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Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)**The Sanctity of Divine Symbols and Their Impact on the Reformation of Thought and Action****Dr. Abdul Qadoos**

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**Abstract**

*Islam presents a complete and comprehensive way of life that guides every dimension of human existence. Its foundation rests on belief in Tawḥīd (the oneness of Allah), obedience to His commands, and adherence to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This guidance is not confined to theory; rather, it is manifested in practical life through what the Qur'an describes as the Sha'ā'ir Allāh (the Symbols of Allah). The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes these symbols and declares their reverence a clear sign of true faith. Allah Almighty states: "Whoever honors the symbols of Allah, it is indeed from the piety of the hearts."<sup>1</sup> This highlights that respect for these symbols is not merely outward; it reflects an inner state of humility, submission, and consciousness of Allah (taqwā). In the contemporary Muslim world, one of the major causes of intellectual and moral decline is the weakening of this very spirit. Religious practices are often performed as formalities, while their deeper meanings and transformative impact are overlooked. As a result, both individual character and collective identity have been adversely affected. This study seeks to demonstrate that a proper understanding and sincere reverence for the symbols of Allah are essential for the reformation of thought and action. It argues that these symbols are not only expressions of faith but also powerful means of spiritual, moral, and social transformation.*

**Keywords:** *Divine Symbols, Qur'an, Hadith, Sanctity, Thought, Action.*

**Introduction**

This study examines the concept of *Sha'ā'ir Allāh* (the Symbols of Allah), their categories, their significance, and the consequences of neglecting them in light of the Qur'an and Sunnah. It aims to highlight the central role that reverence for these symbols plays in shaping both individual character and collective life.

The research adopts an analytical approach, drawing upon Qur'anic verses, Prophetic traditions (Aḥādīth), classical exegesis, and the writings of both classical and contemporary scholars. It is based on the premise that the preservation and proper understanding of religious symbols are essential for maintaining faith, strengthening social cohesion, and ensuring spiritual stability.

At its core, this study argues that the decline in the Muslim Ummah's intellectual and moral condition is closely linked to the weakening of respect for these symbols. When their inner spirit is neglected, religious practice loses its transformative power. Conversely, when these

symbols are understood and honored in their true sense, they become a source of renewal for both thought and action.

### Discussion One: The Meaning and Reality of the Symbols of Allah

#### 1. Lexical and Terminological Definitions

##### i. Literal (Lexical) Meaning

The term *Sha'ā'ir* (شَعَائِر) is the plural of *Sha'īrah* (شَعِيرَة), derived from the Arabic root *sha'ara* (شَعَرَ), which conveys meanings such as perception, recognition, and indication.<sup>2</sup> In classical Arabic usage, it refers to a sign or symbol—something outwardly visible that points to an inner reality. In this sense, *Sha'ā'ir* denotes those apparent markers through which deeper spiritual meanings are expressed and recognized.

##### ii. Terminological (Sharī) Meaning

In Islamic terminology, *Sha'ā'ir Allāh* refers to those acts, symbols, and practices—both outward and inward—that represent the worship of Allah, obedience to Him, and the distinct identity of the Muslim community. These are not limited to ritual forms; rather, they encompass all prescribed expressions of devotion that reflect submission to the divine will. Their observance and reverence have always been regarded by scholars as an essential part of Islamic life, as they signify the presence and continuity of the Sharī'ah in both individual and collective spheres.

#### 2. Qur'anic Foundations

The Qur'an explicitly refers to *Sha'ā'ir Allāh* in several places, affirming their central religious significance. Among the most notable examples are:

- *"Indeed, Ṣafā and Marwah are among the symbols of Allah"*<sup>3</sup> — affirming their sacred status within the rites of Hajj.
- *"And the sacrificial animals We have made for you among the symbols of Allah"*<sup>4</sup> — including sacrifice among the recognized divine symbols.
- *"And whoever honors the symbols of Allah—indeed, it is from the piety of hearts"*<sup>5</sup> — directly linking their reverence with inner taqwā.

These verses make it clear that the symbols of Allah are not merely cultural expressions; rather, they possess a firmly established Qur'anic basis and carry deep spiritual, moral, and social significance.

