

MANIFESTATIONS OF IMAAAN & KUFR



MIRROR IMAGES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

MOHAMMED LAMINU DANGATA

MANIFESTATIONS OF IMAAN & KUFR



“Allah is the Guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light; and (as to) those who disbelieve, their guardians are Shaitans who take them out of the light into the darkness; they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide.”

Q. 2:257

Mohammed Laminu Dangata

MIRROR IMAGES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

CONTENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DEDICATION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

BELIEF AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS

1.1. BELIEF IN ALLAH

1.2. BELIEF IN ANGELS

1.3. BELIEF IN ALLAH'S MESSENGERS

1.4. BELIEF IN ALLAH'S REVEALED BOOKS

1.5. BELIEF IN THE DAY OF RESURRECTION

1.6. BELIEF IN DIVINE PRE-ORDAINMENT

1.7. FURTHER DIMENSIONS OF DEEDS OF IMAAN (FAITH)

CHAPTER 2

DISBELIEF AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS

2.1. DENIAL OF THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SIX ARTICLES OF FAITH OR DOUBTING OR LACKING CONVICTION IN THEM

2.2. REJECTION AND ARROGANCE IN SUBMITTING TO THE DIVINE COMMAND

2.3. HYPOCRISY IN FAITH AND IN DEEDS

2.4. POLYTHEISM (SHIRK)

2.4.1. TYPES OF "SHIRK"

2.4.1.1. MAJOR "SHIRK"

(I) “Shirk of Intention”

(II) “Shirk of Invocation”

(III) “Shirk of Undue Obeisance”

(IV) ‘Shirk of Undue Love”

2.4.1.2. MINOR “SHIRK”

2.4.1.3. INCONSPICUOUS “SHIRK”

2.5. FURTHER DIMENSIONS OF DEEDS OF KUFR (DISBELIEF)

CONCLUSION

GLOSSARY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Proofreader: Mr. I. O. Quaye, a Retired Tutor, Accra College of Education, Accra

Website: www.senseofislam.com

E-mail: senseofislam@gmail.com

Contact: 0208596843

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mohammed Laminu Dangata is a Ghanaian and Salaga born and bred. He is a servant of Allah(swt), whose preoccupation is pursuing research into problems and challenges in Islam, with emphasis on Religious Sectarianism and Secularism.

DEDICATION

This write-up is written in honour of my departed friend, Brother Kalilu Sylla of Touba, Mali, for his open-handed assistance and encouragement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Every write-up, of course, reflects the work of a team that includes the author, other writers, interviewee(s), proofreader(s), typist(s), editor(s), printer(s), publisher(s), distributor(s), and other contributors.

I therefore express my heart-felt gratitude to all those who have contributed immensely towards the completion of this book. Especially, my appreciation goes to all those who have taken my words and given them shape. My thankfulness is due to all, for they have really done a good job and in fact worked miracles seeing to the completion of this write-up.

Thoughtfully, as a token of my everlasting gratitude, the following Branches of the Ghana Muslim Students Association (GMSA) with their respective institutions do indeed deserve a special mention for their co-operation: GMSA, U.P.S Branch; GMSA, ACCE Branch; and GMSA, UG, Legon Branch; as well as the College of The Holy Qur-an, Madina, Accra.

Finally, I would appreciate further contributions in respect of this project, so I am contactable at the following: ibomld2000@gmail.com.

INTRODUCTION

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL!

In Utter Darkness of Ignorance of Guidance, Even Those With Eyes Can't See; And so, With The Light of Knowledge of Guidance, We Don't Have to Blindfold Ourselves.

Our actions and inaction are reflections of our Faith. Prayer, Fasting, Sacrifice, Pilgrimage, and zikr, as well as Zakat/Sadaqat, love, compassion, justice, marriage, decency, honesty, modesty, respect, bashfulness, and caution, among others, are mirror images of Faith, provided they are carried out sincerely. Such are Deeds of Faith, the clear indicators of Imaan.

Similarly, Ancestral or neo-Ancestral Sacrifice, Soothsaying, Demonic Protection, Demonic Dreams or Nightmares, Communion of Spirits, Ministry of Angels, Spiritual Healing, and Coptic Exorcism, as well as envy, hypocrisy, arrogance, etc. are expressions of lack of Faith. These are Deeds of Kufr, the obvious Faith destroyers.

There are other deeds that neither increase Faith nor destroy it; they can only decrease it, so they are not acts of Kufr. Such are minor acts of immorality.

Indeed, Faith is a necessary precondition for acceptance of Worship and moral values, so we need to keep our fingers crossed for it, needn't we?

CHAPTER 1

BELIEF AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS

There is no doubt that understanding the most basic facts about Islamic Doctrines will enable us to have a very concise picture of our sense of direction, the certainty about the truth of the usual Islamic Beliefs and, with that, we can, as a matter of religious obligation, express our Faith in Deeds of Faith. That is, after having believed, we are obliged to strictly adhere to Salat (Prayer), Sacrifice, “Zikr” (Remembrance of Allah), “Hajj” or Pilgrimage, and Fasting, as well as love, justice, politeness, bashfulness, patience, and strictness, among other things.

The following Textual Evidence has lent credence to the fact that steadfastness or resoluteness in the midst of trials, tribulations, misfortunes, difficulties, troubles, or sufferings is a clear demonstration of Imaan, the prerequisite for acceptance of deeds: “Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: ‘We believe,’ and will not be tested?’ ” Q. 29:2

Indeed, Faith not only finds expression in Worship, but also in Morality. No wonder, Faith is shown in Deeds of Faith.

Fundamentally, there are six long-established Systems of Belief in Islam. These are: Belief in Allah, Belief in Angels, Belief in Allah's Messengers, Belief in Allah's Revealed Books, Belief in the Day of Resurrection, and Belief in Divine Pre-ordainment.

1.1. BELIEF IN ALLAH

"The Messenger (Muhammad—pbuh) believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allah... and they say, 'We hear, and we obey...' " Q. 2:285

The first Code of Belief in Islam, the foremost conviction in the Unseen, comprises the Belief in the Oneness of His Lordship, in the Oneness of His Worship, and in the Oneness of His Names and Attributes.

To hold Belief in the Oneness of Allah's Lordship, we must be absolutely certain that it was He Alone Who created the Heavens and the earth and all that, and that their Creation was a successful accomplishment not more by accident than design. We must accept completely and without doubt that Allah is the Originator of Creation. Here lies the connection: "Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were joined together as united piece, then We parted them? And We have made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe? And We have placed on the earth firm mountains, lest it should shake with them, and We placed therein broad highways for them to pass through, that they may be guided. And We have made the heaven a roof, safe and well guarded. Yet they turn away from its signs (i.e. sun, moon, winds, clouds, etc.). And He it is Who has created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon, each in an orbit floating." Q. 21:30-33

We really need to appreciate the Originator's Design with respect to the spectacular scenery of the Universe by pondering on the Wisdom of Creation. The following Scriptural Verses have left nothing to the imagination: "Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men who understand. Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! Glory be to Thee; save us then from the chastisement of the fire." Q. 3:190-191

I think this is the Belief of almost everyone; almost all the major Religions are on common ground.

Next, to practically demonstrate our Faith in the Oneness of Allah's Worship, we are enjoined to please Him Alone by acting in accordance with the divinely prescribed Acts of Worship. Thus after having believed in the Oneness of Allah's Lordship, as the Originator of Creation, we must give in to His Commands by being sincere with our intentions and then by strictly holding on to Prayer, Pilgrimage, "Zikr," Fasting, Sacrifice, etc.

We really have to intend to please the Creator Alone by being duty bound to carry out our religious obligations in respect of True Worship and at the same time by strictly avoiding such components of False Worship as "Communion of Sprits," "Ministry of

Angels,” “Spiritual Healing,” “Coptic Exorcism,” “Soothsaying,” “Demonic Protection,” and “Demonic Dream.”

We must reiterate that because Allah Alone created the heavens and the earth and all that, He Alone deserves Worship. It is proclaimed: “O mankind! Worship Your Lord (Allah), Who created you and those who were before you so that you may become Al-muttaqun (The pious).” Q. 2:21

Indeed, since all creatures do not have any share in the Creation of the Heavens and the earth and all that exists, they should certainly have no share in Worship, let's bear it in mind.

Last of all, to lay bare our Belief in the Oneness of Allah's Names and Qualities, we must believe in and then name or qualify Him Alone with those Names and Attributes as enshrined in the Holy Qur-an and Books of Hadith. For example, we can refer to Allah Alone as the Gracious or the Master of the Day of Judgment. Such are attributable to Allah and Allah Alone.

But we can name a person with any of the Attributes of Allah by simply placing the term “Abdul” (Servant) before It. For instance, “Abdul Rahman” means the Servant of the Gracious, but not the Gracious (Al-Rahman) Himself. Besides, we must have a firm conviction that such Qualities as the “Hands” and “Face” of Allah are a Reality. These are however beyond compare.

