

A PRIMER OF

THE CREED AGREED UPON BY MUSLIMS



WRITTEN BY
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Commended by many esteemed scholars of the Muslim world, including:

The Erudite Shaykh and Mufti Muḥammad Taqī ‘Usmānī (Pakistan)

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Allah preserve them all.

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*In the Name of Allah,
the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy*

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Preface

Praise be to Allah, Lord of all worlds. May prayers of exaltation and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, his family, and his Companions.

The following is a brief though holistic exposition of the doctrines agreed upon by all Muslims – *Atharis*, *Ash'aris*, *Maturidis*, and *Sufis* alike – specifically the non-fanatical among them. The purpose behind authoring this text was to demonstrate that Muslims' agreement in terms of creed is much greater and more impactful than their disagreements, and that the doctrinal points that unite them overwhelm those that divide them, both in number and value.

To realise this goal, the text was written such that both its structure and style are borne of direct references to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. This is in terms of specific wordings excerpted from these sources, as well as meanings and principles unanimously agreed upon by the scholars of the ummah. This was the methodology we followed to the best of our ability. For this reason, the text is full of explicit and implicit mention of Qur'anic passages and Prophetic narrations.

It is from Allah's wisdom that the ummah should pass through trials and tribulations to wake it from its slumber, as is the case today. Such tests incite the ummah to diligently seek out the causes of its strength, among the foremost of which is its unity.

By Allah's grace, the number of those calling for the ummah's unity continues to increase and their voices are getting too loud to ignore. However, the means to achieving unity – though mandated in the Qur'an and Sunnah and our religious tradition – require tweaking and appropriation for the modern context and its challenges.

As such, this work is part of a larger project of reform towards the revival of the ummah; a revival which cannot be realised without unity.

We presented this exposition to a great number of scholars and academics, among the moderates and reasonable from all the aforementioned orientations: *Atharis*, *Ash'aris*, *Maturidis*, and *Sufis* – as well as the various

ideologies within the tremendous throng (*sawād a'zam*) of the Ummah. This was so that they may inspect and correct it. Though the directives were few in number, we acted upon all of them, and even kept the most important in the exposition's commentary.

The exposition has gone through many stages of editing and improvement. A number of scholars and thinkers from various backgrounds, traditions, and orientations wished to – and indeed did – formally endorse it. We saw it best to include a limited number of these endorsements.

If we are to reflect over the texts of creed authored in the past, we would find that the majority of them focused on what distinguishes their respective methodologies from others. This is perhaps to be expected, since more often than not the context in which they were authored was one united under the banner of the caliphate, or at least seeking its establishment.

As for our age, when there is neither caliphate nor the realistic international means for its return in the short term, the Muslims are weak and divided.

Studying said traditional creedal texts without proper contextualisation of their positions serves only to further the splintering and division within the ummah, and this is antithetic to the principles of the Shariah.

This is a terrible outcome that Allah has prohibited us from contributing towards:

“Obey Allah and His Messenger and do not dispute with one another lest you become discouraged and weakened.” [al-Anfāl: 46]

“Do not be like those who split up and differed after clear proofs had come to them. It is they who will suffer a tremendous punishment.” [Āl ‘Imrān: 105]

For this reason, the reform project aims to revive the ummah through many unifying endeavours. Among these is seeking doctrinal and jurisprudential unity by authoring texts that offer realistic and pragmatic solutions to the concurrent challenges the Ummah faces.

This exposition acts as one of the most important contributions to this project, setting the precedent and creating the theoretical and practical doctrinal framework upon which unity may be established, following the divine command:

“Hold firmly to the rope of Allah – all of you – and do not be divided.”
[Āl ‘Imrān: 103]

We pray Allah grants us sincerity, steadfastness, and guidance; He is most capable and most befitting of this.

We also ask our respected brothers all over the world that they not be shy in their guiding and correcting of our efforts. The believer is his brother’s mirror, and the believers are like a building that stands only when its structural constituents pull one another, as our Leader Muhammad ﷺ has taught us.

Haitham al-Ḥaddād

London, the start of Shawwāl 1441 AH, end of May 2020.

The Endorsement of
The Erudite Shaykh and Mufti
Muḥammad Taqī ‘Usmānī

Former Judge at the Shariat Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court, Pakistan.
Vice President of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy, Jeddah.
Vice President of Jamia Darul Uloom, Karachi, Pakistan.

Praise be to Allah, and sufficient is this [as a mantra]. May salutations of peace be upon His chosen slaves.

My dear brother and respected Shaykh Haitham al-Ḥaddād has honoured me by allowing me to review his blessed exposition *A Primer of the Creed Agreed Upon by Muslims*. In this text, he has been able to encompass Islamic doctrines in a way that is succinct and simply worded.

The exposition pours an ocean into a jug, so to speak, in that the reader is able to comfortably and easily learn the agreed-upon Islamic doctrines in a single sitting without the jargon and deep nuances found in books of kalam. I pray that Allah, Exalted, accepts the efforts of our noble brother, and that He allows His slaves to benefit from the text; He is All-Hearing, Most Near, most ready to answer the calls of His slaves.

