

Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi

LET US BE
MUSLIMS

Part Two
ISLAM

EDITED BY
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U.K.I.M. DAWAH CENTRE

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The Islamic Foundation
Markfield Dawah Centre
Ratby Lane, Markfield
Leicester LE67 9RN (U.K)

First Print May 1998

Second Print February 2001

Published and distributed by:
U.K.I.M Dawah Centre
401 Alum Rock Road
Birmingham B8 3DT (U.K)
Tel/Fax: 0121-326 9936

Printed by:

Alltrade Printers (Sales) Limited
Birmingham - 0121-359 2346

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INTRODUCTION

Let Us Be Muslims is a collection of Friday congregational addresses delivered by the young Mawdudi in 1938-9 before ordinary villagers in plain words from their everyday language. He tried to explain the essential message, the basic teachings and the spirit of Islam. These addresses were collected and published as Khutbat (Urdu).

Let Us Be Muslims is the new edited English translation of Khutbat, published by The Islamic Foundation, Leicester in 1985. We are grateful to the Foundation who gave us permission to reproduce the work in parts for distribution in the U.K. After the first publication of Part One - Iman in 1996 and reprinted in 1997, we are now pleased to present Part Two - Islam. We hope to publish the remaining parts - The Prayer, Fasting, Alms Giving, Pilgrimage and Jihad in due course - Insha'Allah.

Sayyid Mawdudi's discourse, though delivered over half a century ago, is still relevant in today's hi-tech and sophisticated world. No matter how 'ordinary' the audience were, they were responsible, intelligent and reasonable people. So are today's 'ordinary' people. He did not treat them as objects to be manipulated by cheap rhetoric but valued them. These lectures by Mawdudi confront us with the questions rather than dogmatic statements. These questions are artful premises from which we can easily deduce the necessary conclusions.

His reasoning ultimately enables us to understand that calling ourselves 'Muslims' is not a mere name-tag but embodies a comprehensive system of sound human thought and conduct.

We pray to Allah that this booklet will help us in our understanding of the message of Islam and lead us on the path of prosperity and rekindle light in our souls.

“And further set thy face towards Religion with true piety, and never in any wise be of the unbelievers:” (Surah Yunus, Chapter 10, verse 105)

UK Islamic Mission Dawah Centre
April 1998

The False Gods

Brothers in Islam! Come, let us now try to establish the minimum conditions you should fulfil and the least you should do so that you can be called Muslims.

What is Kufr and Islam?

You must, first of all, recollect one important thing: What is Kufr and what is Islam? Kufr means refusal to obey God, and Islam means total submission to God alone and refusal to accept any ideas, laws or commandments which contravene the guidance received from God.

This contrast between Islam and Kufr has been clearly described in the Qur'an. Allah says:

'Whoso judges not by what God has sent down they are the unbelievers.'
(al-Ma'idah 5: 44)

'Judging' does not refer here to merely legal matters or court judgement. It applies to all those decisions which we all have to make every day in our lives. You are all the time having to ask yourselves whether to do a certain thing or not, and how to act in varying circumstances.

One way to reach a decision in every eventuality has been laid down in the Book of God and in the Sunnah of His Messenger; other ways are prompted by your desires, by your culture and society, or by man-made laws. If you ignore or reject the way laid down by God, if you decide to conduct your lives according to some other way, you are, then, following the path of Kufr. If you do this always and in every portion of your lives, you are totally Kafirs. And if you obey the directions of God in some matters, while in others follow your own self, desires, society, or man-made laws, then you are guilty of Kufr to the extent of your disobedience. You may be half Kafir, or a quarter Kafir or less or more. Put simply: Kufr exists in proportion to the extent of rebellion against the law of God.

