Aspects of the Days of Ignorance

By Shaikh-ul-Islaam Muhammad bin ‘Abdil-Wahhaab [Died 1206H]

Translated by isma’eel alarcon
Aspects of the Days of Ignorance – by Imaam Muhammad bin ‘Abdil-Wahhaab

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About the Book: This is a translation of the classical treatise of Imaam Muhammad bin ‘Abdil-Wahhaab “Masaa’il-ul-Jaahiliyyah” (Aspects of the Days of Ignorance), which is a list of 128 points - each point representing one aspect of belief or practice that the people of the Days of Ignorance were upon, which Islaam came to oppose. The source used for this translation can be found on sahab.org.

The original Arabic text of the treatise is included within this translation so as to make this e-book a comprehensive reference guide and an easily-accessible study guide. Footnotes were added by the translator in order to clarify and provide evidence for some of the points that the author mentioned but didn’t provide proof or an explanation for. In recent times, this treatise has been explained by Shaikh Saalih Al-Fawzaan in several lectures. These lectures were recorded and transcribed and put into a book.

The subject matter of this treatise is one of great importance, for the aspects of the Days of Ignorance have not ceased to be acted upon till this very day. And the people that call towards these misguided beliefs and practices of the Days of Ignorance are many, such as innovators and people of desire. So it is important for the Muslim to learn what the People of the Days of Ignorance were upon in terms of beliefs, actions and practices, so that he may avoid that, since Islaam came to oppose these aspects.

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TEXT OF THE TREATISE:

These are the aspects that the people of the Days of Ignorance – both the people of the Book and the non-People of the Book – were upon, which the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ opposed. They are from the matters that every Muslim is required to possess knowledge of. This is since with (understanding) one side of the opposite, the goodness of the other side of the opposite can be made apparent. And it is by (making apparent the) opposite of something that matters become clarified.

The most important of these aspects (of the Days of Ignorance) and most severe in terms of danger was the absence of faith (Eemaan) in the heart, for what the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ came with. And if approval for what the people of the Days of Ignorance were upon is further added to this (absence of faith), then the total ruin is achieved, as Allaah says:

“And those who believe in the falsehood while disbelieving in Allaah, it is they who are the losers.” [Surah Al-'Ankaboot: 52]

[1] They performed worship by mixing righteous people into their supplication and worship of Allaah. They only did this desiring that these (righteous people) act as
intercessors for them before Allaah, based on their notion that Allaah loved this and that these righteous people loved Him. Allaah says: “And they worship besides Allaah things that harm them not nor profit them, and they say: ‘These are our intercessors with Allaah.’” [Surah Yoonus: 18]

And He says: “And those who take associates apart from Him, (say): ‘We worship them only so that they may bring us nearer to Allaah.’” [Surah Az-Zumar: 3]

This is the greatest of matters that the Messenger of Allaah opposed them in. So he brought sincerity (i.e. doing deeds sincerely for Allaah alone and not for anyone else) and informed that it was the Religion of Allaah, which all the messengers were sent with. And he informed us that no deeds are accepted (by Allaah), except those done sincerely (for Him alone). And he informed that whosoever does what these (polytheists) approved of, then Allaah has forbidden Paradise for him and his final destination will be the Hellfire.

It is due to this aspect that mankind becomes divided into Muslims and disbelievers. And it is due to it that enmity (between the two) occurs. And it is for this purpose that Jihaad was legislated, as Allaah says:

“And fight them (disbelievers) until there is no more fitnah (evil/disbelief) left, and the religion is for Allaah alone.” [Surah Al-Anfaal: 39]
“He has ordained for you the same religion which He ordained for Nooh and that which We have inspired in you (O Muhammad), and that which We ordained for Ibraheem, Moosaa and ‘Eesaa, (saying): ‘You should establish the Religion and make no divisions within it.’” [Surah Ash-Shooraa: 13]

And He says: “Verily, those who split up their religion and became sects, you have no concern with them in the least.” [Surah Al-Ana`aam: 159]

He has forbidden us from being similar to them, saying: “And be not like those who split up and differed after the clear signs came to them.” [Surah Aali `Imraan: 105]

And He has forbidden us from splitting up into sects in the Religion: “And hold firmly onto the Rope of Allaah, all of you together, and be not divided.” [Surah Aali `Imraan: 103]

[3] They held the acts of opposing the figure of authority and failing to comply with him as being something virtuous. And they saw the acts of hearing and obeying as being humiliating and degrading. So Allaah’s Messenger ﷺ opposed them and commanded that patience be observed when facing the oppression of the rulers. And he commanded with hearing and obeying them, whereas advising (them). And he ﷺ spoke extensively in regards to that and he constantly brought it up and repeated it.

