

# The Ash'ari Aqeedah

## The Creed of the Muslims

A Translated Summary





## The Creed of a Muslim

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*Additional Notes (blue) by Afroz Ali, al-Ghazzali Centre for Islamic Sciences & Human Development*

The obligatory matters of the deen that the tongue should give expression to and in which the heart should believe.

This Treatise is what a Muslim should express in words and what hearts should believe. It contains about a hundred items of creed ('aqida), which can be divided into three basic categories: that which must be believed about Allah Almighty, that which is impossible in respect of Allah, and that which is permissible in respect of Him.

These are matters which all those who are legally responsible must believe.

### 1.1 Beliefs regarding Allah

#### 1.1a Tawhid - Allah's Oneness and Disconnection from creatures (tanzih)

These obligatory tenets include believing in the heart and expressing with the tongue that Allah is One God and that there is no god other than Him, nor is there any like Him, nor any equal to Him.

[Belief is expressed on the tongue and confirmed by sincerity in the heart and action by the limbs. Thus it is composed of all three aspects. Nonetheless, simple belief in the Oneness of Allah will save a person from being in the Fire for all eternity.

The belief that Allah is One is the fundamental basis of Islam, and when Divine Unity is expressed, the name "Allah" must be used. It is not permissible to say, "There is no god but the Almighty" or use any other names except Allah for the shahada. Nothing at all resembles Him or is equal to Him.]

[Al-Kalbi mentions that the clear evidence for this is found in four verses: "If there had been any gods except Allah in heaven or earth, they would both be ruined" (21:22); "Say: 'If there had been other gods together with Him as you say, they would have sought a way to the Master of the Throne'" (17:42); "Allah has no son and there is no other god accompanying Him, for then each god would have gone off with what he created and one of them would have been exalted above the other" (23:91); and "But they have adopted gods apart from Him which do not create anything. They are themselves created." (25:3)

#### 1.1b. No Associates

He has had no child. He has no father. He has no wife. He has no partner.

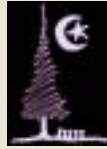
[See Qur'an 112: "Say: He is Allah, One with no other, Allah the Everlasting Sustainer of all. He has not given birth and was not born and there is no one equal to Him," and "And say: 'Praise be to Allah Who has had no son and Who has no partner in His Kingdom and Who needs no one to protect Him from abasement.'" (17:111)

He is totally unique. If he were to have a wife or partner, that would imply need, and He is absolutely beyond need.]

#### 1.1c. No Temporality

There is no beginning to His firstness nor any end to His finality.

[His existence does not begin with firstness so that there is a point at which He could be said to begin nor does He have a point at which He could be said to end. He exists eternally, out of time, before time and after time.]



#### 1.1d. Ineffability and Indefinability

Those who try to describe Him can never adequately do so nor can thinkers encompass Him in their thought. Real thinkers may derive lessons from His signs but do not try to think about the nature of His Essence. "But they do not attain any of His knowledge except what He wills." (2:254)

[ It is impossible to grasp His true description, let alone His Essence. Thinkers must learn through the Signs which indicate the splendour of His Power, but must not attempt to reflect on the nature of His Essence because the Prophet said, "Reflect on His creation, but do not reflect on His Essence." ]

#### 1.1e. His Footstool

"His Footstool embraces the heavens and the earth, and their preservation does not tire Him. He is the Most High, the Magnificent" (2:254)

[ He has full control and authority over all creation, high and low, and His preservation of them is no burden for Him.]

#### 1.1f. His Attributes

The All-Knower and the All-Aware, the Arranger and the All-Powerful. The All-Hearer and the All-Seeing. The High and the Great. He is over His Glorious Throne by His Essence.

He has knowledge of all things, and complete power and authority over all things. His hearing and vision are connected to all things in existence.

[He used the words "by His Essence" to remove the possibility of giving form because of the relation of "over" to "Throne". "Above" means higher than or beyond something. It can be used metaphorically for concepts. Here it designates honour and overwhelming power.]

#### 1.1g. His knowledge

He is everywhere by His knowledge. He created man and He knows what his self whispers to him and He is nearer to him than his carotid artery. No leaf falls without Him knowing of it nor is there any seed in the darkness of the earth, nor any wet thing nor any dry thing, that is not in a clear book.