Thus comparing anything to Allah, changing any description of Allah, rejecting any Name or Attribute of Allah, or giving any unusual form for Allah's description sharply contradicts the usual Belief in the Oneness of Allah's Names and Attributes. It is proclaimed: “And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him.” Q. 112:4

It is encouraging to note that invoking any of the following secret names in Salat (Prayer) plainly contrasts the Belief in the Oneness of Allah's Names and Attributes: **Yamlikha, Maslinia, Maslina, Murnush, Shaazanush, Marmanush,** and **Aukafashatinatwanus**, the alleged seven names of the people of the cave, not forgetting **Kitmir**, the name of their dog.

Such invocation, which is attributable to The Prophet (pbuh), is a serious falsification of the truth about the story of the People of the Cave as enshrined in *Qur-an Chapter 18 Verses 9-26*.

What a fairy tale!

Believers are therefore obliged to invoke Allah by any of His Attributes, but not by any hidden name, be it angel's, jinni's, or human's. It is emphasised: "And invoke no other ilah (god) along with Allah...(none has the right to be worshipped but He)..." Q. 28:88 Of course, "He is Allah besides Whom there is no god; the Knower of the unseen and the seen; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. **He is Allah besides Whom...(none has the right to be worshipped but He)**, the King...the All-Mighty, the Compeller, the Supreme. **Glory be to Allah! (High is He) above all that they associate as partners with Him...**He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor of all things, the Bestower of forms. **To Him belong the Best Names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him.** And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise." Q. 59:22-24

The preceding Monotheistic Beliefs are embedded in the meaning of La ilaha illallah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah).

It is important to note that believing in and practising any of the following defiles Worship by spoiling not only its beauty, but also its importance or acceptance or value, seriously contradicting Monotheism, the Belief in and Worship of Allah and Allah Alone: casting money, love, hatred, market, and fame spells; tying magic string (akadi or kobri); applying magic pomade or traditional, magic eyeliner; turning into cats, dogs, vultures, etc.; wearing talismanic rings, smocks, or belts; drinking magic potion; invocation of pictures, of spirits, etc.; burying or hanging talismanic objects like horns, clubs, bones, or cowries; viewing magic mirror; producing events during sleep (nightmare – magic dream); and flying on magic carpet, animal skin, broom, or knot.

So reasonably, every Muslim who blends their declaration of La ilaha illallah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah) with any of the above-mentioned reflections of Disbelief is a false worshipper, whose Worship is to no avail because they are supposedly pious. Such are the embodiment of mirror images of darkness.

1.2. BELIEF IN ANGELS

The Faith in Angels, the second conviction in the Unseen, is one of the connotations of the Belief in Allah. This is a complete and undoubted acceptance of the absolute reality of angels. Especially, it refers to any complete, enthusiastic recognition of the factual way of life of angels, not only as immaterial beings or good spirits, but also as Allah's Messengers, as human guides, guardians/protectors, and removers of souls, among other things.

We need to hold this Belief as one of the absolute certainties in life because it is not based on presumptions but backed by proofs. Indeed, this spiritual existence of angels, like that of the Creator, is akin to yet another supernatural existence such as of demons and experience such as of sleep and dreams. The following Qur-anic Statements support this fact: “There is no human being but has a protector over him (or her) (i.e. angels in charge of each human being, guarding him, writing his good and bad deeds.” Q. 86:4 Besides, “Allah...the Most High. It is the same (to Him) whether any of you conceals his speech or declares it openly, whether he be hid by night or goes forth freely by day. For him (each person), there are angels in succession, before and behind him. They guard him by the command of Allah...” Q.13:8-11 Moreover, “Then, on the Day of Resurrection, He will disgrace them...Those whose lives the angels take while they are doing wrong to themselves (by disbelief and by associating partners in worship with Allah and by committing all kinds of crimes and evil deeds)...” Q. 16:27-28

In all truthfulness, angels are benevolent creatures, so they always take delight in inspiring humans to follow Guidance; they often prompt us to accept the Truth and then act on its Dictates or reject or give up Falsehood and all that.

The Prophet (pbuh) said something to the effect that each human being has a whisper from Satan and a whisper from the angels. Satan's whisper influences the person to commit evil and deny the Truth, whereas the angel's whisper does suggest to them spiritual and moral purity, as well as acceptance of the Truth. Therefore, if one is confronted with the whisper of religious refinement and acceptance of Truth, then one should know that it is from Allah the Almighty. By the same token, the whisper of evil and rejection of the Truth is from Satan, “Rajim,” the outcast, so one must seek refuge in Allah the Almighty.

The Prophet (pbuh) then gave certainty to the preceding facts by adding this: “Shaitan” (Satan) threatens you with poverty and orders you to commit Fahsha (evil deeds, illegal sexual intercourse, sins); whereas Allah promises you Forgiveness from Himself and Bounty, and Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower.” Q. 2:268

The foregoing proofs have pointed out that Allah's Guidance has indeed come and, with that, Believers might think about and understand their religious obligations and prohibitions.

It is important to note that “The Communion of Spirits” or “The Ministry of Angels,” which completely destroys the Conviction in Angels, is completely without foundation. Perhaps, what people invoke as angels are no more than the devils (demons), and such invocation (Worship) is attributable to the Devil, the outcast. The Final Message has

added force to this point: “They (all those who worship others than Allah) invoke nothing but female deities besides Him (Allah) and they invoke nothing but Shaitan, a persistent rebel!” Q. 4:117

Let's now try to answer this question: Did the Messiah or any other human Messenger of Allah ever attribute to himself the power to invoke angels? Certainly not! Even Prophets had to invoke their Lord so that He could help, guide, guard, or strengthen them with His angels, a fact which supports that angels act on Divine Command only. It is insisted: “And we (angels) descend not except by the Command of your Lord...” Q. 19:64

Believers are obliged to strictly hold on to Monotheism by directing their intention and invocation or Prayer or supplication to Allah and Allah Alone. Of course, Servants of Allah are enjoined to seek spiritual assistance through Worship, particularly Prayer, by first of all invoking Him to aid them with His angels as guides, guardians/protectors, etc. For example, in the opening chapter of the Holy Qur-ran, after having testified that Allah Alone is worthy of Worship and of Trust—“You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything),” we then invoke Him by requesting the Divine Power [angel(s)] from Him to help/guide us in our endeavours—“Guide us to the straight Way...”

Notwithstanding this, some individuals are in association with the so-called Guardian Angels or are remote controlled by the repeated promptings of the “Holy Ghost.” They have in fact resorted to acting on the advice or suggestions of those spirits thereby becoming the easy game for such advocates of calculated deception, the Devil and the devils.

The following observed evidence has provided further explanation: “Following the inspiration of the “Holy Ghost,”...My father had been sitting in the house reading the newspaper when the Spirit whispered to him, 'Run out into the orchard!' Without a moment's hesitation, not waiting to learn why or for what reason, my father ran...' ” (From the Duties And Blessings Of The Priesthood, Basic Manual For Priesthood Holders, Part B)

So do not be deceived or befooled by the Devil to prostrate before or to obey the commands of the so-called angels or “Holy Ghost.” Isn't this yet another calculated deception? Of course yes! This is so because acting on the promptings of such forces of evil seriously contradicts Monotheism, the Belief in and Worship of Allah and Allah Alone.

It is encouraging to note that even though there are two angels in charge of each person, recording their good and bad deeds, three categories of persons are an exception. Narrated Aishah—RA: The Prophet (pbuh) said: “The deeds of the following three persons are not recorded by the pen: (1) A sleeping person till he wakes up (2) A child till he reaches the age of puberty (3) An insane person till he becomes sane.”

Finally, it is necessary to point out that apart from the two recording Angels (almutalaqqiyaan), there are several others with different Responsibilities. We could thus instance such angels as Archangel Gabriel, responsible for revealing Allah's Word to His Prophets and for supporting them as well; Mikaaeel (Michael), responsible for rain; and Israfeel, responsible for resurrection of the dead.

Narrated Salim's father: “Once Gabriel promised to visit the Prophet but he delayed and the Prophet got worried about that. At last he came out and found Gabriel and complained to him of his grief (for his delay). Gabriel said to him, ‘We do not enter a place in which there is a picture or a dog.’ ”

1.3. BELIEF IN ALLAH'S MESSENGERS

This Statement of Belief is the resolution that all the well-chosen are from Allah, the Merciful. In particular, it refers to acceptance of all Allah's Messengers, not forgetting His other Prophets, not only as humans, but also as givers of glad tidings and of warning. And more importantly, acting on their Message and Tradition is fundamental to this pledge.

In all seriousness, obedience to the final Messenger and Seal of all the Prophets (Muhammad—pbuh) implies obedience to all other Messengers and Prophets of Allah (pbut). Being Servants of the same Master, Allah, all of them did proclaim the same Message of Monotheism. But because the previous Message was somewhat distorted by the Messengers' adversaries, it cannot be a reliable source of Guidance.

