, it will not be possible to correct the methods they make use of in their inquiry into the Shī'ism.

At this stage, we have discussed this particular problem that the Wahhābīs have and scientifically expounded the hidden causes and factors contributing to it. We should, of course, mention that both the past and contemporary Sunnīs have rid themselves of this inconvenience. That is why we see them defending the Imāmiyyah school of thought and busily defying those who are still involved in this admixture.¹

Before the matter is brought to an end, reference should be made to a few points of great importance. The present research methodology is made up of three stages that ought to be followed in sequence, thoroughly and without the slightest modification or change. I believe that this method, if not applied in order, will not keep the basic foundations it stands on and the worthy goal it is intended for, which is correcting the way the Wahhābīs study the Shī'ism and explaining the difference between the Sunnīs'

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¹ The words of great Sunnī men of learning on the Wahhābīs' big problem of "mingling Shī'ism with *Ghulāt*" are mentioned in a separate chapter.

and Wahhābīs' methods of investigation. Wahhābī's literature on the Shī'ism will certainly not resist falsifications, false statements and misconceptions, unless they follow our method of investigation.

After we have outlined the factors that have helped the past and present Sunnīs to achieve success in their studies on the Shī'ism, and after comparing them with those of the Wahhābīs, the primary factor will appear to be the one that prevented the Sunnīs from getting caught in the trap of mingling the Shī'ism with Extremism.

This is a critical stage because once the Wahhābīs' diseased conception of linking the Shī'ah school of thought to the *Ghulāt* is cured, the mistake they make when expounding Shī'ah realities will also be treated; this, in turn, will lead to re-formation of their study system by basing it on a scientific and realistic approach. The contemporary Sunnīs have followed their predecessors' methodology because they have been aware of the danger that awaits them at this stage. These people have given the Shī'ism an interpretation different from that of the Wahhābīs. They openly pushed away the Wahhābī interpretation of the Shī'ah realities and set up scientific criteria which the Wahhābīs should refer to before any investigation and interpretation.

It is, therefore, essential that this stage be carefully examined, so that ordinary Sunnīs do not walk in the footsteps of the Wahhābīs, who themselves cannot appreciate the importance of the Shī'ah characteristics except through an awareness of the importance of this level.

This is why we expect the reader not to content himself with a mere inattentive study of this section, but ponder on the issue to arrive at a conclusion.

We expect that the Wahhābīs' conscience will awaken and perceive the critical point, since it was an error at this particular

stage that triggered all the Wahhābīs' later misinterpretations of the Imāmiayyah realities.

Here, we desire that the Wahhābīs return to a true approach in their Shī'ah research; an approach taken up by the Sunnīs of the past and the present and favored by Islam, too.

In my book "*An Undetachable Link between the Shī'ahs and the Ghulāt*"—a product of the time I was a Wahhābī—I mingled the Shī'ism and the *Ghulāt*, and as a result considered the Shī'ahs as infidels. This was because I had been unable to view the Shī'ism and the extremist *Ghulāt* as two separate things and had entirely relied on the Wahhābī literature—not even on the Sunnīs'—in my attempts to identify the Shī'ah. This is the justification for crowning the pyramid with this very critical stage.

While I was still in my reverie of negligence, I used to attribute to the Shī'ahs myriad beliefs taken from the Zoroastrians, idolaters, stories of the Age of Ignorance [*Jāhiliyyah*], Sufi nonsense and the extremists' conception, despite the abundant apostasy found in them. I crammed all these in my book "*An Undetachable Link between the Shī'ahs and the Ghulāt*".[1] I thought I was doing the right thing. Then having known of this stage of investigation, I realized my mistake and learned that the error of taking the Shī'ahs and the *Ghulāt* as identical would inevitably end in an inaccurate conclusion.

After I had corrected the crookedness of my mind, I was able to distinguish between what was attributed to the Shī'ism but in fact did not belong to it and what was not recognized as part of the Shī'ah school of thought but actually belonged to it. As a result,

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[1] When I was a Wahhābī I believed that the Shī'ahs were more extreme and polytheistic than the *Ghulāt* themselves, but my long investigation and the scores of the Shī'ah books that I studied—all proclaiming their aversion of extremist' Sufi exaggeration and polytheism—made it clear to me that there is a fundamental difference between the Shī'ism and the *Ghulāt*. I have put down all these positions in my book: "Shī'ahs view on the extremes and the *Ghulāt*".

I burned the above book a little before it was supposed to be printed.

When I was a Wahhābī, I used to think it was acceptable to call the Shī'ahs by such designations as the Zoroastrians, Jews, or Gnostics.¹ But when I recognized my mistake I became confident that such names befit the *Ghulāt*. My perception of the error I had made at this particular stage, no doubt, played an important role in liberating me from the grip of the Wahhābī research methodology, and helping me follow the approach of the earlier and contemporary Suunīs—not so extensively of course. It was also effective in revising my opinion concerning the Shī'ah, and authoritatively freed me from the trap I had fallen into, i.e. the mingling of the Shī'ism with the *Ghulāt*.

There is no doubt that the environment where I had received my training was closely linked with the difficulty created for me. In San'a, Yemen's capital, I studied in a religious school affiliated to the Wahhābism. This school is responsible for printing and distributing books on the Shī'ism. The authors of these books, who had all been trapped when identifying the Shī'ism and the *Ghulāt*, had mingled the Shī'ism with the extremist sects and attributed to the Shī'ahs superstition and idolatry of all sorts. These books had, of course, left a great impression of the Shī'ism on me.

The school felt satisfied with the books that similarly followed the Wahhābīs' method of investigation, and issued no permission for other the Sunni books that pursued a different method in their search to know the Shī'ah.

Some time later, I found a chance to study the works of the eminent Sunnī writers regarding the Shī'ism and I was greatly surprised to find that their research procedure was fundamentally

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¹ Gnosticism, a mystical and philosophical school that flourished in the first two centuries C.E., maintains that it is possible to know God through esoteric knowledge. The author of this book may have meant Sufi sects.

different from that of the Wahhābīs. They seemed to have noticed the erroneous mingling of the Shīʿism with the extremists. These authors strongly criticized the Wahhābīs' methods that saw no distinction between the Shīʿism and the *Ghulāt*, and believed that what the Wahhābīs write concerning the Shīʿism does not give the reader even the slightest hint of the realities or features of the Shīʿah school of thought.

Professor Hāmid Hafnī, the contemporary Sunnī author and Head of the Department of Arabic Literature of the ʿAyn-u Shams University, says, "I spent a long time studying the doctrinal pronouncements of the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa), in particular, and the Shīʿah belief, in general, through the works of those who had criticized this school of thought. I did not, however, gain anything worthwhile to familiarize myself with this school of thought."[1]

Such is the opinion of the distinguished Sunnīs who maintain that the Wahhābīs are unaware of the error they commit at "the stage of the Shīʿah's affinity"; naturally, they don't keep the Shīʿism and the extremists apart.

Anwar Jundī, a Sunnī Egyptian thinker, says, "It is right that a research worker separates the Shīʿahs from the extremists, whom the Imāms (ʿa) of the Shīʿahs have severely criticized and about whose tricks they have given warnings."[2]

Pointing to the same trouble, ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Wāhid Wāfī, another Egyptian scholar, says, "Many of our authors have mingled the Jaʿfarī Shīʿism with other Shīʿah sects."[3]

Muhammad al-Ghazzālī, the Sunnī *imām*, who has extensively tried to correct the Wahhābīs' method of studying the Shīʿism, has authoritatively defied those Sunnīs who have followed the

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[1] Murtadā al-Razawī, *Fī Sabīl al-Wahdat al-Islāmiyyah*, p. ٤٥.

[2] *Al-Islām wa Harikat al-Tārīkh*, p. ٤٢١.

[3] *Bayn al-Shīʿah wa Ahl-e Sunnah*, p. ١١.

Wahhābīs and has taken pains to offer a solution to those who are caught up in the trouble of mingling the Shī'ism with the Extremism. He says, "Some liars who have mingled the Shī'ism and the *Ghulāt*, have spread the rumor that the Shī'ahs are 'Alī's (*'a*) followers, whereas the Sunnīs are Muḥammad's (*s*), and that the Shī'ahs consider 'Alī (*'a*) more meritorious for the rank of Prophethood, and that Prophethood was erroneously conferred on someone else. These are very hideous accusations and very mean lies that correspond with the *Ghulāt* (belief) only."[1]

Al-Ghazzālī has also said, "Some of these (people) have falsely accused the Shī'ahs of maintaining that certain verses of the Qur'an have been deleted."[2]

Some Sunnī thinkers maintain that the Wahhābīs go to extremes when they investigate the Shī'ah school of thought. They mingle Shī'ism and the *Ghulāt*, and thus deviate from the right path. This is a fact testified to by Muḥammad Bihī, an Egyptian scholar, who says, "The Wahhābīs have widened the gap between the Sunnīsm and Shī'ism. This has intensified the ideological breach between the Sunnīsm and Shī'ism from the ١٨th century onwards, yielding an ever-increasing discord, all because of the negative effect of the Wahhābī conception."[3]

'Abd al-Ḥalīm Jundī, another Sunnī scholar, says, "The Shī'ahs were attributed with what is the *Ghulāt*'s design; this has left an unfavorable impression on how other people perceive the Shī'ism. They have also attributed the Shī'ahs with things that they themselves hate, such as the deification of the Imām. This is the Extremism, ending in blasphemy."[4]

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[1] *Risālah al-Taqrīb*, no. ٣, the first year, Sha'bān ١٤١٤ AH, p. ٢٥٠.

[2] *Laysa min al-Islām*, p. ٤٨.

[3] *Al-Firkr al-Islāmiyyah fī Taṭawurihī*, p. ١٤٠.

[4] *Al-Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq*, p. ٢٣٥.

Dr. Ṭāhā Ḥusayn says, "The Shī'ah's enemies ascribe to them anything, never restricting it to what they (themselves) have heard or seen of the Shī'ah, but multiplying it still further. They do not stop even at this point, but put the blame for the strange beliefs on the helpers of the Ahl al-Bayt (*'a*) of the Prophet (*s*). These accusers are similar to bandits in ambush; they make an excessively critical study of the Shī'ahs every single word and deed, attributing to Shī'ah much more than what the Shī'ahs have (actually) said or done, blaming the Shī'ahs for strange beliefs and actions."¹

Mention was previously made of Dr. 'Alī 'Abd al-Wāḥid Wāfī, a Sunnī thinker, who in his *Bayn al-Shī'ah wa Ahl al-Sunnah* has dealt with the discord caused by the Wahhābīs. Refuting the Wahhābīs for a baseless commotion they have caused between the Sunnīs and Shī'ahs, he says in his book, "However extensive the mutual disagreement might seem, it will not exceed the religiously permitted *ijtihād*."²

The Sunnī research worker, Fahmī Huwaydī, another one of those who have realized that the Wahhābī's insistence on excommunicating the Shī'ahs stems from the concept of identifying the Shī'ism with the Extremism, saying, "Excommunicating the Shī'ahs is one of the Wahhābīs' chief projects."³

All these scholars maintain that the Wahhābīs have ended up erroneously confusing the Shī'ism and Extremism. Some Sunnī thinkers even believe that the image the Wahhābīs present of Shī'ism seriously contrasts with the realities of this school of thought, and is in complete harmony with the extremists' belief,

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¹ *'Alī wa Banūh*, p. ۳۵.

² *Bayn al-Shī'ah wa Ahl al-Sunnah*, p. ٤. "We do not consider this statement as valid; so we have criticized it in details in our book, *A Re-reading of the Idea of Taqrīb*", Eskandari, the Arabic translator.

³ *Irān min al-Dākhil*, p. ۳۲۲.

a point Sālim Bihansāwī has raised in his works. In his book,[1] he has done a thorough survey on the necessity to correct the Wahhābīs' method of research into the Shī'ism, and has clearly shown that they have parted with the Sunnī's method of investigation. In answer to an accusation laid against the Shī'ahs that Shī'ahs have a different Qu'ran, he reacts vehemently saying, "The Shī'ahs have, in their mosques and homes, the Qur'an that is exactly the same as the Sunnīs'."

Some other Sunnī thinkers, such as Anwar Jundī, the Egyptian scholar whom we have cited, hold that the Wahhābīs' conception of the Shī'ahs comes from the writings of the extremists, even of the Jews, Christians, the Magi and Orientalists; and this naturally yields nothing but identifying the Shī'ism with the *Ghulāt*.

H□asan al-Bannā, the leader of the Egypt's Islamic movement, is one of the most ardent scholars who have tried to amend the Wahhābī's method of studying the Shī'ism. He has severely opposed the theoreticians who combine the Shī'ism with the *Ghulāt*, and is shocked at the Wahhābī blunders in spite of the abundant Shī'ah treasure that has filled libraries the world over.[2] (This is a statement Professor 'Umar Talmisānī, the al-Bannā's pupil, quotes from his master in his book.)

'Abbās Mah□mūd 'Aqqād, a distinguished Sunnī author, had also perceived the deviation. Anīs Mans□ūr, the famous Egyptian writer, quotes him as having said, "Were I permitted to live longer, I would do a logical research on the Shī'ism, because the nonsense wrongly attributed to the Shī'ism has shown most people a crooked visage of the Shī'ism." However, his life did not last.[3]

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[1] *Al-Sunnah al-Muftarā 'Alayhā*, p. ٦.

[2] *Dhikriyyāt lā Mudhkarāt*, p. ٢٥٠.

[3] *La'allaka Tad□h□aka*, p. ٢٠١.

Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī, the Sunnī historian, has also vehemently assailed those who do not differentiate the Shī'ism from the Extremism, saying, "Certain authors falsely believe that the Shī'ism is an innovation introduced into religion by 'Abd Allāh ibn Sabā, a vain assertion stemming from insufficient knowledge. How false such an assumption seems to anyone who is aware of 'Abd Allāh ibn Sabā's stand among the Shī'ahs, of the Shī'ahs' aversion to his words and deeds, of the Shī'ah scholars' opinion of him who have unanimously pronounced their hatred of him." [1]

Greatly surprised at the identification of the Shī'ism with the *Ghulāt*, 'Umar Tilmasānī, the leader of the Ikhwān al-Muslimīn says, "The Shī'ah jurisprudence has, with its power and culmination of thought, enriched the Muslim world." [2]

A leader of the Sunnīs, a religious erudite of the time, Muḥammad Abū Zahrah, greatly bewildered by the Wahhābī approach, has criticized the Wahhābīs' invalid interpretations of some Shī'ah theological expressions. Also, he has proved that the Wahhābīs have not understood the purport of "dissimulation". This word, as explained by the Shī'ahs, is derived from the Qur'an. He says, "Dissimulation means that a believer who fears to be persecuted, or who desires to achieve his lofty goal—rendering a service to the God's religion—keeps a part of his belief in secret. This stems from the Qur'an." [3]

"Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends rather than believers; and whoever does this, he shall have nothing of (the guardianship of) Allah, but you should guard yourselves against them, guarding carefully; and Allah makes you cautious of

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[1] *Khuṭaṭ al-Shām*, vol. ٦, p. ٢٥١.