These (first) three aspects (of the Days of Ignorance) have been gathered together in what has been related on the Prophet ﷺ in the two Saheehs, that he said:

1 The Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said: “Hearing and obeying is (obligatory) upon the Muslim, in that which he loves and hates, so long as he is not commanded with disobeying (Allaah). So if he is commanded to commit disobedience (to Allaah), then there is no hearing and obeying.” Sahee Al-Bukhaaree: Book of Rulings (no. 7144) and Sahee Muslim: Book of Leadership (no. 1839) from the hadeeth of Ibn ‘Umar ﷺ.
“Indeed, Allaah is pleased with three things for you: 1) That you not worship (anything else) except Allaah and that you not associate anything with Him, 2) That all of you, together, hold tightly onto the Rope of Allaah and not be divided into groups, and 3) That you mutually advise he whom Allaah has given authority over your affairs.”

There did not occur any defects in the religious and worldly affairs of mankind, except that it was due to a violation of these (first) three aspects, or one of them.

Their religion was built upon certain principles, the greatest of which was *taqleed* (blind following). So this was the biggest principle for all of the disbelievers – the first and last of them – as Allaah says:

“And similarly, We sent not a warner before you (Muhammad) to any town (people), except that the luxurious ones among them said: ‘Verily, we found our forefathers following a certain way and religion, and we will indeed follow in their footsteps.’” [Surah Az-Zukhruf: 23]

And He says: “And when it is said to them: ‘Follow that which Allaah has sent down’, they say: ‘Nay, we shall follow that which we found our forefathers following.’ Would they do so even if the Devil invites them to the torment of the Fire?” [Surah Luqmaan: 21]

So He revealed to them His saying: “Say: ‘I exhort you to one thing only – that you stand up for Allaah’s sake in pairs and singly – and then reflect (upon the life of the Prophet). There is no madness in your companion (Muhammad).’” [Surah As-Saba`: 46]

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2 Saheeh Muslim (no. 1715) and Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree (3/270)
And His saying: “(Say to the disbelievers): ‘Follow what has been sent down unto you from your Lord, and follow not any partners besides Him.’ Little do you remember!” [Surah Al-A`araaf: 3]

[5] From their greatest principles was that they were deceived by (following) the majority, using that as a proof against the correctness of a matter.³ And they also used as evidence for declaring the falsehood of something, the fact that it was strange and that its adherents were few. So Allaah prescribed the opposite of that and He clarified this in many places of the Qur’aan.

[6] They relied upon (the actions of) their ancestors as evidence (for their doings), as is found in His saying: “Then what about the generations of old?” [Surah Taha: 51]⁴

And His saying: “We never heard of this thing (which you have brought), amongst (the speech of) our forefathers.” [Surah Al-Mu`minoon: 24]⁵

³ They saw that the more adherents an ideology or a practice had, the truer it was. Thus, when they saw that the followers of the truth were few and the followers of falsehood were many, they chose the falsehood over the truth. So Allaah opposed this in many places of the Qur’aan, praising the few and condemning the majority, as He says: “But few of My servants are grateful.” [Surah Saba: 13]

⁴ This was the response of Pharaoh, when the prophet Moosaa came to him with the truth from his Lord. So Moosaa’s argument was based on revelation, while Pharaoh’s argument was based on logic. Thus he questioned Moosaa if what he had come with was the truth, then what will become of the nations of the past that never knew of or followed this way? Does it mean that they are all wrong and you are right? So Moosaa’s response was: “The knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a Record. My Lord neither errs nor forgets.” [Surah Taha: 52]

⁵ This was what the people of Nooh said to him in their rejection of him.
[7] They would use as a basis of proof that any people that had been given strength in understanding and works, as well as in dominion, wealth and status – that they were upon the truth.

So Allaah refuted that by saying: “And indeed We had firmly established them (disbelievers of old) with that wherewith We have not established you (O Quraish!” [Surah Al-Ahqaaf: 26]

And saying: “Although aforetime, they had invoked Allaah (for the coming of Muhammad) in order to gain victory over those who disbelieved. Then when there came to them that which they recognized (i.e. the Prophet), they disbelieved in him.” [Surah Al-Baqarah: 89]

And saying: “Those who have been given the Scripture recognize him (Muhammad) as they recognize their own sons.” [Surah Al-Baqarah: 146]

[8] They used as evidence for determining the falsehood of a matter, the fact that only the weak ones followed it, as is found in Allaah's saying: “They said: 'Shall we follow you, when the lowliest of people follow you?'” [Surah Ash-Shu`araa: 111]

And He says (relating their statements): “Is it these (poor believers) whom Allaah has favored from amongst us?” [Surah Al-Ana`aam: 53]

So Allaah refuted this claim, saying: “Should not Allaah know best those who are grateful?” [Surah Al-Ana`aam: 53]

This verse is referring to the Christians and Jews who knew the Prophet Muhammad better than they knew their own children because of what they read of his description from their revealed books of old.