Islam: Total Surrender

Islam is nothing but man's exclusive and total submission to God. He is not a servant of his self, or of his ancestors, or of his family and nation, or of any ruler, general, leader, Mulla, Shaikh or any other person. He is a servant of God alone. Says Allah:

'Say [O Prophet]: 'People of the Book! Come to the creed common between us and you, that we serve none but God, and that we associate none with Him, and none of us takes

others as Lords, apart from God.’ But if they turn away, say, ‘Bear witness that we are Muslims.’ (Al’Imran 3: 64)

And further:

‘What! Do they seek a Din other than God’s, whereas unto Him surrenders whoso is in the heavens and on earth, willingly or unwillingly, and unto Him all must return?’ (Al ‘Imran 3: 83)

One fundamental principle has been clearly and forcefully propounded here. True religion means total obedience and submission to God. Worshipping God does not mean merely that you bow before Him five times a day. It means that His commandments should be carried out at all times. You should abstain from what He has forbidden and do what He has commanded. In particular find out what the commandment of God is. Never judge the right and wrong by what your own hearts desire, what your intellects suggest, what your forefathers used to do, what your families and relations prefer, what your society approves, what religious scholars tell you, what a particular person orders or would be pleased by. If you follow any other person’s orders or suggestions in preference to God’s commandment, you are making that person a partner in Godhood. It would mean you were giving him that status which exclusively belongs to God.

‘Authority [to lay down what is right and what is wrong] belongs to God alone.’
(al-An’am 6: 57)

Worthy of worship is He alone who has created you and who keeps you alive. Everything in the heavens and on earth obeys Him. No stone obeys another stone, no tree obeys another tree, no animal obeys another animal. Are you then worse than animals, trees and stones, which obey only God, that you obey human beings like yourselves in preference to God? This is the central message of the Qur’an, simple and emphatic.

Three Reasons For Going Astray

Why do people disobey God and go astray? According to the Qur’an, there are three main reasons.

Self- worship

The first is love of one’s own desires:

And who is more astray than he who follows his own likes and dislikes without any guidance from God. Surely God guides not the wrongdoers.

(a1-Qasas 28: 50)

Thus, more than anything, it is man's own wishes and desires which lead him astray. For, the one who becomes a slave to his own desires can never become a true slave of God. He will always have only one consideration before him: what will bring him more worldly profit, what will bring him fame and honour, what will give him pleasure and gratification, and what will provide him with comfort and ease. He will therefore do whatever is necessary to achieve his ends, irrespective of whether God has forbidden the kind of thing he is doing. And he will never do anything which will not help achieve these ends, even though God may have ordered him to do so. The god of such a person is his own self - nafs - or his own desire, his like and dislike - hawa - and not Allah. How, then, can he benefit from God's guidance, asks the Qur'an:

'Have you seen him who makes his own desire his god? Will you be a guardian over them? Or do you think that most of them hear or use their reason? Nay, they are but as the cattle; nay, but they are further astray from the way. '
(al-Furqan 25: 43-4)

To be a slave of one's desires is worse than being a beast of the field. No animal will overstep the limits set by God. Every animal eats what has been fixed by God for it; it performs only those functions which are allotted to it. But such an animal is man that when he allows his desires to take over, he commits acts as would make Satan himself shudder.

Society and Culture

The second reason for going astray is following blindly the customs and practices, beliefs and notions, rites and ceremonies of society and regarding them as superior to God's guidance. Such a person, when reminded of God's commandments, insists that he should follow only what society approves and continue the traditions of his family or country. How can one who is suffering from such a disease be a servant of God? His gods are society, family and nation. What right has he to claim that he is a Muslim? The Qur'an warns him thus:

And when it is said to them, 'Follow what God has sent down', they say, 'No, we will follow [only] what we found our fathers doing.' What! Even if their fathers did not use their reason at all, nor were guided? (al-Baqarah 2:170)

And, further:

And when it is said to them, 'Come now unto what God has sent down, and unto the Messenger', they say, 'Enough for us is what we found our fathers doing.' What! Even if their fathers had no knowledge and no guidance? O believers! You are responsible for your own souls. Those who are astray can do you no harm, if you are rightly guided. Unto God shall you all return, and then He will tell you what you were doing. (al-Ma'idah 5:104-5).

