



**Refuting Extremist Ideology Series (2)**

المنظمة العالمية لدراسة الشريعة الإسلامية

# **The Issue of Al-Walaa' Wal-Baraa' “Loyalty and Disavowal”**

**Its Concept and Origin**

**by**

**Prof. Ibrahim Salah al-Hudhud  
Former President of al-Azhar University**

**Supervision and Introduction**

**Prof. Mohammad Abdul Fadil Al-Qousy**

**The Former Member of the Council of Senior Scholars and the Former Vice President of  
the Organization**

## Foreword

Hate speech cannot foster a compassionate human society. It is inconceivable that the Prophet (PBUH), sent by Allah as a mercy to the worlds, would advocate hatred, resentment, or enmity.

The Holy Quran clearly states: “We did not send you, except as a mercy to all the worlds.” [Q. 21:107]. This declaration includes all creation without exception—humans, jinn, animals, birds, and all beings. Therefore, the message of Islam is universal. Allah also addressed the Prophet (PBUH), saying: “And [as] for his saying: ‘O my Lord! These are indeed a people who have no faith. Yet pardon them, and say, ‘Peace!’ Soon they will know.” [Q. 43: 88-89). Although they did not believe, the Prophet (PBUH) was commanded to forgive them and to respond with kind and gracious words.

In this book, we will follow the scholars' approach by first presenting the opinion of the opposing view and its evidence. Then, with the will of Allah Almighty, we will respond. This method aligns with the Prophet's approach (PBUH) in correcting concepts. He would first ask the companions (may Allah be pleased with them) to explore the meaning of a term, and then proceed to clarify or correct it.

An example is his saying to the companions: “Do you know who is bankrupt? They said: ‘The bankrupt among us has neither money with him nor any property’. He said, 'The real bankrupt of my Ummah would be he who would come on the Day of Resurrection with Salat, Saum, and Sadaqah (charity), (but he will find himself bankrupt on that day as well have exhausted the good deeds) because he reviled others, brought calumny against others and beat others; so his good deeds would be credited to the account of those (who suffered at his hand). If his good deeds fall short of clearing the account, their sins would be entered into his account and he would be thrown in Hell.”

### **The concept of Al-Walaa' Wal-Baraa' “Loyalty and Disavowal” according to its proponents**

**Al-Walaa' (Loyalty):** It is the love and support for Allah, His Messenger, the Companions, and the monotheistic believers.

**Al-Baraa' (Disavowal):** It is the detestation of those who oppose Allah, His Messenger (PBUH), the Companions, and the monotheistic believers, including disbelievers, polytheists, hypocrites, innovators, and sinners.

### **The significance of Al-Walaa' and Al-Baraa' according to them:**

The importance of al-Walaa' and al-Baraa' in Shariah is profound, as it is one of the pillars of faith. Evidence of its importance includes its connection to the meaning of the Two Declarations of Faith. First: The phrase 'There is no god' from 'There is no god but Allah' signifies disavowal from everything worshiped other than Allah.

Second: It is a condition of faith, as the Almighty said: 'You see many of them affiliating with those who disbelieve. Evil is what their souls have offered on their behalf, such that God is wroth with them and in the chastisement, they shall abide. Yet had they believed in God and the Prophet, and what has been revealed to him, they would not have affiliated with them, but many of them are wicked.' [Q. 5: 80-81]

Third: This doctrine is the strongest bond of faith, as reported by Ahmad in his Musnad from al-Bara ibn Azib (may Allah be pleased with him). He said: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, 'The most excellent action is love for Allah's sake and hatred for Allah's sake.' In the authentic hadith: 'If anyone loves for Allah's sake, hates for Allah's sake, gives for Allah's sake and withholds for Allah's sake, he will have perfected faith.' Abu Dawud transmitted it.

Fourth: It is a reason to experience the sweetness of faith and the pleasure of certainty, as the Prophet (PBUH) said: 'Whoever possesses the following three qualities will have the sweetness (delight) of faith: 1. The one to whom Allah and His Messenger become dearer than anything else. 2. Who loves a person, and he loves him only for Allah's sake. 3. Who hates to revert to Atheism (disbelief) as he hates to be thrown into the fire.' [Agreed upon].