[2] *Al-'Ālam al-Islāmī* Magazine, no. ٩١.

[3] *Al-Imām al-Ṣādiq*, p. ٢٢.

(retribution from) Himself; and to Allah is the eventual coming."
(۳: ۲۸)

In answer to the Wahhābīs who take the Shī'ah view on the Imamate as identical with that of the extremists, Abū Zahrah says, "The Imāmiyyah do not rank the Prophet (s□) and the Imām (*'a*) on the same level."'

The great leader of the Sunnīs, the dean of the al-Azhar University, Shaykh Mah□mūd Shaltūt, is among those who supported the Sunnīs' dealing with the Shī'ahs. He ardently challenged the Wahhābīs' manner of study because they had blundered badly, linking the Imāmiyyah with the extremists.

He made a great effort to lead the Wahhābīs back to the general Sunnī trend, and to stop the Shī'ahs—the Sunnī tension plotted by the Wahhābīs'. The Wahhābīs, as a result, opposed him, accusing him of trying to bring the Sunnīs and extremists into closer contact. What he desired to do was to make the Wahhābīs understand that they were attributing to the Shī'ahs what were in fact the Sabā'iyyah's, Khat□t□ābiyyah's and Bayāniyyah's ideas, who the Shī'ahs condemn as unbelievers. He maintained that the reason the Wahhābīs linked the Shī'ism with perverted beliefs—as the Wahhābīs called them—was because to the Wahhābīs, the Shī'ism was a branch of the Extremism.

Mah□mūd Shaltūt was compelled to assail certain contemporary Sunnīs who, having been tainted with the Wahhābism, eyed their predecessors' dealings with the Shī'ahs negatively. He believed that these people formed the greatest impediment in the proximity [*taqrīb*] of the Sunnīsm to the Shī'ism. He says, "The idea of *taqrīb* is being defied by the short-sighted and malicious found in every society. These are the people who think that their stability is dependent upon the discord of religious sects; they are the people in whose hearts there is a disease—those who

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' *Ibid.*, p. ۱۵۱.

lovingly dance around their whims—and have peculiar inclinations. These are the mercenary writers who are at the service of those who conspire against the Muslim unity, and, directly or indirectly, resist any reformatory movement that aims at uniting the divided Muslims." ¹

No sooner were the Imāmiyyah and the extremists considered as integral that the Wahhābīs started calling the Shī'ahs *rāfid□ī* [heretics], whereas this is a general term used in sectarian literature to identify most of the extremist groups whom the Shī'ah scholars had considered as unbelievers long before the Sunnīs attempted to do so. This is why Anwar Jundī says, "The *rāfid□ī*s are neither Sunnīs nor Shī'ahs." ²

There is no need to quote hundreds of other oral or written statements of Sunnī scholars to demonstrate the danger there is in identifying the Shī'ism with the extremists.

These citations, if made, will add up to many pages. The identification of the Shī'ism with the Extremism, hard for an analyst to discern at the onset, is thus known to be one of the biggest problems the enemies of Islam have worked out in order to destroy the foundation of the Islamic unity. It is difficult to recognize because the enemies of Islam have deceptively clothed the hidden carcass it contains in seemingly befitting attire and made it into a Muslim institution. Today, there are simple-minded Sunnīs who have been deceived by the Wahhābīs, have not conceived their ominous aims and are caught up in this problem. This situation is, however, being made ineffective within the narrow circle it has made around the Wahhābī faction.

It is good to know that the Wahhābīs do consider the Shī'ahs as people of extreme thoughts, but cannot realize that in fact the Shī'ahs are not afflicted with Extremism; it is the Wahhābīs

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¹ *Risālat al-Islām* Magazine.

² *Al-Islām wa H□arikat al-Tārīkh*, p. ٢٨.

themselves who suffer from the disease of the inability to identify the Shī'ahs. They try to find out the factors that have contributed to the appearance of the Extremism in the Shī'ahs, but cannot understand that they should, instead, look for the reasons of "the mingling problem" in themselves.

Having realized that the Wahhābīs are trapped because they had not properly investigated previous Sunnīs' books, the contemporary Sunnī thinkers began to look for the factors that helped in the emergence of the deviation.

They have now clearly announced that the Shī'ahs do not suffer from the Extremism; this is an illusion that has the Wahhābīs in its grip, and has come about because they did not distinguish between the Shī'ism and the Extremism.

I made an extensive study and learned that the methods of study into the Shī'ism are restricted to the following three:

۱) The Wahhābī faction's method;

۲) Past and present Sunnī thinkers' method;

۳) The Shī'ah scholars' methods.

I was, at first, firmly devoted to the Wahhābī manner; but some time later, I came to know of the Sunnī method and was, later on, guided to study the Imāmiyyah scholars' method. There I noticed an undeniable contrast between the Wahhābī and Sunnī approach. If we accept the Wahhābīs' method in spite of so many differences and variations, then logically speaking, both methods will be invalid; that is, neither the Wahhābī research nor the Sunnī analysis on the Shī'ism.

In the following parts you will come to believe that the Sunnīs' interpretation of the Imāmiyyah's creed presents more facts than the Wahhābī's comment that bears absolutely no reality and is mere presumption.

When we review the product of the Wahhābīs' studies, we learn that they are at a complete loss to give a correct interpretation of the Shī'ah belief system. The crooked image that the Wahhābīs portray of the Shī'ism is not anywhere close to what the eminent Sunnī and Shī'ah scholars paint for us.

Being in the grip of a gross deviation and under the influence of the extreme view of identifying the Imāmiyyah with the Extremism when there is no link between the Shī'ism and Extremism, the Wahhābīs are never able to penetrate the correct meaning of divinity, prophesy and other realities of the Imāmiyyah as the Shī'ahs understand them. It is evident that such circumstances bring the Wahhābīs nothing but perplexity.

Strange to say, some simple-minded Sunnīs accept the Wahhābīs' opinion concerning the Shī'ahs and mock the manner their thinkers had followed. These people are unaware of the harsh conflict going on between the Sunnīs and Wahhābīs; so they are easily deceived. These conflicts stem from the issue of the Shī'ah identity.

Just as the issue of the Shī'ah identification launched a struggle within the Sunnīsm when the Wahhābīyyah appeared in the eighteenth century A.D., it has stretched the battlefield out to include the Wahhābīs and Sunnīs in a conflict, the reason for which we will never understand until the problem has been settled. Many of the matters that were simply a differing point between the Shī'ahs and Wahhābīs have now turned into points of conflict between the Sunnīs and Wahhābīs.

The Sunnīs, fully aware of the radical dissimilarities between the Imāmiyyah and Extremism, have openly said that what the Wahhābīs raise against the Shī'ahs pertains only to the Extremism of the *Ghulāt*, not the Shī'ahs. The Wahhābīs' viewpoint, though an aid in the intensification of the struggle between the Sunnīs and Shī'ahs, has developed into a fire that is now burning the Wahhābīs and Sunnīs both. The reason for the

oft-repeated warnings of the Shī'ah and Sunnī thinkers is now made clear. So long as the problem among the three sects is not settled, there will be no hope to reach an understanding and stop the tension.

Dr. Nāsir Qaffārī, the hard-line Wahhābī author who calls the Shī'ah unbelievers, gives an interesting account of sharp conflicts between the Wahhābīs and Sunnīs. He says, "The bulky case of the disputes among the contemporary writers on Imāmiyyah attracted my attention. A group of writers such as Muhibb al-Dīn Khatīb, Ihsān Ilāhī Zahīr, and Ibrāhīm Jibhān call the Imāmiyyah, the unbelievers who are pushed out of the Islamic bounds by their extremist convictions. Others such as Nashār, Sulaymān Dunyā and Mustafā Shak'ah consider the Imāmiyyah as those that take the middle course, the moderate, with no inclination towards Bātinīs. Still others such as Bihinsāwī having been doubtful (about the reality) corresponded with the Shī'ah scholars on the issues Muhibb al-Dīn Khatīb and Ihsān Ilāhī Zahīr had raised. In a whirlpool like this, truth will either disappear or lose colour."[1]

My persistence in getting to the roots made me write my doctorate dissertation on *"The Wahhābīs' Problems Arising from Confusing the Shī'ahs with the Ghulāts"*, where I explained that these problems arise from the differences in study methods.

After lengthy analyses of the Shī'ah research methods, I realized that the Wahhābī method can never be adopted to know the Shī'ahs, in particular because the Wahhābīs and Sunnīs extensively differ in their knowledge of the Imāmiyyah. The Wahhābīs' methods of Shī'ah studies, if applied, will produce nothing except the mutilation of the research topic—the realities of the Shī'ism—because it is thought that the followers of the

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[1] *Usūl-u Madhhab al-Shī'ah al-Imāmiyyah al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah*, vol. ۱, pp. ۱۰-۱۱; it is a book in which I have criticized Dr. Qaffārī. This book will soon be published.

Household of the Prophet (*s*□) have no (sound) method of explaining their doctrine. One cannot help referring to the comments and explanations the Imāmiyyah themselves offer, if he does not want to get involved in the crucial conflict between the Sunnīs and Wahhābīs on the significance of the Imāmiyyah doctrine. This is exactly what Dr. Qaffārī reported concerning Sālim Bihansāwī.

"Having seen the difference of opinion between Ih□sān Ilāhī Z□ahīr and Mus□t□afā Shak'ah on the Ithnā 'Ashariyyah Shī'ism, Bihansāwī referred to the Imāmiyyah *'ulamā'* in order to discover the reality. He wrote the book, *al-Sunnat al-Muftarā 'Alayhā*, in which he collected the outcome of the dialogues he had had with these scholars. It was then that he realized the Sunnī's study method on the Shī'ah realities was closer to the truth."

We also see that Dr. H□āmid H□afnī Dāwūd, the great Sunnī thinker, demands that the (Sunnī) writers should abandon the Wahhābī's method and stick to the Imāmiyyah's approach in the exposition of their ideas.

In a prelude to the late Muz□affar's book *'Aqā'id al-Imāmiyyah*, he writes, "Those who imagine that they can understand the Shī'ahs' beliefs, sciences, and social culture by studying what the Shī'ahs opponents have written, are in manifest error no matter how knowledgeable these writers are, how well they know the ideas, and how impartial and just they are in quoting the thoughts and ideas."

I would like to say, explicitly, that although I spent a long time studying the beliefs of the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt (*'a*), in general, and the Shī'ah doctrine, in particular, by going through what the historians and the critics had written concerning the Imāmiyyah, I was unable to gain anything worthwhile. My extensive research and my zeal to understand the nuances of the Imāmiyyah produced nothing worthwhile, but pushed me still

further away from the truth of the beliefs of the Shī'ahs. This was because I had trusted the writings of the Shī'ah opponents, and had left my work incomplete and barren. In lieu of my burning desire to search for the truth—wherever it might be—I had to open my Shī'ah study folder in a different way; that is, I made up my mind to familiarize myself with this school through the works of its scholars because it is evident that the scientists of any school are better acquainted with their own beliefs than are their opponents, however eloquent these antagonists might be in rhetoric.

Being scientifically honest, one of the most important foundations of a scientific research that makes one take the most care, is what I had set myself to follow in all the investigations I was to do and all the papers I was to write. How can a researcher be sure that his citations are true if he does not refer directly to Shī'ah sources however sharp he may be in understanding the issues? He will be basing his argument on an unscientific foundation if he does not.

All these made me concentrate my Shī'ah studies on their books and quote their beliefs from their own works and statements—without the least alteration—so as to keep away from the error others had made when judging the Shī'ahs.

A researcher, desiring to acquire facts from a source other than the original, will have been unfaithful to realities and will have done an unscientific job as did Dr. Ah☐mad Amīn, from Egypt, when he was studying the Shī'ism. Trying to bring to light certain parts of the Shī'ah doctrine, he went to extremes presenting the Shī'ism as a manifestation of the Judaism in Islam and a fabrication by 'Abd Allāh ibn Sabā. This is certainly a false claim, one that the Shī'ahs hate and against which their scholars have written books, an example of which is 'Allāmah

Muh☐ammad H☐usayn Kāshif al-Qit☐ā's comprehensive research work "*Al-Shī'ah wa Us☐ūluhā*".[1]

An example will illustrate the problem. The Wahhābīs have said, in their books, that according to the Shī'ahs, Imām 'Alī (*'a*) is in the clouds, and the Shī'ahs will not help any of his sons to rise up unless the Imām (*'a*) himself calls out from the sky inviting people to help that person. Evidently, this is an idea of the extremists who believe that Imām 'Alī (*'a*) is in the clouds whence he talks to the people. Having studied the issue and discussed it with eminent Shī'ah *'ulamā'* in the city of Qum, their greatest center of learning, I realized that they resent these words. What they take as certain is the issue of which the Sunnīs, too, are sure: "When Imām Mahdī, may God's blessing be upon him, whose rising is accepted by both the Sunnīs and Shī'ahs, reappears, an angel, high up in the sky, will call out his name inviting people to help him." The Wahhābī writing, as you see, cannot be trusted.

From the selected words of the Sunnī thinkers quoted, it becomes clear that the Wahhābīs do not know the Shī'ahs, and a wide gap appeared between the Wahhābīs and Sunnīs for no cause other than the Wahhābīs' mistake in identifying the Shī'ism and mixing it up with the Extremism.

The following points clarify why I ever insisted in bringing the issue to light and in quoting Sunnī thinkers, I want to explain:

١. The extraordinary impact of the problem in diffusing the differences between the Shī'ahs and Sunnīs on the one hand, and the Sunnīs and Wahhābīs on the other.

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[1] A prelude to '*Aqā'id al-Imāmiyyah*, p. ٢٠-٢٣.

٢. The significant role the problem has in the emergence of deviations and in the failure of the Wahhābīs' studies of the Shī'ahs.