#### 3. Jurisprudential (Sharī'ah) Perspective

##### i. Legal Status (Ḥukm)

From a juristic perspective, two key aspects arise: the legitimacy of these symbols within the Sharī'ah and the obligation to honor them. Those acts explicitly recognized in the Qur'an and Sunnah as *Sha'ā'ir* must be upheld and respected. Any form of disrespect or mockery is considered religiously blameworthy and, in certain contexts, may lead to serious legal and theological implications, depending on established scholarly principles.

##### ii. Distinction Between Divine Symbols and Bid'ah

It is important to distinguish between divinely prescribed symbols and later innovations. The *Sha'ā'ir* are defined by the Sharī'ah in both form and purpose. Practices that lack a sound basis

in the Qur'an and Sunnah, or that contradict their objectives, fall under *bid'ah* (innovation) and cannot be regarded as legitimate symbols of Allah, even if they gain cultural acceptance over time.

#### 4. Types and Classifications

For analytical clarity, the *Sha'ā'ir Allāh* may be understood through several classifications:

##### i. External and Internal Rites

- **External rites** include visible acts such as Ṣalāh, Adhān, sacrifice, and the rituals of Hajj (e.g., Sa'ī between Ṣafā and Marwah).
- **Internal rites** refer to the spiritual states these acts are meant to cultivate, such as humility, sincerity, and consciousness of Tawḥīd. When this inner dimension is neglected, the essence of the ritual is weakened.

##### ii. Individual and Collective Rites

- **Individual rites** include acts such as prayer and fasting performed at a personal level.
- **Collective rites**—such as Jumu'ah, Hajj, and Eid prayers—strengthen communal identity and unity within the Ummah.

##### iii. Practical and Symbolic Dimensions

Some rites involve clear practical obligations, while others carry symbolic and historical meanings. The rituals of 'Arafāt, Mina, Ṣafā, and Marwah, for example, embody both spiritual lessons and historical continuity within the practice of Hajj.

#### 5. Purposes and Functions of the Rites

The *Sha'ā'ir Allāh* serve multiple purposes beyond their outward performance:

##### i. Moral and Spiritual Development

They train individuals in discipline, patience, self-control, and sincerity. Fasting cultivates restraint, prayer nurtures regularity and humility, and Hajj instills sacrifice and unity.

##### ii. Remembrance and Continuity (Tadhkīr)

They preserve the legacy of Tawḥīd and the traditions of the Prophets, serving as constant reminders of Allah and His commands.

##### iii. Formation of Communal Identity

Collective observance strengthens unity and shared belonging, reinforcing both social cohesion and intellectual alignment within the Muslim community.

##### iv. Legal and Organizational Function

Rites also establish structured patterns of worship—such as fixed prayer times and prescribed methods—ensuring order and discipline in religious life.

#### 6. Academic Observations

##### i. Spirit versus Formalism

The effectiveness of rituals depends on the preservation of their inner spirit. When reduced to mere form, they lose their transformative impact and contribute to moral and intellectual decline.

**ii. Cultural Context and Practice** While cultural expressions of rituals may vary, such variation is acceptable only within the limits set by the Shari'ah. Where cultural practices conflict with these limits, correction becomes necessary.

### iii. Interpretation of Texts

A balanced understanding of ritual-related texts requires attention to their apparent meanings as well as the broader objectives of the Shari'ah (Maqāsid al-Shari'ah).

### iv. Contemporary Educational Needs

In the modern context, there is a pressing need for structured educational efforts—through curricula, seminars, and scholarly engagement—to revive a sound understanding of these rites and their purposes.

## 7. Illustrative Examples

- **Şafā and Marwah:** These reflect the perseverance of Hājar (RA) and the submission of Ibrāhīm (AS), while forming an essential component of Hajj.
- **Sacrifice (Qurbānī):** Symbolizes devotion and selflessness, alongside its social function of supporting the needy.
- **Şalāh and Adhān:** Represent both individual devotion and collective identity, calling believers toward worship and unity within the المسجد (mosque).