Muḥammad Taqī ‘Usmānī
Vice President of Jamia Darul Uloom, Karachi, Pakistan
27 Shawwāl 1440 AH

The Endorsement of
The Erudite Shaykh and Doctor
Ḥasan al-Shāfi‘ī

President of the Arabic Language Academy, Cairo.
Member of the Council of Senior Scholars in Al-Azhar.

From Ḥasan al-Shāfi‘ī, Cairo, to the esteemed Shaykh Dr. Haitham al-Ḥaddād, Allah preserve him:

Praise be to Allah alone, and may exaltations of peace and blessings be upon our Master and Messenger Muhammad, his family, Companions, and followers.

Indeed, that which the Muslims agree upon in terms of creed is greater than what they differ over, as Sh. al-Ḥaddād has written. This is in and of itself a good thing, which we thank Allah for, and it also provides – as the Shaykh wrote – a strong foundation for the noble end he seeks; namely, reviving Islamic unity. This unity has been severely weakened, and the enemies of the ummah were successful in busying each province and state with its own problems. These problems may sometimes be legitimate, but at other times are fake and illusory.

Those striving for the ummah’s unity must adorn themselves with patience and have hope and trust in Allah, for He does not let the efforts of those who do good go to waste.

The unity that this creedal exposition speaks of – in a simultaneously brief and holistic manner – is one that unites the Atharis, Ash‘aris, Maturidis, and Sufis. Perhaps in the near future, it will expand to also include Ibadis, as they are present in the Algerian scholarly class.

This persistent and diligent effort for the sake of unity inspires hope within us that it will eventually spread out: realising cultural, social, and political unity. At the same time, it combats the factors that lead to division and separation currently present among us.

Those who internally and externally oppose the ummah's unification take advantage of these factors and aggravate them further, as our esteemed Shaykh undoubtedly knows. Permit me to finally make the following two requests:

The first request is to include a short summary at the conclusion of the text regarding the relationship of Muslims with other religious denominations, [noting] that said relationship is founded upon peace, goodness, and justice. This is so long as they are not hostile against us and do not drive us out from our homes. Removing delusions and doubts around this matter is especially important today.

The second request is that you kindly accept a copy of *Al-Durrah Al-Kalāmiyyah*, as it is perhaps in the same vein as this blessed text.

Go forth in the path of Allah, aided by Him and a victor by His will. Allah be with you, He is enough for us, and He is the best in Whom we can trust.

Dr. Ḥasan al-Shāfiʿī

President of the Arabic Language Academy, Cairo, Egypt

Member of the Council of Senior Scholars in Al-Azhar

(Received on 2/11/1441 AH, 23/6/2020 CE)

The Endorsement of
The Respected Shaykh and Doctor
Khayr al-Dīn Qaramān

One of Turkey's most prominent senior scholars.

Dr. Haitham al-Haddād, Allah preserve you.

May peace, Allah's mercy, and His blessings all be upon you,

First and foremost, I thank you for this noble effort. It reminded me of the efforts of Imam Abū Ḥanīfah al-Nu'mān – Allah have mercy upon him and be pleased with him – when he authored his book *Al-Fiqh Al-Akbar (The Greater Knowledge)* with the aim to collate what the ummah agreed upon in terms of belief and creed.

This text focused on the founding principles of religion and its doctrines, relying upon an all-embracing perspective, which encompasses within it the Atharis, Ash'aris, and Maturidis, seeking unity between all Muslims. I must nonetheless share a few notices with regards to predestination.

The text on the one hand affirms that man's destiny is pre-eternally recorded, and consequently predestined. On the other hand, it emphasises man's responsibility over his action, attributing it to acquisition (*kasb*). There ought to be – and Allah knows best – a statement added which alludes to the fact that, “Acquired action is within Allah's knowledge, and Allah has written it as a result of His Knowledge. His writing of destiny is a result of His Knowledge, not vice versa.” As such, Allah has written deeds as a consequence of His Knowledge; the former is borne of the latter. This solves many theological problems. Allah knows best¹.

This text may indeed be agreed upon by the People of Sunnah (*ahl al-sunnah*). However, the masses today are in need of answers to the question of ‘why?’ more so than their need for the ready-made position.

These types of questions are the ones that beget wisdom. Unity among the Muslims must be borne of agreement upon fundamental principles

1 We edited the passage as per the Shaykh's advice, Allah reward him.

and holistic methodologies. This text unites the ummah in creed and belief. Differing among ourselves in secondary matters must not be a barrier to togetherness and brotherhood.

We pray that Allah be pleased with anyone who exerts himself in uniting the Islamic ummah, and that He make what you author present in your book of good deeds, and that He grant you strength and make you a source of it to others.

May peace, Allah's mercy, and His blessings all be upon you.

Dr. Khayr al-Dīn Qaramān

(Received on 8/2/1442 AH, 25/9/2020 CE)

The Endorsement of
The Shaykh, Jurist, and Uṣūlī
Mawlūd ibn al-Ḥasan al-Sarīrī al-Sūsī

One of Morocco's most prominent senior scholars.

Praise be to Allah. May prayers of exaltation and peace be upon our Master, the Messenger of Allah, as well as upon his family, Companions, and all those who follow him.