This was the response that Nooh received from his people when he called them to worship Allaah alone. So he said to them after hearing their argument: “And what knowledge do I have of what they used to do (before following me)?” [Surah Ash-Shu`araa: 112]
[9] They followed and took their example from their evil and wicked scholars and worshippers. So Allaah revealed His saying: “O you who believe! Verily, there are many of the (Jewish) rabbis and (Christian) monks that take the wealth of mankind unjustly and hinder them (mankind) from the way of Allaah.” [Surah At-Tawbah: 34]

And His saying: “Do not go to extremes in your religion (by believing in something) other than the truth. And do not follow the vain desires of people that went astray, from times of past, and who misled many and strayed (themselves) from the Right Path.” [Surah Al-Maa'idah: 77]

[10] They used the following argument for determining the falsehood of a religion: That the ones who followed it possessed a short amount of understanding and lacked good memory, as Allaah says: “They followed you without thinking.” [Surah Hood: 27]

[11] They used a wicked and corrupt type of reasoning to establish evidence, as occurs in His saying: “You are no more than human beings like us!” [Surah Ibraaheem: 10]

[12] They rejected the correct and true way of reasoning. The reason for the occurrence of this aspect and the one before it was due to a lack of understanding, on their part, of (what consisted of) similarities and differences (i.e. similarities and differences between the prophets and normal human beings).

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8 This was the response that Nooh got from some of the chiefs among his people, when he called them to worship none but Allaah. They claimed that the only ones that followed him were the poor and weak, and that they did so “without thinking.”

9 This was the response of the people of Nooh, ‘Aad and Thamood, when their respective prophets called them to worship Allaah alone.
They went to extremes with regard to their scholars and righteous people, as is found in His saying: “O People of the Book! Do not go to extremes in your religion (by exceeding the limits set forth by Allaah). And do not speak concerning Allaah, except that which is true.” [Surah An-Nisaa: 171]

Everything that has been mentioned previously is based upon a principle, which is denying and affirming (i.e. they denied what Allaah affirmed and affirmed what Allaah denied). So they followed vain desires and speculation while turning away from what Allaah revealed to them.

They used the claim that they had a “lack of comprehending” as an excuse for not following what Allaah revealed to them, as Allaah says: “(They said): ‘Our hearts are sealed (with coverings).’” [Surah Al-Baqarah: 88]

And He says: “(They said): ‘O Shu’aib, we do not understand much of what you say!’” [Surah Hood: 91]

So Allaah declared them to be liars and clarified that their lack of understanding was due to the sealing of their hearts, and the sealing of their hearts was due to their disbelief.

[13] They went to extremes with regard to their scholars and righteous people, as is found in His saying:

[14] Everything that has been mentioned previously is based upon a principle, which is denying and affirming (i.e. they denied what Allaah affirmed and affirmed what Allaah denied). So they followed vain desires and speculation while turning away from what Allaah revealed to them.

[15] They used the claim that they had a “lack of comprehending” as an excuse for not following what Allaah revealed to them, as Allaah says: “(They said): ‘Our hearts are sealed (with coverings).’” [Surah Al-Baqarah: 88]

And He says: “(They said): ‘O Shu’aib, we do not understand much of what you say!’” [Surah Hood: 91]
They replaced what came to them from Allaah with books of magic, as Allaah mentions in His saying: “And when there came to them a Messenger from Allaah confirming what was with them, a party of those who were given the scripture threw the Book of Allaah behind their backs, as if they did not know! And they followed (instead) what the devils gave out (falsely of magic) in the lifetime of Sulaymaan.” [Surah Al-Baqarah: 101-102]

They ascribed their falsehood to the prophets, as is found in Allaah’s saying: “And Sulaymaan did not disbelieve” [Surah Al-Baqarah: 102] and His saying: “Ibraaheem was neither a Jew nor a Christian.” [Surah Aali ‘Imraan: 67]

They contradicted themselves in their ascriptions, for they would ascribe themselves to Ibraaheem, yet openly manifest their lack of following him.

They slandered and accused righteous people based on the actions of others who "ascribed" themselves to these (righteous people). An example of this is found in the Jews' slander of 'Eesaa and the Christians' and Jews' slander of Muhammad.

Here, Allaah refutes the claims of the Jews and Christians. Each one invented their own religion and then ascribed them to certain prophets, such as the Jews when they ascribed their magic to Sulaymaan and the Christians when they ascribed their false religion to Ibraaheem. So Allaah clarified the reality of the matter in these two ayahs.

The Jews slandered and accused 'Eesaa by accusing his mother, Maryam, of committing fornication. Allaah says concerning this: “And because of their disbelief and because of their uttering against Maryam a great slander (that she committed fornication)!” [Surah An-Nisaa: 156]
They believed that the tricks of the sorcerers and their likes were from the miraculous endowments that Allaah granted to some righteous people. And they attributed it to the prophets, such as their ascribing it to Sulaymaan.