Fifth: It is the link on which the Muslim community is based: 'The believers are indeed brothers.' [Q.49:10]

Sixth: By achieving this doctrine, you gain the guardianship of Allah. When Ibn Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated, 'Whoever loves for the sake of Allah and hates for the sake of Allah, and associates for the sake of Allah, and disassociates for the sake of Allah, then indeed he will attain the guardianship of Allah by doing that.'

Seventh: Failing to uphold this doctrine can lead to disbelief. Allah Almighty said: 'Whoever amongst you affiliates with them, he is one of them.' [Q.5:51]

Eighth: Its frequent mention in the Quran and Sunnah highlights its great importance.

### **From the sayings of their Sheikhs:**

Sheikh Hamad ibn Ateeq (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "As for the enmity towards the unbelievers and the polytheists, know that Allah Almighty has made this obligatory, confirmed its obligation, forbade loyalty to them, and emphasized it to such an extent that there is no more evidence in the Quran and no clearer ruling than this after the necessity of monotheism and the prohibition against its opposite." Furthermore, Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said, "Achieving the declaration that there is no god but Allah requires that one loves only for Allah's sake, hates only for Allah's sake, is only hostile for Allah's sake and that he loves what Allah loves and hates what Allah hates. He also said, "Whoever believes that churches are the houses of Allah, that Allah is worshiped in them, and that what the Jews and Christians do is

considered worshipping Allah and obeying Him and His Messenger; or who loves, pleases, or supports them in opening and establishing their religion under the guise of kinship or obedience—such a person is a disbeliever.” He also said elsewhere, "Whoever believes that visiting the dhimmis in their churches is close to Allah is an apostate."

**Among the examples of the loyalty to the disbelievers are the following:**

1. Imitating them in dress and speech.
2. Residing in their countries without necessity and not leaving them except to move to Muslim lands to protect one’s faith.
3. Traveling to their countries for leisure and entertainment.
4. Taking them as close confidants and advisors.
5. Using their calendar, particularly one that reflects their rituals and holidays, such as the Gregorian calendar.
6. Adopting their names.
7. Participating in their festivals, congratulating them on their occasions, or attending their celebrations.
8. Praising them, glorifying their civilizations, or admiring their morals and skills without acknowledging their false beliefs and corrupt religion.
9. Seeking forgiveness for them and asking for mercy upon them.

**Their evidence from the Holy Quran:**

Allah says:

- 1- 'Verily there is for you a good example in [the person of] Abraham, and those who were with him when they said to their people, ‘We are indeed innocent of you and of what you worship besides God. We repudiate you, and between us and you there has arisen enmity and hate forever.’ [Q. 60:4]
- 2- 'A proclamation from God and His Messenger to mankind on the day of the Greater Pilgrimage that God is free from obligation to the idolaters, and [so is] His Messenger.' [Q. 3:10]
- 3- 'O you who believe, do not take Jews and Christians as patrons; they are patrons of each other. Whoever amongst you affiliates with them, he is one of them. God does not guide the folk who do wrong. And you see those in whose hearts is sickness, vying with one another for them, saying: 'We fear lest we suffer a turn of fortune'. But it may be that God will bring victory or some commandment from Him; and then they will end up, for what they kept secret within themselves, remorseful.' [Q. 5: 51-52]
- 4- 'O you who believe, do not take My enemy and your enemy for friends. You offer them affection.' [Q. 60:1]
- 5- 'Let not the believers take the disbelievers as patrons, rather than the believers - for whoever does that, does not belong to God in anyway - unless you protect yourselves against them, as a safeguard. God warns you of His Self;' [Q. 3: 28]

6. “O you who believe, do not take as intimates anyone apart from yourselves; such men spare nothing to ruin you; they would love for you to suffer. Hatred is revealed by their mouths, and what their breasts conceal is yet greater.” [Q. 3: 118]

7. “O you who believe, do not take your fathers and brothers for your friends, if they prefer disbelief over belief; whoever of you takes them for friends, such are the evildoers.” [Q. 9: 23]. It is evident that the prohibition is restricted, not absolute.