I was able to look at the text Dr. Haitham al-Ḥaddād authored in creed. He included in his text the quintessential Islamic doctrines that Muslims unanimously agree upon without reservation. Muslims should take this as a symbol of their theological agreement, as it obliges their external and internal unity. Said unity is one of the general yet fundamental religious duties of Muslims, and one that they must seek to establish.

This is despite the majority of them being heedless of it, instead bringing to the forefront of their discourse every matter that may lead to disunity in their ranks.

Scholars have every right to call the masses to this obligation of unity and for them to respond to it with their hearts and minds. Allah, Exalted, commanded it, and He does not command but that which is within our capability. He legislated the means to its realisation in this religion of Islam.

The ones who doubt unity as a possibility in the modern context should be reminded that it is indeed possible with sound intention and resolve, seeking the practical means for its establishment.

This is only possible if the core of the matter is emphasised over its shell, and if our priorities are set straight. Creedal unification is an origin that links us together, and it is the antecedent to all else that follows it.

Dr. Haitham al-Ḥaddād sought out this very thing in his work, which in reality brings in its wake many other fruits the Shariah calls for. Among those are rectifying hearts, acquiring strength and togetherness, having goodwill, and many other fruits that may be reaped with minimal effort

in this domain. We pray Allah makes it count in his scale of good deeds, and that He allows it to never stop benefitting the creation.

Mawlūd al-Sarīrī

(Received on 23/11/1440 AH, 26/7/2019 CE)

Praise be to Allah. May prayers of exaltation and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, and Companions.

The following is a brief exposition of the Muslim creed.

Chapter 1²

The General Principle: Belief in Allah, His Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and the Last Day

Allah is the Lord of all worlds. He is the Creator of everything, the Owner of everything, the Controller of everything, and the Judge over everything. Everything submits to Him. He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth, and is the Most Supreme, Most Majestic and the Most Beautiful Being in existence.

He is the Lord of Mercy (*al-Raḥmān*), and the Giver of Mercy (*al-Raḥīm*). He is the One (*al-Wāḥid*), the Unique (*al-Aḥad*), the Independent (*al-Ṣamad*). He does not give birth nor is He fathered, and He has no equal. He has no partners.

He is the Ever-Living (*al-Ḥayy*) and the Sustainer (*al-Qayyūm*), neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him.

He is the Exalted (*al-ʿAlīyy*), the Supreme (*al-ʿAzīm*), the Self-Sufficient (*al-Ghaniyy*), the Praiseworthy (*al-Ḥamīd*), and He is powerful over all things.

To Him belong the Beautiful Names and Lofty Attributes. He knows what is in the heavens and earth; Allah knows all things, and ever is Allah of all things encompassing.

All that is in the heavens and earth sanctify His praise, even if we do not comprehend their glorification.

2 The title 'chapter' was not part of the original arabic text, it was added to this translation for clarity.

Visions do not grasp Him, though He grasps all visions. There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearing (*al-Samīʿ*), the All-Seeing (*al-Baṣīr*).

- Only He is deserving of worship and unqualified obedience.
- Only He is deserving of the highest degree of veneration.
- Only He is deserving of the utmost limit of love.
- Only He is deserving of the utmost limit of fear.
- Only He is deserving of the highest degree of praise.
- Only He is sought for help, and only He is relied upon. There is no escape nor refuge from Him but in Him; there is no might nor strength save through Allah, the Supreme.

Belief in Allah is the first pillar of faith (*īmān*).

Allah created mankind and jinn to worship Him alone without any partners. He prepared them for this out of mercy for them, instilling within their dispositions (*fiṭrah*) the testimony that He is their Lord. Within it, He also instilled love of virtue and dislike of vice. However, He made the devils among men and jinn their enemy, whispering to them, making disobedience and misguidance seem appealing to them in order to take them away from obedience to Him, Most High.

The enjoyment of worldly desires has also been made appealing to people, as has the worldly life, all as a test for them in this life. Allah created another eternal life – a final abode of recompense that is the reward of their deeds in this abode of trial.

If they obey Allah, worship Him and follow His path, they will be successful, having attained His pleasure. They will rejoice in this life and the next. If they disobey Allah and instead follow the paths of the devils, and follow their own base desires, they are deserving of His wrath. Not only will they be losers, they will be wretched in this life and the next.

Out of His mercy, He sent forth Messengers to deliver this message to jinn and mankind, and to explain to them the reality of the worldly life. The Messengers called the jinn and mankind to believe in Allah and worship

Him alone with no partners, to believe in His Prophets and Messengers, and to believe in what He revealed to them and to follow them.

They warned them from the devils as well as from following whimsical desires. They invited them to believe in the life of the Hereafter along with what it holds of Gardens of bliss for the obedient, and the punishment of the Blazing Fire for the disobedient.

Allah chose Muhammad ﷺ son of ‘Abdullāh to be the seal of the Prophets and Messengers. He revealed to him the final scripture, the Noble Qur’an, commanding all jinn and mankind to believe in him and follow him until the Day of Judgement.

Whoever testifies that there is none worthy of worship but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and believes in the unseen, and in all that Allah revealed to his Messenger ﷺ, is the believing Muslim who will succeed by attaining Allah’s pleasure in this life and the next.