In every age, the people who refused to follow the Truth have been suffering from this disease. Always it has prevented them from accepting the guidance brought by the Messengers of God. When Prophet Musa invited people to submit to God's law, they said:

Have you come to us to turn us from what we found our fathers practising?
(Yunus 10: 79)

When Ibrahim tried to dissuade his fellow citizens from associating gods with God, they said:

We found our fathers worshipping them. (al-Anbiya' 21:53)

People have, in all ages, made this same excuse to every prophet, 'What you say is contrary to the practice of our forefathers and this is why we cannot accept it.'

And even so We never sent a warner before you to any people but its men who lived in the pursuit of pleasures said,

'We indeed found our fathers following a certain way, and it is their footsteps that we are following.' He said, 'What! Though I should bring you a better guidance than you found your fathers upon?' They said, 'In what you are sent with, we disbelieve.' So We inflicted Our retribution upon them; and behold how was the end of them that gave the lie [to the truth]! (Zukhruf 43: 23-5)

Allah tells people that they can either follow their forefathers, their society and culture, or His commandments. They cannot do both. If you want to be Muslims you must give up all things apart from God and obey what He has commanded:

And when it is said to them, 'Follow what God has sent down', they said, 'No, but we will follow what we found our fathers doing.' What! Even though Satan was inviting them unto the punishment of the blazing flame. And whosoever submits his will to God, and is a doer of good, he indeed has taken hold of the most firm handle. And with God rests the outcome of all affairs. And whoso disbelieves, let not his belief grieve you. Unto Us they shall return, and We shall tell them what they did.
(Luqman 31: 21-3)

Obedience to Human Beings

The third reason is obeying other human beings in preference to God. How does this happen? When we mistakenly believe that the person concerned is a great thinker whose word must be true. When we imagine that he controls our livelihood, having the power to withhold it from us or give us whatever he desires. When we think that he has the authority over us to do as he wishes. Or, when we subscribe to the notion that he can ruin us by laying his curse upon us or take us to Paradise with him if he is obeyed. Or, when we conclude that we must follow the ways of certain nations because they are progressive and modern and have made great

advances in the world. If we behave in any of these manners, the door of Divine guidance is closed:

If you obey most of those on earth, they will lead you astray from the path of God.
(al-An'am 6: 116)

We can be on the right path only when we have faith in one God, and follow His guidance only. How can we find that path when we have invented numerous gods, sometimes obeying this one and sometimes that one.

The three main causes of going astray are now before you: self-worship or unrestrained gratification of one's desires; social conformity or blind following of the customs of society, family and nation; and servitude to human beings in general, especially rulers of the time, rich and false religious thinkers.

If you want to become true Muslims you must first break these three formidable idols who claim to be your gods. For with these three idols in your hearts you cannot become slaves of God. Merely by offering Prayers many times a day, by ostentatiously observing Fasts, and by putting on the outward face of Muslims, you may deceive your fellow beings - as well, indeed, yourselves - but you will never be able to deceive God.

Condition of Muslims Today

To be slaves of the three idols, I say, is the real Shirk (idolatry). You may have demolished the temples of bricks and mortar, you may have broken stone idols in them, but you have paid little attention to the temples within your own hearts. To smash these idols is the essential precondition to becoming a Muslim.

This applies to all Muslims throughout the world. Whatever sufferings you are going through, I am sure, are the result of worshipping these idols. But because I am facing my Punjabi brothers here, I have to particularly tell them that the root of all their misery and humiliation is again precisely these three things. There are more than fifteen million of us in this land. But despite this we have no weight of our own. Some communities numerically far smaller carry much more weight.¹ And what is the reason? It is solely by being slaves to our own selves, to family customs and to other human beings in preference to God, that our strength has been sapped from within.

Let us look at ourselves. We have created among us many castes, like Rajputs, Gakhars, Mughuls, Jats and many others. Islam asked all these ethnic groups to become one Ummah, to be brothers and to unite harmoniously like a solidly-built wall of cemented bricks. But we are still clinging to the old pagan ideas. Just as there are separate castes among Hindus, so are we also split. We do not intermarry as Muslims should. There is no trace of brotherhood and fraternity between us. Verbally, we call each other Muslim brothers, but in reality we observe all those distinctions which were prevalent before Islam.