[He knows our inner dialogue and thoughts. He is closer to man than his carotid artery, which gives him consciousness, and so He is closer to man than his own physicality and consciousness. "We created man and We know what his own self whispers to him, and We are nearer to him than his carotid artery." (50:16) In addition to the universal scope of His knowledge, He knows the precise details, like each individual leaf which falls - and it only falls by His will and in accordance with His knowledge. Everything is encompassed by His knowledge, dead or alive, growing or dormant. "The keys of the Unseen are in His possession. No one knows them except for Him. He knows everything in the land and sea. Not a leaf falls without His knowing it. There is no seed in the darkness of the earth, and no wet thing or dry thing, but that it is in a Clear Book." (6:59)]

#### 1.1h. Mastery over all creation

He is settled on His throne and has absolute control over His kingdom.

No one knows the true interpretation of this expression. Imam Malik was asked about it and said, "'Settling' is known but 'how' is not known." Nothing is hidden from Him and



His control is absolute. "He then established Himself firmly on the Throne." (10:3, etc.)

[This is one of the ambivalent (mutashabihat) expressions of the Qur'an. Scholars like Ibn Shihab and Malik forbade delving into its interpretation. They said, "We believe in it and do not turn to its meaning". Some allowed clarification of it to understand the wisdom, not form. And this is the position of the Ash'ari Aqeedah.]

### 1.1i. His Names and Attributes

He has the most beautiful names and the most sublime attributes and He has always had all these names and attributes. He is exalted above any of His attributes ever having been created or any of His names having been brought into temporal existence.

[He is described by the best and noblest of the meanings of His Names. He has attributes like power, will, height, and so forth. He is high exalted over any imperfection or lack. These Names have always been His and will remain His. Thus neither His names nor His attributes are created. They are simply His. "To Allah belong the Most Beautiful Names" (7:180)]

### 1.1j. His Speech and Manifestation

He spoke to Musa with His speech which is an attribute of His essence and not something created. He manifested Himself to the mountain and it disintegrated through exposure to His majesty.

Allah spoke to Musa with His timeless words and Musa actually heard His timeless speech. "When Musa came to Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, 'My Lord, show me Yourself so that I may look at You!' He said, 'You will not see Me, but look at the mountain. If it remains firm in its place, then you will see Me.' But when His Lord manifested Himself to the mountain, He crushed it flat and Musa fell unconscious to the ground." (7:143)

[Adawi: He created for Him an understanding in his heart and a hearing in his ears by which He heard words which had neither voice nor letter. He heard it from every side and in every limb. By "not something created", it is possible that he means that it was not a creature which spoke to Allah. Rather Allah spoke to him. It is also possible that he meant that the words with which Allah spoke to Musa were timeless and not created.]

## 1.2 Belief in the Qur'an

The Qur'an is the speech of Allah, not something created which must therefore die out, nor the attribute of something created which must therefore come to an end.

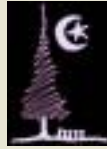
[The Qur'an is the speech of Allah which is not created and is timeless, outside of temporal time. Hence it will not end as creatures must end, but will abide endlessly.]

## 1.3 Belief in the Decree (Qadar)

### 1.3a. The Prior Decree of Good and Evil

Also included is belief in the Decree both the good of it and the evil of it, the sweet of it and the bitter of it. All of this has been decreed by Allah, our Lord. The way things are decided is entirely in His hand and the way they happen is according to His decree. He knows all things before they come into existence and they take place in the way He has already decided.

[It is necessary to believe that all things, good and evil, are decreed by Allah and nothing escapes His will and thus only what He wills occurs in His kingdom. All things



and their being are brought into existence from the concealment of non-existence to the domain of manifestation in their myriad aspects and forms - long and short, at one time rather than one, in one place rather than another. All of that occurs and issues directly from His Decree according to His knowledge and is dependant on His will.]

[‘Adawi: This entails belief in three: His knowledge, Power and Will.]

### 1.3b. Prior Knowledge

There is nothing that His servants say or do which He has not decreed and does not have knowledge of. “Does not He who creates know, when He is the Subtle and the Aware.” (67:14)

[He knows everything which happens before it happens. It only occurs in accordance with His knowledge of it.]