Whoever disbelieves in Allah or associates partners with Him, or disbelieves in His Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, or in one of the pillars of faith Allah commanded us to believe in, is the disbeliever with whom Allah is angry, making his life in this world miserable.

If the disbeliever dies upon his disbelief, Allah will throw him into the Fire of Hell in the Hereafter. *“He will lose both this life and the next – that is truly the clearest loss.” [al-Ḥajj: 11]*

Disbelieving in Allah leads to transgression and the loss of tranquillity. It leads to destruction, corrupts moral values, does away with blessings, and removes happiness from this life before the next. *“Whoever turns away from My Reminder will certainly have a miserable life, then We will raise him up blind on the Day of Rising.” [Ṭā Hā: 124]*

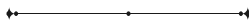
As for the one who believes in Allah, His Prophet ﷺ, and all that has been revealed to him, but has sinned and died in that sinful state without repentance, if his good deeds were more than his sins, he will go to jannah. But, if his sins are more than his good deeds or equal to them, then he is under the will of Allah.

If Allah wills, He will forgive him and admit him into the Garden without punishment; and if He wills, He will punish Him first and then admit him into the Gardens of perpetual bliss, living there for eternity.

No Muslim will be punished for an eternity even if he dies upon sin. This is from the mercy of Allah, His generosity and bounty. Praise be to Allah as He loves and is pleased with.

Worshipping Allah alone without any partners is the only way to build a civilisation and renaissance based on justice and mercy.

It is the path to peace and tranquility. It is the source of happiness and prosperity for mankind.



Belief in Angels

Angels are creatures made of light. They are honoured slaves of Allah who do not disobey His command and do as they are told. They glorify Him night and day without tiring. They do not eat, drink, or marry. They are given the responsibility of carrying out sublime deeds.

The generality of mankind cannot see them in their true form. They are spread all over the heavens and earth. No one truly has knowledge about them and their numbers but Allah, Most High.

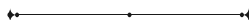
Among them are those who carry the Throne of the Most Merciful, those who guard the gates of Paradise and Hellfire, those who protect human beings, and others who record thier deeds.

Among them is *Isrāfīl*, the angel given responsibility for blowing the Trumpet (heralding the Last Day). Among them is *Mikāl*, the angel given responsibility over the rain. The Angel of Death is given the responsibility of taking a person's soul, while others beg forgiveness for the believing men and believing women. Allah mentions the angels frequently in the Qur'an.

Their being is majestic, among them are those who have two wings while others have three, four or more.

The best and greatest of angels is *Jibrīl*, peace be upon him. He has six hundred wings and Allah charged him with conveying the revelation to His Prophet, Muhammad ﷺ.

The angels are part of the realm of the unseen. Belief in them is one of the pillars of faith, and serves to increase faith in Allah and His greatness. It also increases one's love of Allah, love of seeking refuge in Him, having awe of Him, and taking solace in holding fast to Him alone without partners. Whoever denies their existence has left the fold of Islam.



Chapter 3

Belief in Jinn

Jinn are the second of the two prominent beings (*thaqalayn*) Allah created for His worship. The Prophets and Messengers called them to this purpose just as they called mankind to it. Among them are those who believe as well as those who disbelieve. Among them are the righteous as well as those who are devils.

Allah created them from a smokeless flame of fire.

They are akin to mankind in many respects, though completely different in others. They are a different creation and are not seen in their original form.

Believing in them is part of belief in the unseen; it increases a person in his veneration of Allah as well as his devotion and drive to draw close to Him.



Belief in the Scriptures and the Messengers, Peace Be Upon Them

Allah chose the best of his servants, and gave them Revelation (*wahy*), he sent down to some of them books to call to His worship alone, without partners. These Books inform the people of Him, explaining to them His religion and messages to them, and His commandments and prohibitions. To the obedient, they give glad tidings of success in this world and the next, and to the disobedient, they give warnings of great loss in this world and the next. The ones who receive these books are His Prophets or His Messengers.

Allah commanded that all of them be believed in. The Books He revealed are His Books and He commanded us to believe in all of them. He made this one of the pillars of faith. Whoever disbelieves in one of the Prophets or one of the Messengers, or one of the Books revealed to them, has left the fold of Islam.

Among those Books are: the Scriptures (*Ṣuḥuf*) of Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him; the Torah (*Tawrāh*) Allah revealed to Mūsā, peace be upon him; the Psalms (*Zabūr*) He revealed to Dāwūd, peace be upon him; and the Gospel (*Injīl*) He revealed to ‘Īsā, peace be upon him.

The last and greatest of these Books is the Holy Qur’an, which Allah revealed to the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad ﷺ. It is the only Book that Allah has taken upon Himself to preserve until the end of times.

The Prophets and Messengers are the best among the two prominent beings. Allah specially chose them and graced them with virtue and protected them from vice. He aided them with miraculous signs (*āyāt mu‘jizāt*) specific to them which prove their truthfulness, and are enough for people to believe³.

The first of the Prophets is Ādam, peace be upon him. Allah created him with His two hands, and created his wife from him, and from them

3 Sh. Hasan al-Shāfi‘ī, Allah preserve him, suggested adding the word “*biḥim*” in the original Arabic. That is: “...to believe *in them* (the Prophets and Messengers).”

humanity spread. He is the Father of Mankind (*abū al-bashar*) and we are his children, peace be upon him.