It is these distinctions which have prevented us from becoming a strong wall. Each and every brick in the wall is disjointed. We can neither rise together nor face any adverse situation together. If we are asked, in accordance with Islamic teaching, to break these barriers and become one again, what is our answer? Just the same as the opponents of all the Prophets gave: We cannot go against the customs which have come down from our forefathers. And, what answer was given by God to this obduracy? Only this: You do not have to break these customs and you do not have to give up following the rites of Hindus. But We shall break you into pieces and shall put you to disgrace and dishonour in spite of your large numbers.

Look further: Allah has commanded that your sons and daughters are both entitled to inheritance. What is your answer? 'No, for according to the custom of our forefathers, only sons and not daughters are entitled. We will follow the way of our forefathers in preference to the law of God.' Tell me, in the name of God, is this Islam? When you are asked to break this ancestral custom you say that you will break it only when others too break it. When asked why, you say because if others did not give a share to their daughters and we did, then we would be at a disadvantage when our sons took wives. Just consider what this reply means. Are we to obey the law of God only on condition that others obey it first? We shall be saying next: If others commit adultery, we shall also do it; if others commit theft, we shall also steal. In short, till such time as others give up sinning, we shall continue to commit sins.

In following your cast system and inheritance customs in such a manner all the three false idols we have been discussing are being worshipped. There is slavery to the self, to society, and to Kafir nations. And at the same time, while serving all these idols, we still claim that we nonetheless somehow belong to Islam!

These are only two examples. We need only look at the situation with open eyes to see countless others. And in all these we will find that sometimes there is worship of one idol, sometimes of two, and sometimes of three. While these idols are being worshipped alongside the claims of allegiance to Islam and God, how can we expect Allah to shower His blessings on us - blessings which have been promised only to true Muslims?

2

Can We Call Ourselves Muslims?

Brothers in Islam! You now understand that, according to the Qur'an, men go astray in three ways. The first is to ignore the guidance of God and become slaves of desire. The second is to give precedence to family, culture, society, customs and the ways of fore-fathers over the law of God. The third is to ignore the way enunciated by God and His Messenger and follow the ways either of so-called important people or of other civilizations and cultures.

A True Muslim

A true Muslim should be free from these three ailments. Only someone who is a slave of none but God and a follower of none but His Messengers can be truly called a Muslim. A Muslim sincerely believes that the teaching of God and His Messenger is absolute truth, that whatever runs counter to it is false, and that it contains all that is good for man in this world and in the Hereafter. A Muslim who has complete faith in these truths will, at every step in his life, look only to God and the Messenger to guide him and submit to whatever they require. Such a person will never feel troubled in his heart about obeying God's commandments, or be concerned if members of his family or his society upbraid him, or if the entire world opposes him. In each case his response will be unequivocal: I am God's slave, not yours; I have faith in His Messenger, not in you.

What is Hypocrisy?

Serving the Self

On the other hand, a person may say, 'This may be the directive of God and the Messenger, but it is difficult for me to accept it because it seems to be harmful. So I shall act according to my own opinion as against the guidance of God and the Messenger.' Obviously, no faith can be alive in the heart of such a person. He is not a true believer (Mumin) but a hypocrite (Munafiq). While he verbally claims to be a servant of God and a follower of the Messenger, in reality he is a slave of his own self and a follower of his own opinions.

Adherence to Society and Culture

Similarly, a person may say that whatever the injunctions of God and the Messenger may be, a certain practice cannot be given up because it has been followed since the times of his forefathers. He, too, must then be reckoned among the hypocrites, however prominent the mark on his forehead traced by prostration in endless prayers and however pious his face. The spirit of Islam has not entered his heart. Islam does not consist merely in bowing (ruku), prostration (sujud), Fasting (Sawm) and Pilgrimage (Hajj); nor is it found in the face and dress of a man. Islam means submission to God and the Messenger. Anyone who refuses to obey them in the conduct of his life-affairs has a heart devoid of the real Islam - 'faith has not yet entered their hearts'. His Prayers, his Fasting and his pious appearance are nothing but deception.

