Some Remarks *on* Developments

in the English-Speaking World

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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بسم الله والحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وعلى آله وصحبه ومن والاه

Introduction

Regarding the subject of the book that appeared some time ago in English, *"The Doctrine of Monotheism",* I wished to direct some remarks to the Islamic community of the English-speaking world and draw attention to certain developments that I have observed over the years.

Since I have almost exclusively occupied myself with developments in the Arab world, I cannot claim to be able to comprehensively assess the situation in the English-speaking world. I lack the necessary overview for that. Therefore, these concise lines are, as stated, to be understood as well-intentioned remarks.

It should also be mentioned that it is not my primary intention in these pages to criticise individual persons, even though some names are mentioned for the purpose of source attribution. Without doubt, one must acknowledge that there has been much activity in the English-speaking world in recent decades, and many individuals have contributed to making information about Islam accessible. This, however, should by no means prevent one from also pointing out concerning developments.

A Remark on a Conversation Between Daniel Haqiqatjou and Mohammed Hijab

First, I wish to refer to a conversation between two preachers and recent disputes in the English-speaking world that were also addressed therein.

It concerns an interview that **Daniel Haqiqatjou** conducted with **Mohammed Hijab**. The conversation lasted five hours, and I have only seen some excerpts of it. In particular, I became attentive to a few minutes (beginning at hour 3:32) in which it was discussed that the early Hanbalites showed harshness towards the movement of the *Ashʿariyyah*. In doing so, the following claims were put forward by **Daniel Haqiqatjou**:

- This harshness had allegedly originated solely from the Hanbalites, specifically because they had just endured the persecution during the *Mihnah*[1]. Their harshness against the movements of the *Mutakallimīn*[2], which were heavily influenced by

[1] The "*Mihnah*" (literally "the trial") refers to the period in the early 3rd century AH during which the *ʿAbbāsid* caliphs, beginning with al-Maʾmūn, imposed the *Muʿtazilite* doctrine of the createdness of the Qurʾān upon the scholars and persecuted those who refused to affirm it — most famously Imam Ahmad ibnu Hanbal.

[2] The "*Mutakallimūn*" are the practitioners of "*Kalām*" — a speculative, rationalist approach to theology that sought to establish and defend creedal positions through philosophical argumentation, particularly logical methods derived from Greek philosophy. The major schools associated with this approach include the *Muʿtazilah*, the *Jahmiyyah*, and later the *Ashʿariyyah* and ...--

philosophy, was thus merely a reaction to the oppression that the Hanbalites had previously suffered at the hands of the *Muʿtazilah* and *Jahmiyyah*.

• The early Hanbalites, who represented the *Ahlu l-Hadīth*, certainly made – so the claim – *Takfīr* upon Muhammad ibnu Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī and Muslim ibnu l-Hajjāj.

• If one were to actually apply this standard of the Hanbalites of that time, one would essentially have to declare everyone a *Kāfir*. Why, then, should one adopt and apply this standard?

• **Mohammed Hijab** added to this that the early Hanbalites vehemently rejected the claim that the Qurʾān is created. In this statement as well, it appeared as though the early Hanbalites were the first from whom this position was known.

All of these statements were made within approximately two minutes, which is indeed remarkable, since none of them were substantiated in any way. This is all the more remarkable because we are speaking here of two individuals who essentially represent the highest level of academic education available in the Western world. Both are graduates of the most renowned Western elite universities. One should bear in mind that these very universities praise themselves and Western methods of academic scholarship in the

Māturīdiyyah. The early scholars of *Ahlu s-Sunnah wa l-Jamāʿah* unanimously rejected this methodology and insisted that creedal matters be established solely through the Qurʾān, the Sunnah, and the understanding of the Salaf.

highest terms and claim to have reached the pinnacle of academic rigour in the entire history of humanity.

However, anyone who considers these statements wonders how such academic rigour could be entirely absent from such a discussion. Therefore, the following points shall be briefly addressed here:

The claims made above are entirely at odds with the historical facts and the actual course of historical events. For this reason, they could not be substantiated at all, since none of it aligns with Islamic history.