### 1.3c. The Prior Predisposition of People

He leads astray whomever He wills and in His justice debases them and He guides whomever He wills and in His generosity grants them success. In that way everyone is eased by Him to what He already has knowledge of and has previously decreed as to whether they are to be among the fortunate or the wretched.

[ Every man has prior disposition to what Allah already knows about him being happy or wretched because Allah only created man according to His knowledge. See Qur’an 14:4, 3:160, etc.]

### 1.3d. Exaltedness of Allah’s power

He is exalted above there being anything He does not desire in His kingdom, or that there should be anything not dependant on Him, or that there should be any creator of anything other than Him, the Lord of all people, the Lord of their actions, the One who decrees their movements and the time of their death.

[ The power of Allah is so immense and vast that there is nothing which is not directly under his authority and subject to His will. All things - might and abasement, wealth and poverty, pious actions and all things are subject to His will and power.]

## 1.4 Belief in the Messengers and Muhammad

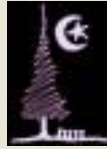
### 1.4a. The sending of Messengers

He has sent Messengers to them in order that they should have no argument against Him.

[The first of the Prophets was Adam and the last was Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. One must believe and accept that Allah sent the Messengers to those who are legally responsible, i.e adult and sane, and they conveyed the Message. The wisdom of sending the Messengers is that it removes any excuse which creatures might offer about not having heard the Message.]

### 1. 4b. The Final Messenger

He sealed this Messengership, warning, and Prophethood with his Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, whom He made the last of the Messengers - “A bringer of good news and a warner, calling to Allah by His permission and an illuminating lamp.”



[Revelation, which is warning and prophethood, which is informing about what Allah has said, reaches its end with the Prophet Muhammad. There will be no Prophets after him. He brings the good news that whoever follows him will be happy and whoever does not will be punished. He calls to Allah, conveying tawhid to the legally responsible, and fighting the unbelievers. He is an illuminating light because his Shari'a is a light which guides the bewildered - whoever follows it and proceeds along the Straight Path will emerge from the darkness of disbelief to the light of belief.]

#### **1.4c. Divine Guidance through the Book**

He sent down on him His Wise Book and by means of him He explained his upright deen and guided people to the Straight Path.

[ One must believe and affirm that Allah revealed to His Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, a Book containing judgement and wisdom to which no falsehood at all comes. Allah opened and expanded the Straight Deen of Islam through His Prophet. Thus He manifests its judgements and clarifies that on the tongue of His Prophet. Allah only sent down the revelation to us so that it would be clear to people. The guidance of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, is the sun of knowledges, the source of right guidance and the fount of certainty which guides people to the Straight Path.]

### **1.5. Belief in the Resurrection and Judgement**

#### **1.5a. The Last Hour**

Also part of what must be believed is that the Final Hour is coming - there is no doubt about it .

[40:59. This must be confirmed and believed and the one who denies that the Final Hour will come is an unbeliever. However, but only the All-Knower of the Unseen knows when it will actually come. ]

#### **1.5b. Resurrection of the Dead**

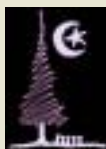
It must be believed that Allah will raise up all who have died: "As He brought them into existence the first time so they will be brought back again;"

[ It must be believed that He will bring the dead back to life after they were dead and bring them back for the Gathering. There is no disagreement among Muslims that it will occur, but there is disagreement about whether He will bring them back from absolutely nothing or back from dissolution through a reconstitution of their parts.]

#### **1.5c. Divine Reward: Multiplication of Good Actions**

It must be believed that Allah, glory be to Him, multiplies the reward of the good actions of His believing servants.

[ It must be believed that Allah will multiply good actions for the believers according to sincerity and degrees of humility, so that multiplication can be from ten to 700, in other words, a great deal. Ibn Hanbal transmitted that Allah multiplies the good action a thousand thousand times. This means the reward for doing them. The "good action" is what is praised in the Shari'a, and what is the opposite of that is a "bad action", which is what the Shari'a considers reprehensible.]



### 1.5d. Pardoning Wrong Actions

He pardons them for their major wrong actions by virtue of their repentance (tawba) and He forgives them for their minor wrong actions by virtue of their avoidance of the major wrong actions.