٣. The effect of the solution of the problem on these three sects in reaching an understanding and in stopping the tension.

٤. The Imāmiyyah's real visage.

The most recalcitrant external opponents of the divine religion are the pagan, atheistic and materialistic thoughts that intensify the counter-religious points of doubt. The worst internal enemy of any religion that questions both the existence and the identity of the religion, I believe, is the mixing of reality with delusion. It produces an untrue and incorrect sense of the religion and the *sharī'ah*, and portrays an inverted and crooked image of the religion. All these make man's intellect flee from religion and gravitate towards atheism. The mixing of the Shī'ism with Extremism is a kind of mixing realities with delusions.

٥. The radical reason for the Wahhābīs' linking the Shī'ahs with the extremist Sūfīs.

The main reason for such a belief stems from identifying the Imāmiyyah with the extremists, whereas the Shī'ah *'ulamā'* excommunicate these extremist Sufis.

All the explanations given so far are constituents of the first stage of Knowing the Shī'ahs.

In stage one of knowing the Shī'ahs, a recall can be made of the following two basic factors as causes for the emergence of error and deviation among the Wahhābīs.

١. The Wahhābīs' lack of knowledge;

٢. The Wahhābīs' method of study.

The first factor itself stems from three other causes:

a.   Lack of knowledge of what the Ghulāt means;

b.   Lack of knowledge of what the Twelver Shī'ism means;

c.   Being unaware of the Imamiyyah's position towards the Extremism and the extremists.

The second factor, too, stems from two causes:

a.   The Wahhābīs' mode of thinking;

b.   The Wahhābīs' breaking away from the Sunnīs' approach of treating the Twelver Shī'ism.

We do not desire to conduct a lifeless research, but we desire that the reader be on guard against the danger that takes shape at this stage and not fall prey to it.

Negative consequences of the problem of mingling

The complications resulting from the prevalence of "the mingling ailment" pointed in brief are:

١.   Misinterpreting the reality of divinity and Prophesy in the Shī'ahs' doctrine;

٢.   Misinterpreting the reality of the *sharī'ah* and religious injunctions in the Shī'ahs' doctrine;

٣.   Misinterpreting the reality of the aims of the Shī'ah's school of thought;

٤.   Misinterpreting some Shī'ah expressions;

٥.   Misinterpreting the reality of the Shī'ah sources;

٦.   Misinterpreting the reality of the Imamate in the Shī'ah doctrine;

٧.   Misinterpreting the reality of the Shī'ah identity;

٨.   Misinterpreting the origin of the Shī'ah school of thought.

These eight errors yield the greatest fallacy: misinterpreting the Shī'ah peculiarities; resulting in mingling the Shī'ah peculiarities with those of Extremism.

In order for the dear reader to be acquinted with the ominous consequences of these errors, he/she is to look at the two following pictures:
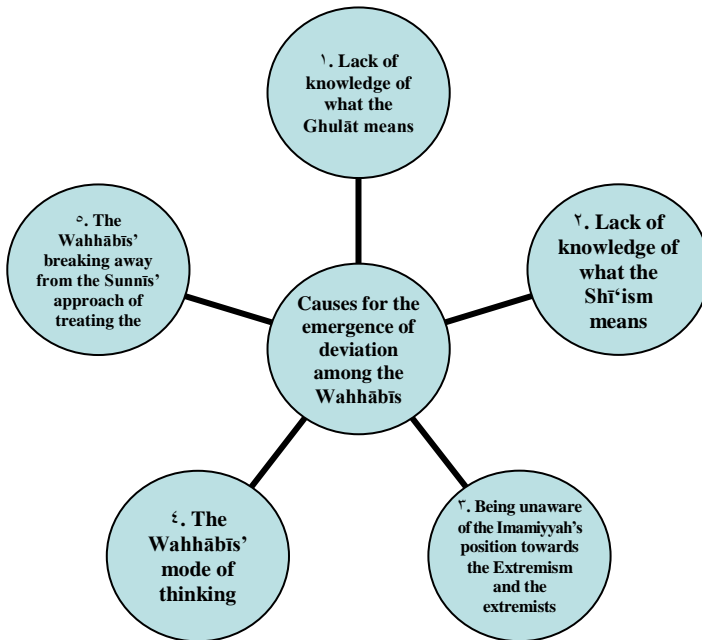
The above diagram shows how the Wahhābīs can go astray through the five main factors.
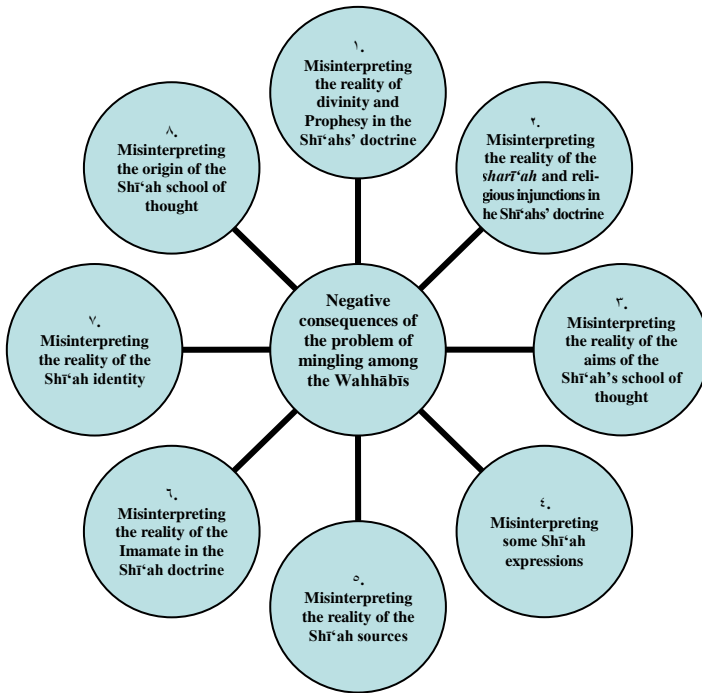
The above picture shows that these ٨ errors are the end result of the very five causes and that this sedition can have dire consequences.

Before proceeding with the factors that have helped in the emergence and expansion of the Wahhābīs' problem of mingling the Shī'ism with Extremism, we should mention a few points.

١. The problem of confusing Shī'ism with Extremism, already existing within Wahhābīs ideological system, has not appeared out of the blue. It is the outcome of many factors that joined hands in the course of time and created this problem. It has scientifically been proved that contrary to certain discoveries

that are the result of a mental spark, historical problems do not appear spontaneously.

٢.   It is very hard to diagnose the causes of historical problems, since these are processes which are different from those at work in a simple ordinary illness. You will see that certain factors do not induce the problem, but they develop it.

٣.   It is impossible to diagnose the factors that have brought this particular problem about except through a careful study of the history of this problem. For this reason we went through all relevant Wahhābīs literature and after long years of investigation and study, we became aware of the background of the problem and then recognized the causal factors. Through these investigations, it became clear to us that the roots of this problem in Wahhābīs ideological system go back to the time the Wahhābī school emerged during the Ottoman rule.

To seize the power in hand, the Ottoman government was at severe wars against the Shī'ite safavid kings. In order to urge the people to fight against the Shī'ite Iranians, the Ottoman government drew up an agenda for excommunicating the Shī'ites and for permitting the shedding of their blood. This plan infiltrated into the Indian subcontinent where a Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Dihlawī, influenced by the project, wrote a book called *al-Tuḥfah al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah*. The Ottoman government published a summarized version of this book among the Sunnīs, thus intensifying the differences between Shī'ism and Sunnism. This book had a great influence on Wahhābīs' behavior towards the Shī'ites and on the formation of the problem of equating Shī'ism with Extremism.

We can clearly see the impression this book has left on Muḥibb al-Dīn Khaṭīb in his book *al-Khuṭūṭ al-'Arīḍah fī Dīn al-Imāmiyyah*, a summary of *al-Tuḥfah al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah*. This book is one of Wahhābīs' sources in their study of Shī'ism. Khaṭīb himself was one of the founders of Wahhābīs'

ideological system whose approach left a lasting influence on Wahhābīs' studies of Shī'ism, which is clearly felt in the writings of Iḥsān Ilāhī Ẓahīr.

Historians are well aware of the political conditions governing the time when the book *al-Tuḥfah* was written. All Indian historians have said that this book was published in Oudh, the kingdom of Lucknow at the end of ١٢th Century after Hijrah when there were desperate political struggles between the *sultān*s, kings, who supported Shī'ism and those who supported Sunnīs at Lucknow area. No doubt such books do great services to governments' political aims and intentions. That is why we see that these books are usually donated to governors and kings involved in the strife.

Maḥmūd Shukrī Ālūsī, who has summarized the book *al-Tuḥfah*, has wᶜritten the following statements in the introduction to the book:

"I dedicate this book to God's vicegerent on the earth and the Prophet's representative in reviving the religion, that is, the personage who best observes peoples' rights, administers the affairs by drawing up exact plans and applying a deep insight, adopts the best approach in stabilizing people's affairs and their safe-keeping, and favors the scholars and the benevolent of his country… and he is the Commander of the Faithful, whose obedience is obligatory on all, the king of the lands and the seas, the monarch, the son of the monarch, the combatant king 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Khān, the son of the combatant king 'Abd al-Majīd Khān. O God! Support him through your help, and make him victorious for Thy name to be glorified; remove the seditions of the black-hearted enemies of his and Thine, and crush them with the sword of thy rage and domination."¹

He then continues in this way: "My aim at dedicating this book to his lofty precinct is to obtain his look cast on the book so it

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¹ *Al-Tuḥfah al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah*, summerized, pp. ٢-٣.

will be accepted. It is then that I will, God willing, have a wish fulfilled. I have prepared this book in nine chapters, the first of which explains Shī'ites sects and their state…"[1]

It is a pity that this book, which was published in a special political situation, shaped the Wahhābīs system of thought so effectively that they are still following on the same track, and are ignoring the oppositions raised by the eminent Sunnī scholars against the book. This book is indeed an offspring of politics. That which comes together with politics should leave together with politics.

The Ottoman policy demanded that Shī'ite school of thought be misrepresented, because after the fall of Baghdad, achieved by Iran's Shī'ite government, the Ottomans saw their own existence was being open to danger. The Ottoman government knew it well that the Sunnīs will not enter a bloody war against Imāmiyyah Shī'ites unless it is somehow accepted by the general populace that the Extremists, the *Ghulāt*, are disbelievers and are not considered as Muslims.

It was in this way that the problem of equating Shī'ism with Extremists came to the fore, in the days of Ottoman's political condition, and was flourished more fully by Wahhābīs, who were then making use of the literature in circulation during the Ottoman period. All these books were, however, missionary publications, not scientific and analytical ones. It is clear that non-scientific propagations aim at distorting the rival's real visage, and skip any scientific dialogues with him.

After the fall of the Ottoman government, many Sunnī dignitaries remarked that there was a need to revive the approach that the former Sunnī thinkers had adopted when dealing with Shī'ites. At a time when such an approach had already been consigned to oblivion; however, Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt, rector of the al-Azhar University and the great leader of Sunnīs

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[1] *Ibid.*

issued a *fatwā* stating that Shī'ism is similar to the other four Sunnī schools of thought, and it can be chosen.

The above-mentioned points are just samples forming the chronicle of Wahhābīs' view that equates Shī'ism with Extremism. The readers can follow the issue more fully and convincingly in the discussions that will soon come.

٤. As for the problem of Wahhābīs' equating Shī'ism with Extremism we need to say that the issue requires an extensive discussion to be conducted on each of the areas involved. These include: Extremism, the Imāmiyyah, the relationship between Imāmiyyah and Extremism, and finally Wahhābīs itself.

In the third area of our investigation we need to see whether Shī'ism lives in acquiescence with Extremism, or whether there is a large gap between the two. How do individual Shī'ites and Extremists view each other?

In the fourth area of our investigation we need to investigate the extent of familiarity between Wahhābīs and Shī'ites. Are the Wahhābīs aware of the reality of Shī'ism? How do Wahhābīs deal with other Muslims? How do Wahhābīs define *Ghuluww*, Extremism? And how do Shī'ites define it? What is the difference between the Sunnīs manner of dealing with Shī'ites with Wahhābīs' manner? On what basis does the Wahhābīs' ideological organization stand? How did it influence the way they deal with Shī'ites?

It will be possible to fathom the problem after these four areas are fully investigated. It is a problem that has indeed jeoparadized the understanding there should exist among Muslims—an issue that needs to be solved.

٥. After extensive examinations of the corpus of Wahhābīs' writings concerning Shī'ism and after detailed enquiries conducted on the writings of those who had fallen prey to the problem created by Wahhābīs, we understood that these writers can be divided into six groups:

a)　Those that had authored books because they wanted to acquire the pleasure of the rulers who were severely fighting the Iranian Shī'ite government. That is why we see their books fully hued with propaganda and security hints as if these books have been published by an intelligence office which is at the service of colonizers. These books represent the foreign policies of the same anti-Shī'ite government, and have nothing to do with the realities of Shī'ite school of thought. These authors who are in fact court mercenaries play an important part in the development of the sedition arising from equating mentioned above.

b)　The second group are the simple-minded people who have been deceived by those in the first group—that is, these are the people who have naively trusted the court mercenaries and have thus come to believe that the Imamiyyah school of thought is a branch of the Extremists, and that Shī'ites are not included among Muslims. While writing the book *"The Relationship between the Shi'ites and the Extremists"* I myself belonged to this group.

c)　Those in the third group were not simple-minded people, but were not experts either, nor did they have a deep vision and insight into the question. They had unconsciously fallen into a trap, overstating things that were not really points of exaggeration, and pointlessly attributing to Imāmiyyah school of thought the things in which the Imamiyyah themselves have no belief. Because they lack precision in their study of Shī'ite books, they misunderstand the realities of Shī'ism, confuse between Oneness of God [*tawhīd*] and polytheism, and accuse Shī'ism to be polytheists.