Anyone who possesses even a basic understanding of these subjects knows without any doubt that all of these issues existed before Ahmad ibnu Hanbal was confronted with them. One should bear in mind that it is always about the assessment of individual theological questions and not about specific names of groups or movements. The various innovations were all well known and were unanimously rejected by all early Imams of Islam, with equally pronounced harshness.

One should consider the book *as-Sunnah* by ʿAbdullāh, the son of Ahmad ibnu Hanbal, in which he transmits, through his father and other individuals, very numerous statements from earlier scholars addressing these very topics with the same harshness mentioned above.

Al-Bukhārī likewise did so in his book *Khalqu Afʿāli l-ʿIbād.* Anyone who is even slightly familiar with the books of the early Muslims could never make such a claim, since all of these statements were

narrated much earlier by individuals such as Muhammad ibnu Idrīs ash-Shāfiʿī, Mālik ibnu Anas, Sufyān ath-Thaurī, Abu ʿAmr al-Auzāʿī, and many others.

Thus, ʿAbdullāh transmits in *as-Sunnah:*

كَانَ ابْنُ الْمُبَارَكِ يَقُولُ: «الْجَهْمِيَّةُ كُفَّارٌ»

> *The statement of ʿAbdullāh ibnu l-Mubārak was: "The Jahmiyyah are Kuffār."*

قَالَ السُّوَيْدِيُّ: وَسَأَلْتُ وَكِيعًا عَنِ الصَّلَاةِ خَلْفَ الْجَهْمِيَّةِ، فَقَالَ: «لَا يُصَلَّى خَلْفَهُمْ»

> *As-Suwaidī said: "And I asked Wakīʿ about the prayer behind the Jahmiyyah. He said: 'One does not pray behind them.'"*

سَمِعْتُ الْحَسَنَ بْنَ عِيسَى، يَقُولُ: «الْجَهْمِيَّةُ وَمَنْ يَشُكُّ فِي كُفْرِ الْجَهْمِيَّةِ؟»

> *I heard al-Hasan ibnu ʿĪsā say: "The Jahmiyyah – and who doubts the kufr of the Jahmiyyah?"*

قِيلَ لِوَكِيعٍ فِي ذَبَائِحِ الْجَهْمِيَّةِ، قَالَ: «لَا تُؤْكَلُ هُمْ مُرْتَدُّونَ»

> *Wakīʿ was asked regarding the slaughtered animals of the Jahmiyyah. He said: "Their slaughtered animals are not to be eaten. They are Murtaddūn (apostates)."*

The scholars mentioned here rank among the greatest Imams of Islam. They and their peers transmitted the Islamic source texts, not only the *Hadīth*, but also the Qurʾān, the recitations of the Qurʾān *(Qirāʾāt)*, Islamic jurisprudence and its practical application, Islamic

conduct *(Ādāb, Akhlāq, Zuhd),* the *Sīrah* and all other Islamic fields of knowledge.

ʿAbdullāh ibnul Mubārak passed away in 181 AH, Wakīʿ ibnul Jarrāh 197 AH, and al-Hasan ibnu ʿĪsā in 239 or 240 AH. They all, therefore, passed away before Ahmad ibnu Hanbal, who died in 241 AH. Such citations could be continued at great length, for the simple reason that the scholars across multiple epochs rejected nothing as vehemently as the ideology of the *Jahmiyyah* and their philosophical denial of the attributes of Allah. There is hardly anything in early Islamic history that is as well and abundantly documented as this. Whoever believes he can invalidate one book or another of the Salaf and thereby bring down this vast body of narrations, books, and writings is gravely mistaken. Furthermore, anyone who holds this mere assumption thereby demonstrates that he has no insight into the early literature of Islam.

In addition to the innumerable statements regarding the *Jahmiyya* and comparable groups in particular, there are equally many regarding the general theological questions. For instance, the question of whether the Qurʾān is the word of Allah or created. This question was a significant point of contention, since the aforementioned sects denied that Allah speaks. The early scholars were unanimous that whoever claims the Qurʾān is created, and thereby denies that Allah speaks, is not a Muslim.

Abu l-Qāsim al-Lālakāʾī transmits in his significant work on the creedal foundations of *Ahlu s-Sunnah wa l-Jamāʿah,* from Muhammad ibnu Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī alone, that the latter had personally

heard several of these matters from “more than one thousand” scholars[3].