8. “You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day loving those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their clan. [For] those He has inscribed faith upon their hearts and reinforced them with a spirit from Him, and He will admit them into gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide, Allah being pleased with them, and they being pleased with Him. Those [they] are Allah’s confederates. Assuredly, it is Allah’s confederates who are the successful. [Q. 58: 22]. It is clear to anyone that the prohibition is restricted to opposing Allah and His Messenger and showing enmity towards them, and is not absolute.

**A strange opinion:**

These people differentiated between loyalty and disavowal (al-wala’ wal-baraa’) and citizenship, saying that citizenship is a type of worldly interaction. In contrast, loyalty and disavowal refer to loving the allies of Allah and hating as well as disliking the enemies of Allah. So you can engage with them as fellow citizens in worldly matters, but without loving them in your heart - rather, you dislike them. This does not prevent you from treating them with kindness, as Allah says “Let not hatred of a people cause you not to be just; be just, that is nearer to Allah-fearing” [Q. 5: 8]

**Commentary:**

It is evident from reviewing the above that they cite religious texts without considering similar texts from the Holy Quran and the Prophetic Sunnah, which represents a misunderstanding of the sacred text. It is also clear that they are introducing innovations into the religion that were never endorsed by the predecessors (al-salaf), which has led them to rush into takfir those who don't believe in their corrupted doctrine. This poses a severe danger both to Muslims themselves and to humanity at large.

**The correct understanding of the issue:**

**First:** Neither al-Salaf al-Salih nor the four Imams considered loyalty and disavowal (al-wala’ wal-baraa’) among the pillars of faith or Islam. The majority of the community's scholars have consensus that the pillars of faith and Islam are what came in the Prophetic Hadith “Umar bin al-Khattab (May Allah be Pleased with Him) told me: Whilst we were with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) one day, a man came to us whose garment was exceedingly white and whose hair was exceedingly black, and we did not see any signs of travel on him, and none of us knew who he was. He came and sat before the Prophet (PBUH), resting his knees against his and placing his hands on his thighs. He said, O Mohammad, tell me about Islam: what is Islam? The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, “Islam means to bear witness that there is no god except Allah and that Mohammad is the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), to establish regular prayer, to pay zakat, to fast Ramadan and to perform pilgrimage to (the Ka’bah), if you have the means.” He (the man) said

you have spoken the truth. He (Umar) said it amazed us, how he questioned him and said that he had spoken the truth. He (the man) said, tell me about faith (Iman). He said, "Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and to believe in al-qadar (the divine will and decree), both good and bad." He (the man) said you have spoken the truth. He (the man) said, tell me about Ihsan: What is Ihsan? - Yazeed said, "It is to worship Allah as if you can see Him, for although you cannot see Him, He sees you." He (the man) said, tell me about the Hour. He said, "The one who is asked about it does not know more than the one who is asking." He (the man) said, and then told me about its signs. He said, "When the slave woman gives birth to her mistress, and when you see the barefoot, naked, destitute shepherds competing in the construction of lofty buildings." He (Umar) said, and then he went away. Then the Prophet (PBUH) said to me: "O Umar, do you know who that questioner was?" I said Allah and His Messenger know best. He said, "That was Jibreel, who came to you to teach you your religion." The hadith is clear and explicit in defining the pillars of Islam and faith (iman).

Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari said, "Faith (iman) is belief in the heart, while declaration with the tongue and action with the limbs are its branches. Thus, whoever believes in their heart - meaning affirms the oneness of Allah the Most High and acknowledges the messengers by believing in what they brought from Allah - their faith is valid. Even if they were to die in that state, they would be considered believers and saved. One only exits from faith by denying any part of this."