Imitating Other People

Again, someone may, in defiance of the Book of God and the Messenger's directions, urge thus: Such and such ideas and practices should be adopted because they are prevalent in the West; this particular behaviour must be accepted because other nations are making progress because of it; this point should be conceded because an important person is advocating it. Such a person is in grave danger of losing his faith. This attitude is irreconcilable to Iman.

If you are Muslims and want to remain Muslims, then cast overboard every suggestion which is contrary to the injunctions of God and His Messenger. If you cannot, it will behoves you to claim to be following Islam. To assert that you believe in God and the Messenger but to ignore their injunctions in the conduct of your lives in favour of other people's thoughts and practices is neither Iman nor Islam. It is sheer hypocrisy.

Allah leaves no doubt about the ridiculous nature of such conduct:

Indeed We have sent down revelations clearly showing the truth, but God guides whomsoever He will to a straight path. They say, 'We believe in God and the Messenger, and we obey.' Then, after that, a party of them turn away; they are not [true] believers. And when they are called unto God and His Messenger that he may decide between them, behold, a party of them turn away; but if they are in the right, they will come unto him submitting willingly. What! Is there in their hearts sickness? Or are they in doubt? Or, do they fear that God and His Messenger may be unjust towards them? Nay, it is they who are doing wrong. All that the believers say, whenever they are called unto God and His Messenger that he may judge between them, is that they say, 'We hear, and we obey.' It is they who are the successful. Whoso obeys God and His Messenger, and fears God, and has awe of Him, it is they who shall triumph. (al-Nur 24: 46-52)

Reflect on the definition of Iman set out here. What is Iman? It consists in submitting yourselves, willingly and totally, to the Book of God and the guidance given by His Messenger. Whatever guidance and commandments are received from these sources you must implicitly obey and no arguments against them should be listened to, whether they come from your own minds, or from members of your families, or from outsiders. You can only be a Muslim if you develop this attitude. If you do not, you are no more than a hypocrite.

Compare, now, yourselves with those who had real and true Iman in their hearts and see how they obeyed Allah and the Messenger.

The True Faith

Abstinence From Alcohol

You know how widespread the drinking of alcohol was in Arabia. Men and women, young and old, all loved to drink. They sang songs in its praise and were totally addicted to it. You also know how difficult it is to give up drinking after becoming addicted to it. An alcoholic would rather give up his life than stop drinking. If he cannot get alcohol he becomes worse than a physically-ill person.

Yet what happened when the prohibition order was given through the Qur'an? Those same Arabs who loved alcohol more dearly than their lives broke with their own hands the containers they were drinking from. Alcohol flowed like water in the streets of Madina. One group of people, with drinking vessels in their hands, heard the proclamation of the Prophet,

blessings and peace be on him, prohibiting alcohol; those who had vessels close to their lips put them away before a drop could enter their mouths.

Such is the strength of true Iman. This is one of the finest examples of submission to Allah and the Messenger.

Confession of Crime

You know what severe punishment Islam has prescribed for adultery - one hundred strokes on the bare back. The very thought makes a person shudder. And if a married person is involved, the punishment is stoning to death - one trembles at the very mention of such terrible punishment. But have you heard the story of the man who committed adultery at the time of the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, and had the strength of faith to face its consequences?

There were no witnesses. There was nobody to take him to court, nobody to report him to the police. Yet the Iman in his heart admonished him: As you have gratified your desire in contravention of the law of God, you must undergo the punishment prescribed by God for it. So this person presented himself, of his own accord, before the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, I have committed adultery. Please give me my punishment.' On hearing these words the Prophet turned aside as if he had not heard the man, but he moved in front of him and repeated his request. The Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, again turned aside, and again the man went and stood in front of him and made the same request for the third time.