[Part of His bounty to His believing servants is that if anyone does any major wrong actions and then repents and makes amends, He will pardon Him by His favour and generosity. Small wrong actions are expiated by avoiding major ones.]

### 1.5e. Those who do not repent are subject to His will

Those who do not repent of their major wrong actions become subject to His will. "He does not forgive anything being associated with Him, but He forgives anything other than that to whoever He wills."

[ Those believers who commit major wrong actions and die without repenting of them are subject to the Will of Allah. If He wishes, He will forgive them out of His favour. If He wishes, He will punish them out of justice. He may forgive everything except for associating others with Him.]

### 1.5f. Deliverance from the Fire because of belief

Those He punishes with His Fire, He will remove from it because of any belief they have and by this He will cause them to enter His Garden. "Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it." (99:7)

[ It must also be accepted that if Allah wills that the rebels among the believers be punished in the Abode of Punishment, their punishment will be commensurate with what they have brought on themselves by their evil deeds and then mercy will envelop them and they will emerge from the Abode of Punishment and enter the Abode of Peace. Whoever has the weight of atom of belief in his heart will not be in the Fire forever. Thus belief is a reason for not being forever in the Punishment and a reason for entering the Garden with Allah's pardon and mercy.]

### 1.5g. The Intercession of the Prophet

Any of the community of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, who have committed major wrong actions and for whom he intercedes, will be brought out of the Fire by his intercession.

[ The intercession of the Prophet and others must be affirmed. He is singled out for mention because he is the first intercessor and by the intercession of our Prophet the people of major wrong actions of his community of unifiers will emerge from the Fire. The Mu'tazilites deny intercession, based on the lack of permission to pardon and overlook wrong actions, but we defer to transmitted evidence and they hold to merely logical evidence. Transmitted evidence is more sublime and radiant.]

## 1.6 The Afterlife: the Garden and the Fire

### 1.6a. The Garden

Allah has created the Garden and has made it ready as an everlasting abode for His friends (awliya'). He will honour them in it with the vision of His Noble Face. This is the same Garden from which He sent down Adam, His Prophet and Khalif, to the earth, which was as it had already been decreed in His foreknowledge.



[Allah has created the everlasting abode of the Garden for the believers in which they will have no toil or fatigue, but will be rejoicing and will be blessed by contemplation of His Face. See 75:23.]

### 1.6b. The Fire

He has created the Fire and has made it ready as an everlasting abode for those who disbelieve in Him and deny His signs and Books and Messengers and He keeps them veiled from seeing Him.

[He created the Fire as an eternal abode of punishment for those who deny and reject Him and ignored the evidence which indicates the existence and oneness of the Creator and denied His revealed Books and Messengers. They will abide in the hatred which is the result of disbelief and they will be veiled from seeing their Lord on that day.]

## 1.7 Details of the Resurrection

### 1.7a The Coming of Allah and the Angels

Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, will come on the Day of Rising together with the angels, rank upon rank.

[It is confirmed by transmission that on the Day of Resurrection Allah will come with angels in ranks. That must be believed, and its knowledge comes from the Lawgiver. Malik and others say about this ayat (89:22) and others that they are read as they have come without qualification. We take what they say literally but do not compare that to any creature.]

### 1.7b. Presentation of Peoples

All the different peoples are confronted with their accounts and their punishment or reward.

[All the different peoples will come to present themselves so that their states was be investigated and reckoning taken for their actions. The actions of those who present themselves for the Reckoning will have their good and bad actions enumerated. The believer will be called to account with graciousness and favour, and the hypocrite and unbeliever with evidence and justice. So Allah Almighty will say to the believer, "I veiled it for you in the world and I forgive it for you on the Day of Rising." The unbelievers will be reckoned in front of witnesses and those who they denied will be summoned to their Lord, "The curse of Allah on wrongdoers."]

### 1.7c. The Balance

The balances will be set up to weigh people's actions - "Whoever's actions are heavy in the balance - they are the successful."

[See 21:47; 101:6. The balances will be set up to manifest justice so that no one will be wronged even the weight of a mustard grain. Allah will bring all the person's actions, even to an atom's weight, on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever has his balance heavy will be successful and achieve a happiness after which there will be no misery. Whoever has his balance light will be wretched and will have no happiness after his wretchedness.]