They do not differentiate between the great polytheism that puts one out of the pale of Islam, and the lesser polytheism that exists among most Muslims without harming the basis of their Islam. They do not discriminate levels and degrees of unbelief [*kufr*] either; that is, between the *kufr* that does not put one out of the pale of Islam and the one that does so. They confuse these points,

accuse all opposing Islamic sects as apostates and consider most Muslims as disbelievers.

d)   The fourth group is those who consider their own religious ideas as dictates of the party to which they belong, and so condemn any opposing voice. They are so persistent in their conviction that they even prejudge other schools before discussing their doctrines, listening to what these schools have to offer and before acquiring any knowledge therein. They consider all the opponents as "those who are followers of falsehood". They take any opposing voice as some kind of Extremism, and drive it away by means of various accusations.

e)   The fifth group includes those who do not tolerate the logical oppositions that the Shī'ites express against Wahhābism. Rather than answering these oppositions, they blindly defend Wahhābism; and are therefore forced to deny many indisputable points between Sunnīs and Shī'ism. In fact, their prejudiced defense of Wahhābism pushes them out of a logical and rational route and urges them to assume an emotionally defensive position. Instead of giving answers to Shī'ites, they level multitudes of accusations at them. They attribute to Shī'ites the things that they themselves have attributed to Extremists. People of this fifth group too have rendered valuable services to the illness of equating Shī'ism with Extremism.

The Wahhābīs are now facing huge number of scientifically potent oppositions that Shī'ites and even certain Sunnīs have leveled against them. Because they are unable to solve these problems, and because they have learned that the Wahhābī argument is painfully weak, they have gathered all their force to vigorously defend Wahhābism. To achieve their goal they launched a dangerous project, misrepresenting the realities and facts of Shī'ism. They did it because they had no aim other than strengthening their defensive front, and made use of all means they had at their disposal. Marring of the Imāmiyyah visage was one their defensive stratagems. They were not concerned with

the realities of Shī'ism, but merely desired to strengthen their own defensive lines by ruining the imaginary enemy and by making accusations.

f)   The most dangerous of anti-Shī'ite authors are those who have infiltrated into the lines of certain naïve Wahhabīs, feigning to be one of their number while both the Sunnīs and Wahhabīs condemn them. Sunnī dignitaries, having learned of the ominous plans of this latter band whose goals were not but achieving power, wealth and fame, drove them away. Inevitably, they took refuge with Wahhābism in order to attain their wicked goals.

'Abdullāh 'Alī Qas□īmī Najdī may be considered as one among people of the latter group. He left Arabia for Egypt. There he contested against al-Azhar university scholars, and they excommunicated him. He wrote a book called "*Wahhābiyyah Revolution*" that sounded very pleasing to Wahhābism, but forced the Sunnīs to react against it. Later on, he wrote another book called "*Contest between Islam and Idolatry*", and called the Shī'ites idolaters. Wahhābīs became very happy. Some time later, he made his own idolatrous tendencies known: he denounced divine religions and attacked divine Prophets. At this point, Wahhābīs rejected him too. The inverted visage he had presented of Shī'ism had left a lasting influence and mark in memories.

g)   An important source in the propagation of the confusion in question was ambiguities in certain lexical items commonly in use from the first century after Hijrah and shortly afterwards. In those days the word "Shī'ism" was applied to many sects. The dim and blur atmosphere of the time prepared the ground for the cultural attacks of Imāmiyyah enemies. On the pretext of opposing Extremist sects, Shī'ism was unjustly labeled as "extremist" and flooded by extensive accusations.

h) The confusion between sense and significance of Shī'ism—which was applied to many sects—and sense and

significance of Twelver Imāmiyyah, which is used to refer to only one school of thought was a cause for the Wahhābīs to attribute to the Imāmiyyah followers many inappropriate opinions and ideas—things that the Imāmiyyah and the Sunnīs call as disbelief, *kufr*.

It is evident that if the meaning of words and the conceptual boundaries that separate them from each other are not precisely defined, they will turn into instruments in the hand of mischief-makers or in hand of the naïve.

i)   Another element that has contributed to equating Shī'ism with Extremism—as Wahhābis understand it—is the presence of certain *Ghulāt*, Extremists, in Kūfah a Shī'ite centre in the first century after Hijrah. These were people who, according to clear evidence of history, were few in number and had been forcefully repelled by the Shī'ite community of the time and even by those in following epoch. Little by little they died away. Wherever Imamiyyah Shī'ism gravitated into the bosom of the people, Extremism was forced to leave. Further explanations will follow.

j)   Given the Ummayyid and the Abbasid policy of using tortures, threats, and massacres against *Ahl al-Bayt*, members of the Household of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his descendants—in spite of the lofty ranks they had among Muslims—it is no wonder to see that in order to justify the criminal acts of the criminals, the same caliphs and rulers exposed the oppressed Shī'ites to manifold tortures, and accused them of having uttered apostetic word, particularly at a time when the weak and the wronged are unable to defend themselves when facing with the bullying enemy.

Factors contributing to the advent and expansion of the theory of equating Shī'ism and Extremism in Wahhābīs' view

We said that the first factor contributing to the advent of this particular extremist notion had been the Wahhābīs' unawareness

of the Imāmiyyah Shī'ism. This unawareness falls into three divisions:

١. Ignorance of the meaning of Extremism;

٢. Ignorance of the meaning of Shī'ism;

٣. Ignorance of the Imāmiyyah's position with regard to Extremism and the Extremists.

In this chapter we will explain the first, leaving the remaining points for another book of ours, "*Imāmiyyah's View Concerning Extremism and the Extremists*".

Ignorance of the meaning of Extremism

Exaggerated zeal and Extremism, *Ghuluww*, is a phenomenon that has been rejected by all Islamic schools of thought, *madhāhib*. You will not find any school that has sanctioned it. The angry look that schools of thought have given the Extremism is because of repeated warnings of the Qur'an and specified in the words of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his descendents, both constantly reminding Muslims that deviations in religion are based on Extremism foundations. The history of Extremism goes back to the time when "deviation" was born in history. In other words, there is no deviation without having stemmed from some kind of Extremism. It is a definite historical point that Extremist inclinations have been at work in all sects that are outwardly Islamic but are in fact distanced from the reality of Islam.

Here, we do not intend to recount all Qur'anic statements and the *sunnah* vocabulary in regard to Extremism and its dangerous outcome, nor do we plan to talk about *Ghulāt* sects, their roots and the influence exerted on them by Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity, because these are unrelated to our discussion. We would rather reveal something that is closely connected with our aim, and has not been discussed elsewhere, that is, the

position of the concept "Extremism" in the Wahhābiyyah culture and the definition of its concept.

Ever since the ١٨th century CE, when the Wahhābiyyah was established until today, various and weird definitions of "the Extremism", *ghuluww*, incongruous with the Imāmiyyah's and even with the Sunnīs' views, have been in vogue. These are definitions that finally end in charging Islamic sects with Extremism.

I remember the time when I, as a prejudiced Wahhābī, was being trained, in Wahhābī training centers of Arabia. The definition that we were given concerning the concept "Extremism" was such that it did not spare most Sunnīs including the Ash'arites, and the Maturidis, let alone the Imāmiyyah.

This method applied in training and propaganda had left abnormal influences on me and other students. For example, we considered these sects as tainted with Extremism, polytheism, disbelief and deviation. Therefore, we did not permit ourselves to read and study their ideas. We were pessimistic of their scholars and did not treasure holding dialogues with them.

The contemporary Sunnī scholar, "Yūsuf Qard□āwī" depicts this pitiful event that has come from hatred and infected complexes of the Wahhābīs as follows: "No one other than the enemies of Islam will benefit when Islamic rites are misrepresented, religious symbols are destroyed and values are demolished. It is a pity that these acts have now been turned into wishes of certain Muslims. On my trip to Arabia last year, I came across a terrible and pitiful event: a series of books that had attacked and rebuked the scholars leveling accusations against them. Some of these books had been written by certain *salafī* supporters Wahhābī Fundamentalists, who had not spared any of the past and contemporary, living or dead, scholars [*'ulamā'*] but

had sharply charged them with accusations, slanders and vilifications".[1]

Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī, the leader of the contemporary Sunnīs, calls the Wahhābīs' interpretation of religion "queer and unfamiliar"[2], and reckons it as the most dangerous enemy of Islam. He says, "The development of Islamisation is being threatened from various directions, the most dangerous of which is a kind of religious thought in extremist-fundamentalist attire that even the true Salafiyyah hate."[3]

How prudent it would be if the Wahhābīs heeded these remarks and critically examined their own understanding and interpretation of the Extremism. Without self-criticism, one will not be able to examine one's outlook and distinguish the truth from falsehood.

The important point to be made here is that there are two usages for the term "Extremism": one in jurisprudence and the other in tradition, *ḥadīth*. It is an erroneous application of the meaning of "Extremism" to jurisprudence that pushes one into infidelity and unbelief. The implications we come across in the history of *ḥadīth* merely refer to some narrators, poles apart from what it means in jurisprudence.

Shahristānī, the Ash'arī, says, "The *Ghulāt* are the people that went to extremes as regards their religious leaders [the *imām*s]; took them out of the limitations that are set for all created beings and installed them on the divine throne: sometimes likening them to God and sometimes likening God to them, excessive in one direction and belittling in the other. Their doubt has its sources in the notion of the infusion of the divine into man [*ḥulūl*] in

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[1] Yūsuf Qardāwī, *al-Shaykh al-Ghazzālī kamā 'Araftuhu Riḥlatu Nisfi Qarn*, p. ٢٦٣.

[2] Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī, *Humūm al-Dā'iyyah*, p. ١٥.

[3] Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī, *Sirr Ta'akhkhur al-'Arab*, p. ٥٢.

metempsychosis and in the claims the Jews and Christians had made."'

The kind of Extremism that leads to infidelity, according to the above text, has two fundamental bases:

    a.   Deifying man: raising man to the dignity of divinity.

    b.   Lowering God's position to man's.

The idea of the infusion of the divine into man denotes a lowering of God's position, and the notion of man's pre-eternity ends up in his being deified. These two serious notions can easily be understood if a bit of investigation is conducted on the *Ghulāt* sects.

On the other hand, the kind of Extremism discussed in the science of *h□adīth*, when referring to certain narrators, pertains to the off-shoots [*the furū'*] of Islam, not to the roots [*the us□ūl*]. The former is no cause for infidelty. It is the Wahhābī's mingling of the two that has driven them into committing dangerous blunders. Such is the case with the contemporary Wahhābī writer, 'Abd al-Rah□mān 'Abd Allāh Zar'ī, who was unable to differentiate between the two in his book *Rijāl al-Shī'ah fī al-Mīzān.*

When we study the books the Sunnīs have written on the science of the narrators of *h□adīth* [*'ilm al-rijāl*], we see that the Sunnī authors have used the term *ghuluww* [Extremism] to refer to many people who although disagree among themselves as to the superiority of the Companions, never take them as deities. Therefore, these narrators cannot be considered as infidels The Wahhābīs gradually drifted away from the current meaning of "Extremism" as the Sunnīs had recognized it, and extended the scope of its application so widely that the resulting fire began to burn the Sunnīs too. Taking Shī'ahs and Sunnīs as supporters of

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' *Al-Milal wa al-Nih□al.*

the Extremism, the Wahhābīs directed torrents of accusations against the non-Wahhābī sects.

The outcome of extending the concept of the Extremism

The outcome of extending the concept of the Extremism is most noticeable in the Wahhābīs' dealing with the opposing parties on certain points of difference. It is necessary, therefore, to refer to some imaginary, quarrelsome problems that have been created under the pretext of fighting the Extremism.

١) Making a fuss on the issue of God's attributes, the Wahhābīs accuse as an extremist anyone who opposes their idea on God's attributes. Scores of books that denounce the Shī'ism and Sunnīsm have been written, and the world of Islam is now filled with a great commotion. Instead of being a factor unifying Muslims, the issue of God's attributes has, in the hands of the Wahhābīs, been turned into a weapon to create turbulence and tension.

Muḥammad 'Ādil 'Azīzah, the contemporary Sunnī scholar, has done a lot to make the Wahhābīs understand that the *Ash'arī*s and the *Māturīdī*s are not extremists. If anyone considers them as extremists, then Ibn Kathīr of Damascus, much respected by the Wahhābīs, should also be called an extremist because he has not followed the Wahhābīs (view) on God's attributes.

All the Sunnīs and Shī'ahs make an interpretation [*ta'wīl*] of the Qur'anic verses pertaining to the divine attributes without considering it a cause for the Extremism. The Shī'ah and Sunnī religious scholars, the *'ulamā'*, have found no relationship between interpreting the divine attributes and Extremism; the scholars of both denominations have strongly criticized the Wahhābīs' method of evaluation.

Muḥammad 'Ādil 'Azīzah, who has written a book on Ibn Kathīr of Damascus' view on the divine attributes, says, "I have written this book with the aim of narrowing the scope of the differences

and eliminating the present animosity among Muslims because, these days, many Sunnī men of learning are being subjected to accusations, calumny and excommunication by the Wahhābīs, merely because they have pronounced their own judgment differently from that of the Wahhābīs on God's attributes."[1]

Anyone reading this book will understand that Ibn Kathīr's method of explaining the God's attributes differs from that of the Wahhābīs. He says, "This little treatise, containing Ibn Kathīr, the Salafi's words on the divine attributes will prevent a liberal Muslim from hastily accusing others—who hold the same ideas as Ibn Kathīr does—of being misguided and outside the pale of Islam, because Ibn Kathīr is known to all as being knowledgeable, meticulous and sound (in mind). Ibn Kathīr is said to have asked Ibn 'Abbās for the interpretation of the Qurʾanic verse: *"Upon the day when the legs shall be bared, and they shall be (summoned) to bow themselves, but they cannot."* (٦٤:٤٢); Ibn 'Abbās said, "A great matter is disclosed."[2]

Now, the objection we make is this: why, then, do the Wahhābīs call the Sunnī and Shī'ah populace who interpret the Qurʾanic verses of the divine attributes "extremists"? This has resulted in heavy blows and blind attacks to befall the Shī'ism and Sunnīsm from the ١٨th century onwards. We can fathom the profundity of this catastrophe in many utterances of the Shī'ahs and Sunnīs.

Dr. Muḥsin 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, the contemporary Sunnī scientist, unveils the catastrophe. He says, "In recent years, my colleagues and I have witnessed a current that imagines itself to be in charge of implementing ideological improvements and confronting manifestations of polytheism in Islamic society; it has filled the cultural centers with futile arguments concerning divine

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[1] *'Aqīdah al-Imām al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn Kathīr fī Āyāt al-Ṣifāt.*

[2] *Ibid.*, p. ٨.

attributes. This painful situation was the first impetus for me to review these verses."[1]

This black sedition of the Wahhābīs has, from its inception, drowned many scholars in its abyss. Dr. Muḥammad 'Ayyāsh Kabīsī, the contemporary Sunnī thinker says, "This sedition of the Wahhābīs urged me to focus my doctorate thesis on this particular matter, conduct a complete deductive study of all the divine attributes mentioned in the Qur'an and in the traditions, and explicate the comments of the past and present ulamas. These investigations expand our breast to receive tolerantly the disagreements there are in the interpretation of the Qur'anic verses and not to take them as the borderlines between faith and disbelief, between unity and polytheism."[2]

When I was a Wahhābī myself, I thought that anyone whose belief was different from that of the Wahhābīs was misguided, deviant, and an extremist, while I took my own ideas as foolproof.