Furthermore, al-Lālakāʾī transmits, among other things:

عَنِ الرَّبِيعِ بْنِ سُلَيْمَانَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ الشَّافِعِيَّ يَقُولُ: مَنْ قَالَ الْقُرْآنُ مَخْلُوقٌ فَهُوَ كَافِرٌ

> *From Rabīʿ ibnu Sulaimān, that he said: I heard ash-Shāfiʿī say: Whoever says the Qurʾān is created is a Kāfir.*

Ash-Shāfiʿī passed away in 204 AH, thus considerably earlier than Ahmad ibnu Hanbal. He can therefore clearly not have been a “Hanbalite” either; rather, he and many others had already held these positions before Ahmad, and it was Ahmad who followed them in this!

Harb al-Kirmānī, who is today increasingly maligned as an extremist Hanbalite, likewise narrated the general consensus on the issues that he mentioned in his comprehensive *ʿAqīdah* treatise. The two Rāzī Imams likewise did the same in their *ʿAqīdah*.

This was narrated by Ibnu Abi Hātim ar-Rāzī. One could add innumerable books and writings to these. All of these scholars narrated these views not as their personal opinion, but from innumerable scholars before them.

If someone therefore claims that these above-mentioned positions were an innovation, essentially an invention of the Hanbalites after

[3] See the corresponding statement with source and the Arabic original text as well as the English translation in the aforementioned book *“The Doctrine of Monotheism”,* published 07/2025, on page 26.

Ahmad ibnu Hanbal, and were not known in this manner before that, then the reality of Islamic history in this regard has evidently passed him by entirely.

In reality, Ahmad ibnu Hanbal and those who came after him did not introduce a single matter on their own; rather, they narrated everything from earlier scholars. And they did so in accordance with the scholarship of their time.

Their opponents in these matters were not Muslim scholars; rather, they were those completely deviant sectarians who were rejected by the generality of the scholars and regarded as non-Muslims, such as al-Jaʿd ibnu Dirham, Jahm ibnu Safwān, and Bishr al-Marīsī. Whoever believes he must reject the views of those "Hanbalites" will inevitably have to reject the position of early Islamic scholarship altogether and align himself with the views of a Bishr al-Marīsī.

Likewise, the claim by **Haqiqatjous** that the early Hanbalites made *Takfīr* upon al-Bukhārī is remarkable, especially in its sweeping generality. Moreover, the statement was simply thrown out and strongly affirmed without citing any evidence for it. One truly wonders: Is this the highly praised academic rigour that one supposedly learns at Harvard and Oxford?!

Whoever makes such a claim should cite unambiguous sources that confirm it. What is meant here are explicit statements — not passages open to this or that interpretation, since such interpretations can be mistaken, especially when they come from people with no noteworthy knowledge of the subject. Furthermore, it should not

merely involve the statement of one or two individuals, since such a thing can always occur, even if those individuals are themselves prominent scholars.

Abu ʿĪsā at-Tirmidhī, who is undoubtedly regarded as one of the greatest Imams of Islam and who was particularly known for his understanding of the Sunnah, that is, the Islamic *ʿAqīdah*, and his knowledge of the views of the early scholars of the Salaf, was a student of al-Bukhārī and narrated his statements in his work innumerable times. At-Tirmidhī without doubt held the same views as the prominent Imams of Islam before him. Where, then, can this sweeping *Takfīr* be seen here?

Abu l-Qasim al-Lālakāʾī transmits – as already stated above – significant *ʿAqīdah* content from al-Bukhārī. Al-Lālakāʾī is widely recognised as one of the most renowned early Imams and authored one of the most comprehensive works on the creedal foundations of *Ahlu s-Sunnah wa l-Jamāʿah*. Furthermore, he clearly mentions a narration in which al-Bukhārī vehemently rejects certain claims made about him. How, then, could all of this be reconciled with the claim of **Daniel Haqiqatjous**?

Much more could be said on these topics, but that cannot be the objective of this brief text at hand. The aim of this writing is merely to point out that one should deal prudently with statements regarding Islamic subject matters and Muslim personalities.