They performed worship by whistling and clapping their hands. 12

They took their Religion as an amusement and a game. 13

They were deluded by the life of this world. So they perceived Allaah's bestowal of worldly material (on someone), as an indication of He was pleased (with that person),14 as He says: “And they say: ‘We are abundant in wealth and in children. And (because of that) we are not going to be punished.’” [Surah Saba': 35]

They refused to enter into the truth when they saw that they had already been preceded to it by the weak and poor - out of pride and disdain - so Allaah revealed:

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12 The proof for this is found in Allaah's saying concerning the disbelievers: ‘And their prayer at the House (Ka’bah) was nothing but whistling and clapping of hands. So taste the torment because of what you used to disbelieve.’” [Surah Al-Anfaal: 35] This point is connected to the following one in that the disbelievers only did this because they took their religion as a game and an amusement.

13 Allaah refutes this, saying: “And leave alone those who take their Religion as play and amusement, and whom the life of this world has deluded.” [Surah Al-An'aam: 70]

14 This means the more worldly matters one amassed the more he felt that Allaah was pleased with him and his condition, regardless if he was upon disbelief.
“And turn not away those who invoke their Lord, morning and afternoon seeking His Face.” [Surah Al-An’aam: 52]  

[25] They determined the truth to be false based upon their argument that the weak and poor people took precedence in accepting it. This is as He says: ‘(They said): ‘Had it (i.e. Islaam) been something good, they (poor and weak ones) would not have preceded us in (accepting) it.’’ [Surah Al-Ahqaaf: 11]

[26] They distorted (i.e. tahreef) the Book of Allaah after having comprehended it, while doing so knowingly (i.e. deliberately and not out of ignorance).  

[27] They authored books of falsehood and then attributed them to Allaah, as is found in His saying: “Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say: ‘This is from Allaah.’” [Surah Al-Baqarah: 79]

[28] They did not accept anything from the truth, except for that which was (in accordance) with their party/group. Allaah says: “And when it is said to them (Jews): ‘Believe in what Allaah has sent down’, they say: ‘We will believe in (only) what was sent down to us.’ And they disbelieved in that which came after it, whereas it is the truth confirming what is with them.” [Surah Al-Baqarah: 91]
But in spite of this, they did not even have knowledge of what the party/group (that they adhered to) used to believe, as Allaah points out in His saying:

"Then why have you killed the prophets of Allaah aforetime, if you indeed were believers?"

[Surah Al- Baqarah: 91]

It is from the amazing signs of Allaah that when these people abandoned the command of Allaah to unite and began to commit that which Allaah forbade from evil, the matter became such as: "Each group rejoicing in that which it has."

It is also from the amazing signs of Allaah that these people held the highest degree of hatred for the religion they affiliated themselves with, while having love for the religion of the disbelievers – those who were enemies to them and their prophet. And their trial was found in the extent of their love (for that religion of their enemies). As they did with the Prophet ﷺ when they approached him with the religion of Moosaa, while (in reality) they were following the books of magic. And that (magic) was from the religion of the people of Pharaoh.

They disbelieved in the truth if it was found with someone that they did not like or agree with. Allaah says: "The Jews say that the Christians follow nothing (i.e. are on the wrong Religion) and the Christians say that the Jews follow nothing."

[Surah Al- Baqarah: 113]
They rejected what they agreed was part of their Religion, as they did during the Hajj (pilgrimage) to the House (i.e. the Ka'bah).\(^{17}\) Allaah says: "And who turns away from the religion of Ibraaheem (pure Tawheed), except he who fools himself." [Surah Al-Baqarah: 130]

Then He clarifies what is correct, saying: "Rather, whosoever submits himself to Allaah while he is a good-doer,\(^{19}\) his reward is with Allaah." [Surah Al-Baqarah: 112]

They performed their acts of worship while exposing their private parts, as Allaah says: "And when they committed an evil deed (i.e. going around the Ka'bah in a naked state), they said: ‘We found our forefathers doing it.’" [Surah Al-A`araaf: 28]

\(^{17}\) The polytheists made Hajj, but in a corrupted way from that of their forefather Ibraaheem. So by doing this, they rejected the correct form of Hajj, which they believed was part of the Religion, in favor of their own manner of performing Hajj. This included placing idols around the Ka'bah and at the sites of Safaia and Marwaa, making tawaaf around the Ka'bah while naked, and whistling and clapping in prayer at the Ka'bah. The Prophet ﷺ opposed them in all of their acts of Hajj and established the correct way of performing it according to the Sunnah.

\(^{18}\) As is found in their saying: “None shall enter Paradise unless he is a Jew or a Christian.” [Surah Al-Baqarah: 111]

\(^{19}\) “Whosoever submits himself to Allaah” refers to sincerity and “while he is a good-doer” refers to actions in accordance with the Sunnah - the two conditions for having a good deed accepted - sincerity and compliance with the Sunnah. So Allaah clarifies that the true saved group is the one that implements the Tawheed and the Sunnah, and Allaah knows best.
They performed worship by forbidding the lawful, in the same manner that they worshipped by ascribing partners to Allaah.