I remember the time I was studying at Ibn Sa'ūd University in ١٩٨٨, where I fiercely criticized all the Sunnīs who did not subscribe to the Wahhābism: I was averse to people like 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudah, Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī of Egypt, Muḥammad 'Alī Sābūnī, Ḥasan al-Bannā, and scores of others whose belief on the divine attributes was different from that of the Wahhābīs. When I finally got away from the trap the Wahhābism had me in, I realized the bewildering fate that was awaiting them.

The approach I have been following in my discussions with the Wahhābīs has been to quote the people who the Wahhābīs believe in, because it is impossible to mention Shaykh Ṭūsī, the eminent Shī'ah scholar, or cite his belief directly. The Wahhābīs

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[1] Prologue to the book "*Tafsīr Āyāt al-Sifāt*".

[2] *Al-'Aqīdah al-Islāmiyyah fī al-Qur'an wa Manāhij al-Mutikallimīn*.

cannot tolerate even hearing his name, let alone listening to his judgment. Therefore, you should, from the beginning, route your point through such people as Ibn Kathīr so the Wahhābīs do not turn away. This, of course, works only if the Wahhābīs have no ill intention, but are the simpletons that are caught up in the trap. They are more in need of medication than disputation. We should view them as a physician does, that is, we should do our best to cure them.

These wrongly educated naïve Wahhābīs are of the opinion that any opposing opinion denotes disbelief and Extremism, but they are unaware that this is pure illusion, an invention of their sick mind. Being involved in such illusion, I once thought that all others were in an open boat of Extremism, but only we would be saved. I thought I was a physician wishing to cure someone who was ill with Extremism. This is why I wrote the book *Al-Sᵢlatu bayn il-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah wa Firaq al-Ghulāt*, the link between Ithnā 'Ashariyyah and the *Ghulāt* sect, the instructions to cure. Before it was published, however, something unexpected happened, and I realized that it was I who was diseased and in need of someone to cure me. I found the top physician, one who could fight this dangerous virus; it was the Imāmiyyah, whom I had mistaken as extremists. The situation changed: just a couple of days before the event I thought I was the physician, but realised in fact I was the diseased.

I was like a doctor who was carrying a deadly virus in his brain, but imagined that all other people had cancer, until he happened to meet another specialist, supposedly one of his patients. The latter diagnosed the former's illness. The scene changed dramatically: the former doctor himself was in need of therapeutic measures.

Today, I have not only discovered that the Imāmiyyah are not suffering from Extremism, but the Wahhābīyyah themselves are seriously ill, suffering from the hallucination that the Shī'ism and Extremism mean the same thing. It is the Wahhābīyyah that

should cure itself the soonest. To me, most Wahhābīs are simple-minded, not malicious, patients, and I deal with them as a doctor does, doing my best to rid them of the dangerous disease of equating Shī'ism with Extremism; this is a task that cannot be done except through a peaceful dialogue: *"Had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you."* (٣:١٥٩)

Anger cannot treat the patient who is spiritually sick; this is exactly what we mean when we speak of "the unity among Muslims": a peaceful symbiosis and a scientific dialogue (to be conducted) under the patronage of understanding and of terminating the tensions, not with the aim of calling each other liars, resorting to quietism or abandoning of religious beliefs.

٢) Making a fuss over certain doctrinal points that the Wahhābīs assume are part of the principles of the religion [*us□ūl*] and a borderline between disbelief and Islam, although they are subsidiary points [*furū'*] and arguable. The Wahhābīs do not make a distinction between *us□ūl* and *furū'* in religion and label *Ghālī* and anyone who disagrees with them on any article of faith a disbeliever, excommunicating him from the fold of Islam. For the Wahhābīs any doctrinal point is a part of the principles of religion [*us□ūl al-dīn*]. It is true that each single principle of religion is a doctrinal point, but not every article of faith can be a principle of the religion. These should not be confused. It is such a confusion that has made the Wahhābīs believe that is impossible for the Shī'ahs and Wahhābīs to reach an understanding. The Wahhābīs take all differences as oppositions to the principles of religion.

 Dr. Nās□ir Qaffārī reiterates the same point in his book, *Mas'alah al-Taqrīb*, and strongly rejects the possibility of any understanding between these two schools of thought, although most of the differing points (he refers to) are not part of the principles of either party's belief system; they are either questions that the Sunnīs themselves do not include in the *us□ūl*

or are the juridical points that have nothing to do with the belief system.

When I say these issues are parts of the subsidiary doctrinal issues, I do not mean that they may be disregarded for the sake of unity; what is meant is that since they are not included in the principles of religion. They can be examined, discussed and refuted without an apparent loss of faith in this world.

Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Ḥāmid, honoured by the Wahhābīs, also says, "That the doctrinal points are called "the principles" is a recent development. Theologians and certain jurists have divided religious issues into two categories: belief and practice. The practical juridical questions derived from the doctrinal ones are considered secondary issues, "*furū*'", in contrast to the principles, "*uṣūl*". The name, but not the reason, spread wide among the Sunnīs; in the course of time the reason was forgotten. Whenever the doctrinal points are called "the principles of religion", it is meant to show the special position and the superiority "belief" has over "practice"; it never denotes that there are no questions of secondary import within the doctrinal points."[1]

He quotes Ibn Taymiyyah's lengthy discourse in which he said that the principles of religion and the doctrinal points should not be combined.

God knows how hard I tried to stop the tension among the Shī'ahs, Sunnīs and Wahhābīs. But, I am increasingly convinced that it is the Wahhābīs themselves who add more fuel to the fire. I have studied almost all the Wahhābīs' books carefully and come to the conclusion that the burning fire of sedition the Wahhābīs have made, originates from a double confusion: equating the Shī'ism with Extremism on the one hand, and confusing the principles of religion with the secondary doctrinal points on the other. To me "mingling" is the most serious

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[1] *Ma'an 'alā Ṭarīq al-Da'wah*, pp. ١٣٤-١٣٧.

spiritual and mental disease, and as I was one of the victims of this virus myself, I set out to discover the cause of the illness and the ways to treat it.

The religious strife and the bloodshed we see in the Islamic countries, like Pakistan, are because of the impact of such Wahhābī writings as Ih□sān Ilāhī Z□ahīr's. This sect has published thousands of books, essays and interviews on the issue of identifying the Shī'ism—and other Islamic sects too—with Extremism. But it is the Wahhābīs themselves who are ill; they muddy the waters, mingle the Imāmiyyah with the *Sabā'iyyah* and Extremism, Polytheism with Islam, and disbelief with belief. It is our duty to cure the naïve and unbiased stratum of people from this deadly disease. This book attempts to offer a sound method for the dialogue between the Shī'ahs and Wahhābīs.

For example, if we want to talk to a Wahhābī about *tawassul*, resorting to the noble Prophet, (*s*□) after his demise, we should first ask him if he considers the issue as belonging to the principles of religion. If he doesn't, then discussing the matter and disproving Wahhābīs' opinion will not cause polytheism nor will it put one out of the fold of Islam. If he does, he should be reminded that the Wahhābī scholars have divided the doctrinal issues into the two groups: *us□ūl* and *furū'*, and that not every doctrinal issue belongs to the category of the principles of religion; none of the four Sunnī canonical schools have included it among the principles of religion either. The authorities whose words are accepted by the Wahhābīs are as follows:

Shaykh H□asan al-Bannā says, "Supplication and entreaties to God [*tawassul*] if made through one of His servants, could be considered a secondary issue; it is not an issue of faith".٠ When the Wahhābīs understand that the differing point is simply a secondary question, not an issue of principles, we are cleared of

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٠ The fifth principle out of the twenty principles he has taken into account for unity among Muslims.

the charge of disbelief and polytheism (they make against us) because the disagreement over a secondary issue is no cause for polytheism. (Item five of the twenty-point principle that he had in mind for the unity of Muslims.)

Muḥammad Ghazzālī, the contemporary *imām* of the Wahhābīs sees no logical cause for the accusations the Wahhābīs make concerning *tawassul*.[1]

۳) The *hadīth*s with a single transmitter are another alibi for the Wahhābīs to accuse their opponents of Extremism, an accusation that looks more like a war than a scientific argument. The Wahhābīs accept isolated narrations as a proof, but their opponents do not. Arguments on such narrations have been going on among Muslims for a long time without fighting or accusing the opposition of innovation in religion and polytheism, the Wahhābīs have turned the argument into a black sedition, as exemplified in the Wahhābī Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh's "*Ḥujjat al-Āḥād fī al-'Aqīdah wa Shubahāt al-Mukhālifīn*".[2]

Anyone reading the Wahhābīs' books or taking part in their gatherings, can easily understand that they accuse their adversaries—whether the Sunnīs or Shī'ahs—of Extremism. If a Muslim ever voices an objection about anything, he will be labeled an extremist; this is a concept whose scope of meaning has been so widely extended by the Wahhābīs that it can include most Muslims!

In fact, it is the Wahhābīs themselves that have demolished the conceptual barriers of "Extremism", trespassed the boundaries depicted by the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, and presented a visage of Extremism so weird that it introduces most Shī'ah and Sunnī scholars as deviated extremists. Today, the Wahhābīs call most

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[1] *Dastūr al-Waḥdah al-Thaqafiyyah bayn al-Muslimīn*, p. ۱۳۰.

[2] P. ٤.

of the premises adduced from the Qur'an and *Sunnah* as cases of Extremism. If they go on for some more time, you will certainly not find even one typical man that could be called "moderate", judged by the Wahhābī standards.

The Wahhābīs should know that if someone holds the view that accepting narrations made by only one reporter is not permissible in doctrinal questions he is not an extremist nor is he cast out of the fold of Islam and faith. The mere rejection of a *wāḥid* narration, when the doctrinal issues of religion are concerned, is no cause for disbelief. 'Ā'ishah and 'Umar, both the apple of the eyes of the Wahhābīs, were wont to rejecting such traditions. The Sunnīs have reported an episode in which 'Umar quoted the Prophet (*s*) as having said that a dead person will be punished in the grave if his folks cry for him. 'Ā'ishah, however, refuted the narration.

How can a narration with one transmitter be a proof to accuse a Muslim with when the narrator may have erred, forgotten the *ḥadīth* or made adjustments to it? Is it logical to accuse Muslims of being extremists and polytheists because they have refuted an opinion that has been based on a single-transmitter narration some Wahhābīs stick to? Ibn Taymiyyah himself has said, "The Companions have disproved many *wāḥid* narrations that the people of *ḥadīth* had reckoned as sound [*ṣaḥīḥ*]."

By insisting that one-transmitter narrations should be accepted in doctrinal issues, the Wahhābīs have committed dangerous errors, one of which is incorporating into the principles of religion the points that are miles away from Islam. More painful yet is their using these points as bases to launch various accusations from, to fabricate unusual and illogical dogmas and to call anyone who rejects these dogmas a disbeliever. But they should know that the Muslim populace does not accept this behavior.

Qāḍī 'Ayāḍ says, "Ibn Qāsim and Ibn Wahab have said 'We believe that the practice of the people of Madīnah is more authorative than a narration that has only one transmitter'."[1]

Mālik, the leader of the Sunnīs, has discarded many *āḥād* narrations because they are in conflict with the practice of the people of Madīnah. What are the Wahhābīs going to do with these incidents?

Shaykh Yūsuf Qarḍāwī has written, "I noticed that the Ḥanbalīs were divided on this matter, because what had been handed down from Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was itself conflicting. It is now clear for me that most Ḥanbalī researchers of the principles of religion do not consider the one-reporter narrations as something that bring certainty and knowledge. This is a point Abūya'lā has mentioned, as have 'Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb, Ibn Qudāmah and even Ibn Taymiyyah."[2]

Are the Wahhābīs aware that Ibn Taymiyyah, their leader, has said, "This is a one-reporter narration. How can it possibly serve as a foundation for a principle of religion on which sound belief rests?"[3]

Shāṭibī has also said, "In dealing with the principles of religion, [relying on] guesswork will not suffice, because the probability of contradicting it exists; guesswork is all right in the case of the secondary issues of religion [*furū'*]; the people of *sharī'ah* act on it because there is a reason for it; so, guesswork is forbidden in all cases except in the secondary issues of religion; all religious scholars consider this a satisfactory idea."[4]

In doctrinal issues, the Sunnī populace allows no argumentation concerning the narrations with a single transmitter because they

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[1] *Tartīb al-Madārik*, p. ٦٦.

[2] *Al-Shaykh al-Ghazālī kamā 'Araftuhū Riḥlatu Nisfi Qarn*, p. ١٢٥.

[3] *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, p. ١٣٣.

[4] *Al-I'tisām*, vol. ١, p. ٢٣٥.

are not sure if they can prove their point. The list of such notable people includes Imām al-H☐aramayn, Sa'd, Ghazzālī, Ibn 'Abd al-Birr, Ibn Athīr, S☐afī al-Dīn Baghdādī, Ibn Qudāmah, 'Abd al-'Azīz Bukhārī, Ibn Sabkī, S☐an'ānī, Ibn 'Abd al-Shakūr, Shanqīt☐☐ī, and scores of others.

Khat☐īb Baghdādī has said, "A one-transmitter narration is unacceptable in any religious issue that requires finality."

Abū Ish☐āq Shīrāzī says, "A one-transmitter narration brings no knowledge."¹

Ghazzālī has said, "A one-transmitter narration brings no knowledge; this is a necessity; therefore, we do not confirm whatever we hear since affirming two contradictory pieces of information is affirming two oppositions."²

Ibn 'Abd al-Shakūr also says, "The avant-garde in the science of *us☐ūl* maintain that a narration with one transmitter, received from a source other than the Infallible (Imāms) (*'a*), surely brings neither knowledge nor certainty, whether or not it is presented together with an analogue. In the case where the isolated narration is intended to convey knowledge, (care must be taken because) if two just people bring two opposing pieces of information, affirming them will be affirming two contradictions."³

'Abd al-Qāhir Baghdādī has written "The one-transmitter narrations could be acted on if they are correct in the chain of transmitters, and if they are not logically impossible in the text; they bring no knowledge though."⁴

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¹ *Al-Tabs☐irah*, p. ٢٩٨.