### 1.7d. The Books of Actions

People will be given pages on which their actions are recorded - "Whoever is given his book in his right hand will be given an easy accounting and whoever is given his book behind his back - they will burn in a Fire." (84:7-13)

[ Nations will be given their pages which contain their actions. When they are given them, Allah will create knowledge in them and they will understand what they contain. If someone is given his book in his right hand, that indicates that he is one of the people of the right hand and happiness. If someone is given his book in his left hand, that is an indication that he is one of the people of misery." The receiving of the books should actually be put before the balance and weighing of acting because the weighing is after the Reckoning and the Reckoning is after receiving the Books.]

### 1.7e. The Sirat

The Bridge (sirat) is true and people will cross it according to their actions. Those who cross it, and achieve safety from the Fire, do so at different speeds, while the actions of others cast them to their destruction in the Fire.

[ There is a great deal of description of the Sirat and it is said that it is finer than a hair and sharper than a sword. Al-Qarafi, on the other hand, says that it is wide with two paths on it, one to the right and one to the left. The people of happiness travel on the right and the people of wretchedness on the left.

There are ropes on it and each rope leads to one of the levels of Jahannam and Jahannam lies between the creatures and the Garden. The Sirat is set up over Jahannam, and none of the people of the Garden enters the Garden until he has crossed over the Sirat.

People will cross over the Sirat according to the disparity in their actions and avoidance of the things forbidden by Allah. Some will pass over like lightning. Some will escape the hooks, some will be scratched but released, and some will be caught by the hooks and tipped into the Fire of Jahannam.]

### 1.7f The Basin

Also included is belief in the Basin (hawd) of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, which his community will come down to drink from after which they will never feel thirst again. But those who make any changes or alterations in the deen will be driven from it.

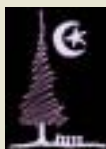
[ It is necessary to believe in the Basin of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He will drive away from it those who alter things, like the apostates, but those of his followers who follow him with the best will drink from it when they leave their graves thirsty. Whoever drinks from it will never feel thirst again.]

## 1.8 Belief

### 1.8a. Definition of Belief

Belief consists of what you say with the tongue, what you believe sincerely in the heart, and what you do with the limbs.

[ Belief is articulation of the shahada, belief in the truthfulness of the Messenger and what he brought in the heart and then acting according to the judgements of the Shari'a, like praying and fasting. Someone with all of these three is a believer. If someone believes that belief does not consist of these three and imagines that what the author said was due to his inclination to what belief obliges because there is consensus



that someone who believes with his heart, speaks with his tongue and acts with his limbs is a believer. If he does not believe that belief consists of these three, he takes it as a preface to the words which follow:]

#### **1.8b Increase and Decrease of Belief**

Belief increases when your actions increase and decreases when they decrease. So it is through actions or the lack of them that increase and decrease in belief occurs.

[ Belief increases according to actions and decreases according to actions. This increase and decrease is in relation to its fruits. This is the school of the early and later people of the community, and this is the final position taken in the matter by Malik. He first had said that belief increases and does not decrease. Applying the name "belief" to action is agreed upon. The Almighty says, "Allah would not let your belief go to waste," which referred to the prayers they did facing Jerusalem before the change of the qibla to Makka.]

#### **1.8c. The intention and following the Sunna**

The statement of belief is not complete without action. Neither the statement nor action are complete without intention. And neither the statement nor intention is complete unless they are in accordance with the Sunna.

[ Actions and words are according to intentions. The intention is the fulcrum upon which actions are based, and so a man should only base his actions on the pure Sunna and Straight Shari'a and follow the Rightly-guided khalifs.]

[ 'Adawi: "Complete" means "sound".]

#### **1.8d. Islam and Wrong actions**

No Muslim becomes an unbeliever (kafir) through wrong actions.

[It must be believed that no Muslim who commits a wrong action becomes an unbeliever as long as he believes. The same applies to someone who commits acts of disobedience while he nevertheless believes that the Shari'a forbids them. If someone does something which demonstrates that he lacks belief, like throwing a copy of the Qur'an into the rubbish, then he is an apostate. We are not discussing him. The Prophet said, "Whoever faces our Qibla and eats our sacrifices is truly a believer." The Kharijites were heretics when they said that every sin is a major wrong action and every major wrong action removes actions and the one who does that is an unbeliever. The Mu'tazilites said that every major wrong action renders actions void and the one who commits such an action is between two stations, and he is not called a believer or an unbeliever. He is called a deviant (fasiq).]