Among the Prophets is also Nūḥ, peace be upon him. He called to Allah among his people for nine hundred and fifty years.

Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him, is the Intimate Friend of Allah the Merciful (*Khalīl al-Raḥmān*).

Mūsā, peace be upon him, the one to whom Allah spoke directly (*Kalīmullāh*).

ʿĪsā son of Maryam, peace be upon him, is also among them. Allah raised him up to Himself, and he will descend again at the end of times and follow our Prophet ﷺ, and die a natural death.

There are many more Prophets and Messengers. Some of their stories have been mentioned in the Qur'an, and some He did not mention. Allah commanded us to believe in all of them, and He made this as one of the pillars of faith.

They are brothers: their religion is one, their message is one message, though their laws (*sharā'i*)⁴ differ. The laws differ one from the other in some details but all call for justice, excellence and noble character while prohibiting immorality, evil, transgression and ignoble character.

The Prophets and Messengers gave glad tidings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as the seal of the Prophets and Messengers. Allah commanded him ﷺ to follow their guidance.

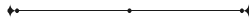
Allah sent them to their respective nations calling them to worship Him alone without partners, to believe in what He revealed to them, and to follow the Messengers. They command their people to enjoin common good and forbid evil. They give glad tidings to the obedient of success in this life and the next, and warnings to the disobedient of great loss in this life and the next.

They delivered the message and fulfilled their trust in the best possible way, just as Allah commanded them to, so may His blessings of exaltation and peace be upon them all.

4 Translator's note: plural of *sharī'ah*

From the fruits of believing in the Books, Prophets, and Messengers is further veneration of Allah, Most High, and loving Him. This is because He did not leave mankind to fend for itself.

Another consequence of this belief is that it allows for emulating these Messengers and taking them as role models in calling to Allah. Finally, it gives certainty that the ultimate end will be for the believers, and that great reward awaits the patient.



Chapter 5

Belief in our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Allah chose Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and marked him as the seal of the Prophets and Messengers, and as a Messenger to the two prominent beings – jinn and mankind. There will be no Prophet or Messenger after him.

He is Muhammad ﷺ son of ‘Abdullāh, the Qureshi Arab. He was born in Makkah and passed away in the city of Madinah more than fourteen hundred years ago. May Allah’s blessings of exaltation and peace be upon him, his family and his Companions.

He is the best of creation, and the best among them in character, knowledge and action. He is the most beloved creature to Allah, All Mighty. He did not speak of his own whim; rather, it is revelation that came down to him.

Allah sent him as a mercy to the worlds – a bringer of glad tidings and a warner; and one who invites to Allah, by His permission, and a beacon of light.

He made all good and pure things as lawful, and all impure things unlawful, freeing mankind from its shackles and chains. He delivered the message, fulfilled the trust, and sincerely advised the ummah – may Allah’s blessings of exaltation and peace be upon him, his family, and his Companions.

Allah commanded all those who came after him to believe in him ﷺ, and He made the testimony of him being the slave, and final Messenger of Allah, conjoined with the testimony of His divine unity. Allah commanded us to believe in all that he ﷺ told us, follow all that he ﷺ commanded us to do, and keep away from all that he ﷺ prohibited us from, and that He not be worshipped except through the ways that he ﷺ legislated.

Whosoever disbelieves in him or denies that he ﷺ is the seal of the Prophets and Messengers is not considered as Muslim, as he has committed major disbelief and is deserving of eternity in the Fire of Hell.

Allah aided the Prophet ﷺ with great signs and many miracles that prove the truthfulness of his Prophethood, the greatest of which is the Noble Qur'an.

Allah made his words and deeds a guidance, a *Sunnah*, and a law for humankind, for all times and in all places. He preserved them from being altered, corrupted or lost until the Day of Judgement. He made his law the best and most complete of divinely legislated law, abrogating the laws of previous Prophets and Messengers.

Allah, Most High, commanded us to love and venerate him ﷻ. He graced him ﷺ with many unique characteristics in this life and the next, and adorned him with many beautiful qualities.

Allah made conferring blessings of exaltation upon him, one of the rites of religion, among the signs that distinguish the Muslims, and one of the means to attain the pleasure of the Lord of Mercy. May Allah's blessings of exaltation and peace be upon him, his family, and his Companions.

Great numbers have believed in him ﷺ throughout the ages in different lands, from different ethnicities and colours, among the jinn and mankind.

The best among them are his Companions who met him, believed in him, and died upon this state. They are the best people after the Prophets and Messengers, as per the Prophet's testimony, peace and blessings be upon him, his family and Companions.

The best of the Companions are the Rightly Guided Caliphs: Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, then 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, then 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, then 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, then the rest of the ten who have been given the glad tidings of Paradise. May Allah be pleased with them, and may He make them pleased.

The wives of the Prophet ﷺ are the Mothers of the Believers, and will be his wives in Paradise. Loving them and his Companions is part of faith, and hating them is hypocrisy and transgression.