They observed their worship by taking their rabbis and monks (i.e. learned people) as lords besides Allaah.

They denied Allaah's Attributes, as Allaah says: "But you thought that Allaah did not know much of what you were doing." [Surah Fussilat: 22]

They denied Allaah's Names, as Allaah says: "While they disbelieve in Ar-Rahmaan (The Most Merciful)." [Surah Ar-Ra`ad: 30]

They committed ta`teel (negation of Allaah's Names and Attributes), as is found in the statement of the people of Pharaoh.

20 Allaah says: "And do not say concerning that which your tongues put forth falsely: ‘This is lawful’ and ‘This is forbidden’ so as to invent lies against Allaah. Verily, those who invent lies against Allaah will never prosper." [Surah An-Nahl: 116]

21 This point is connected with the last one in that the first point refers to the learned scholars amongst the People of the Book who made the lawful forbidden and the forbidden lawful. The next point refers to those amongst the People of the Book that followed these evil scholars, such that by their obeying them in their changing of the commands of Allaah, they in reality took them as gods besides Allaah. Allaah says: “They (Jews and Christians) took their Rabbis and Monks as lords besides Allaah…” [Surah At-Tawbah: 31]

22 The Attribute of Allaah that was denied by them in this verse was that of His Knowledge.

23 The Name of Allaah that they denied according to this verse was Ar-Rahmaan.
They attributed deficiencies to Allaah, such as (Him having) a child, a need and being tired, while (on the other hand), they would eliminate some of these deficiencies from their religious leaders (i.e. monks). 25

They committed shirk in Allaah's sovereignty (mulk), as is found in the beliefs of the Majoos. 26

They rejected Al-Qadar (Divine Preordainment). 27
[44] They used *Al-Qadar* as an excuse (for themselves) against Allaah.

[45] They opposed Allaah’s Legislation (i.e. commandments) by using His Divine Preordainment (as an argument).

[46] They reviled time as is found in their saying: "There is nothing but our life of this world. We die and we live and nothing destroys us except *Ad-Dahr* (time)."

[47] They attributed Allaah’s blessings to someone other than Him, as He says: "They recognize the blessings of Allaah, yet they deny them (by worshipping others besides Allaah)."

[48] They disbelieved in the signs of Allaah.

[49] They rejected some of them (these signs).

Islaam prescribed the belief in *Al-Qadar*, which necessitates observing patience during times of misfortune.

28 To ascribe Allaah's blessings to someone other than Him is committing shirk in His Lordship (*Rububiyyah*) because Allaah is the One who grants all blessings, as He says: “*And whatever blessing or good thing (that you have), then it is from Allaah.*” [Surah An-Nahl: 53]

29 The signs of Allaah can be divided into two types: Natural signs and Religious signs. Allaah sends both of these types of signs for mankind to reflect on and so that they may be guided. The natural signs
They said: "Allaah did not send down anything to a man." [Surah Al-An`aam: 91]

They said about the Qur'aan: "Verily, this is nothing but the word of a man."b [Surah Al-Muddaththir: 25]

They attacked the wisdom of Allaah, the Mighty.

And He says: “We will show them Our signs in the universe and in their own selves, until it becomes clear to them that this (Qur'aan) is the truth.” [Surah Fusilat: 53] The religious signs include the Qur'aan and all the other miracles the Prophet was sent with, such as the splitting of the moon, which the mushrikeen disbelieved in, as Allaah says: “The Hour has drawn near and the moon has been split. And if they (disbelievers) see a sign they turn away and say: ‘This is continuous magic.’ And they disbelieved (in these signs) and followed their desires.” [Surah Al-Qamar: 1-3]

30 This was the claim of the Jews when the Messenger of Allaah came to them. But yet it contradicted their own beliefs for they believed in Allaah's revelation to Moosaa. So Allaah refuted them saying: “They did not estimate Allaah with an estimation that is due to him.” [Surah Al-An'nam: 91] The following point is connected to this one in that when the people of the Days of Jaahiliyyah rejected that Allaah revealed anything to a human, this led them to say that what the Prophet brought to them was only the words of a man.
They employed different schemes – both hidden and apparent – to repel what the messengers came with. This is as is found in His saying: "And they (disbelievers) plotted, while Allaah (too) plotted." [Surah Aali Imraan: 54]

And His saying: "And a party of the people of the Scripture say: 'Believe in the morning in that which is revealed to the believers, and reject it at the end of the day, so that they may turn back.'" [Surah Aali Imraan: 72]

They agreed with the truth in order to find a way to repel it, as Allaah has stated in the aforementioned verse.