[ 'Adawi: This is the position of all of the people of the Sunna, the Salaf and later ones, except for the Kharijites and Mu'tazilites. However, Ibn Habib Ibn 'Abdu'l-Hakam and some others said that someone is a kafir if he deliberately abandons the prayer or zakat, fasting and hajj.]

#### **1.8e. Martyrs**

Martyrs (shuhada') are alive, receiving their provision in the presence of their Lord.

[It is obligatory to believe that the martyrs, those who fought the unbelievers and were killed in the way of Allah to elevate the word of Allah, are alive and delighting in the Presence of their Lord because of the privileges they have been granted, one of which



is that they will be secure from the Greatest Terror on the Day of Rising. See Qur'an 3:169.]

#### **1.8f. In the grave: the spirits of the fortunate**

The spirits of the fortunate remain in bliss until the day they are raised again.

[The souls of the fortunate will remain in bliss until the Day of Rising seeing their place in the Garden. When one of them dies, he is shown his place in the Garden morning and evening.]

#### **1.8g. In the grave: the spirits of the wretched**

The spirits of the wretched are tormented until the Day of Judgement.

[The souls of the wretched are punished by seeing their place in the Fire and other punishments.]

#### **1.8h. The questioning in the grave**

The believers are tried and questioned in their graves. "Allah makes those who believe firm by giving them firm words in the life of this world and the next world."

[ This refers to the questioning by the two angels in the grave. The dead person will be placed in his grave and people will leave him and then two angels come and sit with him and ask him, "Who is your Lord? What is your deen? Who is your Prophet?" The believer will reply, "My Lord is Allah. My deen is Islam, My Prophet is Muhammad," and his grave will be wide for him. When the unbeliever is in the grave and is asked these questions, he will reply, "I do not know," and so he will be dealt a blow from an iron hammer and will scream so that all creatures except men and jinn will hear him. Also reported is the constriction of the grave, which is the pressing on the sides of the body of the dead person and none is safe from that except the one whom Allah grants an exception - they include Fatima bint Asad, the mother of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, because of the blessing of the Prophet going into her grave, and whoever recites Surat al-Ikhlās in his final illness. "]

### **1.9 The Angels**

#### **1.9a. The Recording Angels**

People have recording angels over them who write down their actions. Nothing people do escapes the knowledge of their Lord.

[Men and jinn, believers and unbelievers, free and slave, have recording angels who write down their actions, even the permissible ones and the groan in illness, and even the actions of the heart, like all the thoughts which occur to it. Allah has given the heart a token by which it can distinguish between the good and bad action. The source for the knowledge of that is the words of the Almighty, "Standing over you are guardians, noble, recording. They know everything you do," (82:10-12) and the words of the Prophet, "The angels of the day and night succeed one another." There is consensus on that. None of the actions are hidden from Allah. That is part of the subtlety of Allah regarding His slaves since they know that Allah has recording angels who record their actions and that will prevent them from acts of disobedience and the proof will be established against them when they reject and deny.]



### 1.9b. The Angel of Death

The angel of death seizes people's spirits by the permission of his Lord.

[Allah has delegated an angel called 'Azra'il to take the spirits of creatures, men, jinn and other birds and all animals who have a spirit. The Almighty says, "Allah takes back all selves at the time of their death," (39:42) and He says, "Then when death comes to one of you, Our messengers take him," (6:61) however the outward appearance differs from this. The action is ascribed to Allah because He is the one who does it in reality, and the attribution of taking the spirits is to the Angel of Death because he does it directly by the permission of Allah. Taking is ascribed to the angels who are messengers because they assist the Angel of Death in taking the spirits.]

## 1.10 Authorities

### 1.10a The Best generation

The best generation are those who saw the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and believed in him. Then those who followed them and then those who followed them.

[ The best generation is those who were alive in the time of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and believed in him, respected and helped and followed the Light which was sent down with him and the suns of his prophethood shone on them and they won and chose the virtue of being a Companion. Their generation is the best generation. This is in accordance with his words, "The best of you is my generation and those who follow them and then those who follow them.]