Such is the power of true Iman! For one who has such Iman in his heart it is easy to be punished with a hundred strokes on his bare back, or even be stoned to death, but it is difficult to go before God as a disobedient servant.

Severance of Familial Ties

You also know that in this world nobody is dearer to us than our relatives. Fathers, brothers and sons, particularly, are so dear that we are willing to sacrifice everything for them. But now think of the battles of Badr and Uhud and see who fought against whom. A father, in the Muslim army, was drawn against his son, who was in the army of the Kafirs; or the son was on this side and his father was on the otherside. One brother was on this front and another brother on the other front. Close relatives confronted each other and fought as if they were strangers. It was not for the sake of money or chauvinism or personal enmity that men fought against their own flesh and blood; it was for the sake of God and the Messenger that they had the strength and courage to sacrifice the love for their fathers, sons, brothers and whole families.

Giving Up Cultural Norms and Customs

You know, too, that Islam demolished practically all the ancient customs prevalent in Arabia. The greatest evil of all was idol-worship, which had been practised for hundreds of years. Islam told people to give up this evil as well as alcohol, adultery, gambling, theft and

armed robbery - all of which were rampant at that time. Women used to walk about unveiled; Islam enjoined them to observe purdah. They were not entitled to a share in inheritance; Islam decreed that they should have one. Indeed, no ancient custom was left untouched.

But do you know in what manner did those who truly believed in God and the Messenger submit to all this? The idols which had been worshipped for centuries and at whose altars sacrifices had been offered for long they broke with their own hands. Family customs which had been passed down from generation to generation they totally abolished. Objects which had been considered sacred they trampled under their feet, when ordered to by God. At His command, too, things which had been regarded as prohibited became permissible; what had been considered clean suddenly became unclean and the unclean became clean. Practices which provided profit or pleasure during the days of Kufr were given up for the sake of God. On the other hand, injunctions laid down by Islam, no matter how hard it was to obey them, were gladly accepted.

This is what true Iman means, this is what is called true Islam. Suppose the people of Arabia had at that time said: 'We do not accept this thing because it will harm our interests and we cannot give up that thing as it profits us greatly, we shall continue following this particular practice since it is what our forefathers did and our society approves, while we like certain ideas of the Romans and will adopt them and certain practices of the Iranians which appeal to us.' Had they in this way rejected all tenets of Islam, there would, as you can imagine, have been no Muslims in the world today.

The Way to God's Pleasure

Brothers! The Qur'an says:

Never shall you attain true piety unless you spend [in the way of God] out of what you love. (Al 'Imran 3: 92)

Herein lies the essence of Iman; this is the real spirit of Islam: that you must be prepared to sacrifice for the sake of God, if necessary, whatever is dear to you.

In many affairs of your lives God's commandments beckon you in one direction while your own desires urge you in another. God commands you to do a certain deed but you think that it will cause trouble and loss. God forbids you from a certain action but you consider it to be pleasant and beneficial. On one side is God's pleasure and pitted against it is almost everything in this world. At every step in life you are faced with two paths. One is the path of Islam, and the other of Kufr and hypocrisy.

By giving up the things of this world and bowing to the commandments of God, you adopt the path of Islam. By rejecting God's commandments in order to satisfy the desires of your hearts and the temptations of the world, you take the path of Kufr and hypocrisy.

Muslims of Today

So many Muslims today are all too ready to accept whatever is convenient in Islam but all too quick to change direction when conflict arises between Islam and Kufr. This weakness is found even among some of those claiming to be the greatest champions of Islam.² They will shout 'Islam! Islam!' and sing many songs praising it until their mouths are dry.³ They will be seen doing some work for Islam. But if they are told, 'Let us now implement the law of Islam which you are praising so highly', they will at once say, 'There are some difficulties and obstacles, it is better to leave things as they are for the time being.'

What they mean is that Islam is a beautiful toy, to be displayed on a shelf and praised from a distance, but to be strictly avoided if the question is raised of enforcing its laws to govern ourselves, our families and relations and our businesses and the general conduct of our lives. This is the attitude of even some so-called religious people today.

