

# THE RIGHT WAY

A SUMMARISED TRANSLATION

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BY:

Shaikul Islam Ibn Taimiyah



**DARUSSALAM**

GLOBAL LEADER IN ISLAMIC BOOKS

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## **Publisher's Note**

No doubt, alien philosophies and ideologies pose a threat to Islam. But who can deny the internal deviations and dissensions which have played a greater role in tampering with the purity of Islamic beliefs and simplicity of its practices?

At the core of Islam is Tawhid (Oneness of Allah) from which emanate both the creed and deeds of Muslims. Thus the credal deviations and heresies as well as the innovated practices affect the purity of Tawhid. Notwithstanding almost all great men of learning and reformers have understood and declared this fact, Sheikhul Islam Ibn Taimya was incomparably vocal and his voice was dauntlessly express. All of his works and Fatawa (legal rulings) testify to it.

Our present society -teeming with polytheistic and innovated practices such as invoking the dead, festivals at shrines, seeking help of soothsayers and exorcists, celebration of the birth or death anniversaries of Prophets and saints, unlawful vow and offering, unlawful journeys to mosques and shrines, unlawful sanctification of persons, places and times, belief in omens and countless other superstitions and so on - stands in need of Sheikhul Islam's works that have educated and guided both the commoners and scholars for the last several centuries.

The Right Way is a summarized translation of Ibn Taimya's great work, Iqtida-us-Siratil Mustaqeem. I hope and pray that the living topics discussed herein in a highly erudite but lucid style, which has been more or less transferred into English, would enlighten the readers and guide the seekers of truth.

A brief account of the life of Sheikhul Islam is also produced on the forthcoming pages.

**Abdul Malik Mujahid**  
General Manager

# Shaikhul Islam Imam Ibn Taimiyah

## Birth and Education

Ahmed Bin Abdul Haleem Bin Abdussalam Bin Taimiyah was born in the town of Harran (Turkey), in 661 AH (1263 CE). His father was a leading scholar of Hanbali school of Islamic law, and so were his uncle and grandfather.

When Ibn Taimiyah was seven years old, his family members left their native place and took refuge in Damascus before the Mongolian invasion came.

Endowed with a penetrating intellect and wonderful memory, Ibn Taimiyah mastered the various disciplines of Islamic study at an early age and read extensively the books of the various sects and religions in existence at that time. The number of his teachers exceeds two hundred- Shamsuddin Al-Maqdisi, first Hanbali Chief Justice of Syria, was among them.

Ibn Taimiyah was barely seventeen, when the Chief Justice authorized him to issue Fatwa (legal verdict). At the same age, he started delivering lectures. When he was thirty, he was offered the office of Chief Justice which he refused.

## A Mujtahid

Although Ibn Taimiyah's education was essentially that of a Hanbali theologian and jurist, he was equally conversant with other schools of Islamic law. He was also familiar with heresiographical literature, in particular of philosophy and Sufism. He was undoubtedly an original thinker (Mujtahid).

Much of Ibn Taimiyah's time and effort was spent defending the orthodox Islamic position against a tidal wave of deviation which had swept over the Muslim nation. In all his writings and reformative efforts, he accepted the Qur'an and Sunnah as the basic criteria. In matters where there was no clear guidance from the Qur'an and Sunnah, he ventured into rational thought and took the path of Ijtihad.

## A Mujaddid

Ibn Taimiyah was a great reformer who relentlessly fought against the heretic beliefs and innovated practices that have crept into the body of Islam. He endeavoured to revive the religion of Islam in its pristine purity and revolutionary spirit. His approach was naturally two-folded: (a) to bring about a revolution against Shirk and innovations (Bid'ah) and (b) to emphasize the concept of Tawhid with all its implications.

In this effort he had to encounter with those who upheld Greek philosophy and the Sufi masters who maintained the ideas of pantheism, Gnosticism and asceticism. He attacked the Jahmiyah and Jabariyah (the determinists who denied man's freedom of choice and responsibility) as well as the Qadriyah and Mu'tazilah (the rationalists who denied predestination).

As a result, he faced many difficulties from both the prominent sectarian scholars of his time and from the authorities who supported them. His clashes with them led to his imprisonment on numerous occasions.

## A Mujahid

Ibn Taimiyah fought not only against internal enemies of Islam, but also against its external enemies by both his Fatwas (Islamic legal rulings) and his physical participation in battles.

When the Mongols invaded Syria, he flung himself into the stream of affairs and exhorted people to Jihad against the Mongols. After a pitched battle at Shaqhab in which Ibn Taimiyah fought bravely, the Syrian-Egyptian army emerged victorious. Apart from this, he took part in some other expeditions also.