It is therefore imperative that mankind accept the last Messenger of Allah with his Message, which is authentic and indeed intact, and which confirms the previous Ones. As humans, we need to, as a matter of religious obligation, strictly hold fast to Guidance by accepting the Messengership of The Prophet, Muhammad (pbuh). It is stated, “The Messenger (Muhammad—pbuh) believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allah...and His Messengers. (They say), 'We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers'—and they say, 'We hear, and we obey...’ ” Q. 2:285 Moreover, “Say (O Muhammad—pbuh to mankind), if you (really) love Allah then follow me (i.e. accept Islamic Monotheism,

follow the Qur-an and the Sunnah), Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. Say (O Muhammad—pbuh): 'Obey Allah and the Messenger (Muhammad—pbuh)].' But if they turn away, then Allah does not like the disbelievers." Q. 3:31-32 Besides, "And (remember) when Allah took the covenant of the prophets, saying: 'Take what I gave you from the Book and Hikmah (understanding of the Laws of Allah), and afterwards there will come to you a Messenger (Muhammad—pbuh) confirming what is with you; you must, then, believe in him and help him...' " Q. 3:81 Lastly, "And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers." Q. 3:85

The Belief in Allah's Messengers is often shown in obeying, loving, being loyal to, trusting, helping, or supporting them, or defending their Monotheistic Faith.

The most important thing to remember is that all Allah's Prophets submitted to Guidance, which is Islam. No wonder Islam is a universal Religion, the Faith of Abraham, Moses, Jesus, et al.

Indeed, Islam all the way; Islam the only way!

1.4. BELIEF IN ALLAH'S REVEALED BOOKS

This Statement of Faith is the firmness that the divinely revealed Scriptures are from Allah, the Creator. Unconditional acceptance of the authenticity of the Divine Message is central to this Tenet of Faith. It is the wholehearted recognition that Allah's Revelation is the absolute Truth. The very "Kitabullah," the Book of Allah, reveals its own genuineness, accuracy, or dependability; and so, its approval is relevant to this conviction. It is stated: "So I swear by whatsoever you see and by whatsoever you see not, that this is verily the word of an honoured Messenger [i.e. Jibril (Gabriel) or Muhammad (pbuh) which he has brought from Allah]. It is not the word of a poet: little is that you believe! Nor is it the word of a soothsayer (or a foreteller): little is that you remember! This is the Revelation sent down from the Lord of the Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists). And if he (Muhammad—pbuh) had forged a false saying concerning Us (...), We surely would have seized him by his right hand (or with power and might). And then We certainly would have cut off his life artery (aorta). And none of you could have withheld Us from (punishing) him." Q. 69:38-47

It is worth remembering that acceptance of this certainty is Faith Foundation; and indeed, subsequent acceptance of the Dictates of the Book of Allah results in increased Faith. In other words, the more you accept Allah's Statements without disputing them,

the more you attain Faith. This leads to increased Guidance. It is emphatically stated: "While as for those who accept guidance, He increases their guidance and bestows on them their piety." Q. 47:17

Having done that, we then revere the Divine Message as a Sacred Book. We are being instructed to hold in the highest regard the Last Scripture by greatly respecting and appreciating its Sacredness. To this end, we need to purify ourselves by performing ablution, to handle it with utmost care, to study or recite it in a slow but pleasant tone, and then to listen to it in reverent silence.

It is disheartening to observe that some Muslims often place the Book of Allah on their TV sets, radios, or computers while watching movies, listening to music, or viewing other religiously unacceptable programmes, which are the very violations of revered standards of Scriptural Sacredness, not forgetting those of the norms of human decency.

Our next logical step is to obey Allah's Command by acting in accordance with the Dictates of His Book, the Holy Qur-an. We must be duty bound to carry out what has been enjoined on us and avoid what has been forbidden to us. We should, after having believed in the Message, willingly and eagerly but sincerely listen to, read, or study it, and then go by it.

It is important to note that "Kitabullah" heels intellectually, spiritually, morally, and materially. Some Chapters or Verses of the Qur-an can be recited for the purpose of protection, knowledge, etc. For instance, we can recite Chapters 113 and 114, as well as Verse 255 of the second chapter of the Book of Allah for protection.

These are some of the Healing Properties of the Holy Qur -an on magic spells, evil eyes, and so on. (For details, see "Shift in Orientation" by the same author)

We are however cautioned against using any part of the Book in addition to magic symbols (undoubted basis of "atumi"—modified magic symbols) or formulae for, say, protection purposes. We are forbidden to use certain Chapters or Verses of the Qur-an to prepare "tablet water," a variation of magic potion.

The most important thing to remember is that such modified magic symbols (Arabic Alphabets and/or Numerals, star, moon, skeleton, animals, etc.), the occult power representing hidden names of jinn, humans, or angels, are the invention of human devils in collaboration with the spirit (jinn) devils. (For more information, see "Which Way? – The Two Ways in Perspective!" by the same author)

What a clear manifestation of Kufr!

It is worth noting that wrong-doers (disbelievers or hypocrites) can never ever use the Qur-an or its Verses to protect themselves or others, heal, or exorcise evil spirits in that they are not guided and therefore have no Faith. And because it is a point of fact that they are spiritually and morally wretched, we can say in no uncertain terms that they can't use Verses of the Qur-an or request or use the Divine Power to practise Faith Healing or Divine Exorcism. It is said, "And We send down of the Qur-an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism and act on it), and it increases the Zalimun (polytheists and wrong-doers) nothing but loss." Q. 17:82

I suppose you haven't mistaken Faith Healing and Divine Exorcism for Spiritual Healing and Coptic Exorcism, have you? (For details, see "Which Way?—The Two Ways in Perspective!" by the same author)

What is more, we are cautioned against some previously revealed Books whose authenticity is doubtful, for example, the distorted Books of the People of the Scripture, Jews and Christians. It is connected: "And verily, among them is a party who distort the Book with their tongues (as they read), so that you may think it is from the Book, but it is not from the Book, and they say: 'This is from Allah,' but it is not from Allah; and they speak a lie against Allah while they know it." Q. 3:78 Besides, "Never did We send a Messenger or a Prophet before you but when he did recite the revelation or narrated or spoke, Shaitan (Satan) threw (some falsehood) in it. But Allah abolishes that which Shaitan (Satan) throws in. Then Allah establishes His Revelations. And Allah is All-knower, All-wise. That He (Allah) may make what is thrown in by Shaitan (Satan) a trial for those in whose hearts is a disease (of hypocrisy and disbelief) and whose hearts are hardened. And certainly, the Zalimun (Polytheists and wrong-doers) are in an opposition far-off (from the truth against Allah's Messenger and the believers)." Q. 22:52-53 Lastly, "Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say, 'This is from Allah,' to purchase with it a little price! Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for that they earn thereby.' " Q. 2:79

This is self-evident. For instance, it was categorically stated in one of the lengthy letters in the Bible: "Let me tell you, my brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preach is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any human being, nor did any one teach it to me. It was Jesus Christ Himself who revealed it to me." Galatians 1:11 Also, "But God in his grace chose me even before I was born, and called me to serve him...I did not go to anyone for advice...it was three years later that I went to Jerusalem to obtain information from Peter, and I stayed with him for two weeks. I did not see any other apostle except James, the Lord's brother. What I write is true. God knows I am not

lying!" Galatians 2:15-20 In addition: "From Paul; whose call to be an apostle did not come from human beings or by human means, but from Jesus Christ and God the Father..." Galatians 1:1 Further, "See what big letters I make as I write to you now with my own hand." Galatians 6:11

I think we need to look beyond what is obvious; that is, it remains to be seen whether Paul's claim of apostleship was actually based on any of the Messiah's prophecies or not. In fact, that was somewhat exaggerated because he said so of his own accord, without being inspired by the Holy Spirit. So in order not to escape from reality, we must accept without doubt that Jesus Christ didn't prophesy about Paul's apostleship, did he?

And according to Reverent T.G. Tucker (1987; 320), both the Old and New Testaments have been altered: "These gospels were produced which clearly reflected the conception of the practical needs of the community for which they were written. In them, the traditional material was used, but there was no hesitation in altering it, or in leaving out what did not suit the writer's purpose."

To say the least, we can instance the following distortions or arguable citations in the Bible: the foregoing statements of Paul or his lengthy letters and a collection of five poems (Lamentations).

That is intellectual dishonesty, the undoubted basis of mistrust, which buttresses the point that the authenticity of the previous Message is doubtful, let's bear it in mind.

Such is craftiness, indeed.

Well, it is a point of fact that a believing Muslim who does not read the Book of Allah is of little Faith as compared to a believing Muslim who does read it and is as a result guided by a sense of morality; and a nominal Muslim's (Hypocrite in Faith's) reading the Glorious Book is to no avail because they are misguided in their Faith by clinging to such impious practices as Soothsaying, Demonic Protection, and neo-Ancestral Sacrifice.