Believing in the Prophet ﷺ increases our veneration of Allah, Most High, because He selected this Chosen Prophet ﷺ for us. It also increases our love of Allah because He favoured us with the best of mankind and jinn,

the most prestigious of Messengers and messages.

Believing in him ﷺ increases our love of him, for he ﷺ loves us, shows us compassion, and struggled greatly for our sake.

Disbelief in him ﷺ is to deviate from the path of happiness and virtue. Doing so would corrupt one's values, remove blessings, and lead to punishment.



Belief in the Noble Qur'an

Allah, Most High, revealed to the Seal of His Prophets, Muhammad ﷺ, the best of His books and the last of them to be revealed: the Noble Qur'an, which is the speech of Allah, Lord of the Worlds. A Book in which there is no doubt, confirming what is in the previous Books and having final authority over them.

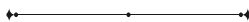
Falsehood can not touch it from before it nor from behind it. It is revealed in a pure, clear Arab tongue. If the jinn and mankind came together to reproduce something like it, they would fail, even if they helped each towards this end. It is the greatest sign and miracle until the establishment of the Hour.

Allah has taken it upon Himself to preserve it forever, unlike other Books. It is the Wise Remembrance (*al-Dhikr al-Ḥakīm*), the Manifest Light (*al-Nūr al-Mubīn*), the Guidance (*al-Hudā*), the Mercy (*al-Raḥmah*), and the Proof (*al-Burhān*).

It is the best Book. The Trustworthy Spirit, Jibrīl (peace be upon him), the best angel, descended with it to Muhammad ﷺ, the best of mankind, on the Night of Destiny (*Laylat al-Qadr*), the best night, in the sacred city of Makkah, the best land, containing a message that is unerringly straight with the best legislation. The ummah of Muhammad ﷺ that believes in this Book and follows it in all walks of life is the best of nations, Allah willing.

Allah revealed the Qur'an a guidance for the two prominent beings for all time and in every place, in all their affairs, and abrogating what came before it. He obliged them to believe in it, act upon it, recite it, learn it, teach it, seek cure in it and call to it. The two revelations – the Qur'an and the Sunnah – are the sources of Islam. There is no Islam for anyone who disbelieves in either of them.

Man's natural disposition (*fitrah*) and reason are in conformity to the Qur'an and the Sunnah.



Belief in the Last Day

Belief in the Last Day and its signs (*‘alāmāt*) is one of the pillars of faith.

The death of a human being is the beginning of his Hereafter.

The grave is either a meadow from the meadows of the Paradise, or a pit from the pits of the Fire. If one is saved from it, then what comes afterwards will be easier. The Prophet ﷺ instructed us to take refuge from the punishment of the grave.

People are then resurrected when the Trumpet is blown on the Day of Resurrection.

The Day of Resurrection is the Last Day. It has many names. It is the end of this world. No one knows when it will fall except Allah. Nevertheless, He informed us that it is close and told us of signs that will lead up to it. The wise one is the person who prepares for it.

There are minor signs which imply that the Hour is approaching, some of which have already come - like the Prophet ﷺ being sent - and others have not, while others are repeatedly taking place.

Following those, there will come major portents that herald the coming of the Hour. Prophet ‘Īsā son of Maryam (peace upon him) will descend⁵ as a just arbiter with the religion of Islam. Blessings will be abundant, security will be widespread, and none will be worshipped, but Allah alone.

Then the Dajjāl will appear and be killed by Prophet ‘Īsā son of Maryam (peace upon him).

Gog (*Ya’jūj*) and Magog (*Ma’jūj*) will also appear, and Allah will destroy them.

⁵ We had spoken of the Mahdi here as one of the signs of the Hour, but Sh. Muḥammad Taqī al-‘Uthmānī, Allah preserve him, suggested we omit his mention.

Prophet ‘Īsā son of Maryam (peace upon him) will then die a natural death.

Allah will send forth a wind that will take the souls of the believers after which only evil people will be left on earth. The Devil will misguide them and polytheism and idol worship will return. The Hour will be established on these people.

The major signs of the Hour will come to pass one after the other, though there is difference over the exact order of some of them.

The sun will rise from the west after which belief will no longer benefit a person who accepts it. The Creature (*Dābbah*) will come out to speak to mankind. The smoke (will spread at the end of times). There will be three landslides of the earth (*khusuf*). The last sign is a fire that will start from Yemen driving people to the place of gathering (*maḥshar*).

Then, the Trumpet will be blown twice or thrice:⁶ a blast that will stun all those in the heavens and earth dead, except those whom Allah wills. The final blast is the blast that will resurrect man, raising them from their graves.

The first to be resurrected is our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. People will be grow out of the ground having different qualities to before; they will be gathered barefoot, naked and uncircumcised.

The terror of this Day will turn the hair of children grey, the nursing woman will abandon the baby she is nursing, and every pregnant woman will deliver her burden [prematurely]. You will see people in a drunken state, though they will not be drunk. The eyes of the oppressors will stare in abject terror. A person will flee from his own brother, mother, father, spouse and children. The criminal would happily ransom his own offspring, spouse, brother, and all those on the face of the earth just to be saved from the torment of that Day. They will be gathered [and dragged] on their faces – blind, dumb and deaf.