His fame as a scholar and a brave fighter eventually made more scholars jealous of him. His opponents dug up an old Fatwa, related to tomb visit, given by him some seventeen years before, and interpreted it provocatively. A great dispute arose and Ibn Taimiyah was imprisoned in 1326 CE. He died in 1328 while in prison in Damascus.

## His Disciples

Ibn Taimiyah's disciples spread from Syria to Egypt. Some of them scattered to very far-off places. They preached and developed his intellectual heritage, and shared their master's persecutions. The most famous of them were Imam Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyah, Ibn Abdul Hadi, Ibn Kathir, Hafiz Dhahabi, Al-Mizzi, Muhammad Bin Muflih, Abu Hafs Al-Bazzar, Ibn Al-Wardi and Qadi Ibn Fadlullah.

## His Impact

Ibn Taimiyah created a climate of revolutionary thinking both through his ideas and his reformist endeavours whose impact was felt not only in his own time but ever since. In his lifetime people were divided either into those who were strong opponents or strong supporters fully in agreement with him, or uncommitted, those who agreed with some views and disagreed with others. Ibn Taimiyah left behind a large number of books and disciplines. His opponents soon sank into anonymity, while the value of and appreciation for his works has increased.

In his own lifetime, Ibn Taimiyah's fame and influence extended beyond the boundaries of Egypt and Syria. When he was imprisoned for the last time in the citadel of Damascus, many letters came from the inhabitants of Baghdad protesting against his arrest and demanding his release. When he died, funeral prayers in absentia were performed even as far as China.

Almost all historians have recognized his deep impact on the most prominent reformer of eighteenth century, Sheikh Muhammad Bin Abdul Wahhab (d. 1792).

*In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.*

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds and blessings be upon His Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), the seal of Messengers, and his household and his pure Companions.

## **CHAPTER: THE UNBELIEVERS' RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS**

Numerous are the religious festivals and fairs of the unbelievers. Muslims need not know in full about these. They should know only this much that such and such days are considered as holy by the unbelievers. They should, at least, realize that the religious festivals and fairs celebrated by the unbelievers are the ones which are not prescribed by Islam. Rather, the unbelievers have invented these. Were some Muslims to celebrate these, it betrays either innovation on their part or their borrowing from the unbelievers, hence these are to be treated as innovation.

What follows is the discussion on certain innovations in which many are found engrossed.

One of these is Easter, at the conclusion of the Lent. The Christians celebrate it in commemoration of the supper sent down on Jesus's disciples. Many misdeeds are committed in this festival, for example, women appearing in public, burning incense at graves, spreading clothes at roofs, writing and pasting papers at doors, and selling and borrowing these as an act of worship.

To burn incense is a religious practice of Christians and Sabians. It has nothing to do with Muslims. This particular incense is similar to musk. It is inhaled and like other perfumes its use is permissible. However, it cannot be taken as part of worship.

Other rituals performed at Easter, for example, preparing sweet dish, frying, colouring eggs, gambling or selling coloured eggs to gamblers, etc. are acts of innovation.

Likewise, putting a red cross on the cattle or at trees by farmers at Easter, collecting particular types of clothes and seeking blessings from these, women collecting olive leaves and taking bath from its water, abandoning the household chores, closing down shops and educational institutions and celebrating the day by declaring it as public holiday are acts of innovations.

### **The General Rule**

The Shariah ruling is that Muslims should not do any particular thing on the religious festivals of unbelievers which they do not normally do in other days. Rather, they should treat these days like any other ordinary day. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had prohibited his Companions from sports and enjoyment on two particular days on which the pre-Islamic Arabs used to hold sports.

Likewise, he forbade them to sacrifice their animals at the places where the polytheists used to celebrate their festivals.

The unbelievers celebrate with much pomp and show a festival on 25th December in the belief that it is the birth day of Prophet Jesus (Peace be upon him). The rituals associated with the Christmas, for example, lighting fire, preparing sweet dishes, etc. are undesirable. It is an article of faith with Christians that it is a holy day. This view does not have any basis in Islam. This festival is not reported in the days of our pious predecessors. On later days Muslims appear to have borrowed it from Christians. Christians celebrate another religious festival in memory of Jesus's baptism. In imitating them some ignorant Muslims women take their children to public baths and believe that it is especially good for children. This is a Christian belief and Muslims are forbidden not to entertain it. The same holds true for Persian festivals of Nau Roz and other festivals of unbelievers.