The preceding facts are supported by the following narration: Hadrat Abu Musa (RA) narrated that Rasulullah (pbuh) said: "The example of a mumin (believer) who reads the Qur-an is like that of turanj (citron), which has a pleasant smell and a sweet taste. The example of a momin who does not read the Qur-an is like that of a date, which has no smell, though its taste is sweet. The like of a munafiq (hypocrite) who does not read the Qur-an is like a wild gourd, which has a bitter taste and no smell. And a munafiq who reads the Qur-an is like a raihan (sweet-smelling flower), which is fragrant but has a bitter taste."

Finally, I urge humble readers to pay heed to the reasonable arguments in the Noble Qur-an, for it is truly a Book of Knowledge and indeed Source of Guidance. It is emphasised: "And that those who have been given knowledge may know that It (...Qur-an) is the truth from Your Lord, so that they may believe therein, and their hearts may submit to it with humility. And verily, Allah is the Guide of those who believe, to the straight path." Q. 22:54

1.5. BELIEF IN THE DAY OF RESURRECTION

The Conviction in the Day of Restoration means that there is life after death. Particularly, it refers to the Belief in Resurrection and in judgment, as well as in Reward—Paradise, and in Punishment—Hell, not forgetting similar conditions of bliss and torture in the grave.

To demonstrate this Faith, we need to show obedience to our religious obligations and prohibitions. We should be Allah-conscious by always remembering the agony of death and the consequences of our actions and inaction. To do this, we ought to be intellectually, spiritually, morally, and materially refined by being monotheistic, morally honest and decent, anticipating some rewards and at the same time by avoiding Impiety, dishonesty, and indecency, with the unbearable torment of the Hell-Fire in mind.

For instance, whereas turning away an orphan harshly and egging people on or discouraging them from helping or feeding the poor or the needy or being greedy-miserly are a clear indication of lack of Faith in the Hereafter, looking after orphans and providing for them and looking after or feeding widows or the poor or the needy are demonstrative of one's Faith in the Hereafter, provided one's intention is sincere, and one believes in the other Articles of Faith as well.

Another mirror image of light in respect of the conviction in the Day of Restoration lies in showing reverence to the Call to Prayer by listening to it attentively, in repeating the Wordings after the caller, and in invoking Allah's Blessings on The Prophet (pbuh) immediately after its completion. According to The Prophet (pbuh), his promised Intercession on That Day is only granted to those who manifest or act in accordance with the above-mentioned set standards of Belief by listening to the Azan in reverence silence, by responding to it, and then by supplicating for him.

Interestingly, this Certainty is at variance with the Materialists' "popular" notion that death is an eternal sleep and, for that reason, we need to seriously ponder on the wisdom of such "eternal sleep" death, just for once.

Let's face it, we were once in a state of non-existence and then came into being. Also, we know in no uncertain terms that in the course of time we will be in a state of non-existence once again.

Now, the question is, Do we have difficulty in accepting that we were once non-existent? Of course no! Or can't our Creator bring us back to life after we have died? Of course yes!

This Confidence in Allah's Ability to bring the dead back to life is not based on presumptions, but it is backed by proofs or real evidence. For example, sleep is illustrative of death, and wakefulness of Resurrection. Such is a truism, indeed. The Holy Qur-an has provided us with other examples: "O mankind! If you are in doubt about the resurrection, then verily We have created you (i.e. Adam) from dust, then from a Nutfah (mixed drops of male and female sexual discharge i.e. the offspring of Adam), then from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood) then from a little lump of flesh—some formed and some unformed (as in the case of miscarriage)—that We may make (it) clear to you (i.e. to show you Our power and Ability to do what We will). And We cause whom We will to remain in the wombs for an appointed term, then We bring you out as infants, then (give you growth) that you may reach your age of full strength. And among you there is he who dies (young), and among you there is he who is brought back to the miserable old age, so that he knows nothing after having known. And you see the earth barren, but when We send down water (rain) on it, it is stirred (to life), and it swells and puts fourth every lovely kind (of growth). That is because Allah: He is the Truth, and it is He Who gives life to the dead, and it is He who is Able to do all things." Q. 22:5-6 And indeed, "Look then at the effects (results) of Allah's Mercy: how He revives the earth after its death. Verily, that (Allah) (Who revived the earth after its death) shall indeed raise the dead (on the Day of Resurrection), and He is Able to do all things." Q. 30:50

It is worth remembering that Allah Alone knows the exact Day or Time of the aforesaid Resurrection. The following Statement of Allah provides the evidence: "People ask you concerning the Hour, say, 'The knowledge of it is with Allah Only.' What do you know? It may be that the Hour is near!' " Q. 33:63

The following Biblical Statement is concurrent with the preceding Qur-anic Proof: “No one knows, however, when that day or hour will come—neither the angels in heaven, nor the son; only the Father knows.” Mark 13:32

Nonetheless, the Signs of that Day are a known fact. No doubt, its Signs will be made apparent to all. In connection with this, the Master of the Day of Resurrection has this to say: “O mankind! Fear your Lord and be dutiful to Him! Verily, the earthquake of the Hour (of Judgment) is a terrible thing. The Day you shall see it, every nursing mother will forget her nursling, and every pregnant one will drop her load, and you shall see mankind as in a drunken state, yet they will not be drunken, but severe will be the Torment of Allah.” Q. 22:1-2

Of course, there will be yet other obvious Signs preceding that Day such as the appearance of Gog and Magog and of Dajjal (the one-eyed man or anti-Christ), as well as the Second Coming of the Messiah, son of Mary.

Strictly speaking, that will indeed be the Hour when the Sun, of all Allah's Signs, will rise from the West. What a Day!

Finally, it is worth emphasising that to prefer the mention of creatures such as cult figures or religious leaders to Allah's Mention, or to become grief-stricken when the Word of Allah is mentioned is another reason for lack of faith in the Hereafter. The Holy Book has truly thrown light on such undue preference in the following Words: “And when Allah Alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter are filled with disgust (From the Oneness of Allah) and when those (whom they obey or worship) besides Him (...) are mentioned, behold, they rejoice!” Q. 39:45

Narrated Abu Shuraih Al-Adawi: “My ears heard and my eyes saw the Prophet when he spoke, ‘Anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day, should serve his neighbor generously, and anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should serve his guest generously by giving him his reward.’ It was asked. “What is his reward, O Allah's Apostle?” He said, ‘(To be entertained generously) for a day and a night with high quality of food and the guest has the right to be entertained for three days (with ordinary food) and if he stays longer, what he will be provided with will be regarded as Sadaqa (a charitable gift). And anybody who believes in Allah and the Last Day should talk what is good or keep quite (i.e. abstain from all kinds of dirty and evil talks).’ ”

1.6. BELIEF IN DIVINE PREORDAINMENT

This is the sixth and last of the fundamental Codes of Belief in Islam. It means that whatsoever Allah has ordained would surely come to pass. Particularly, it refers to the fact that Allah's Decision is based on His advance Knowledge or Awareness of our fate.

This is a clear indication that Allah knows and is aware of the outcome of events before those events actually occur. Such events are said to be predestined because Allah has absolute control over them. And each of them occurs by Allah's Will or Permission.

Allah's Will is Guidance, so it is in accordance with His Will that He does a lot of good. The Qur-an vividly explains: "Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allah..." Q. 4:79

By Allah's permission, however, any misfortune that befalls us is from ourselves; He is aware of it, but He allows it. Allah has established the truth of this: "No calamity befalls, but by the Leave [i.e. Decision and Qadar (Divine Preordainment)] of Allah ...And Allah is All-Knower of everything." Q. 64:11

Wrong-doers are more often than not overtaken by Divine Retribution. This worldly punishment for wrong-doing has serious far-reaching or long-term repercussions as far as social interactions are concerned. In fact, the consequences are at all levels. It is emphasised, "Evil (sins and disobedience to Allah) has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of men have earned (by oppression and evils deeds), that He (Allah) may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return (by repenting to Allah, and begging His Pardon)." Q. 30:41

Again, by Allah's Permission, one can succeed in carrying out evil deeds which are punishable by the Divine Law.

It is heartening to note that Allah just leaves wrong-doers in error for disbelieving in or displeasing Him. He does not actually prompt them to stray from the Path of Guidance because He is just, and they have the free-will. The Holy Qur-an has added force to the preceding facts: "Allah will keep firm those who believe, with the word that stands firm in this world (i.e. they will keep on worshipping Allah Alone and none else), and in the Hereafter. And Allah will cause to go astray those who are zalimum (polytheists and wrong doers), and Allah does what He wills." Q.14:27 In addition, "...And Allah guides not the people who are Zalimun (Polytheists, wrong-doers)." Q. 62:5 Besides, "...Verily, Allah will not change the (good) condition of a people as long as they do not change their state (of goodness) themselves (by committing sins and by being ungrateful and disobedient to Allah)..." Q. 13:11

In all truthfulness, Allah always demands unquestioning obedience from each and every Believer. He does expect from them nothing but good. Therefore, it is not His Will that we do evil. The Noble Qur-an has attested to this fact: "And (when) it is said to those who are the muttaqun (...) 'What is it that your Lord has sent down? They say: 'That which is good.' For those who do good in this world, there is good, and the home of the

Hereafter will be better. And excellent indeed will be the home (i.e. paradise) of the Muttaqun (the pious...).' Q. 16:30

Indeed, Believers are limited by the Divine Law because they have truly allowed their free-will to be limited by Allah's Will, Guidance—and that is a promise.