Moreover, attention should be drawn to the significant problem that the vast majority of people who speak about such topics today,

perhaps even in casual talk shows on the internet, have no knowledge of the books of the early Muslims. The very least one could do in such a situation would be to refrain from taking a clear public position on such important issues – which were generally held and narrated by consensus among the early Muslims – and to refrain from initiating public discussions about them.

On the other hand, there are also English-speaking preachers who strive to follow an authentic doctrine as it was upheld by the early scholars, such as **Jake Brancatella** – may Allah grant him *Taufīq* – who has made some efforts to counter some of the developments mentioned here.

Attempts to Invalidate Individual Writings Can Never Refute Consensus Positions

At this point, it must be emphasised once again that there are indeed many and increasing attempts today to reject individual early writings and to cast doubt on their authenticity. However, these very attempts by such persons already demonstrate that they can have no knowledge of the early literature.

Anyone who is familiar with the numerous books of the greatest personalities among the Muslims knows without any doubt that these are broadly transmitted consensus positions, and that invalidating individual writings accomplishes nothing at all and constitutes a futile endeavour.

In this context, **Yasir Qadhi** can be mentioned as an example, along with his attempt to invalidate the treatise *as-Sunnah* by al-Hasan ibnu ʿAliyy al-Barbāharī and to deny its authenticity[4]. This, however, is not as simple as some people claim when discussing the hand-written manuscripts *(Makhtūtāt)*.

Ultimately, however, the argumentation of such people amounts to rejecting the writing because one believes to detect inconsistencies in the content. It is ultimately a very superficial approach to say that a writing contains certain errors and therefore cannot originate from a recognised scholar. There are indeed explanations if one can adopt a prudent, scholarly approach and does not simply seek to refute by all means what one does not personally subscribe to. This is stated in general terms, even if this subject cannot be discussed in detail here.

More important, however, is the already mentioned principle that it is utterly absurd to think that one could invalidate the contents of this writing by denying the authenticity of this particular treatise. Whoever thinks such a thing merely demonstrates thereby that he truly has no knowledge of the early literature.

The same is attempted with other individual writings, such as the text *Usūlu s-Sunnah* by Ahmad, the treatise *as-Sunnah* by Harb al-Kirmānī, and others. But anyone who has even a slight insight into

[4] It goes without saying that all the statements and views discussed here in the English-speaking world are of course not new, but were simply adopted by these preachers from the Arabic.

the texts of the Salaf has understood that these attempts must inevitably come to nothing.

The Rejection of the Tawḥīd Understanding of the *Daʿwah Najdiyyah* by Some Preachers

When mentioning **Yasir Qadhi**, the thought quickly comes to preachers who position themselves as opponents of the so-called *Wahhābiyyah*. In doing so, an attempt is made to demonstrate that the *Daʿwah Najdiyyah* had propagated a false understanding of monotheism and thereby excluded Muslims from Islam.

Undertakings of this kind are known from the aforementioned **Yasir Qadhi**, but **Daniel Haqiqatjou** has also strongly positioned himself in this regard for some time now. Here, too, one should exercise more prudence, especially if one has not thoroughly studied the actual contents of this *Daʿwah*.

As for the understanding of monotheism, I deliberately refer here to the above-mentioned book that appeared in English, *"The Doctrine of Monotheism",* which deals with precisely this subject. However, the argumentation therein is based exclusively on the Qurʾān, the Sunnah, and the statements of the early scholars, particularly with regard to the *Tafsīr*.

It would therefore be absurd to label the book as "Wahhabi", especially since the statements of the *Daʿwah Najdiyyah* are fundamentally absent from it. Whoever wishes to discuss the contents must therefore focus on the source texts mentioned therein and the cited

argumentation, without digressing about various scholars and their particular statements or positions.

An Example of a Statement by Daniel Haqiqatjou

While I was working on this writing, a brother sent me a post by **Daniel Haqiqatjou** regarding the *Daʿwah Najdiyyah,* which can serve as a good example of disingenuous argumentation. He claims that the followers of the so-called *Wahhābiyyah* would exclude from Islam all followers of the four schools of jurisprudence from the outset, even the followers of the Hanbalite school of jurisprudence! As evidence for this claim, he cites the statement of a scholar which states that some people convert from Christianity to Islamic groups that are in reality grave-worshippers – thus they merely go from one false belief to another. From this, **Haqiqatjou** concludes:

- That the followers of the *Wahhābiyyah* do not consider any followers of the well-known schools of jurisprudence to be Muslims.
- That they apply this even to the followers of the Hanbalite school of jurisprudence.
- That they consider all followers of any of the schools of jurisprudence to be worse than Jews and Christians.