As a result, neither Prayer nor Fasting nor reciting the Qur'an nor outward adherence to the Shari'ah is effective. When the soul departs, what feats can a dead body perform?

3

Are We True Muslims?

Brothers in Islam! Who are true Muslims? Let us see what Allah and His Messenger have to say about their lives and hearts:

Say: My prayers and my sacrifices, and my living and my dying are for God alone, the Lord of all the worlds. No partner has He. Thus I have been commanded, and I am foremost among those who surrender [themselves unto Him].
(al-An'am 6:163-4)

The same theme is elucidated by the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him:

One who loves for the sake of Allah alone and hates for the sake of Allah alone; and whatever he gives, gives for the sake of Allah alone, and whatever he withholds, withholds for the sake of Allah alone - indeed, he perfects his Iman. (Abu Da'ud).

The Qur'an makes clear what Allah demands of you. You should devote yourselves wholly to the service of Allah, you should live for Him alone, you should die for Him alone. You, and the world around you, entirely belong to Allah; let nobody have a share in what belongs to Allah. That is to say, you should not serve anyone but Him, nor live or die for anyone but Him.

The Prophet, blessings and peace be on him, explains what the Qur'an has said. To be a true believer your love and enmity for everything, all your affections, all relations and transactions in your lives, should have only one purpose: to seek Allah's pleasure. Without this your Iman itself will not be complete; the possibility of rising higher in the sight of God does not arise. The greater the deficiency in this respect, the more defective the Iman.

Some people think that these qualities are required only to reach higher spiritual stations and are not essential to Iman and Islam. In other words, even without these qualities a person can be a good Mumin and a Muslim. This mistaken notion has arisen because people in general do not differentiate between legal Islam and true Islam which alone is truly authentic in the sight of Allah.

Two Types of Islam

Legal Islam

Under legal Islam, on which jurists and states must base their dealings, what lies in your hearts and minds is not taken into account, nor can it be. Your verbal affirmation and those essential signs which must flow out of that affirmation are accepted as sufficient evidence of your Islam. Anyone who affirms by word of mouth belief in Allah, the Messenger, the Qur'an, the Hereafter and other articles of faith, and who also fulfils those necessary conditions which provide proof of his affirmation, is considered part of Muslim society and all dealings with him are to be conducted as with a Muslim.

This definition provides the legal and cultural basis on which Muslim society is organized. Its purpose is no more than that all those who enter into the Muslim Ummah are recognized as Muslims: nobody from among them can be called a Kafir; every one of them must have the same mutual legal, moral and social rights; they should be entitled to marry among Muslims; they should be eligible to receive their share in inheritance; all other civil relations should be established with them.

True Islam

However, in the world-to-come, you cannot be judged as a Muslim and a Mumin on the basis of this legal affirmation, nor on this basis will God accept you as one of His chosen servants. What will count then is having faith in hearts, and willingly and wholly submitting lives to God. Whatever is verbally affirmed is meant for courts and for the common man and the Muslim society. For they can only see the exterior, but Allah sees deep into your hearts and knows precisely the degree of your Iman.

How will He judge a man? Allah will see whether he lived and died for Him alone, whether his loyalties to Him superseded all other loyalties, whether his obedience and his service, indeed his entire life, were devoted only to Him. If they were solely for Allah then he will be adjudged a Mumin and a Muslim, but if they were for someone else, then he will not be adjudged a Muslim nor a Mumin. Whoever falls short of this criterion will, to the extent he falls

short, be lacking in Iman and Islam, irrespective of how important a Muslim the world may judge him and of any high positions he may hold. With Allah only one thing matters: whether or not you have given away in His way all that He has given you.

If you have, you will be granted the reward which is reserved for those who are loyal and render the service that is due. But if your submission has been less than total, if you spare any part of your life from His service, your claim to be Muslims, which implies that you have wholly given up yourselves to God, will be a deceptive claim. Although you may be able to mislead the world and persuade t