### 1.10b. The best Companions

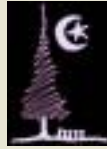
The best of the Companions (Sahaba) are the rightly-guided khalifs. Firstly, Abu Bakr, then 'Umar, then 'Uthman, then 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with all of them.

[ Not all the Companions had the same degree, but they varied in their degrees of excellence. The Rightly-guided Khalifs are the best and in order of excellence they were Abu Bakr, then 'Umar, then 'Uthman, then 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with all of them.]

### 1.10c. Respect for all the Companions

None of the Companions of the Messenger should be mentioned except in the best way and silence should be maintained concerning any disagreements that broke out between them. They are the people who are most worthy of being considered in the best light possible and the people whose opinions should be most respected.

[ One should avoid getting embroiled in the quarrels between them and one must always take the best interpretation in holding an opinion regarding them. They must always be thought about in the best possible light.]



#### 1.10d. Those in authority

Obedience to the leaders of the Muslims, both their rulers and their men of knowledge, is obligatory.

[It is obligatory to obey the Imams of the Muslims who are in authority who are responsible for attending to the best interests of the Muslims. If they command what is correct, it is obligatory to obey them, and if they forbid the reprehensible, it is obligatory to refrain from that. It is only obligatory to obey the scholars who act by their knowledge and command the correct and forbid the reprehensible and preserve the limits of Allah. The evidence for the obligation is the words of the Almighty, "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in command among you." (4:58) The one who transgresses is not obeyed because the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "There is no obedience due to a creature which involves disobedience to the Creator." (Ibn Hanbal & al-Hakim)]

#### 1.10e. The Salaf

It is also obligatory to follow the Right-acting Companions, to tread in their footsteps and ask forgiveness for them.

[It is obliged to follow the righteous Salaf, who are the Companions, in their words and actions, whether it is learned directly from them or is learned by derivation and ijtihad. Similarly one must pray for forgiveness for them.]

#### 1.10f. Avoiding Disputation

It is also obligatory to avoid wrangling and argumentation regarding the deen ...

[It is necessary to avoid wrangling and arguments about the deen. Wrangling is to deny the truth after it is clear. Argumentation is to quarrel with the people of innovations. That is forbidden because it could lead to attacking the Companions and cause doubt in the heart. If the aim of the argument is to set forth the truth without obduracy, then it is permitted.]

[ʿAdawi: Malik said, "This wrangling is not part of the deen in anything." There are certain adab which the one engaged in debate must have. He should avoid gesturing with limbs other than the tongue. He should be balanced in raising and lowering his voice. He should listen attentively to what his opponent says. Turns should be taken in speaking and not try to monopolise the debate and stubbornly refuse to alter his original claim if it is refuted. One must be careful to avoid obduracy, partisanship, laughter, obstinacy, and the like.]

#### 1.10g. Avoiding Innovations

...and to avoid every new thing which people have introduced into it.

[Avoid innovations because the Prophet said, "If anyone innovates something in this business of ours which is not part of it, it is rejected." This is applied to innovations which did not occur in his time and which the Shari'a indicates are unlawful, according to some. Some believe that innovation is what did not occur in this time, whether the Shari'a indicates that it is unlawful, obligatory, recommended, disliked or permitted. Innovations are found in all five categories. This is what is stated by Ibn ʿAbdu's-Salam, al-Qarafi and others.]



Shaykh al-Islam Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Haytami (d. 974/1567; R.A.) defined the Sunni Muslims as follows in his book *Fath al-jawad*:

*“A mubtadi (innovator) is the person who does not have the faith (aqid’ah) conveyed unanimously by the Ahl as-Sunnah. This unanimity was transmitted by the two great Imam’s Abu’l Hasan al-Ashari (d.324/936; Rahimahullah) and Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d.333/944; Rahimahullah) and the scholars who followed their path.” Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Haytami also said in his book al-Fatawa al-Hadithiyya (pg. 205): “Man of bid’ah means one whose beliefs are different from the Ahl as-Sunnah faith. The Ahl as-Sunnah faith, is the faith of Abu’l Hasan al-Ashari, Abu Mansur al-Maturidi and those who followed them. One who brings forth something which is not approved by Islam becomes a man of bid’ah.”*