In actuality, however, in the text cited as evidence:

- The discussion was specifically about grave-worshippers.
- The word *Madhhab*/school of jurisprudence was not mentioned a single time.
- None of the four schools of jurisprudence mentioned by him was referred to with even a single word.

In fact, this claim contradicts reality in every respect, since individuals such as Mālik or ash-Shāfiʿī are regarded by all representatives and followers of the *Daʿwah Najdiyyah* as great and significant scholars. Moreover, Muhammad ibnu ʿAbdil-Wahhāb was himself a Hanbalite scholar, and most followers of the *Wahhābiyyah* count themselves as adherents of the Hanbalite school of jurisprudence! In reality, therefore, the criticism in no way pertains to the legal opinions of various scholars, but rather to fundamental creedal matters, such as the aforementioned worship at graves.

The Problematic Engagement with Reprehensible Philosophy

A general problem that should also be mentioned here is that many English-speaking preachers themselves come from the field of philosophy, which was sharply condemned and strictly rejected by the early scholars of the first centuries. The reprehensible philosophy in question is not about trivial logical relationships, such as that one and one makes two, or that an effect follows its cause in time. Rather, it concerned the fact that people in the Islamic world began to

learn the rules of philosophy and thereby to investigate the nature and essence of the Creator.

These rules were, moreover, established by non-Muslims, such as the Greek philosophers, who were far removed from a sound understanding of monotheism. Apart from this, the intellect differs among people, and consequently so do the conclusions they draw. If the Islamic creedal foundations were subjected to human reason, an unclear and contradictory doctrine would be the inevitable consequence.

The creedal foundations must, in contrast to the digressions of the *Mutakallimīn*, be clearly explained through the Islamic source texts. And it was precisely this that prompted the early scholars over the course of centuries to unanimously reject the reprehensible philosophy. An example is this statement by ash-Shāfiʿī, which was narrated by Abu Nuʿaim al-Asbahānī in *Hilyatu l-Awliyāʾ wa Tabaqātu l-Asfiyāʾ*:

... ثَنَا أَبُو مُحَمَّدِ بْنُ أَبِي حَاتِمٍ، ثَنَا يُونُسُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْأَعْلَى، سَمِعْتُ الشَّافِعِيَّ، يَقُولُ: «لَأَنْ يُبْتَلَى الْمَرْءُ بِكُلِّ مَا نَهَى اللهُ عَنْهُ مَا عَدَا الشِّرْكَ بِهِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ النَّظَرِ فِي الْكَلَامِ، فَإِنِّي وَاللهِ اطَّلَعْتُ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكَلَامِ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مَا ظَنَنْتُهُ قَطُّ»

... it was reported to us by Yūnus ibnu ʿAbdil-Aʿlā: I heard ash-Shāfiʿī say: "That a person be tried with everything that Allah has forbidden, apart from shirk, is better for him than looking into philosophy. I have – by Allah – seen things from the people of philosophy that I could never have imagined."

Muslims in the English-speaking world will ultimately have to question their own intellectual origins. Whoever has learned philosophy according to Western models from the outset and has, moreover, applied it to Islamic theological questions for many years, will inevitably be unable to follow the methodology of the early Muslims fully and entirely. It is clear that this first requires a longer process in which people must acquire a well-founded knowledge of the books of the early Muslims.

It is not sufficient in this regard to resort to the argument, in support of one's own approach, that a knowledgeable person from later centuries also employed philosophy in order to refute the false views of certain sects. Whoever reads the books of the early Muslims sees in their statements that they explicitly rejected this approach, being closer to the source of Islam and possessing a better understanding than later scholars.