The sun will be folded up, the stars extinguished, the sky split open, the planets dispersed; mountains will be like fluffed wool, oceans will explode and be set ablaze, and much more.

6 Sh. Ḥasan al-Shāfi‘ī, Allah preserve him, suggested omitting the words “*aw thalāth*” – translated to “or thrice” – in the original Arabic, since matters of faith should have no uncertainty.

Mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds on a day that lasts fifty thousand years. They will differ in their states, some faring better than others. The sun will be brought close, increasing the adversity of that day.

Allah will ennoble some of His pious slaves on that Day such that they do not experience the burden of these calamities.

The believers – those who followed our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ – will be exclusively allowed to quench their thirst from his Fountain, and they will never feel thirsty again.

People will rush to Ādam and other Prophets (peace be upon them all) seeking their intercession with Allah that He may commence judgement, but they will excuse themselves. Then people will go to Muhammad ﷺ and he will say, “I am fit for that.” He will intercede with Allah to convene the judgement between the creation. This is the Major Intercession (*Shafā’ah ‘Uẓmā*) and the Praiseworthy Status (*Maqām Maḥmūd*) that Allah exclusively graced our Prophet ﷺ with. All present at that standing will praise him for this.

Martyrs and others from the ummah of Muhammad ﷺ will be admitted into Paradise without recompense or punishment.

Then judgement will commence, and each soul will receive its due for what it did, and not a single one of them will face the slightest injustice, nor will any soul bear the burden of another. Whoever comes with a good deed will have tenfold of its like, and whoever comes with a sin will only be recompensed its worth.

Deeds – or the records wherein they are written, or those who did them – are weighed. The records will be spread round; the inhabitants of the Garden will be given their records in their right hand, honouring them because they have succeeded, while the disbelievers will receive theirs in the left hand – they will be truly lost.

There will be three groups of people: disbelievers, believers and hypocrites. Each group will be told to follow what they worship. The disbelievers will follow what they worship, and those objects of worship will lead them to the Fire of Hell.

Allah will then command the believers and hypocrites to prostrate to Him. The believers will prostrate, while the hypocrites will not be able to do so. The former will be given a light with which they will traverse the Bridge (*Ṣirāṭ*).

The Bridge will be set forth. It will be as sharp as a sword, and have shackled hooks that will snare those who deserve punishment from the believers. The first to cross it will be our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, then the rest of the Prophets after him.

People will then cross it (at speeds) depending on their respective light, faith and good deeds. The supplication of the Messengers on that day will be, “Allah! Reprieve, reprieve!”

Those who cross the Path will then reach the Arched Bridge (*Qanṭarah*) between Paradise and the Fire. Each will take rightful retribution from the other for their injustices in the worldly life. Once matters are settled, and they are cleansed of any grievance, they will be permitted entry into Paradise and they will go in. They will recognise their abode therein better than they did their worldly abode.

The first to enter Paradise is our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Its doors will open for him.

May Allah make us all inhabitants of Paradise. They will have whatever they wish for, eternally residing therein. In it is what no eye has ever seen, what no ear has heard, and what no heart can ever imagine.

In Paradise, the believers will be in different levels. The highest level will be for the Prophets and Messengers, then the truthful (*siddiqūn*), then the martyrs, then the righteous.

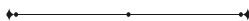
The disbelievers, on the other hand, will be the inhabitants of the Fire and will experience all its punishments. They are also of different stations therein. They can never escape it. Allah protect us from it.

As for Muslims who deserved punishment in the Fire because of what they did, they will be allowed to leave it by the intercession of our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as well as that of others or after having been purified by it. They will not reside in it for eternity.

Belief in the Last Day strengthens veneration of Allah, grants a sense of conviction in His promise and engenders a yearning to meet Him. It also invigorates a person to exert himself in ship, dispels laziness, and increases awe of Allah and fear of His punishment. The belief helps a person leave sin and detach himself from the worldly life.

On the other hand, disbelief in it leads the strong to transgression, injustice and wickedness, and leads the weak to despair, despondency, envy, as well as evil words, deeds, and morals.

It is also tantamount to disbelief in Allāh, Most High.



Belief in Destiny, Its Good and Bad

Belief in destiny is one of the pillars of faith. Allah has ordained all matters; that is, He willed them to manifest at specific times and places, and in the form and exact measures known to Him, Most High. Allah then recorded these in the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Mahfuz*) fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and earth. Allah brought everything into existence and created it in its respective time, place, manner, form and all its other details. This is done exactly as He had willed and ordained, encompassed in knowledge, and as He had recorded.

Everything that happens in creation is as Allah willed, ordained, encompassed in knowledge, and recorded in the Preserved Tablet. He then creates it and brings it to existence in accordance with this.

“Indeed, We have created everything, according to a perpreordained measure.” (al-Qamar: 49).

Destiny is of two categories:

The First: That which takes place through man’s own efforts and deeds directly. He is taken to account for it and recompensed either in this life, the next, or both. If he did good, he will be recompensed with good; and if he did evil, he will be recompensed with evil.

“Whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it.” (al-Zalzalah: 7-8).

An example of this is man’s seeking out the causes of benefit and warding off harm, the worldly recompense of which would be attaining the results Allah determined for the said causes.