² *Al- Mustas☐fī*, vol. ١, p. ١٤٥.

³ *Muslim al-Thubūt Bisharh☐-i Fawātih☐ al-Rah☐mūt*, vol. ٢, pp. ١٢١-١٢٢.

⁴ *Us☐ūl al-Dīn*, p. ١٢.

Bayhaqī has said "Concerning the issue of the divine attributes, our scholars do not base their argument on a one-transmitter narration if the narration is not based on the Qur'an or on the consensus of opinion, [*ijmā'*]."[1]

Fakhr Rāzī has also said "When *us☐ūlī*s say 'one-transmitter tradition', they mean it is a tradition that does not bring knowledge and certainty."[2]

Elsewhere he has said "Basing their discourse on one-transmitter narrations, some people talk about the divine attributes although these narrations are far from finality and certainty."[3]

Muh☐ammad Ghazzālī, the Egyptian, has also joined the long list and said "I graduated from al-Azhar University about half a century ago, and have been teaching for years. I discovered that the one-transmitter narrations merely produce a surmise and can be used to issue a religious verdict until more evidence has not been found. Therefore, it is a sort of exaggeration to claim that such narrations produce certainty; it is null and void, considered logically or by referring it to the transmitted science."[4]

Elsewhere, Ghazzālī says, "A narration that has only one transmitter merely produces a surmise; it can function within the scope of *furū'*, not within the principles of faith [*us☐ūl*]. I would like to emphasize that a one-transmitter narration has never produced anything except guesswork. However, there are now some people who desire to rely on one-transmitter narrations in order to prove their own faith and consider those who refute the narration as disbelievers; this is a sort of Extremism."[5]

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[1] *Al-Asmā' wa al-S☐ifāt*, p. ٣٥٧.

[2] *Al-Ma'ālim*, p. ١٣٨.

[3] *Asās al-Taqdīs*.

[4] *Al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah bayn Ahl al-Fiqh wa Ahl al-H☐adīth*, p. ٧٤.

[5] *Dastūr al-Wah☐dah al-Thaqāfiyyah bayn al-Muslimīn*, p. ٦٨.

Yūsuf Qard□āwī says, "The doctrinal issues should be based on certainty, not on guesswork; the soundly-documented narrations with one transmitter, on the other hand, do not produce certainty. It is the narration with an established chain of transmission, Mutawater that brings certainty; the former issue is confirmed by the Qur'an, *"And they have no knowledge of it; they do not follow anything but conjecture, and surely conjecture does not avail against the truth at all."* (٥٣:٢٨) and the latter by the *us□ūlī* scholars. This is a method that is prevalent in notable scientific centers of the world of Islam, such as al-Azhar, Zaytūnah, Qruwiyīn, Dīwband, etc."[1]

Sayyid Qut□b has also said, "One-transmitter narrations cannot be accepted in doctrinal issues; in such instances we refer to the Qur'an and the traditions that have been received with an unbroken chain of transmission (mutawater); in doctrinal issues the condition for accepting these narrations is that they should be mutawater."[2]

Mah□mūd Shaltūt says, "All religious scholars maintain that a one-transmitter narration does not produce certainty, nor can it be used to base a doctrinal issue on. The researchers have all called this an indisputable matter; this is certainly an undisputable consensus."[3]

Of the scores of similar statements the Sunnī scholars have made, only a portion has been mentioned above to convince the Wahhābīs that they should not accuse of disbelief and polytheism anyone who opposes them.

The discussion presented so far concerns the first reason why the Wahhābīs have been unable to know the Imāmiyyah: their lack of knowledge of what the Extremism means. The second reason,

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[1] *Al-Shaykh al-Ghazzālī kamā 'Araftuhū Rih□latu Nis□f-i Qarn*, pp. ١٢٣-١٢٤.

[2] *Fī Z□ilāl al-Qur'ān*, vol. ٦, p. ٤٠٠٨.

[3] *Al-Islām, 'Aqīdah wa Sharī'ah*, pp. ٧٤-٧٦.

the Wahhābīs' lack of knowledge of what the Shī'ism means, is thoroughly discussed in our second book *Mawqif al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah min al-Ghuluww wa al-Ghulāt*. The third reason, the Wahhābīs' lack of knowledge on the Imāmiyyah's position towards the Extremism and the extremists, will also appear in the same book. Below is just a brief discussion on the third item.

A brief report on the Imāmiyyah's stand against the Extremism and the extremists

The fiery stand it takes against the Extremism and the extremists is the Imāmiyyah's unique peculiarity when this school is contrasted with others. No other school of thought has shown as severe a reaction as the Imāmiyyah has brought to the fore. This is because the Imāmiyyah's mentality, stemming from the glorious Qur'an and the true Prophetic (s☐) *Sunnah*, is at war with the extremist conceptions, and is doing its best to correct these deviations (from the truth) and save the infested. Further explanation is unnecessary. What is clear requires no details. Many of the extremists I have met and talked to, have given up the Extremism and profane beliefs, and have returned to the fold of Islam.

Because the Wahhābīs are unaware of the Imāmiyyah's basic view and thought, they equate the Extremism with the Shī'ism; this being an illness they suffer from. They should, therefore be made to understand that it is a misconception; (along with this), the Shī'ah's point of view, based on the Shī'ah sources, should be explained to them. They should know that the Imāmiyyah keeps aloof of the extremists because the Shī'ism keeps pace with the Qur'an and the true Prophetic (s☐) *Sunnah* both in word and deed. Doubts can certainly be removed when evidence is offered. Our detailed discussion centers round the following five points:

١. The Imāmiyyah's view on the extremists' conception;

٢. The Imāmiyyah's view on how the extremists legalized their opinions;

٣. The Imāmiyyah's view on leaders of the Extremism;

٤. The Imāmiyyah's view on the extremists' narrations;

٥. The Imāmiyyah's view on the extremists' books.

The Shī'ah school of thought has played an undeniable part in rescuing Muslims from the grip of the extremist deviations. The procedure this school has adopted in countering the Extremism, has forced the extremist thought to remain confined within a narrow circle, unable to spread out.

The opinion the Shī'ahs vehemently fight against is the false notion of "deification of man", i.e. man's abandoning the quality of being a servant to God. This false notion is the outcome of drawing no distinction between divinity and submission to Him. The Imāms (*'a*) of the Shī'ahs have, in hundreds of narrations that have been quoted from them, clarified man's rank and have expressly said that however far he travels along the path to perfection, man will never attain the rank of divinity.

The words of the Imāms (*'a*) of the Shī'ahs have their origin in the glorious Qur'an and the pure Prophetic (*s*□) narrations and are similar to an explanation of these two sources; that is why a sway of the Qur'anic style of expression can be seen in all their words that communicate (to us) both the worship all created things owe to Allah and the Unique Lordship of the Divine. Since the extremists have, in their propaganda, centered on the deification of man or deification of the Imāms, the Imāms (*'a*) of the Shī'ahs have emphasized that they are servants of the Divine Essence, Allah, and fully submissive to Him. In this way they have totally eradicated the extremists' fundamental notion of the deification of man.

The Shī'ah transmitters of *h*□*adīth* have taken great pains to preserve the *h*□*adīth*s on this topic and considerably influenced

attempts made to wipe up the deviated ideas of the extremists. It was on the basis of these narrations that the Shī'ah jurists reacted strongly towards the *Ghulāt* sects and excommunicated them. The Wahhābīs, who equate the Shī'ism with the Extremism, take these narrations as allusions to the Imāms (*'a*) of the Shī'ahs, blaming the Shī'ahs accordingly. This is the unfortunate conclusion of identifying the Shī'ism with the Extremism to which we previously referred. A few narrations are mentioned below:

١.   Imām Ja'far al-S□ādiq (*'a*), on the authority of his ancestors, has quoted the Holy Prophet (*s*□) as having said, "Do not rank me higher than is my due, for God had appointed me as His servant before He chose me as His prophet." When the Holy Prophet (*s*□), whose dignity is the highest among men, places so much emophasis on his worshipping Allah, the Imāms (*'a*) of the Shī'ahs certainly do the same.

٢.   Imām 'Alī (*'a*) has said, "Beware of going to extreme as regards us; consider us as servants that have been brought up." Being an obedient servant to Allah, an important instruction of the Shī'ism, is quite prominent in the Imāmiyyah books. When I see the narrations from the Imāms (*'a*) of the Shī'ahs and match them with the words of the Shī'ah men of knowledge, I see that there is a complete correspondence between the two. That the Imāms (*'a*) are Allah's servants is a fundamental fact of the Shī'ism, an issue thoroughly integrated with the life of this school and its followers. Therefore, the Extremism finds no place among the followers of this school of thought. Deep in his heart, every Shī'ah believes in the words of Imām Rid□ā (*'a*), who said, "Anyone who elevates the dignity of the Commander of the Faithful (*'a*), to consider him a divinity, is among those upon whom God's wrath is brought, and is of those who have gone astray. Did 'Alī ibn Abī T□ālib (*'a*) not eat (food) and marry as others did? Can such a person occupy the station of divinity? Were it so, then you could each be a god."

The Shī'ah books abound with such narrations and the Shī'ah scholars have also followed the same manner (of thought and belief). Anyone frequenting the Shī'ah gatherings, will be convinced that these ideas do not merely fill the gaps in the Shī'ah books, nor live a dormant life; they are in fact a part of the Shī'ah community, the blood circulating through it and giving it vitality and honour.

The picture presented so far depicts the first stage of introducing the Shī'ism to the Wahhābīs—the step following the separation of the Imāmiyyah from the Extremism. Now, let's take a cursory look at the second stage, i.e. the study of the Imāmiyyah in detail.
✍

Stage Two: Analytical Study of the Imāmiyyah

The second step we need to take in introducing the Shīʿism to the Wahhābīs is to make a detailed analysis of the beliefs in this school of thought, and explain it to the Wahhābīs so that incorrect analyses and false beliefs do not engage their minds, nor cause them to accuse us of the Extremism and disbelief, attributing to us the false notions that have nothing to do with the Imāmiyyah.

The facts that we plan to investigate are available in the Imāmiyyah's authentic books. We do not, of course, mean to make an extensive study of the texts, for this will be done in another book. We merely say that in all their publications, the Wahhābīs commonly attribute the Shīʿahs with all the extremist beliefs and opinions and then shower them with accusations that the Shīʿahs strongly refute. A number of contemporary Sunnī writers have unfortunately followed the Wahhābīs' manner, whereas their researchers have realized it necessity to refer to the authentic books of a *madhhab* and make a scholarly analysis and investigation of their content before commenting on them. The reason for the difference in the manners adopted by such persons as Iḥsān Ilāhī Ẓahīr, who gives a verdict to excommunicate the Imāmiyyah, and Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt, who calls the Imāmiyyah one of the Islamic authentic schools of thought becomes clear to us: the former has taken the second-hand

documents of the *Ghulāt* as sufficient evidence, but the latter has studied and analyzed the first-hand sources.

We will now go through four important questions.

١. The reality of divinity and prophecy as viewed by the Imāmiyyah

These two issues occupy a fundamental position in the Shī‘ah doctrine. Anyone referring to the Imāmiyyah books will clearly understand that the Shī‘ahs display great interest in the issue of the Oneness of God and His Lordship and take it as belonging to a guild different from that of worship that creatures must render to God, for Lordship [*rubūbiyyah*] is specifically Allah's Divine Essence, and all others are placed on the plane of rendering worship and being creatures.

The extraordinary significance of this issue has set the Imāmiyyah up to taking a harsh stand against the Extremism and its beliefs and write myriads of books in which they have rejected the extremists' ideas and excommunicated the extremists, because the *Ghulāt* have not separated the station of Lordship from that of worship, but believe in unification [*ittih□ād*] and incarnation [*h□ulūl*].

As regards Prophecy, the Imāmiyyah have established their belief upon the Qur'anic texts, maintaining that the Prophet's (*s□*) mission is the last, and his superiority over all definite. This is something the extremists do not accept. Rather, they consider others superior to the Prophet (*s□*). The Imāmiyyah are of the opinion that no other Prophet (*s□*) has come after Muh□ammad (*s□*) nor will ever come. Also, anyone who denies that Prophecy ends with Muh□ammad (*s□*) is a disbeliever. This belief surely stems from the Qur'an.

٢. The realities of the divine injunctions and laws in the Imāmiyyah school of thought

To understand these realities, they should be sequenced as we have arranged, because until the first reality is not understood, the second one cannot be attained. The former reality concentrates on theory, the latter on practice; the first reality talks about intellectual reasoning and the second speaks about corporeal acts: belief in the first issue leads to practice in the second one.

Having first proved that there is no transcendental beloved or a creator or one who regulates the affairs except Allah, and having established the fact that law-making is exclusively His, we proceed to the second issue and say that legislation should be adduced from the Qur'an and from the revelation [wah□y]; since the Prophet's (s□) *Sunnah* originates from the revelation, it is a source of legislation

If you refer to the Shī'ah juridical books, you will see that the precepts and verdicts are all documentary: they have the Qur'an or the true *Sunnah* as their proof and support, intend the external meaning of the orders, flee from the esoteric and interpretive implications, sentence to apostasy anyone who interprets [ta'wīl] the religious injunctions, does not feel obliged to observe the rules and washes his hands of acting according to the *sharī'ah* laws. The Shī'ahs maintain that however important belief may be, it is not enough to make one needless of the religious injunctions and laws.

٣. The Imāmiyyah's ultimate religious end

It will not be possible to know the ultimate goal of a school of thought, unless its outlook on articles of faith and practical questions are understood. The Wahhābīs, however, desire to understand the ultimate goal of the Shī'ah school of thought before dealing with the position this school has adopted concerning faith and practice. This is impossible because the

goals begin to flourish within the matrix of faith and practice. It is not possible to separate one's goals from their beliefs, but the Wahhābīs work hard to fabricate false aims for the Shī'ism and launch their attacks without having deliberated on the significance of the first and second realities mentioned above.

٤. The purport of some terms common among the Shī'ahs

I have often seen that the Wahhābīs misinterpret certain expressions as *badā'*, dissimulation [*taqiyyah*], inerrancy [*is□mah*] and *mus□h□af* that are commonly used in the Shī'ah culture. So long as the meanings of these words are not made clear, there will exist no feasibility of a strife-free dialogue between the Shī'ahs and the Wahhābīs because of the profound diversity there is between the Shī'ahs' interpretation of the words and how the Wahhābīs understand them, although these expressions are formally the same.