Thus, Abu Nuʿaim likewise transmits the following from ʿAbdurrahmān ibnu Mahdiy in *Hilyatu l-Awliyāʾ*:

> قِيلَ لِعَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ مَهْدِيٍّ: إِنَّ فُلَانًا قَدْ صَنَّفَ كِتَابًا فِي السُّنَّةِ رَدًّا عَلَى فُلَانٍ. فَقَالَ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ: رَدًّا بِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَسُنَّةِ نَبِيِّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ؟ قِيلَ: بِكَلَامٍ. قَالَ: رَدَّ بَاطِلًا بِبَاطِلٍ.

> *It was said to ʿAbdurrahmān ibnu Mahdiy: "Someone has written a book about the Sunnah as a refutation against that (man)." ʿAbdurrahmān then said: "A refutation based on the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet – may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him?"*

> *It was said: "(No, a refutation) by means of philosophy." He said: "(That is) a refutation of falsehood through falsehood."*

This statement is but one example of the repeatedly narrated position of the early scholars regarding this matter. Instead, the Salaf used to explain the truth through the Islamic source texts and likewise refute falsehood through the texts.

In *as-Sunnah*, al-Khallāl cites the following statement by Imam Ahmad:

> وَلَوْ تَدَبَّرَ إِنْسَانٌ الْقُرْآنَ كَانَ فِيهِ مَا يَرُدُّ عَلَى كُلِّ مُبْتَدِعٍ بِدْعَتَهُ

> *"If a person reflects upon the Qurʾān, he will find in it that which refutes the bidʿah (innovation) of every innovator."*

Al-Khallāl further cites in *as-Sunnah* the following apt statement by ash-Shaʿbī:

> مَا ابْتُدِعَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ بِدْعَةٌ إِلَّا وَفِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مَا يُكَذِّبُهَا

> *"For every bidʿah that has been devised regarding Islam, there exists in the Book of Allah – mighty and exalted is He – that which exposes it as a lie."*

The vehement rejection of philosophy was, in turn, practised by the early Muslims in general, by well-known figures such as Mālik and ash-Shāfiʿī, and thus not merely by Hanbalites who only appeared after Ahmad.

The Rejection of Debates and Disputations Among the Salaf

In the context of the rejection of philosophy, the early scholars of Islam always also prohibited debating *(al-Jadal)*. On the English-speaking internet, disputes, debates, and refutations, which frequently devolve into mudslinging, have been taken to the extreme.

It is precisely this urge to participate in or follow debates that generates very high click numbers for many preachers. In this way, an addiction develops on both sides to continue such debates and to stage them in an increasingly extreme manner. This is precisely what was unanimously rejected by the early scholars of Islam.

For this reason, numerous narrations on this matter are found in the books of the Salaf, frequently compiled in their own chapters. Whoever wishes to consult such narrations can do so, for example, in the comprehensive work *ash-Sharīʿah* by Abu Bakr Muhammad ibnu l-Hussain al-Ājurrī, but also in many other works of the Salaf.

Al-Ājurrī transmits in a dedicated chapter on this subject the following *Hadīth*:

> عَنْ أَبِي أُمَامَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: " مَا ضَلَّ قَوْمٌ بَعْدَ هُدًى كَانُوا عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا أُوتُوا الْجَدَلَ

> *From Abu Umāmah – may Allah be pleased with him – that he said: The Messenger of Allah – may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him – said: No people went astray after*

> *having been upon guidance except that they were given disputation.*

He thereafter mentions further *Hadīths* and numerous statements and accounts of the early scholars. For example:

> كَانَ أَبُو قِلَابَةَ يَقُولُ: " لَا تُجَالِسُوا أَهْلَ الْأَهْوَاءِ، وَلَا تُجَادِلُوهُمْ، فَإِنِّي لَا آمَنُ أَنْ يَغْمِسُوكُمْ فِي الضَّلَالَةِ، أَوْ يُلْبِسُوا عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ بَعْضَ مَا لُبِّسَ عَلَيْهِمْ

> *Abu Qilābah said: "Do not sit with the people of desires and do not debate with them, for I fear that they will confuse you in the matters of religion wherein they themselves are confused."*

> عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ بْنِ قُرَّةَ قَالَ: الْخُصُومَاتُ فِي الدِّينِ تُحْبِطُ الْأَعْمَالَ

> *From Muʿāwiya ibnu Qurrah, that he said: Disputations about the religion destroy (good) deeds.*

In essence, with regard to the current state of affairs on the internet, one can say that the position of the Salaf was the exact opposite of what is commonplace among many preachers today as virtually a daily activity.