### Discussion Two: The Sanctity of the Signs of Allah – Qur'anic and Prophetic Perspective

The life of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) provides the clearest and most practical example of reverence for the symbols (*Sha'ā'ir*) of Allah. His conduct consistently reflected deep respect for these symbols, and he emphasized their sanctity within the life of the Muslim community.

#### (a) Reverence for the Sacred House (Ka'bah)

When approaching the House of Allah, the Prophet (ﷺ) would perform Ṭawāf with profound humility, often engaged in remembrance of Allah and visibly moved in devotion. On one occasion, he said:

*“Allah is more sacred than you, O Ka'bah.”*<sup>6</sup>

This statement indicates that reverence for the Ka'bah is, in essence, an expression of reverence for Allah Himself, as it represents one of His greatest symbols.

#### (b) Sacrificial Practices

In matters of sacrifice, the Prophet (ﷺ) stressed not only the outward performance but also the ethical dimension of the act. He said:

*“Indeed, Allah has prescribed excellence in all things...”*<sup>7</sup>

This guidance makes it clear that the sanctity of sacrifice is not limited to the ritual itself; rather, it extends to the manner in which it is performed, reflecting compassion, dignity, and moral responsibility.

#### (c) The Sanctity of Adhān and Şalāh

The Adhān and Şalāh stand among the most visible and enduring symbols of Islam. They function not only as acts of worship but also as expressions of unity and discipline within the Muslim community.

The Prophet (ﷺ) supplicated for those who call to prayer, saying:

*“O Allah, guide the Imams and forgive the Mu’adhdhins.”<sup>8</sup>*

He also emphasized the seriousness of responding to the call to prayer:

*“Whoever hears the call to prayer and does not respond, there is no prayer for him except with a valid excuse.”<sup>9</sup>*

Together, these teachings highlight that honoring the rituals of prayer includes both respect for their outward form and commitment to their timely observance.

### **Discussion Three: Reverence for Rites and the Reformation of Thought**

The foundation of Islamic thought is Tawhīd, and the rites of Allah serve as its practical expression in daily life. When these rites are observed with sincerity and reverence, they renew within a person a deep awareness of Allah’s greatness and authority.

Acts such as prayer, Adhān, Hajj, sacrifice, and devotion to the Ka’bah continuously affirm that ultimate sovereignty belongs to Allah alone. Through them, a believer develops a consciousness of servitude (*‘ubūdiyyah*) and begins to view life within a framework directed toward divine purpose. In this way, reverence for these symbols strengthens faith and gradually frees the individual from shirk, hypocrisy, materialism, and self-centeredness.

### **3. Rites of Allah and the Correction of Intellectual Deviations**

A weak understanding of religion often results in the loss of the true spirit of rituals. When acts of worship are reduced to routine practices, their intellectual and spiritual impact diminishes.

#### **(a) Rational Misconceptions**

In some modern approaches, rituals are interpreted merely as cultural or historical practices. This view contrasts with the Qur’anic perspective, which presents them as divinely ordained signs connected to faith and piety. Such misunderstandings often arise from a secular outlook that separates religion from lived experience.

#### **(b) Formalism (Externalism)**

Another tendency is to focus exclusively on outward performance while neglecting inner sincerity. A person may perform prayer or offer sacrifice without genuine devotion. The Qur’an cautions against this superficial approach:

*“It is neither their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah, but it is your piety that reaches Him.”<sup>10</sup>*

This verse redirects attention to the inner reality that gives meaning to outward acts.

#### **(c) Influence of Western Secular Thought**

Contemporary thought, influenced by secular frameworks, often restricts religion to the private sphere. As a result, collective practices—such as congregational prayer, Hajj, Eid, and Islamic dress—are sometimes treated as personal choices rather than as essential expressions of communal identity and religious commitment.

### **4. Intellectual Effects of Reverence for the Signs of Allah**

#### **(a) Intellectual Clarity**

Reverence for divine symbols sharpens intellectual perception, enabling a person to distinguish between truth and falsehood. As Imam al-Ghazali observes, reverence for these signs opens the way to the purification of both mind and heart.