They held fanaticism for a particular madh-hab (i.e. belief, school of thought), as is found in His saying concerning that (quoting from the disbelievers): “And do not believe (in anyone), except he who follows your religion (way of thinking).” [Surah Aali Imraan: 73]

They labeled the aspect of following Islaam as being a form of Shirk (association of partners in the worship of Allaah). This has been mentioned by Allaah in His saying: “It is not possible for a human being that Allaah give him the Book, the rule and the prophethood and then he (turns around after that) saying to the people: ‘Be my worshippers, rather than Allaah's.’ On the contrary, (he would say): 'Be you Rabanniyoon (learned religious men) because of your having taught and studied the Book.' Nor would he order you to take angels and prophets as lords (i.e. gods). Would He order you to disbelieve after you have submitted to Allaah's Will?” [Surah Aali Imraan: 79-80]

They distorted (Allaah's) words from their original state (i.e. meanings).
They twisted (the meanings of) the words found in the Book.

They labeled the people of guidance with evil names such as “Sabian” (one who apostates from the truth) and “Hashawee” (one without any benefit in his speech).

They fabricated lies upon Allaah.

They disbelieved in the truth.

They held the condition that, whenever overcome by established proof (against them), they fled to complain to the king (or ruler), as Allaah says: "The chiefs of the people of Pharaoh said (to Pharaoh): 'Will you leave Moosaa and his people to spread mischief in the land?'" [Surah Al-A’raaf: 127]

They accused them (i.e. the prophets who refuted them) of causing mischief in the land, as is stated in the (previous) verse.
They accused them of defaming and belittling the religion of the king (or ruler), as Allaah says: “The chiefs of Pharaoh’s people said: ‘Will you leave Moosaa and his people to spread mischief in the land and to abandon you and your gods.’” [Surah Al-‘A’raaf: 127] And He says (quoting Pharaoh): “Verily, I fear that he will change your religion.” [Surah Ghaafir: 26]

They accused them of defaming and belittling the false gods of the king, as is stated in the (previous) verse.

They accused them of changing the Religion, as Allaah says: “Verily, I fear that he will change your religion or that mischief and evil will spread throughout the land.” [Surah Ghaafir: 26]

They accused them of defaming and belittling the king (ruler), as Allaah says: “The chiefs of Pharaoh’s people said: ‘Will you leave Moosaa and his people to spread mischief in the land and to abandon you and your gods.’” [Surah Al-‘A’raaf: 127]

They claimed that they acted upon what was with them from the truth, as is found in His saying: “They say: ‘We will believe in what was sent down to us’” [Surah Al-Baqarah: 91], while (in reality) they abandoned it.

31 This was what Pharaoh told his people when Moosaa came to him with the truth from his Lord. Thus he warned them from him, accusing him of wanting to change the religion that their ruler was upon.
[69] They would make additions to their acts of worship (by innovating into them), as was done by them on the day of ‘Aashooraa.

[70] They would (on the other hand) make decreases in their worship also, as was done in their abandonment of stopping at the mountain of ‘Arafaat.

[71] They abandoned performing obligatory matters out of (false) piety.

[72] They performed worship by forsaking the good things that were bestowed unto them (by Allaah).

[73] They performed worship by abandoning the beautification of Allaah. 32

[74] They called the people towards misguidance, without any knowledge.

[75] They called the people towards disbelief, while knowing.

32 Allaah refutes these last two acts of false piety of theirs by saying: “Say: ‘Who is it that has forbidden the adornment with clothes given by Allaah, which He has produced for His slaves, and the good and fine provisions?’” [Surah Al-A’raaf: 32]
They would plot powerful plots (against the prophets), as was done by the people of Nooh. 33

Their leaders consisted of two types: Either he was an evil scholar or he was an ignorant worshipper. This is as Allaah says: "Do you (believers) covet that they (Jewish Rabbis) will believe in your religion, in spite of the fact that a party of them (Rabbis) used to hear the word of Allaah (i.e. Torah), then they used to change it knowingly after they had understood it. And when they (Jews) meet those who believe (Muslims), they say: 'We believe.' But when they meet one another in privacy, they say: 'Shall you (Jews) tell them (Muslims) what Allaah has revealed to you, so that they may argue with you about it before their Lord. Have you (Jews) then no understanding? Know they not that Allaah knows what they conceal and what they reveal. And there are among them (Jewish Rabbis), unlettered people who know not the Book, but they trust upon false desires and they but guess." [Surah Al-Baqarah: 75-78]

They claimed that they were the awliyaa (friends/supporters) of Allaah apart from all other people.

They claimed to love Allaah, while they abandoned His Divine Laws. So Allaah tested them, saying: "Say (O Muhammad): 'If you truly love Allaah, then follow me, Allaah will love you and forgive you your sins." [Surah Aali 'Imraan: 31] 34

33 Allaah says quoting Nooh: “And they (disbelievers in him) have plotted a great plot!” [Surah Nooh: 22]
They held onto false hopes, such as their saying: "The Hellfire will not touch us, except for a limited number of days." [Surah Al-Baqarah: 80] 35 And their saying: "None shall enter Paradise unless he is a Jew or a Christian." [Surah Al-Baqarah: 111]

They took the graves of their prophets and righteous people as places of worship (masaajid). 36

They took the landmarks of their prophets (i.e. places where they had sat or prayed in) as places of worship, as has been narrated on 'Umar. 37

They placed lamps upon the graves.