Similarly, if it is written in the stars that one is an inmate of Hell, one will surely dwell in it, irrespective of one's existing level of Faith. And if it is written in Allah's Book that you are a resident of the Good End, you are definitely entitled to it.

This does not mean that the outcome of events is in accordance with the Divine Will. But it does mean that Allah is Just, and so have we the Free-Will. He has shown us the Two Ways and their respective Destinations, so we have to bear the consequences of our choices. The following Statement of Allah has truly cast light on this sense of choice, the understanding that we can either exercise our free-will to the letter or have it limited by Guidance, Islam: "Whoever goes right, then he goes right only for the benefit of his ownself. And whoever goes astray, then he goes astray for his own loss. No one laden with burdens can bear others' burden. And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger (to give warning)." Q. 17:15

I would like to point out that indulging in triumphalism is strictly forbidden, especially among Believers and the innocent. We should neither consider others' misfortune as a cause for rejoice nor become grief-stricken when we hear their success stories. All in all, just have unshakable Faith in Allah Alone, carry out Acts of Worship, and then strictly go by Righteousness.

And of course, Believers are obliged to act with other manifestations of Imaan such as justice, charity, Love, decent speech, Islamic dress code, gentleness, and decent hairstyle, among others. Such images of light are the hallmark of the true Believer, the embodiment of not only piety, but also of moral honesty and decency. And because they are guided by Faith, they are indeed guided by a sense of morality, not forgetting clear conscience.

1.7. FURTHER DIMENSIONS OF DEEDS OF IMAAN (FAITH)

Righteous/Moderate Spending, a Clear Manifestation of Faith:

“By no means shall you attain to righteousness until you spend (benevolently) out of what you love; and whatever thing you spend, Allah surely knows it.” Q. 3:92

“And the servants of the Beneficent Allah are they who ... when they spend, are neither extravagant nor miserly, and (keep) between these the just mean.” Q. 25:63-67

Raiment of Righteousness, a Mirror Image of Imaan:

“O children of Adam! We have indeed sent down to you clothing to cover your shame, and (clothing) for beauty and clothing that guards (against evil), that is the best. This is of the communications of Allah that they may be mindful.” Q. 7:26

Mercifulness, a Clear Demonstration of Conviction:

Narrated Aisha: “A bedouin came to the Prophet and said, “You (people) kiss the boys! We don't kiss them. The Prophet said, ‘I cannot put mercy in your heart after Allah has taken it away from it.’ ”

Love/Compassion/Salaam, a plain Sign of Imaan:

“The believers, men and women, are Auliya (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another...Allah will have His Mercy on them. Surely Allah is Almighty, All-Wise.” Q. 9:71 Moreover, Abu Huraira (RA) relates that the Prophet (pbuh) said, “By Him Who has my soul in His Hand, you will not enter Paradise until you have faith; and you will not attain faith until you love one another. Shall I tell you about something that, if you do, will bring about love amongst you? Spread greetings (with peace) amongst yourselves.”

Strictness, The Firmness of Mouth, of Hand, And of Heart Against Irresolution; a True Reflection of Imaan:

We have to reiterate that Faith is often shown in forbidding evil with our hands, tongues, and hearts. Ibn Mas 'ud (RA) relates that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, “No Prophet that Allah sent before me in a nation but had from among his nation disciples and companions, who went by his way and obeyed his orders. These were followed by successors who professed what they did not practise and practised what they were not ordered. He who struggles against them with his hand is a believer; he who struggles against them with his heart is a believer; and he who struggles against them with his tongue is a believer. Beyond that, there is not a grain of Faith.”

Justice, a noticeable connotation of Faith:

“O you who believe! be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness of Allah's sake, though it may be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives; if he be rich or poor, Allah is nearer to them both in compassion; therefore do not follow (your) low desires, lest you deviate; and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allah is aware of what you do.” Q. 4:135

Patience/Steadfastness, a Clear Indication of Imaan:

“You shall certainly be tried respecting your wealth and your souls, and you shall certainly hear from those who have been given the Book before you and from those who are polytheists much annoying talk; and if you are patient and guard (against evil), surely this is one of the affairs (which should be) determined upon.” **Q. 3:186**

“So be patient (O Muhammad—pbuh), verily, the Promise of Allah is true...” Q. 40:77

Humility/Gentleness, an Obvious Sign of Faith:

“And the servants of the Beneficent Allah are they who walk on the earth in humbleness, and when the ignorant address them, they say: Peace.” Q. 25:63

“And do not turn your face away from people in contempt, nor go about in the land exulting overmuch; surely Allah does not love any self-conceited boaster; And pursue the right course in your going about and lower your voice; surely the most hateful of voices is braying of the asses.”

Q. 31:18-19

Obedience to The Fitra, a True Demonstration of inborn Inclination of Tawheed, the Unity of Allah:

Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle said, "Five practices are characteristics of the Fitra: circumcision, shaving the pubic region, clipping the nails and cutting the moustaches short."

Aisha reported: The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Ten are the acts according to the Fitra: clipping the moustache, letting the beard grow, using the tooth-stick, snuffing water in the nose, cutting the nails, washing the finger joints, plucking the hair under the armpits, shaving the pubic hair, and cleaning one's private parts with water. The narrator said, 'I have forgotten the tenth...'" (Sahih Muslim, II, 502)

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "There are two groups in my nation who have no share in Islam: the Murji'a and the Qadariyya.' He was asked, 'What are the Murji'a?' and he answered, 'They are those who say that Faith is mere saying with no deeds.' He was asked, 'What are the Qadariyya?' He answered, 'They are those who say that there is no fate (destiny).'
" (Bukhari, Muslim, as related by Ibn Abbas –ra)

CHAPTER 2

DISBELIEF AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS

Kufr (Disbelief) basically means lack of Faith (Belief). Therefore, Kufr is the direct opposite of Imaan (Faith). While the former is a whole, which is greater than its individual parts such as the Belief in Angels and in Resurrection, the latter is also a whole, which is greater than each of its parts such as arrogance and hypocrisy. The following Statements of Allah leave nothing to the imagination: “Verily, those who **believe**, then **disbelieve...**” Q. 4:137 Moreover, “Those who take **disbelievers...instead of believers...**” Q. 4:139 Further, “Allah has promised those who **believe...** that for them there is forgiveness and a great reward (Paradise). And those who **disbelieve...**are those who will be the dwellers of the Hell Fire.” Q. 5:9-10 Also, “O you who **believe!** Believe in Allah...and whoever **disbelieves** in Allah...” Q. 4:136 (also see Q. 98:6-7; Q. 84:22 and 25)

The following Scriptural Statement supports the fact that gratitude is one of the manifestations, but not a complete synonym, of Faith: “Why should Allah punish you if you have thanked (Him) and have believed in Him. And Allah is All-Appreciative (of good), All-Knower.” Q. 4:147

Let’s face it; since the purpose of creation is to worship and Zikr/Thankfulness (directly reflecting – deeply thinking over the wisdom of Divine Creation, Blessings, Favours, or Graces, or uttering words of gratitude like “Alhamdulillah” – “All Thanks and Praises belong to Allah,” is a part of True Worship, which is a manifestation of Imaan, then it stands to reason that, misdirected gratitude (thanking others besides Allah for Divine

Blessings such as hearing and sight), is a component of False Worship, a clear demonstration of Kufr.

It is worth noting that indirect gratitude, which is accorded a creature for having done good, is not Worship, but a righteous deed.

But it still remains to be seen whether ingratitude is synonymous with Kufr or is an express reverse of Imaan, considering the following Verses: “Verily, man (**disbeliever**) is **ungrateful** to his Lord.” Q.100:6 And indeed, “Verily, We showed him the way, whether he be **grateful** or **ungrateful**. Verily, We have prepared for the **disbelievers** iron chains, iron collars, and a blazing Fire.” Q. 76:3-4

Kufr specifically refers to the following mirror images of darkness, the true reflections of faithlessness: Denial of the Truth about any of the six Articles of Faith or Doubting or Lacking Conviction in any of them, Rejection of Faith and Arrogance in submitting to the Divine Command, Hypocrisy in Faith and in Deeds of Faith, as well as Polytheism/“Shirk.”