### **(b) Spiritual Balance**

A proper understanding of these rites brings balance to one's thinking and emotional life, protecting against both excess and neglect.

### **(c) Moral Refinement**

When the heart is shaped by reverence for Allah's symbols, it naturally inclines toward honesty, justice, and sincerity, distancing itself from deceit and moral weakness.

### **(d) Revival of Religious Consciousness**

Respect for these rituals sustains a living sense of faith within the individual and the community. When such reverence weakens, the vitality of religious life gradually declines.

### **Discussion Four: Reverence for Rites and the Reformation of Actions**

Islam, as a comprehensive way of life, places equal emphasis on the reformation of both belief and action. Sound practice is inseparable from sound belief, and faith remains incomplete without righteous conduct.

The rites of Allah represent the outward expression of faith. When these rites are observed with due reverence, they not only deepen intellectual awareness but also shape practical life through sincerity, discipline, and devotion. Allah Almighty states:

*"And whoever honors the symbols of Allah—indeed, it is from the piety of hearts."*<sup>11</sup>

This verse indicates that reverence for divine symbols is not confined to outward observance; rather, it reflects an inner state of piety that naturally finds expression in one's actions.

### **2. Relationship Between the Signs of Allah and Righteous Deeds**

In Islamic thought, belief and action are closely intertwined, much like the relationship between the soul and the body. The *Sha'ā'ir* of Allah serve to connect human actions with divine pleasure.

Prayer embodies the remembrance of Allah in daily life, Zakāt cultivates generosity and social responsibility, fasting develops self-restraint and patience, and Hajj reflects obedience, unity, and sacrifice. These acts are not isolated rituals; they function as a continuous training process for righteous living. When observed with sincerity, they shape a person's character and guide his actions toward justice and moral excellence.

### **3. Impact of Reverence for Rites on the Reformation of Actions**

#### **(a) Purity of Intention (Ikhlāṣ)**

Reverence for divine symbols protects a person from hypocrisy and ostentation. When one becomes conscious that all actions are performed for the sake of Allah, intentions are purified. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

*"Actions are judged by intentions."*<sup>12</sup>

This principle lies at the heart of all acts of worship and is strengthened through sincere observance of religious rites.

#### **(b) Humility and Presence in Worship**

Respect for rituals brings a روح (spirit) into acts of worship. Prayer, when performed with attentiveness and reverence, rises above mere physical movement and becomes a state of inner presence (*ḥuḍūr al-qalb*). The Qur'an describes the believers as:

*"Successful indeed are those who are humble in their prayers."*<sup>13</sup>

Thus, humility is not an external form alone but a quality that develops through sincere engagement with these rites.

### **(c) Discipline in Individual Life**

Islamic rituals introduce order and structure into daily life. The fixed times of prayer, the regularity of Jumu'ah, and the organized rites of Hajj all cultivate discipline. This discipline, in turn, becomes the foundation for personal reform and responsible living.

### **(d) Collective Discipline and Social Order**

The impact of these rites extends beyond the individual. Congregational prayers, Eid gatherings, Hajj, and other collective practices bring the community together around shared values. Through them, unity, cooperation, and social cohesion are strengthened.

## **4. Purification of the Soul through the Rites of Allah**

The purpose of these rites is not limited to outward correctness; they also serve as a means of inner purification. Allah Almighty states:

*"He has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who corrupts it."*<sup>14</sup>

Through consistent observance, qualities such as sincerity, humility, patience, gratitude, and sacrifice gradually develop. These qualities form the ethical foundation upon which meaningful reform of action is built.

## **5. The Prophetic Model of Action**

The life of the Prophet (ﷺ) offers a complete and practical model for observing and honoring these rites.

### **(a) Prayer as a Means of Reform**

The Prophet (ﷺ) instructed:

*"Pray as you have seen me pray."*<sup>15</sup>

This emphasizes that true reverence requires following the Sunnah in both form and spirit.

### **(b) Guidance in the Rites of Hajj**

During Hajj, he said:

*"Take your rituals from me."*<sup>16</sup>

This highlights that proper observance of rituals is inseparable from adherence to the Prophetic example.