A Peculiar Statement by Nouman Ali Khan Regarding the *Tafsīr*

Finally, a remark regarding a statement concerning the *Tafsīr* of at-Ṭabarī. **Nouman Ali Khan** is, in and of himself, someone who, among other things, processes useful information from the *Tafsīr* for a large audience and also engages with the language of the Qurʾān. It is therefore initially bewildering that such a person claims about the well-known *Tafsīr* scholar at-Ṭabarī that he was merely a chronicler *(Muʾarrikh),* a historian who simply compiled everything – regardless of how nonsensical – and whose narrations could not be taken seriously. The *Tafsīr* of at-Ṭabarī, he claims, is merely a collection of all sorts of stories that are by no means authentic.

One wonders how a person can, on the one hand, appear as someone who possesses a certain knowledge of the *Tafsīr* sciences, but then make such a statement about at-Ṭabarī and his *Tafsīr*, which constitutes one of the most significant works of Qur'ānic exegesis. Anyone who wishes to study the *Tafsīr* cannot avoid the *Tafsīr* of at-Ṭabarī – even if this does not please some people because they do not understand the contents of this *Tafsīr* and the methodology of its author[5]. All authors in the field of *Tafsīr* after at-Ṭabarī inevitably drew from his work. Whoever, therefore, disparages the *Tafsīr* of at-

[5] This is stated here independently of individual statements and positions of at-Ṭabarī. The point here is that many people have no understanding of these ancient works in general but immediately reject them when they see something therein that they themselves cannot classify.

Ṭabarī in such a manner before a broad public can have no awareness whatsoever of the significance of this *Tafsīr*.

In general, it must be said that the *Tafsīr* sciences in particular are highly complex. Gaining a good overview requires a long time and intensive engagement – especially with the foundations of this discipline *(Usūlu t-Tafsīr)* and the methodologies of the *Mufassirīn (Manahiju l-Mufassirīn).* And whoever makes such a statement without reservation cannot possibly demonstrate a well-founded knowledge in these areas.

Such an approach – speaking without well-founded knowledge about such complex subjects and renowned personalities of early Islamic history – is reminiscent of the *Qussās*, that is, those storytellers who were in the vast majority of cases rejected by the early scholars because they narrated all manner of things without well-founded knowledge in order to captivate people and gain their attention. It is people who proceed in such a manner, therefore, who rather deserve such a description as was made by **Nouman Ali Khan**, not someone like at-Ṭabarī.

Here, too, it must be pointed out once again that such ideas were of course not developed for the first time somewhere in the non-Arab world. These are, once again, ideas that have been circulating in the Arab world for some time. Anyone who has insight into the contemporary literature on the *Tafsīr* sciences will find therein precisely such statements that attest to the complete lack of understanding on the part of the respective authors. Particularly with regard to the *Tafsīr* of at-Ṭabarī, one encounters statements

that display an incredible disregard for this *Tafsīr* and for the narrated *Tafsīr* of the Salaf *(at-Tafsīru l-maʾthūr)* in general. The authors of such books have entirely failed to understand the objectives of at-Ṭabarī or other scholars of *Tafsīr*, which is why many statements by such well-known authors of *Tafsīr* then appear to them as entirely meaningless.

Conclusion

With these remarks, I shall conclude and once again recommend reading the published book on monotheism and reflecting upon it, since it concerns indeed the most fundamental subject of all of Islam, yet there are nonetheless misunderstandings and distortions regarding it.

Whoever has any remarks regarding this book, I am grateful for every observation. *Bārakallāhu fīkum.*

May Allah grant all persons mentioned in this writing, and all of us collectively, a sound and authentic understanding of Islam and guide us always. Āmīn.

Wallāhu aʿlam … and Allah knows best.

والله أعلم، ورحم الله علماء المسلمين

وصلّى الله على نبيّنا محمّد وآله وصحبه ومن والاه

والحمد لله ربّ العالمين