Al-Baqillani said, "One should know that faith (iman) in Allah is the belief in the heart. There is nothing in the science of monotheism (Tawheed) called the doctrine of loyalty and disavowal (al-wala' wal-baraa'). Rather, these are matters of the heart that arise as effects of the doctrine of faith. The behavioral manifestation of loyalty is support and backing, while the behavioral manifestation of disavowal is opposition and withdrawal of support. Loyalty and disavowal are fundamentally matters of the heart that emerge as effects of the doctrine of faith. When a believer has faith in Allah, His messengers, His books, His angels, the Last Day, and destiny (both good and bad), this faith produces in his heart love, loyalty, inclination, and support for all believers in truth. It also produces in his heart disavowal from beliefs and ideas that contradict what he believes in.

The behavioral manifestation of loyalty is support and backing, while the behavioral manifestation of disavowal is opposition and withdrawal of support. The manifestations of loyalty and disavowal become apparent when someone who denies your beliefs, faith, and identity decides to oppress you and wage war against your homeland. In such cases, loyalty requires standing beside your homeland, your people, and your identity, and disavowing from the enemy who wants to destroy your identity, security, and homeland."

Therefore, loyalty and disavowal must always be considered within the framework of Muslim coexistence with others. A Muslim should maintain their Islamic identity and belonging without violating the principle of peaceful coexistence among people - this is loyalty. As for disavowal, it means that Muslims should protect their belief from being confused with dubious matters without resorting to declaring others as non-believers or harming protected persons.

Refusing to show loyalty to non-Muslim citizens and others who are not at war with Muslims, in the sense of showing personal enmity and causing them harm, contradicts with clear texts from the

Holy Quran and Sunnah. Muslims are commanded to speak kindly to all people without discrimination. Allah says “and speak kindly to mankind” [Q. 2: 83] and “Indeed Allah enjoins justice and virtue” [Q. 16: 90]. Furthermore, Allah has not forbidden us from showing kindness to non-Muslims, maintaining ties with them, giving them gifts, and accepting gifts from them. Allah says “Allah does not forbid you regarding those who did not wage war against you on account of religion and did not expel you from your homes that you should treat them kindly and deal with them justly. Assuredly Allah loves the just.” [Q. 60: 8]

The problem arises from how those who call themselves Salafis define faith: They say it is belief in the heart, declaration with the tongue, and action with the limbs and pillars - it increases with obedience and decreases with disobedience. They cite the verse “and that those who believe may increase in faith” [Q. 74: 31]. Based on this, they declare anyone who sins a kafir, and their origin is the Khawarij.

**Second: Correct understanding of two pivotal verses in this doctrine and others:**

The First Verse: “O you who believe, do not take My enemy and your enemy for friends. You offer them affection when verily they have disbelieved in the truth that has come to you, expelling the Messenger and you because you believe in Allah, your Lord.” [Q. 60: 1]

It is essential to be guided by the occasion of revelation (sabab al-nuzul) in understanding this verse. This verse was revealed regarding the companion Hatib bin Abi Balta'a, who secretly wrote to the enemies in Mecca informing them that the Prophet (PBUH) was preparing to wage war against them. Allah revealed this matter to the Prophet, and they intercepted the woman carrying the message to the people of Mecca, who were enemies of the Prophet and the state. Thus, the verse was revealed prohibiting taking enemies as allies.

This is a natural matter that no one can object to, as it aligns with human nature and the natural relationship between people across all nations, even in our time - someone who allies with the enemy during war and transmits military secrets commits high treason. For the correct understanding that doesn't disregard the occasion of revelation, the Sunnah, or other contextual texts, the occasion of revelation that we summarized is found in all books of the leading exegetes and authentic hadith collections.