2.1. DENIAL OF THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SIX ARTICLES OF FAITH OR DOUBTING OR LACKING CONVICTION IN THEM

“... and whoever disbelieves in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, then indeed he has strayed far away.” Q. 4:136

To deny the Truth about any of the fundamental Codes of Belief in Islam or doubt or lack conviction in any of them is a major form of Kufr. For example, criticising or questioning the Truth about the generally accepted Islamic Creeds is one of the reasons for lack of Faith. Among the undoubted anti-religious groups that support such iconoclasm are the materialists and freethinkers, the doubting Thomases. The following Scriptural Statements have left nothing to the imagination: “Then who does more wrong than one who utters a lie against Allah and **denies the truth** [the Qur-an, the prophet (Muhammad—pbuh), the Islamic Monotheism,] when it comes to him. **Is there not in Hell an abode for disbelievers?**” Q. 39:32 Besides, “And he went into his garden while in a state (of pride and disbelief), unjust to himself. He said: 'I think not that this will ever perish. **And I think not the Hour will ever come...**' His companion said to him during the talk with him: '**Do you disbelieve in Him Who created you out of dust?'**...' ” Q. 18:35-37

2.2. REJECTION OF FAITH AND ARROGANCE IN SUBMITTING TO THE DIVINE COMMAND

Another major form of disbelief can be seen in rejecting Faith and in being arrogant to submit to the Divine Commands after conviction of their Truth or turning away from the Truth knowingly or deviating from Allah's obvious Signs.

According to Abdullah bin Mas'ud (RA), The Prophet (pbuh) said, "...pride is to completely disregard the truth and to scorn (to look down upon) the people." The Holy Qur-an further states, "And (remember) when We said to the angels: 'Prostrate yourselves before Adam.' And they prostrated except Iblis (Satan), **he refused and was proud and was one of the disbelievers** (disobedient to Allah).'" Q. 2:34 And indeed, "Surely, **those who reject Faith** (disbelieve in Allah and in Muhammad—pbuh as being Allah's Messenger and in all that which he (pbuh) has brought from Allah), neither their properties, nor their offspring will avail them aught against Allah. **They are the dwellers of the Fire, therein they will abide.**" Q. 3:116

We must reiterate that defying or refusing to obey the Truth, being insolent or intentionally and rudely showing no respect, etc. are symptoms of arrogance, the persistence of which deprives the arrogant of the Good End. It is connected: Narrated Abdullah bin Mas'ud (RA): Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said, "Whosoever has pride in his heart equal to the weight of an atom (or a smaller ant) shall not enter Paradise..."

Let's not dispute Guidance; the possibility of our prayer, fasting, Hajj, or charity being rendered null and void because of our refusal to submit to Allah's Command when admonished by continuing to commit such pointless acts of defiance against Him as praying amidst pictures of human beings and animals, praying with jointed hair, rasta, or dreadlocks; and squatting as a mark of obedience and respect is a wake-up call to all those who have got caught up in such deviant practices.

What then is the driving force behind such insensitivity? Pride? Here is the connection: "And when it is said to him, 'Fear Allah,' he is led by arrogance to (more) crime. So enough for him is Hell, and worst indeed is that place to rest.'" Q. 2:206

Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle said, "Allah will not look, on the Day of Resurrection, at a person who drags his garment (behind him) out of pride and arrogance."

2.3. HYPOCRISY IN FAITH AND IN DEEDS/ ACTIONS

“They wish that you reject Faith, as they have rejected Faith, and thus that you all become equal...” Q. 4:89

Hypocrisy in Faith means pretense of Piety and Righteousness. It especially refers to a practice in which the practitioner purports to have Faith in Allah by pretending to obey Him in Worship and Moral Values. Such deception is the outstanding feature of the double-faced who carry out Deeds of Faith just to be seen of or be praised by others.

For example, a nominal Muslim who has broken Faith with Allah by practising Soothsaying or being in association with the devils (jinn) is a Hypocrite in Faith. Such is a Muslim who is not a Believer. In other words, that is a Muslim in name, but not in reality.

This clearly indicates that a nominal Muslim continues to be a hypocrite in Faith as long as they observe the five daily Prayers, Fasting, etc.—hence the name “hypocritical kuffar” (hypocritical disbelievers) or disbelievers in Faith. If they however die in this state of affairs, then they can be referred to as disbelievers. The Holy Qur-an has provided further explanations: “And when they meet those who believe, they say: 'We believe,' but when they are alone with their Shayatin (devils), they say: 'Truly, we are with you; verily, we were but mocking.' ” Q. 2:14 Allah further states, “They have made their oaths a screen (for their hypocrisy). Thus they hinder (men) from the path of Allah. Verily, evil is what they used to do. That is because they believed, then disbelieved, therefore their hearts are sealed, so they understand not.” Q. 63:2-3 Lastly, “And nothing prevents their contributions from being accepted from them except that they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad—pbuh), and that they came not to As-Salat (the prayer) except in a lazy state and that they offer not contributions but unwillingly. So let not their wealth and children amaze you (O Muhammad—pbuh); in reality Allah's plan is to punish them with these things in the life of this world **and that their souls shall depart (die) while they are disbelievers**. They swear by Allah that they are truly of you while they are not of you, but they are a people (hypocrites) who are afraid (that you may kill them).” Q. 9:54-56. (also, see Q. 9:84)

Clearly, the hypocrites in Faith are the rebellious in the True Faith of Islam. Indeed, we can instance Abdullahi Ibn Ubay, Abdullahi Ibn Samad, Abdullahi Ibn Namjal, and Mistah as hypocrites during the life time of The Prophet (pbuh).

“Kitabullah,” the Book of Allah, has added force to the abovementioned facts: “And never (O Muhammad—pbuh) pray (funeral prayer) for any of them (hypocrites) who dies, nor stand at his grave. Certainly, they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger

(pbuh), and died while they were Fasiqun (rebellious—disobedient to Allah and His Messenger (pbuh).” Q. 9:84

They are rebellious in the sense that even though they observe Prayer, Fasting, and Hajj/Pilgrimage, among others, they are opposed to or in disagreement with the Dictates of the Book of Allah and indeed the Central Islamic Authorities in Saudi Arabia. Their opposition to such legitimate Authorities is obviously shown in condoning Soothsaying, Demonic Protection, and neo-Ancestral Sacrifice, as well as fornication, “muta”/marriage of convenience, lottery/gambling, obscene or sexy but insinuating songs and movies, secular humanism, and the use of dreadlocks or jointed-hair or Rasta. What a retrogressive inclination!

Such proponents of pagan and secular values are by far the undoubted enemies within the fold of Islam. It is connected: “...Thus they hinder (men) from the Path of Allah...That is because they believed, and then disbelieved; therefore their hearts are sealed, so they understand not...**They are the enemies**, so beware of them...” Q 63:2-4

The most important thing to remember is that the “hypocritical kuffar” are religious sectarians. They (the hypocrites), unlike the outstanding Group, endorse Impiety and Unrighteousness and at the same time reject Piety and Righteousness. They not only support such deviant practices but also keep Guidance hidden from others. The Qur-an explains, “The hypocrites, men and women, are one from another; they enjoin (on the people) Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief and polytheism of all kinds and all that Islam has forbidden), and forbid (people) from Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do)...” Q. 9:67

It is disheartening that hypocrisy has truly got the better of the sectarian Muslims. They cannot stop themselves letting pretense make them come to terms with Believers. Their following the Devil’s footsteps is obvious. Particularly, their advocacy of calculated deception, like Satan’s, is widely known and talked about. Allah states: “They (think to) deceive Allah and those who believe, while they only deceive themselves, and perceive (it) not! In their hearts is a disease (of doubt and hypocrisy) and Allah has increased their disease. A painful torment is theirs because they used to tell lies.” Q. 2:9-10

They not only deceive Believers but also slander, belie, embarrass, or tease them.

The hypocrites are not united in Truth. Their unity is based on hypocrisy, but not on the Truth. It is based on the pretended reason of pleasing Allah, for they converge on scenes of lust, ignorance, deceit, pride, plot (“maakirchi”), mischief (“sharri”),

persecution (“fitna,” but not “trial fitna”/“jarabbta”), extravagance, and secular humanism, among other things.

Because these pretentious elements don't remember Allah by not pondering on the consequences of their actions and inaction so that they can abstain from evil or repent of their sins, He (Allah) leaves them in their error; He does not guide wrong-doers. Here is the reminder: “...And Allah guides not the people who are Zalimun (Polytheists, wrong-doers).” Q. 62:5

It is therefore obvious that Hypocrites in Faith or sectarian Muslims will be among the eternal dwellers of the Hell-Fire. It is proclaimed: “Verily, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depth (grade) of the Fire, no helper will you find for them.” Q. 4:145

According to The Prophet (pbuh), there are six characteristics of Hypocrisy in Faith, to wit:

- To belie the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad—pbuh)
 - To belie the Message of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh)
 - To hate the Messenger of Allah (pbuh)
 - To hate his Message of Islamic Monotheism
 - To consider Islam's defeat as a cause for rejoice
 - To be grief-stricken when Allah's Religion is victorious
- Hypocrisy is found not only in Faith, but also in deeds/ actions. Thus according to the Prophet (pbuh), Hypocrisy is characterised by lying, broken promises, betrayal of trust or dishonesty, rudeness (embarrassment; offensiveness), and treachery (deceit and disloyalty).