### **(c) Sincerity in Sacrifice**

While offering sacrifice, the Prophet (ﷺ) would supplicate:

*"O Allah, this is from You and for You."*

This reflects the inner dimension of worship, where every act is directed solely toward Allah.

## **6. Rites of Allah and Collective Reform**

### **(a) Jumu'ah (Friday Prayer)**

The weekly gathering renews faith, strengthens moral awareness, and reinforces communal unity.

### **(b) Ramaḍān**

This month serves as a period of collective spiritual training, promoting self-restraint, patience, and social solidarity.

### **(c) Hajj**

Hajj represents a powerful expression of unity, equality, and submission. It brings together Muslims from across the world, embodying both spiritual devotion and social harmony.

## **7. Neglect of Rituals and the Decline of Action**

When reverence for these rites weakens, its effects become visible in both individual and social life. Worship may continue in form, but its spirit diminishes; morality becomes inconsistent, and actions lose their sincerity. The Qur'an reminds:

*"And he whom Allah humiliates—for him there is no one to honor."* <sup>17</sup>

Neglecting the symbols of Allah ultimately leads to spiritual decline and social disintegration.

## **Discussion Five: Violation of Religious Rites in the Contemporary Era and the Need for Reform**

Islam regards the preservation and respect of its religious symbols as an essential aspect of faith. The Qur'an clearly states:

*"Whoever honors the symbols of Allah—it is indeed from the piety of hearts."* <sup>18</sup>

However, in the contemporary context, the sanctity of these rites is increasingly challenged. Practices that once served as strong markers of identity and unity are, in many cases, reduced to routine formalities. Materialism, changing social values, and the influence of secular thought have all contributed to this shift.

Acts such as prayer, Adhān, and adherence to Islamic teachings are sometimes performed without their deeper spirit, while rituals like sacrifice and Hajj may be affected by commercial or social pressures. This situation calls for a thoughtful and sustained effort toward revival.

### **Need for Reform and Suggested Measures**

To restore proper understanding and respect for religious rites, several steps are necessary:

- **Promoting Religious Awareness**  
Greater emphasis should be placed on conveying the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, particularly the inner meaning and purpose of rituals.
- **Educational and تربیتی Reform**  
Academic curricula should incorporate the intellectual and spiritual dimensions of Islamic practices, helping students appreciate their relevance and purpose.
- **Constructive Use of Media**  
Media platforms can play a positive role by highlighting the significance and wisdom of religious practices.
- **Role of Scholars and Intellectuals**  
Scholars must provide clear guidance and address contemporary challenges with balanced and practical solutions.

- **Social Reform Initiatives**

Public programs, seminars, and community efforts should be organized to strengthen awareness and encourage meaningful observance of these rites.

Islam presents a comprehensive framework that organizes the intellectual, spiritual, and practical aspects of human life through the system of *Sha'ā'ir Allāh* (the rites of Allah). These rites—such as Ṣalāh, Hajj, Qurbānī, Ṣawm, Adhān, and Jumu'ah—are not merely outward acts of worship. Rather, they serve as living symbols that cultivate within the believer a deep sense of piety, devotion, and reverence. The Qur'an clearly states:

*“And whoever honors the symbols of Allah—indeed, it is from the piety of hearts.”*<sup>19</sup>

### 1. Meaning and Reality of the Rites of Allah

The rites of Allah encompass all those signs and practices that direct a believer toward the remembrance, obedience, and عظمت (greatness) of Allah. They are not static rituals but living expressions of faith, reflecting both the inward and outward unity of the Muslim Ummah. Their observance renews the spirit of Tawḥīd and sustains the vitality of faith in everyday life.

### 2. Sanctity of the Rites: Qur'anic and Prophetic Perspective

The Qur'an consistently links the sanctity of these rites with the condition of the heart, while the practice of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) demonstrates their central place in religious life. Acts such as prayer, Hajj, Adhān, sacrifice, and Jumu'ah establish discipline, equality, and devotion within the community. Any weakening in their observance inevitably affects the strength of faith itself.