They took these places (gravesites) as locations for celebrating holidays.

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34 Allaah places a condition, here, on loving Him, in that all those that claim to love Him, must be true to their word and show it in their actions. The action He links to showing true love for Him is following His Messenger’s Sunnah, which is in fact His prescribed law.

35 This was the false claim of the Jews.

36 ‘Aa’ishah, radyAllaahu ‘anhaa, reported that the Prophet ﷺ said during the sickness from which he died of: “May Allaah curse the Jews and the Christians, they took the graves of their prophets as masaajid (places of worship).” [Reported by Al-Bukhaaree (3/159), Muslim (2/67) and Ahmad (6/80)]

37 During the time of ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab’s Khilafah, the people began to perform their prayer at the place of ‘Aqabah, the historic site where the Companions had given their oath of allegiance to the Prophet ﷺ. So ‘Umar had the tree cut down since the tree had no benefit and to prevent the people from taking this mark of the Prophet as a place of worship. [Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree]
They performed sacrifices at the gravesites.

They glorified the landmarks and relics of their (deceased) prestigious and revered ones, such as was the case with the central town meeting hall (Daar an-Nadwah). Those who were in its power used to brag and boast about it, as it was said to Hakeem bin Hazzaam (when he sold Daar an-Nadwah): “You have sold the honor of Quraish.” So he said: “All honor has passed away except that of piety (Taqwaa).”

They boasted and were prideful about their family descent.

They reviled (people’s) chains of lineage.

They sought the expectation of rain from (determining it through) the constellations of stars (not from Allaah).

Their women would wail and lament for the deceased (An-Niyaaha).
[91] The most honorable of their virtues was showing transgression to others by challenging them. So Allaah revealed concerning it, what He revealed.

[92] The most honorable of their virtues, also, was bragging and boasting, even when they had a right to do so. So Allaah forbade that.

[93] Holding individual fanaticism and zealotry for one's party/group whether they were upon truth or falsehood was a must according to them. So Allaah revealed what He did concerning that matter.

[94] Their religion consisted of holding people accountable for the crimes of others. So Allaah revealed: "And no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another." [Surah Al-An’aam: 164]

[95] They used to condemn a person due to what was found in someone else. This is seen in the Prophet’s saying (to Abu Dharr when he argued with Bilaal and called him 'son of a black woman’): "Do you condemn him because of his mother?

from the Days of Ignorance that they will not abandon: 1) Bearing pride for (one's) ancestors, 2) Slandering (one's chain of lineage, 3) Seeking rain according to the stars, and 4) the wailing of women for the deceased.” And he further said: “If this wailing woman does not repent before her death, she will be raised on the Day of Resurrection wearing a dress made from tar and a dress full of itches.” [Saheeh Muslim: no. 934]
Indeed you are a man who has in him, (aspects of) Jaahiliyyah (the Days of Ignorance)" 40

They bragged and boasted that they were the caretakers of the House (of Allaah, i.e. the Ka'bah). So Allaah rebuked them, saying: "In pride, they (Quraish used to feel pride that they were the dwellers of the Makkah sanctuary) talked evil about it (the Qur'aan) by night." [Surah Al-Mu'minoon: 67] 41

They would boast about their condition of being from among the offspring of the prophets. So Allaah revealed His saying: "That was a nation that has passed away. They shall receive the reward of what they earned and you of what you earned." [Surah Al-Baqarah: 134] 42

They would boast about their trades, just as the merchants do considering themselves above the farmers. 43

Reported in Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree (1/80 and 81) from the hadeeth of Abu Dharr .

The disbelieving polytheists used to see themselves as the protectors and caretakers of the Ka'bah, but Allaah denied this saying: “And why should Allaah not punish them, when they hinder (people) from Al-Masjid Al-Haraam, while they are not (even) its caretakers?” [Surah Al-Anfaal: 34]

Allaah is confirming in this ayah that the good deeds and good standing that these people's forefathers possessed will not be of any benefit to them. This is since each person is responsible for himself and he will not be punished for the sins of someone else nor will he be rewarded by the good deeds of another.

The Quraish were wealthy traders who would always be conducting business trades, traveling to different lands for that purpose as they did to Shaam in the winter and to Yemen in the summer. So they were people of wealth and thus considered themselves above those people who had to do labor for their money, such as the farmers and people of agriculture.
The worldly life was glorified in their hearts, as is found in His saying: “And they say: 'Why is this Qur’aan not sent down to some great man of the two towns (Makkah and Ta‘if)?'” [Surah Az-Zukhruf: 31]

They made suggestions above Allaah’s doings, as is seen in His (above) saying.