The Second Verse: “O you who believe, do not take Jews and Christians as patrons; they are patrons of each other. Whoever amongst you affiliates with them, he is one of them. Allah does not guide the folk who do wrong. And you see those in whose hearts is sickness, vying with one another for them, saying: 'We fear lest we suffer a turn of fortune'. But it may be that Allah will bring victory, or some commandment from Him; and then they will end up, for what they kept secret within themselves, remorseful.” [Q. 5:51-52] This verse was narrated by Abu Lubaba; in this regard, al-Suddī said: “This verse was revealed during the Battle of Uhud when Muslims feared that part of them may ally with Jews and Christians”. It was also said that this verse revealed because of Ubadah ibn al-Samit and ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Ubayy ibn Salūl; as for Ubadah, he disavowed allying with Jews, yet, ibn ‘Ubayy held onto such alliance, saying: “I fear we might get defeated”. Definitely, the verse was revealed during the war and it is evident that that it is not permissible to seek alliance and assistance from the enemies during war-time. Hence, it is unacceptable to claim

that the general term is what counts rather than the specific actual reason, since the verse explicitly reveals that it is not allowed to make alliance with the enemies during wars. Actually, such verse is followed by other verses that urge providing good treatment for Jews and Christians as long as we are not at war.

The Third Verse: “O you who believe, do not take as intimates anyone apart from yourselves; such men spare nothing to ruin you; they would love for you to suffer. Hatred is revealed by their mouths, and what their breasts conceal is yet greater” [Q. 3:118]. The verse has the sufficient response that it includes the reason behind prohibiting alliance with anyone harboring deep-seated hostility and intentionally seeks to corrupt the believers, as Allah Almighty says in the same verse: “Such men spare nothing to ruin you”; meaning that they will exert every possible effort to harm you. Allah Almighty also says: “They would love for you to suffer”, in other words, enemies wish to see the believers suffering and hardships, and despite declaring their hostility, yet, it is lesser than what they actually bear in their hearts. Hence, prohibition in this verse is restricted not absolute, and the established rule is that what restricted remains as is, and what absolute stays is as is.

The Fourth Verse: “Let not the believers take the disbelievers as patrons, rather than the believers - for whoever does that, does not belong to Allah in anyway - unless you protect yourselves against them, as a safeguard. Allah warns you of His Self” [Q. 3:28]. The prohibition here is restricted, that a believer should not take a disbeliever as an ally unless there is a competent Muslim.

Third: it is impermissible to interpret these verses exclusively rather than the other verse, otherwise Quran will be contradicting; indeed, the Quran calls upon us in many verses to righteously treat the dissenter and be good to him/her. Hence, the message of Islam is all about tolerance and mercy, explained as follows:

Islam calls for righteousness towards all mankind except those being hostile against us, as Allah Almighty says: “Allah does not forbid you regarding those who did not wage war against you on account of religion and did not expel you from your homes, that you should treat them kindly and deal with them justly. Assuredly, Allah loves the just.” [Q. 60:8]

In fact, the Quran explains that the Prophet (PBUH) had come with peace not war, and that mercy for all mankind is the main pillar, as revealed by Allah Almighty: “We did not send you except as a mercy to all the worlds.” [Q. 21:107]

Indeed, Islam is eligible to challenge violence and extremism as it is concerned with general peace and to argue with the People of the Book with wisdom and fair exhortation, as Allah Almighty says: “And do not dispute with the People of the Scripture unless it be with that, bettering the most virtuous way” [Q. 29:46]. In the same context, Allah Almighty urges us not to incite hatred and hostility, as he says: “O not revile those whom they call upon, besides Allah, lest they then revile Allah out of spite, through ignorance.” [Q. 6:108]. Islam also urges good neighborliness and not to initiate hatred, as Allah Almighty says: “Let not hatred of a people cause you not to be just; be just” [Q. 5:8]

The values of Islam believe in multiculturalism and acknowledge them while establishing such beliefs in the Muslim’s hearts. Indeed, the esteemed biography of the Prophet (PBUH) and his

companions embodies the belief of multiculturalism and diversity and practically deals with them. The convergence of civilizations is one of the features of humaneness that is destined, inevitable, and cannot be competed. According to this governing rule, there has been always a distinction between the human general commonalities and cultural specificity; yet, the alternative option for the clash of civilizations is the interaction of all human civilizations in a way that thereby benefits mankind and all humanity and turn towards construction and the civilizations' response towards the current challenges to confront "clash of civilizations" theory. Such theory prompts those empowered with practical and material potentials to practice hegemony, exclusion, and control of others' resources, fortunes, and capabilities under the pretext that the world's upcoming conflicts shall be under the control of the civilizational factor. Islam's values establish in the hearts of Muslims that exclusion, insularity, and self-enclosure have become impossibilities in a world that turned into a small village due to tremendous technological development. Additionally, being misled by the call for a single universal civilization that gathers us all is an attempt to enshrine the hegemony of the sweeping civilization. Such cultural subordination will make every nation lose its cultural specificity and become on the margins of the sweeping civilization.