The Second: That which the slave’s efforts have no role to play, and Allah will not take him to account over. From it is that which is good and that

which is evil, and that which brings about ease as well as that which brings about difficulty, according to what the slave sees.

This is a test from Allah and a mercy for the living, and it contains much wisdom that only Allah knows. Some of that wisdom may manifest to some slaves, though one cannot be certain of it because it is ultimately a matter of the Unseen.

Evil and harm serve as expiation for the sins of Muslims, and an elevation of their levels provided they are patient. Evil and harm are also a reminder for all – especially the disobedient – that perhaps they may repent.

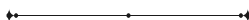
Good and ease require gratitude. They may also be ways in which one is being unwittingly led to destruction.

Human beings are commanded to have patience in the face of difficulty and gratitude in response to ease. This will allow them to realise good in this life and the next.

People are predisposed and legally commanded to take the means, be they tangible or legal, that Allah has appointed, leading to acquiring good and benefit or warding off evil and corruption. This is to be done while having trust in Allah and reliance upon Him, with the certainty that the means cannot in and of themselves benefit or harm.

Whoever believes in destiny will have a tranquil and calm heart because he knows that whatever afflicts him was never going to miss him, and that whatever misses him was never meant for him. Hence, he will not grieve over what missed him, nor is overjoyed with what comes his way. He is tranquil, patient and content. Consequently, Allah rewards him with the best of rewards, and he attains happiness in this life and the next.

Whosoever appreciates the reality of destiny and believes in it correctly will strive to attain what will benefit him in this life and the next, and whoever disbelieves in it has left the fold of Islam and will live a life full of confusion and instability.



The Religion of Islam

The religion of Islam commands justice, excellence, up keeping the ties of kinship, and every good and virtue. It forbids obscenity, immorality and transgression. It is the true religion and way of life besides which Allah will accept none other. It is the best system of law and order, the most perfect, great, wise, just and merciful of them all.

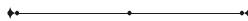
All of it is good. All of it is perfect. All of it is great. All of it is wise. All of it is just. All of it is mercy. It covers all walks of life, individual and communal. It is a religion and a way of life fitting for a group, society, state and individual. There are three stations to religion: Islām (submission), Īmān (faith) and Iḥsān (excellence).

The station of *Islām* is concerned with external actions, while that of *Īmān* is concerned with internal ones. In some contexts both words can take the same meaning and in others, they can be used to mean different things.

Islām is to testify that there is none worthy of worship besides Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; to establish the prayer; offer the Zakah; fast Ramadan; and perform Hajj at the Sacred House (*Ka'bah*) if able to do so.

Īmān is to believe¹ in Allah, His angels, Books, Messengers, the Last Day, and destiny – the good of it and the bad.

Iḥsān is the highest station, and it is to worship Allah as if you see Him; if you do not see Him, He certainly sees you.



1 Sh. Ḥasan al-Shāfi'ī, Allah preserve him, suggested that the statement should read: "*Īmān is the heart's acceptance of Allah, His angels, and so on*" omitting the previous statement: "*They may be one and the same in terms of meaning, and they may differ.*"

Characteristics of Muslims

Muslims love one another and they are allies of one another. They are brothers in religion wherever and however they may be. Their Lord is one. Their Prophet is one. Their Book is one. Their *qiblah* is one. Their sacrifice is one. Their community is one. They are but a single hand.

An Arab is not superior to a non-Arab, or a non-Arab to an Arab; or a white man to a black man, or a black man to a white man, except through piety.

They love the community [of believers] and detest division. They do not innovate in their religion, and they are the Greatest Group. They obey those in charge in common good, honour those of knowledge and excellence, and detest the enemies of Allah.

Despite this, they love guidance and goodness for all humanity. They do not excommunicate Muslims, but leave this to the people of knowledge and expert jurists. They adorn themselves with the best character traits and rid themselves of ignoble immoralities.

Muslims are the best nation brought forth for humanity. They enjoin common good and forbid immorality, and struggle for the sake of Allah. They help one another towards goodness and piety, and never aid each other in sin and hostility. They show mercy to the people and act justly. They do good and spread it, and ward off evil and fight it.

Allah promised them empowerment, and the ultimate end is theirs. They are certain of Allah's promise, optimistic for it, and yearning for His victory.



This is the end of the text. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds. May blessings of exaltation and peace be upon the Seal of the Prophets and Messengers, our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, as well as upon his family and his Companions.

Haitham al-Haddād





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A Primer of The Creed Agreed Upon by Muslims

Written by Haitham al-Haddād

The following is a brief though holistic exposition of the doctrines agreed upon by all Muslims – Atharis, Ash'aris, Maturidis, and Sufis alike – specifically the non-fanatical among them. The purpose behind authoring this text was to show that Muslims' agreement in terms of creed is much greater and more impactful than their disagreements, and that the doctrinal points that unite them overwhelm those that divide them, both in number and value.

To realise this goal, the text was written such that both its structure and style are borne of direct references to the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

This is in terms of specific wordings excerpted from these sources, as well as meanings and principles unanimously agreed upon by the scholars of the ummah. This was the methodology we followed to the best of our ability. For this reason, the text is full of explicit and implicit mention of Qur'anic passages and Prophetic narrations.



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