Remember, “Shaitan (Satan) has overpowered them. So he has made them forget the remembrance of Allah. They are the party of Shaitan (Satan). Verily, it is the party of Shaitan (Satan) that will be the losers!” Q. 58:19

2.4. POLYTHEISM OR “SHIRK”

“Verily, Allah forgives not (the sin of) setting up partners (in worship) with Him, but He forgives whom He wills sins other than that, and whoever sets up partners in worship with Allah, has indeed strayed far away.” Q. 4:116

This is the belief in and worship of others besides Allah, the Creator. It involves giving Divine Attributes to others besides Him. Particularly, it refers to the belief that the

source of power, harm, or blessings is from creatures, not the Creator, Allah; or to the use of or requesting any power other than the Divine.

In effect, to direct your intention, Prayer, Fasting, Sacrifice, and so forth to creatures, but not to the Creator, is False Worship.

2.4.1. TYPES OF SHIRK

2.4.1.1. MAJOR “SHIRK”

(I) “Shirk of Intention.” Any misdirected intention, which is connected to Acts of Worship or their components, is “Shirk,” since intention is central to Worship. And as long as that holds good, it stands to reason that if one’s intention or purpose is to believe in and then carry out Worship in order to please others besides Allah, then one is said to be engaged in “Shirk,” and of course of intention.

For example, if the devils (jinn) command one to slaughter a pigeon every 90 days as a condition for renewing any spirit-money agreement, then one is said to be a false worshipper. This is so because such Sacrifice is carried out in fulfillment of the devils' command (neo-Ancestral Sacrifice), but not Allah's (Eid Adha Sacrifice), thus aiming at pleasing the wrong objects of Worship, the devils—creatures, instead of the Right Object of Worship, Allah—the Creator.

The Holy Qur-an has cast light on the need to direct all intentions to Allah and Allah Alone: “And to your Lord (Alone) turn (all your) intentions and hopes.” Q. 94:8

Truly, actions are judged according to intentions.

(II) “Shirk of Invocation.” Any misdirected invocation is “Shirk.” Invocation, like intention, is an integral part of Worship. And so, requesting or using the hidden power of Occult, which is outside oneself, to help one achieve a purpose in life is “Shirk,” and indeed of invocation. Casting money or love or curse or divorce spells, charming, incantation, exciting the Tempests, and wearing such magic protective objects as rings and silver chains typically exemplify “Shirk of Invocation.”

Such hidden power of occult, derived from the devils (jinn), “angels,” “Saints in Heaven” or “souls of deceased humans,” the Sun-god (“Allahu Shamsu”), or the “Holy Ghost,” is employed to aid “occult malams” solve their problems.

It is important to note that such misdirected acts of invocation are attributable to the Devil, but not to Allah the Exalted. The following Statement of Allah clarifies this point: “They (all those who worship others than Allah) invoke nothing but female deities besides Him (Allah), and they invoke nothing but Shaitan (Satan), a persistent rebel!” Q. 4:117

(III) “Shirk of Undue Obeisance.” Obedience and respect to any authority whatsoever, which is in defiance of the Divine Command in respect of Piety, is “Shirk.” For instance, in Worship, especially in Prayer, Believers obey and show reverence to Allah by strictly adhering to the prescribed rules of Rukuh (bending at the waist), Sujud (prostration), squatting, kneeling down, etc., which are physical components of Worship, with standing and sitting upright as the usual, exceptional positions.

And because intention is central to Worship, believing in and intending to please other creatures, especially the elderly and/or the wealthy, by making such undue bends is “Shirk,” and of course of obedience. The Glorious Qur-an casts light on this misdirected obedience: “They (Jews and Christians) took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allah (by obeying them in things which they made lawful or unlawful according to their own desires without being ordered by Allah), and (they also took as their Lord) Messiah, son of Maryam (Mary), while they (Jews and Christians) were commanded [in the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)] to worship none but One Ilah (God—Allah) La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He)...” Q. 9:31

Therefore, we need to keep away from making such bends as a mark of obedience and respect to the wealthy and the powerful in society, in spite of the fact that those persons usually demand unquestioning, undue bow from us. At best, we must always err on the side of caution by not obeying them in such extremely unusual practices. Allah insists: regrettably, “On the Day when their faces will be turned over in the Fire, they will say, ‘Oh would that we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger (Muhammad—pbuh). And they will say, ‘Our Lord! Verily, we obeyed our chiefs and great ones, and they misled us from the Right Path.’” Q. 33:66-67

(IV) “Shirk of Undue Love.” This means sharing the love that is due to Allah Alone with religious scholars, politicians, Idols, etc. In this, people's inclination is to be unreasonably attracted towards and have uncontrolled affection for others, instead of submitting to Allah Alone. And such leaning is often shown in compromising their Beliefs, Acts of Worship, and Moral Values by considering them less important than having time with or for the sake of being accepted by or of pleasing those they love. It is proclaimed, “And of mankind are some who take (for worship) others besides Allah as rivals (to Allah). They love them as they love Allah. But those who believe love Allah

more (than anything else). If only, those who do wrong could see, when they will see the torment, that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is severe in punishment. When those who were followed disown (declare themselves innocent of) those who followed (them) and they see the torment, then all their relations will be cut off from them....Thus Allah will show them their deeds as regrets for them. And they will never get out of the Fire.” Q. 2:165-167

It is frightening to note that some religious groups have adopted secular humanism. For them, their cult figures are more important than Allah's Religion. Because of this, there are personality cults surrounding their leaders. The so-called religious group members often please their group leaders, instead of Allah, by shirking from their religious obligations with respect to piety or plunging themselves into their religious prohibitions in respect of impiety, the mirror images of “Kufr.”

No doubt, Secular principles are becoming increasingly religious. What a contradiction in terms!

What is more, to allow the love of such things as money and desire to come between you and your Creator, Allah, is to worship them. According to The Prophet (pbuh), “The worshipper of the dirham will always be miserable.” And it is categorically stated in the Glorious Qur-an, “Have you not seen the one who takes his desires as his god?” Q. 25:43

2.4.1.2. MINOR “SHIRK”

Having discussed the Major “Shirk” and its four aspects, we will now shift attention to the second type of “Shirk”—the Minor “Shirk” (“Ar-Riya”). It involves performing Acts of Worship in order to show off, to be praised, or to obtain some material gains. Here lies the connection: “Say (O Muhammad—pbuh): ‘I am only a man like you. It has been revealed to me that your Ilah (God) is One Ilah (God—i.e. Allah). So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord.’ ” Q. 18:110

2.4.1.3. INCONSPICUOUS “SHIRK”

The third and last type of “Shirk” is “Inconspicuous Shirk.” This type of “Shirk” is brought about by unreasonable, inward dissatisfaction of outcomes of events, attributing them to others besides Allah, or conscious and continuous lamentation.

Even though this undue connection is not immediately obvious, it is certainly the commonest of all. The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Ash-Shirk-al-Khafi in the Muslim nation is more inconspicuous than the creeping of a black ant on black rock in the pitch-darkness of the night. And this inconspicuous shirk is expiated by saying thrice the following sentences every day: 'O Allah! I take your refuge from that I should ascribe anything as partner in Your Worship, being conscious of that, and I beg your pardon for that sin which I am not aware of.' ” (Allahuma Inna Nahuzu Bika Min An Nushrika Bika Shai' aa Nalamuhu Wanastagfiruka Lemaa Laa Nalamuhu.)

Finally, we need to point up that to be a Believer, you must first of all accept Guidance and then be exclusively pious and righteous by being monotheistic, honest, and decent. And confusing Kufr with Imaan qualifies you to become a False Believer. In other words, a False Believer is a nominal Muslim who is supposedly monotheistic and morally honest and decent.

By now I think you haven't supported a lost cause, have you?

2.5. FURTHER DIMENSIONS OF DEEDS OF KUFR (DISBELIEF)

2.5.1. Impiety, a major Sign of “Kufr”

Deeds of Impiety: invoking or communing with or being aided or commanded by jinn in practicing soothsaying; in seeking demonic protection; in producing events during sleep or nightmares or demonic dreams; in practising ancestral sacrifice; in tying magic string or “akadi” or “kobri”; in viewing magic mirror; in drinking magic potion or tablet water (rowan allo); in using magic pomade or traditional, magic eyeliner or witches' eyeliner (korlin mayu); in flying on magic carpet, animal skin, broom, or knot; in turning into tabby cats, dogs, vultures, etc.; in disappearing magically, demonically, or mysteriously, and so on.