They looked down upon the poor folk. So Allaah revealed His saying: "And turn not away those who invoke their Lord morning and afternoon, seeking His Face." [Surah Al-An’aam: 52]

They accused those who followed the messengers of having a lack of sincerity and of desiring to achieve worldly ends. So Allaah responded to them by saying: “You are accountable for them in nothing” [Surah Al-An’aam: 52] and other similar statements.

They disbelieved in the angels.

The polytheists of Makkah objected that Allaah did not reveal the Qur'aan to some great wealthy man, of whom it is said either refers to Waleed bin 'Utbah or Hishaam bin Mugheerah, for these two were considered the most noble, high, wise and prestigious people of Makkah and Ta‘if (at that time). They were the ones with the most wealth and children. So they claimed that these people were more deserving of the message and prophethood than Muhammad ﷺ. They only claimed this because they were infatuated with the worldly life and its luxuries, and that is what directed them, such that only those of wealth were fitting for any high and lofty position.
[104] They disbelieved in the messengers (sent by Allaah).

[105] They disbelieved in the revealed books (of Allaah).

[106] They turned away from (accepting) what was reported concerning Allaah.

[107] They disbelieved in the Last Day.

[108] They denied that they would meet Allaah (on the Day of Judgement).

[109] They denied some of the aspects that the messengers (of Allaah) informed of concerning the Last Day, as is found in His saying: “They are the ones who disbelieve in the verses of their Lord and in (their) Meeting (with) Him.” [Surah Al-Kahf: 105] This includes a denial of His saying: “Master of the Day of Recompense” [Surah Al-Faatihah: 2]

And His saying: “Spend of that with which We have provided you before a Day comes when there will be no bargaining nor friendship nor intercession” [Surah Al-Baqarah: 254] and His saying: “Except for those who bear witness to the truth while knowing.” [Surah Az-Zukhruf: 86]
They killed those people who commanded towards justice and fairness. 45

They believed in al-Jibt and at-Taaghoot (false deities and religions). 46

They preferred the religion of the polytheists over the religion of the Muslims.

They covered the truth with falsehood.

They concealed the truth, while possessing full knowledge of it. 47

They enforced the source principle of misguidance, and that is speaking about Allaah without any knowledge. 48
They found themselves in clear contradiction when they chose to disbelieve in the truth, as Allaah says: “But they disbelieved in the truth when it came to them, so they are in a state of utter confusion.” [Surah Qaaf: 5]

They believed in some parts of Allaah’s revelation, while rejecting other parts. 49

They differentiated between the messengers. 50

They argued and challenged those things that they had no knowledge of.

They claimed to follow the Salaf (righteous predecessors), while (in fact) they openly opposed and contradicted them.

49 Allaah says about this: “Do you believe in parts of the Book and reject other parts?” [Surah Al-Baqarah: 85]

50 This means they chose whom they liked and rejected whom they disliked, differentiating between the prophets. This is disbelief because Belief in the Messengers entails believing in all of them – those whose names we know and those whose names we don’t know, since their call was one and the same. Allaah says: “The Messenger (Muhammad) believes in what was sent down to him from his Lord, and (so) do the believers. Each one believes in Allaah, His Angels, His Books and His Messengers. (They say): ‘We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers.’” [Surah Al-Baqarah: 285]
[121] The hindered anyone who believed in Allaah from His path.

[122] They loved disbelief and the disbelievers.

[123] They used to believe in omens (al-‘Iyyaafah).

[124] They used to draw lines on the ground in order to predict future events (at-Tarq).

[125] They would foretell upcoming events (omens) based upon the flight of birds (at-Teerah).  

[126] They indulged in soothsaying and fortune telling (al-Kahaanah).

[127] They appealed to At-Taaghoot (false deities and systems) for judgement.  

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51 This is a specific mode of taking an omen. The word al-‘Iyyaafah is more general and entails all other forms of omens, including taking omens from certain times or places or because of certain events. The disbelievers even took bad omens from certain people, as was the case with their claiming to receive a bad omen from the prophet Saalih: “They said: ‘We foresee a bad omen from you and those with you.’” [Surah An-Namml: 47]

52 Allaah says: “Have you not seen those who claim to believe in that which has been sent down to you, and that which was sent down before you. And they wish to go for judgement (in their disputes) to the Taaghoot (false deities and systems), while they have been ordered to reject them?” [Surah An-Nisaa: 60] And He says: “Do they then seek the judgement of the Days of Ignorance? And who is better in judgement than Allaah for a people who have certain faith?” [Surah Al-Maa'idah: 50]
[128] They hated that marriage be carried out between the two ‘Eids (as they considered that a bad omen). 53

And Allaah knows best. May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon Muhammad, his family and his Companions.

53 Marriage is from the Sunnah of the prophets, as Allaah says: “And indeed we sent Messengers before you (O Muhammad), and placed for them wives and offspring.” [Surah Ar-Ra’ad: 38]