This may seem to be the point where the two realities of Imamate and the Twelfth Imam's ('a) occultation should be brought up, but to make it easier for the Wahhābīs to grasp the idea we moved it to stage three because it is very hard for them to perceive them at this particular stage. Now, let us take a cursory look at the issue of knowing the Imāmiyyah. ✍

Stage Three: A Meticulous Understanding of the Imāmiyyah's Faith

The issues that will be examined at stage three are a logical continuation of what was discussed in stage two; that is, when the concepts of divinity, Prophecy, *sharī'ah*, the religious ultimate end and certain terms of the Shī'ah culture are explained, the origin of the Imāmiyyah and that of the extremists will not be confused, nor will the Shī'ah sources and those of the Extremism be taken as identical. The items that need to be examined at this stage are three: the sources, identity and origin of the Imāmiyyah. The important issues of Imamate and the Imām's (*'a*) occultation referred to here are in fact constituents of stage two, but are discussed here for the reasons mentioned before.

١. Sources of the Imāmiyyah school of thought

Before making a thorough examination of the religious concepts and beliefs, the Wahhābīs habitually claim that the Shī'ahs' beliefs stem from the Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity. This is an unfounded judgment because if they trace the same line that we have mentioned in the previous stages, they will realize that the fundamentals of the Shī'ism are all derived from the Qur'an and the correct Prophetic (*s*□) *Sunnah*. If the Wahhābīs were familiar with the Imāmiyyah's scholarly verdicts and practice, they would perceive our assertion and would no longer accuse the Shī'ahs of being Zoroastrians. Since they

equate the Shī'ism with Extremism, the Wahhābīs think that the sources of these two are also identical, and that the Shī'ah sources have their roots in the Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity, just as the extremists' deviations come from the Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity. How distant are these two opinions!

٢. The reality of the Imamate in the Shī'ah school of thought

Powerful and authoritative documents—the Qur'an and *Sunnah*—prove that the succession to the Prophet (*s*□), Imamate, is a particular blessing Almighty God has, through His Messenger (*s*□) made known to the mankind; it is not a concept that has been fabricated by the Shī'ahs, nor is it the outcome of the oppression inflicted upon the Prophet's pure household (*'a*). The Imamate i.e., leadership of the twelve Imāms (*'a*) has repeatedly been expressed in the correct texts from the early days of the advent of Islam, and has nothing to do with the fourth century or the time thereafter.

Sunnī and Shī'ah Muslims unanimously maintain that the Holy Prophet (*s*□) introduced the twelve Imāms (*'a*) as his vicegerents and inheritors. Muslim Bukhārī, and scores of other narrators who lived before the fourth century A.H., at a time when the number of the Imāms (*'a*) had not yet come to twelve, have recorded the divine words of the Prophet (*s*□) in their books. These narrations played an important part in attracting people to the Imāms (*'a*). That is why the tyrant rulers who feared a shaky rule had, as items of their agenda, the plan to keep these traditional texts in hiding, to distort them, or to assign them esoteric interpretations. We have provided indisputable evidence concerning this matter in our next book "*Rih*□*latī min al-Wahhābiyyah ilā al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah*". The Wahhābīs, however, say that these narrations have come from the extremist sources, but they have forgotten that the traditional texts on Imamate are preserved in the Sunnī authentic books, too; proving that the *h*□*adīth*s in question have not been designed by the Shī'ahs. The

Wahhābīs have neither thoroughly examined the narrations that are accepted by all Muslims of various schools of thought, nor have they taken pains to refer to the Imāmiyyah books and study the undeniable evidences there are on the issue of the Prophet's (s☐) succession, but ignorantly insist that the belief in Imamate is a fabrication of the extremists and Zoroastrians.

It is our belief that the soaring bird of the Imāmiyyah Shī'ism has two powerful wings to fly with: the *thaqalayn h☐adīth* and the narrations concerning the twelve Imāms [*Ithnā 'Ashar Khulafā'*]. So long as the Wahhābīs have not understood these two, they will not perceive other Imāmiyyah realities.

In his book "*Al-Imām 'Alī al-Rid☐ā wa Risālatuhu al-T☐ibbiyyah*", Dr. Muh☐ammad 'Alī Bār, the distinguished Wahhābī author says the following about the *thaqalayn h☐adīth*, "In his *S☐ah☐īh☐*, Muslim quotes Zayd ibn Arqam as having said 'Beside a brook at Ghadīr Khumm, between Macca and Madina, the Holy Prophet (s☐) delivered a sermon. Having praised and glorified Allah and having given us admonitions, he said, "O people! I am a human being who is about to be summoned by the divine angel and who is to respond to this call. I am leaving behind two precious things (*thaqalayn*): The first is the Book of Allah, which contains guidance and light. So take hold of the Book of Allah"; he then persuaded us to act according to it. Then he continued, "And, my Ahl al-Bayt (my Household). With regard to Ahl al-Bayt, I remind you of Allah." He repeated this sentence three times'."

In his book, *Sunan*, Tirmidhī, on the authority of Zayd ibn Arqam, has quoted the Prophet (s☐) as having said, "I leave behind two worthy things among you. If you take hold of them, you will not be misguided after me. One of them is greater than the other; the Book of Allah, which is a rope extending from the heavens to the earth, and my my Household [*'itrah*]. The two will never separate until they return to me beside the pond of *kawthar*. So, heed how you deal with them."

A large number of the contemporary men of knowledge and orators are curiously unaware or pretend to be so though Muslim and Tirmidhī have narrated this report as has Ḥākim Nayshābūrī in his *Mustadrak* and so has Aḥmad in his *Musnad*! These *'ulamā'* have replaced the phrase *wa ahl-i baytī* [*my 'itrah*] with *wa sunnatī* [*my Sunnah*] although Mālik's report in his *Muwaṭṭa'* is weak and disrupted in its chain of transmitters. These scholars should quote the two narrations simultaneously if they ever desire to cite something; it is improper to quote one and hide the other one, for it will be an example of "hiding the knowledge". God and His Messenger have threatened (with punishment) the one who denies it.

'Allāmah Muḥammad Nāṣir Albānī has quoted the *'itrah* tradition in his *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah* in this way: 'O People! I am leaving behind among you two trusts; if you take hold of them, you will never be misguided: the Book of Allah and my Ahl al-Bayt." Albānī then said, "This is a sound narration for which Zayd ibn Arqam's report can be cited as evidence."

"The following scholars have reported the same *ḥadīth*: Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*,¹ Ṭaḥāwī in *Mushkil al-Āthār*,² Aḥmad³ and Ibn-e Abī 'Āṣim in *Kitāb al-Sunnah*,⁴ and Ṭabarānī⁵ on the authority of Yazīd ibn Ḥayyān Tamīmī. Besides, these reports Aḥmad,⁶ Ṭabarānī,⁷ and Ṭaḥāwī have narrated it on the authority of 'Alī ibn Rabī'ah, who said 'I saw Zayd ibn Arqam and asked him 'Did you yourself hear the Prophet (ṣ) saying 'I leave two precious things, *thaqalayn*,

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¹ Vol. ٧, pp. ١٢٢-١٢٣.

² Vol. ٤, p. ٣٦٨.

³ Vol. ٤, ٣٦٦-٧.

⁴ Narrations ١٥٥٠, ١٥٥١.

⁵ Narration ٥٠٢٦.

⁶ Vol ٤, p. ٣٧١.

⁷ Narration ٥٠٤٠.

among you: the Book of Allah and my Household ['*itrat*]?' He answered, "Yes". The chain of the transmission of this report is authentic. The same tradition has also been reported by different intermediaries, some named by Ṭabarānī,¹ some others by Ḥākim,² who called a number of them 'trustworthy' as did Dhahabī."

Another evidence: 'Aṭiyyah 'Awfī quotes Abū Sa'īd Khudrī as having said, "I am a human being who is about to be summoned by the divine angel and who is to respond to this call. I am leaving behind two things among you. If you hold on to them, you will not be misguided after me. One of them is greater than the other: the Book of Allah, which is a rope extending from the heavens to the earth, and my Household ['*itrah*]. The two will never separate until they return to me beside the pond (of *kawthar*)."

Aḥmad,³ Ibn Abī 'Āṣim,⁴ Ṭabarānī,⁵ and Daylamī⁶ have reported the same narration.

Dārquṭinī,⁷ Ḥākim,⁸ and Khaṭīb have given other evidence in *Faqīh*.⁹ Dhahabī has called some of their reports as trustworthy."

"On my trip to the UAE," Albānī continues, "I met certain doctors, one of whom gave me a book he had written to throw doubt on the *thaqalayn* narration. The book, with the two

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¹ Narrations ٤٩٦٩, ٤٩٧١, ٤٩٨٠-٤٩٨٢, ٤٠٥٠.

² Vol. ٣, pp. ١٠٩, ١٤٨, ٥٣٣.

³ Vol. ٣, pp. ١٤, ١٧, ٢٦, ٥٩.

⁴ Narrations ١٥٥٣, ١٥٥٥.

⁵ Narrations ٢٦٧٨-٢٦٧٩.

⁶ Vol. ٢, p. ٤٥.

⁷ Narration ٥٢٩.

⁸ Vol. ١, p. ٩٣.

⁹ Vol. ١, p. ٥٦.

weaknesses it had—which I told him—showed that he was a novice in the science of traditions.

١. The *h□adīth* bibliography consisted of a handful of very ordinary books; the author had ignored a multitude of intermediaries and chains of transmission, each of which was authentic in itself without the need for other corollary evidence.

٢. He had not referred to the works of tradition experts, nor had he taken notice of the rule that says, "The weak report will certainly gain force when there are many chains of transmission. The *thaqalayn* tradition has many authentic chains of transmission.

Some time before this, I heard that in Kuwait a certain doctor had written an essay to weaken the *thaqalayn* tradition, but I was not sure of the news until I received a letter criticizing me for having included the weak *thaqalayan* narration in my book *S□ah□īh□ al-Jām' al-S□aghīr.*'

The evidence the surprised writer of the letter had referred to was the book the above-mentioned author had written. I asked him to go over the matter once again in order to perceive the doctor's error. The writer of the letter had been unable to distinguish between a novice and an expert in the science of *h□adīth*—a circumstance that has snared many people. May God relieve those who are!"٢

I have quoted all Albānī's words, so the Wahhābīs who repeatedly reproduce Dr. 'Alī Ah□mad Sālūs' books on weakening of the *thaqalayan* narration, will realize that this very doctor knows nothing about the sciences of narration and *rijāl*, and that Albānī's has said these words for no reason other than refuting Dr. Sālūs.

' Narrations ٢٤٥٣-٢٤٥٤، ٢٧٤٥، ٧٧٥٤.

٢ End of Albānī's words.

۳) The identity of the Imāmiyyah school of thought

It is impossible to know the intellectual identity of a school of thought before a deep and analytic examination is made of its ideological contents. Yet the Wahhābīs have reversed the procedure. Without having made an analytical study, they have pronounced that the Shī'ah intellectual identity is Zoroastrian.

Because there was a need for the discussion to proceed logically, the chapter on "the identity of Shī'ism" came after "the realities of the Imāmiyyah" presented in previous chapters.

Curiously some have claimed that the Shī'ism is ethnically pure Persian although it carries the Islamic-Arabic identity, but we will, in future discussions, present authentic documents and prove that the Shī'ahs were all Arabs when Islam first appeared, and most Iranians of the time were Sunnīs. Ibn Khaldūn has, on same grounds, praised them in his *Muqaddamah*. For certain reasons, however, Iranians abandoned the Sunnīsm and turned to the Shī'ism.

After it is proved to us that the realities of divinity and Prophecy as the Shī'ahs understand them are derived from the Qur'an and the Prophet's (*s*□) *Sunnah*, as are the Imāmiyyah's juridical precepts; and, after it is made clear that the religious ends portrayed in the Qur'an, in the Prophet's (*s*□) *Sunnah* and the Imāmiyyah school of thought are identical; and, after we have learned that the Qur'an and the Prophet's (*s*□) *Sunnah* are the sources where the Shī'ah knowledge and practical injunctions come from; and, when we know the reality of the Qur'anic issue of the Imamate is exactly as the Imāmiyyah bring it up, we will inevitably conclude that it is impossible to separate Islam's intellectual trend from the Shī'ah intellectual identity, provided, of course, that we have followed the previous discussions sequenced; otherwise, we will end up in the vortex of taking the Shī'ism from the Extremism.

٤. The origin of Shī'ah school of thought

The idea of assigning an identical manner of advent for the Shī'ism and extremist sects stems from the Wahhābīs' ignorance of the Shī'ah intellectual elements and those of the Extremism, as well as from the Wahhābīs' inability to hold onto a coherent dogma. The extremist thought emerged and developed in an environment already polluted by the Zoroastrian stories and Judaeo-Christian superstition. It is, therefore, a purely absurd and funny attempt to take the extremist thought and the Shī'ah faith that stems from the Qur'an and the Prophet's (*s*□) *Sunnah* as identical.

Since the Wahhābīs have not made an analytical study of the Shī'ahs' genuine source books (not even of the Sunnīs'), they have disregarded the Prophet (*s*□), the first person who brought up the issue of the guardianship, [*wilāyah*] of the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī, (*'a*) and have instead brought 'Abd Allāh ibn Sabā' to the fore claiming that the Shī'ism began with him. He was in fact the first to have exaggerated the Commander of the Faithful's (*'a*) stand. This is how the issue of identifying the Shī'ism with the Extremism [*quluww*] began to form.

Muslims unanimously agree on the following statement, "It was 'Abd Allāh ibn Sabā' who first called 'Alī (*'a*) a god and the transcendental beloved"; but the Wahhābīs have replaced the word "god" with word "legatee [*was*□*s*□*iy*]" saying "'Abd Allāh ibn Sabā' was the first to have called 'Alī (*'a*) the Prophet's (*s*□) legatee." This is why they credited him with the advent of the Shī'ism.

In our book, *Rih*□*latī min al-Wahhābiyyah*, we have proved that the Sunnīs maintain that the Prophet (*s*□) was the first person to have introduced 'Alī (*'a*) as his legatee. It is, therefore, sheer absurdity to mingle the two categories of "being a legatee" and "divinity" as the Wahhābīs have done; the former is strongly supported by the Qur'an and is very far from the category of assigning 'Alī (*'a*) a divine stand—an idea that is rooted in polytheistic thoughts.