“O children of Adam! let not the Shaitan cause you to fall into affliction as he expelled your parents from the garden...he surely sees you, he as well as his host, from whence you cannot see them; **surely We have made the Shaitans to be the guardians of those who do not believe.**” Q. 7:27

“A part has He guided aright and (as for another) part, error is justly their due, **surely they took the Shaitans for guardians beside Allah, and they think that they are followers of the right.**” Q. 7:30

2.5.2. Immorality, a Clear Indication of Lack of or Reduction in Conviction: Pre-marital/extra-marital Sex, Drinking, Theft

Narrated Abu Huraira: "The Prophet said, "An adulterer, at the time he is committing illegal sexual intercourse is not a believer; and a person, at the time of drinking an alcoholic drink is not a believer; and a thief, at the time of stealing, is not a believer."

Copying The Opposite Sex

Narrated Ibn 'Abbas: "The Prophet cursed effeminate men (those men who are in the similitude (assume the manners of women) and those women who assume the manners of men, and he said, 'Turn them out of your houses. The Prophet turned out such-and-such man, and Umar turned out such-and-such woman.' "

Pictures of Human Beings And Animals:

Narrated Aisha: "I purchased a cushion with pictures on it. The Prophet (came and) stood at the door but did not enter. I said (to him), 'I repent to Allah for what (the guilt) I have done.' He said, 'What is this cushion?' I said, 'It is for you to sit on and recline on.' He said, 'The makers of these pictures will be punished on the Day of Resurrection and it will be said to them, 'Make alive what you have created.' Moreover, the angels do not enter a house where there are pictures.' "

Dreadlocks/Rasta/Jointed Hair/False Hair/ Unkempt Hair

Abd al-Rahman b. Auf said that he heard Mu'awiya b Sufyin during the season of Hajj. (saying) as he sat upon the pulpit holding a bunch of hair in his hand which was (previously) in the hand of his guard: O people of Medina, where are your scholars? I heard Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) forbidding this and saying: That the people of Bani Isra'il were ruined at the time when their women wore such hair.

Ata ibn Yasar (RA) narrated: "A man came to the Prophet with unkempt hair and an untidy beard. The Prophet pointed to him, as if ordering him to straighten his hair and beard. He did so and returned. Thereupon the Prophet observed, 'Is that not better than one of you coming with his hair unkempt, as if he were a devil?' " (Related by Malik)

Ibn Umar narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said, "Shave it all or leave it all." (Abu Dawood...)

Remember, Faith increases and decreases as well. It increases with regular but sincere and strict adherence to pious and righteous practices. Regular but sincere Prayer, “Zikr,” Fasting, and the like, as well as patience, love, honesty, and decency, among other things, often result in increased Faith.

It is completely destroyed by impious practices and major acts of immorality such as homosexuality but gradually reduced by minor acts of immorality.

And remember, minor “non-disbelieving” sins have the potential for causing a Believer to end up in Hell, provided they persist in any major but “non-disbelieving” sins such as illegal sex and all that, according to the following Scriptural Evidence: **“If you shun the great sins which you are forbidden, We will do away with your small sins and cause you to enter an honorable place of entering.”** Q. 4:31

According to Abu Hurairah (RA), The Prophet (pbuh) said: “...(1) To join partners with Allah, (2) to practise sorcery, (3) to kill a person except for a just cause, (4) to eat up Riba (usury), (5) to eat up the property of an orphan, (6) to show one’s back to the enemy and flee from the battlefield, and (7) to accuse chaste women who never even think of anything touching their chastity and are good believers.”

The following Statement of Allah is indeed a qualification to the foregoing seven destructive sins: “... and what is with Allah is better and more lasting for those who believe and rely on their Lord. **And those who shun the great sins and indecencies,** and whenever they are angry they forgive. Q. 42:36-37

Reasonably, the more your Faith increases, the more you are guided by a sense of morality and by clear conscience as well.

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, it is now obvious that Light is distinct from darkness, Knowledge of Guidance from ignorance of Religious Principles, innocence from guilt, Beauty of “Imaan” from ugliness of “Kufr,” and the Truth from Falsehood.

Indeed, blending acts of disbelief such as Demonic Protection, flying on animal skin, tying magic string (akadi/kobri), envy, and pride with such Deeds of Imaan as Prayer and charity is ironical because it is the wrong result, lack of Faith, not the desired one, Faith, that is attainable.

Let's always remember and consider it.

GLOSSARY

ACCE: Accra College of Education
 Beyond all reason: unacceptable
 Bowing and scraping: showing too much politeness or attention to someone
 Companionable: friendly and pleasant to be with
 Compassion: a strong feeling of sympathy and sadness for the suffering or bad luck of others and a desire to help them
 Compromise: allow (your principles etc.) to be weakened or (your standards or morals) to be lowered or to become less important
 Common sense: basic level of practical knowledge and wisdom that we all need to help us live in a reasonable and safe way
 Covetousness: strong desire for what belongs to someone else
 Condone: approves of (behaviour that some people consider wrong) so that such behaviour is encouraged to happen again in the future
 Conjuring tricks: tricks in which things are made to appear by magic
 Defile: spoil the importance, beauty etc. of (something)
 Err on the side of caution: be careful
 Gets the better of: if a feeling gets the better of you, you cannot stop yourself from letting that feeling make you do something, despite knowing that what you are doing is forbidden or wrong
 Got caught up in: got involved in
 Inconspicuous: not easily noticed
 It goes without saying: it is obvious
 UPS: University of Professional Studies
 Iconoclasm: criticism of the generally accepted Beliefs and Tradition
 Incurable: bad but impossible to change or improve
 Internalise: accept something and make it as a natural and important part of your character
 Indefensible: too bad to be protected from criticism
 It is against (our) better judgment: (we) think it would be wiser not to do it
 If you put someone right on something, you stop them believing something which is not true or correct them by telling them the truth
 If something is written in the stars: (it is believed that) it will be made to happen by the force that controls the future.
 Left nothing to the imagination: (has) shown everything
 Let's bear it in mind: let's remember and consider it
 Let's face it: let's accept the Truth
 Muddied the waters: made the situation more confused, complicated and difficult
 Money-grubbing: having money as (their) main interest and do anything they can to get lots of it
 Magic wand/sword: Stick, rope or metal waved by a magician, sorcerer etc.; which is used to produce mysterious events.
 Magic symbols: combinations of letters or numbers in tabular forms, representing some hidden names or occult powers
 Magic string: string used to tie round a solid, tube-like object; usually made from wood with a human rib, mirror etc., which is used to invoke the devils – demons (jinn)

Not know whether to laugh or cry: not know how to react in a particular situation
Pretext: pretended reason used to hide the real reason
Pointing up: emphasising
Piety: /paieti/ Faith and Its expression in Acts of Worship, especially Prayer/Salat and Remembrance of Allah: spiritual purity
R.A: Radiyal-lahu Anhu: may Allah be pleased with him
Repudiate: deny
Righteousness: Faith and Its expression in Religious Moral Values, particularly love, justice, honesty and decency: moral purity
SAW: Sal-la Lahu Alaihi Was-salam: Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him (pbuh)
Spell: spoken words that are believed to have magical power; or the condition of being controlled by magic words
There is no gain saying: it is not possible to doubt
The bottom line: the most important consideration of a situation etc; final result
The bane: a cause of continual trouble or unhappiness
Time-honoured: valued and respected for being in existence for many years
Time- worn: no longer of interest or value for having been used a lot over a long period of time
To this end: to help achieve this
UG: University of Ghana, Legon
Within reason: acceptable
"Zikr": Remembrance of Allah

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Noble Qur-an (English Translation of The Meanings And Commentary)
 Books of Hadith: Bukhari and Muslim
 Living Islam (Faith Expressed In Worship and Deeds): Sheikh Ishaaq Ibrahim Nuamar
 Good News Bible--Second Edition (C) 1994
 Catholic Encyclopedia: Occult Art, Occultism
 Catholic Encyclopedia: Exorcism
 The Sacred Books of Magic, Abraham The Mage
 A Little Book of Mirror Magic, Patricia Telesco
 The Academy of Sorcery, Abraxas
 Demonology: A Comprehensive Guide
 Demonology: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
 Spiritualism: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
 Dream: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
 Occultism Re-visited Copyright: 1998 Alexis Dolgorukii
 Spirits Adventures. Co. UK <http://mb->
 The Doctrine of Trinity...Mystery or Confusion?
 The Jinn: In the Qur'an and the Sunna, by Mustafa Ashour
 Reverent Examination, by Christians, for Christians
 Polytheism, Believe Religious Information source web- site <http://mb-Soft.com/believe/txo/polythei.htm>
 Ministry of Angels: <http://www.bible-facts.info/articles/ministryofangels.htm>
 Duties And Blessings Of The Priesthood: Basic Manual For Priesthood Holders, Part E