### 3. Reverence for Rites and the Reformation of Thought

The *Sha'ā'ir* of Allah play a decisive role in shaping human thought and consciousness. When approached with sincerity, they cultivate awareness of Tawḥīd, humility, and a sense of accountability before Allah. These rites are not limited to outward performance; rather, they serve as means of intellectual and spiritual development, gradually transforming a person's beliefs, attitudes, and value system.

### 4. Reverence for Rites and the Reformation of Action

When reverence for these rites takes root in the heart, it is reflected in one's conduct. Humility in prayer, discipline through fasting, unity in Hajj, generosity through Zakāt, and sincerity in sacrifice all contribute to the اصلاح (reformation) of actions. In this way, acts of worship move beyond ritual form and become effective means of character-building and social harmony.

### 5. Contemporary Challenges and the Need for Revival

In the modern context, the spirit of religious rituals has been weakened by materialism, secular influences, and cultural shifts. Although many practices continue outwardly, their inner meaning is often diminished. Media, social trends, and certain educational approaches have, at times, reduced these rites to formalities or neglected their deeper significance. Addressing this decline requires a conscious effort to revive their spiritual, moral, and social dimensions.

### Research Findings

1. The sanctity of the symbols of Allah is closely tied to faith, intellectual awareness, and practical reform.
2. Reverence for these symbols reflects inner piety and shapes both thought and action.
3. The life of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) provides a complete and practical model for observing and honoring these rites.
4. Neglect of these rituals leads to spiritual stagnation, moral decline, and intellectual confusion.
5. The revival of the Ummah depends, to a great extent, on restoring proper reverence for these symbols.
6. Contemporary challenges—such as materialism and secular thought—require a thoughtful and well-grounded Islamic response to preserve the true spirit of these rites.

### Suggestions for Reform

#### 1. Educational Reform

The intellectual and spiritual dimensions of religious rituals should be incorporated into educational curricula so that students understand their purpose and relevance.

#### 2. Revitalizing the Role of Mosques

Mosques should serve not only as places of worship but also as centers for learning and moral development, where the deeper meanings of rituals are regularly explained.

#### 3. Constructive Use of Media

Media platforms can be effectively used to highlight the wisdom and significance of Islamic practices, promoting awareness and engagement.

#### 4. Youth Development Initiatives

Programs such as workshops, lectures, and Seerah courses should be organized to connect younger generations with the spiritual and social importance of these rites.

#### 5. Reform of Friday Sermons (Khuṭbah)

Sermons should focus on the practical implications of rituals, emphasizing sincerity, ethical conduct, and social responsibility.

#### 6. Institutional Collaboration

Religious and academic institutions should work together to promote research and initiatives aimed at strengthening respect for Islamic practices.

#### 7. Intellectual Engagement

Scholarly efforts should address contemporary misconceptions and provide clear, reasoned responses to challenges facing the understanding of religious rituals.

### Notes and References

<sup>1</sup> *Al-Hajj*: 32

<sup>2</sup> *Oxford English Urdu Dictionary*, P-241

<sup>3</sup> *Al-Baqarah* 2:158

<sup>4</sup> *Al-Ḥajj* 22:36

<sup>5</sup> *Al-Ḥajj* 22:3

<sup>6</sup> *Sunan Ibn Mājah, Hadith No.2178*

<sup>7</sup> *Sahih Muslim), Hadith No.1893*

<sup>8</sup> *Musnad Ahmad, Hadith No.1321*

<sup>9</sup> *Sunan Abū Dāwūd), Hadith No.3125*

<sup>10</sup> *Al-Ḥajj: 37*

<sup>11</sup> *Al-Ḥajj: 32*

<sup>12</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Hadith No.2783 / Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Hadith No.3217*

<sup>13</sup> *Al-Mu'minūn: 1–2*

<sup>14</sup> *Al-Shams: 9–10*

<sup>15</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*

<sup>16</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Hadith No.1964*

<sup>17</sup> *Al-Ḥajj: 18*

<sup>18</sup> *Al-Ḥajj: 32*

<sup>19</sup> *Al-Ḥajj: 32*