Islam has assured its followers that diversity and pluralism are one of the universe's laws, and the essence of its message is not to compel people to embrace one religion; indeed, diversity is one of Allah's laws in the universe, as Allah Almighty says: "To every one of you, We have appointed a divine law and a way. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one community, but that He may try you in what He has given to you." [Q. 5:48] and: "Had Allah willed, He would have made mankind one community, but they continue to differ, except those on whom Allah has mercy; and that is why He created them." [Q. 11:118-119] and: "Here is no compulsion in religion. Rectitude has become clear from error." [Q. 2:256] and: "So remind. For you are only an admonisher; you are not a taskmaster over them." [Q. 88:21-22]

The values of Islam do not antagonize the other heavenly religions, as the Quranic text stipulated that a Muslim's faith shall be integral provided that he/she believes in the previous messengers and heavenly books, as Allah Almighty says: "The Messenger believes in what was revealed to him from Allah, and the believers; each one believes in Allah and His angels, and in His Books, and His messengers, 'we make no distinction between any of His messengers'" [Q. 2:285]. However, it is impermissible that such human tolerance which Islam has made the founding stone for the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims should be interpreted as a sort of looseness or a readiness to dissolve in any entity that does not agree with the essence of Islam. Such tolerance does not abolish the distinctions and differences, yet, it lays the grounds for the humane relationships that Islam would like to prevail in people's lives. There is no way to eliminate the concept of emphasizing doctrinal, civilizational, and cultural specificities; however, Islam does not seek that such specificities would prevent the civilizational interaction and cooperation among nations and peoples.

The call of Islam depends on the diversity of peoples and social pluralism, and there is no other way to come together except by cooperation and knowing each other, as Allah Almighty says: "O

mankind! We have indeed created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes that you may come to know one another.” [Q. 49:13]

The message and values of Islam focus on tolerance and dialogue not clashing, peaceful coexistence not fighting. In such concern, the Quran and Sunnah explicitly stipulated such values, as Allah Almighty commanded His Prophet to forgive those who refused to believe in him; Allah Almighty says: “And [as] for his saying: ‘O my Lord! These are indeed a people who have no faith. Then disregard them and say, ‘Peace!’ For they will [soon] come to know.” [Q. 43:88-89] and: “So be forgiving with gracious forgiveness” [Q. 15:85] and: “Indulge [people] with forgiveness, and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant.” [Q. 7:199] and: “Tell those who believe to forgive those who do not anticipate the days of Allah that He may requite a people for what they used to earn.” [Q. 45:14]

Islam and its message do not seek to convert non-Muslims into Islam, yet, Islam aims to explain its truth and its role is to preserve the purity of its Shariah and defend it.

Islam does not bear any animosity against other doctrines, as a matter of fact, Islam condemns violence and terrorism. Truly, Allah Almighty created mankind from one soul, and being different in their beliefs and doctrines is one aspect of human nature. Indeed, beliefs are neither sold nor bought and there is no compulsion to adopt specific beliefs, however, the difference does not avert cooperation or acquaintance.

Consequently, the values of Islam urge us all to establish peace among all mankind. The commonalities between human beings are huge, hence, let’s invest them in stopping bloodshedding, and let’s cooperate to purify the religious sense from resentments and hard feelings that cost humanity an exhausting heavy price. Gentlemen, let’s stand together to confront violence, hunger, and poverty, and let’s cooperate to bring happiness to all humanity. Thank you all, peace and blessings be upon you.