All this confusion has appeared because the Wahhābī sub-sect did not follow the logical sequences (we previously referred to) when they were doing their studies and analyses of the Shī'ah belief. Consequently, they deviated. There are, however, Sunnī scholars and sane Wahhābīs who have realized the blunder.

That it was 'Abd Allāh ibn Sabā' who had called 'Alī (*'a*) the *was s iy* of the Prophet (*s*□) is strongly rejected by most Sunnī scholars, who have said that 'Alī (*'a*) had already been known among the Companions of the Prophet (*s*□) as his *was s iy* long before 'Abd Allāh ibn Sabā' came into existence. The Sunnīs have accepted the fact that the Wahhābīs' claim is a mere opinion invented to blemish the Imāmiyyah, so that the illiterate may come to think that the intellectual basis of the Shī'ah school of thought—The Commander of the Faithful (*'a*) being a *was s iy* of the Prophet (*s*□)—has been worked out by a Jew.

Reasons for the advent of the Shī'ism

While examining the reality of the Imamate in the Shī'iite school of thought, we said that we have many documents proving that the Shī'ah belief in the twelve Imāms (*'a*) is based on decisive arguments derived from the Book of Allah and the Prophetic (*s*□) tradition [*Sunnah*]. This is why it is improper to talk about the reason why the Shī'ahs accepted the 'Alī's (*'a*) guardianship, [*wilāyah*] before the reality of the Imamate is studied.

Once you have proved that the Shī'ism, *wilāyah*, and resorting to the Imāms (*'a*) are all obtained from the Prophetic (*s*□) traditions of *thaqalayn* and the *Ithnā 'Asharah khulafā'*, and that resorting to them is (in rank) next to resorting to the Qur'an, it is time to tell the interlocutor that there are fundamentally incongruent reasons for the advent of the Shī'ism and for the appearance of the Extremism. Why the Wahhābīs do not perceive the issue is because they are suffering from the serious illness of mingling the Shī'ism with the Extremism; they should go through stage one discussed in this book in order to be cured.

How to present the peculiarities of the Imāmiyyah to the Wahhābīs?

Having finished the stage on "The proper methods of discussion with the Wahhābīs", it is time we began the section on "Peculiarities of Shī'ism" and consider the following three points:

١.   Since the peculiarities of the Shī'ism cannot be perceived unless the realities of this school of thought are known, these have received priority in our discussion.

٢.   The Shī'ah and Sunnī scholars have undividedly mentioned certain characteristics for Islam, whereas the Wahhābīs have conceived certain others. Mingling of the two characteristics and confusing the principles of Islam with the Wahhābī dogmas has caused the Wahhābīs problems and pushed them to bring a charge against other schools of thought.

٣.   It is clear that the Wahhābīs make no distinction between the Imāmiyyah traits and those of the Extremism, taking some of the latter's characteristics as belonging to the Imāmiyyah. We have enumerated the Shī'ah traits in our book *Rih☐latī min al-Wahhābiyyah*. Of these, three are listed below:

   a.   Observing a positive golden mean as regards the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet, peace be upon them;

   b.   A realistic view of the Companions;

   c.   The issue of the occultation of the Twelfth Imām, may Allah hasten his glorious advent.

The first trait

Of the most significant Imāmiyyah traits mentioned here is the non-extremist, moderate view they hold on the Imāms, peace be upon them, a trend of great impact in my converting to the Shī'ism. When I was a Wahhābī, I imagined the Sunnīs had a non-extremist view regarding the Household of the Prophet (*s*☐)

as the Sunnīs themselves thought. But after I studied *al-Taʿab al-Jamīl ʿalā Ahl al-Jarh wa'l-Taʿdīl*, written by Ibn ʿAqīl, the Shāfiʿī leader of the Sunnīs, and al-Imām Jaʿfar al-Sādiq, written by Muhammad Abū Zahrah, I realized that the Sunnīs' viewpoint on the Prophet's Household (*ʿa*) was not realistic, actual, or moderate, rather, it was the Shīʿah school of thought that maintained the real moderate view.

Although the Sunnīs have rejected the *Nāsibīs*' and the *Ghulāt*'s extreme views concerning the Imāms (*ʿa*) and have disavowed the two groups, they have, nevertheless, opted for a negative stance as regards the Household of the Prophet (*ʿa*); that is, although they have faith in what the Prophet (*s*) has said about Ahl al-Bayt (*ʿa*) and consider it an Islamic necessity to resort to them along with resorting to the Qur'an, they turn to sources other than the Imāms (*ʿa*), stick to their choice, and oppose the Imāms (*ʿa*) in practice or in words. This is what we mean by "the Sunnīs' negative position" towards the Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt (*ʿa*). The Shīʿahs, on the contrary, have openly declared that they do not belong to the Extremism and never opt for an enmity towards the Ahl al-Bayt (*ʿa*) but take the Holy Prophet's (*s*) advice, resort to his Household (*ʿa*) and admit their deeds and words as authentic.

This is the point where the Sunnīs' and Shīʿahs' approaches diverge—a point so critical that has resulted in a thorough separation of the two approaches that have no common grounds. All praise is due to Allah, whose grace guided us to choose the Imāmiyyah school of thought and give up the Wahhābīsm.

The second trait

The Shīʿahs treat the Companions realistically, and know that they are essentially human beings dominated by the same rules and conventions governing man, and can quite possibly err just as others do. I hope that the Wahhābīs will not take my words as "a criticism of the justice of the Companions", but will ponder

on realities instead. I say this because the Wahhābīs greatly fear to talk about the issue, and are intolerant towards any criticism. I do hope, however, that they will see the content of the discussion, without giving it a particular label.

What the Shī'ism denounces is "the absolute justice of all Companions", but not partial justice of some Companions.

As I was a Wahhābī myself, I know it well that the Wahhābīs value the name and the appearance of things so highly that they begin severely striving merely for a name or for an event, but end their struggle as soon as the headings are changed. They refuse to read certain books simply because they are sensitive to the title, but eagerly take up studying the same books as soon as the names are changed. In none of over the three hundred taped discussions I have had with the Wahhābīs will you hear me using the term "Shī'ah". I have, instead, used "*Ithnā 'Ashariyyah*" to make it easier for them to listen, because they bitterly hate the word "Shī'ah".

When speaking to the Wahhābīs, you should not talk about the Companions before you have discussed the *thaqalayn h□adīth*, because the Wahhābīs, favoring the idea of the justice of the Companions—a negative outcome of their opposing the *thaqalayn* narration—will reject the discussion. Once you have explained the *thaqalayn* narration, the issue of the Companions will have automatically found a due solution.

You should not talk about *Ghadīr* before you have made a mention of the *thaqalayn* narration, otherwise you will be driven into a polemic on the Companions [*s□ah□ābah*] and on the event of *Saqīfah* as soon as you mention *Ghadīr*. The Wahhābīs imagine that the two events are interrelated in the same way that most of them consider the *Ghadīr* report, a mere political

outdated discussion,¹ but not so on the *thaqalayn* narration. This is because they consider the latter narration directly linked with the religious authority of the Prophet's Household (*'a*)—a belief that is valid even for these days.

I do not mean to devalue the reports on the *Ghadīr* event, but would like to mention that in talking to a Wahhābī we should remember that he has his own mentality. We desire to help him breakaway from the grip of some troublesome images. A Wahhābī cannot understand the *Ghadīr* before he has understood the *thaqalayn*. The discussion should be delayed a bit until things are clear to him.

As I mentioned in the prologue, we had better begin with *tat□hīr* and *mubāhilah* verses of the Qur'an before we begin to speak about *wilāyah* since the Wahhābīs believe that *wilāyah* and the Companions are closely related. They will be unable to grasp the *Ghadīr* event correctly until they have not made sense of the issue of the Companions. That is why beginning the discussion with the *tat□hīr* and *thaqalayn* verses before any mention is made of the *Ghadīr*—will prepare him to ponder over the *Ghadīr* narration on the one hand and the Qur'anic verses on *wilāyah* on the other.

The Sunnīs and the extremists' ideas on the Companions indicate two exaggerations, two extreme ends of a scale: one considering them all perfectly just, the other denouncing justice in all of them. The Shī'ahs, however, do not equate all the Companions but give each one the respect he deserves, thus maintaining a moderate and reasonable stance.

The third trait

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¹ It is entirely wrong to abandon the discussion on the *Ghadīr* event, contrary to what some Sunnīs and a number of Shī'ahs, with an identity loss, believe that it should. We have answered their claim in our book "*A Re-reading of the Idea of Taqrīb*".

The belief that the twelfth Imām (*'a*) is in occultation is one of the most important traits of the Shī'ism that makes it quite distinct from other schools of thought. Now that the revelation has come to an end and the Prophecy is sealed, the one who is granted the rank of living in occultation is the link connecting the earth with the heavens.

We will try to present this vital doctrine to the Wahhābīs in a new form so that the titles, the names and the expressions will not drive them away.

The belief in the occultation of the twelfth Imām (*'a*) is a fundamental reality foretold by the Prophet (*s*□) ٢٥٠ years before it occurred. Many Muslims of the time came to believe it; many of the Prophet's (*s*□) words in this regard were collected and some were even separately grouped together. [These narrations all point to] a fact that has now become a reality, and people feel it wholeheartedly. We have quoted these *h*□*adīth*s in the concluding chapter of our book *Rih*□*latī min al-Wahhābīyyah.*

The discussion on the occultation of the Imām (*'a*) will be fruitless if it is presented prior to the principle of the Imāmate. The *thaqalayn* narration should, however, come first because it governs both the Imāmate and occultation. Observing the logical sequencing presented in this book is very necessary to make the Wahhābīs grasp the relationships better. The present book, divided into three chapters, is a prologue to our book *Rih*□*latī min al-Wahhābīyyah ilā al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah* in which an extensive analysis is made of the points that are briefly discussed here. The present book, in fact, gives the reader a better insight into our future discussions raised in the above mentioned book.

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The Epilogue: The Future Belongs to the Shī'ism

Our success in introducing the Shī'ism in the best possible manner will, hopefully, lead those who had dealt heavy blows on this school of thought (to change and) adhere to it. They did it because many of them, unable to perceive the grand realities and peculiarities of this school, feigned thousands of lies against the Shī'ism, displayed it wrongly and finally distanced themselves from it. The Wahhābīs will easily convert to this school of thought and propagate for it once they have clearly perceived the Imāmiyyah's shining realities.

What has surprised the Wahhābīs is that the Shī'ism has withstood surges of enmity that had aimed at crushing it, and has successively spread in the nooks and crannies of the world. The secret for the increasing expansion of the Shī'ism lies in the Imāmiyyah's deeply-rooted strength of thought that has attracted hundreds of the Sunnīs and scores of the Wahhābīs: those who were, until recently, the Shī'ahs' most stubborn enemies have now turned into its strongest defenders.

Almost no region—Arab or non-Arab—can be found in which the Shī'ism has not penetrated. The Wahhābīs have now clearly understood that in the near future, it is the Shī'ahs that will constitute "the majority" in the Muslim World because they have already found a strong foot-hold in the regions where the

Wahhābīs expected it the least. They have thus realized that the future belongs to the Shī'ism.

Dr. 'Alī Sālūs, the contemporary Wahhābī writer has confessed saying, "The Imāmiyyah is the greatest of the Islamic schools of thought."[1]

It is our hope that the Wahhābīs will gradually turn to the Shī'ism and that the future belongs to us, provided that we apply the best method in presenting the Shī'ism.

Shaykh Rabī' ibn Muḥammad Sa'ūdī, another Wahhābī writer says, "Having returned to Egypt after four or five years, I felt that there was a new line of thought in Cairo… What surprised me the most was that it was our brothers, the children of the most eminent Egyptian scholars, our former classmates, those in whom I used to have good faith, who had all been attracted to this new line of thought, viz. the Shī'ism."[2]

I have addressed the present book to people like him to let them know that a strife-free dialogue between the Shī'ahs and Wahhābīs is not impossible.

As a further proof I would like to quote Dr. Nāṣir Qaffārī, the famous and biased Wahhābī writer, who says, "Many have converted to the Shī'ism… Anyone reading the book *'Unwān al-Majd fī Tārīkh al-Baṣrah wa Najd* will take fright when he learns of the great number of the communities that have turned to the Shī'ism."[3] He then calls the Shī'ism a great clan. The more we study the Wahhābīs' writing, the more we understand that the future belongs to the Shī'ism, and that this school of thought has increasingly been growing among the Wahhābīs and Sunnīs.

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[1] *Al-Shī'ah al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah fī al-Uṣūl wa al-Furū'*, vol. ۱, p. ۲۱.

[2] Prologue to the book *Al-Shī'ah al-Imāmiyyah fī Mīzān al-Islām*.

[3] Prologue to the book *'Uṣūl al-Madhhab al-Shī'ah al-Imāmiyyah al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah.*

In his compendium of Ibn Taymiyyah's *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, Shaykh ʿAbd Allāh Ghanīmān, a professor of graduate studies at Madīnah Islamic University says, "The Shīʿism is now ruling over all Islamic regions."[1] This proves that the Wahhābīs know that the Shīʿism will soon attract them.

Another promising piece of news comes from Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Maghrāwī, a Wahhābī author, who says, "I fear the spread of the Shīʿism among the Western youths."[2]

Yet another author, Majdī Muḥammad ʿAlī Muḥammad, reports the following: "A Sunnī youth, overwhelmed by doubt and uncertainty, came to see me. He was bewildered by the Shīʿah ideas that had been passed on to him…"[3]

And there are hundreds of other similar cases. So, it is our responsibility to introduce the school properly and logically, to penetrate the Wahhābīs and explain the realities and peculiarities of the Shīʿism. The important point to bear in mind is that rather than answering the doubt they raise, the discussion ought to center on the *thaqalayn ḥadīth.* Just remember that it is awfully hard to convince a Wahhābī before you ever try to answer his question. *"He it is who sent His Apostle with guidance and the true religion, that He may make it overcome the religions, all of them, though the polytheists may be averse."* (۶۱:۹) ✍

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[1] *Mukhtaṣar al-Sunnah.*

[2] *Min Sabb al-Ṣaḥābah wa Muʿāwiyah fa Ummuhū Hāwiyah*, p. ٤.

[3] *Intiṣār al-Ḥaqq*, pp. ۱۱-۱٤.