

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَسْوَاقُ الْحَقَائِدِ الْإِسْلَامِيَّةِ

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF

# ISLAMIC BELIEF

SHAYKH ABDUL-RAHMAN IBN NASIR AL-SA'DI



مركز السنة

Markaz  
us-Sunnah

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## [Author's Introduction]

All praise is for Allāh, Lord of the worlds, and may Allāh send peace and blessings upon Muḥammad, his family, his companions, and his followers until the Day of Recompense.

To proceed:

This is a very concise text concerning the fundamentals of Islamic belief, and its great, important foundations. We have limited it to a brief outline of the issues, merely pointing them out without going into detail or mentioning their evidences. It is closest to being a kind of index of issues, so that their foundations, their rank, and their place in the religion may be known.

Then whoever has a desire for knowledge may seek its detailed explanation and its evidences from their proper places. And if Allāh makes it easy and grants me a longer life, I will explain these matters in greater detail and clarify them with their evidences.

## The First Fundamental Tawḥīd

The comprehensive definition of Tawḥīd which gathers its types is:

The servant's belief and faith in the oneness of Allāh in the attributes of perfection and singling Him out in the types of worship. Thus, included within this is:

- Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah, which is the belief in the sole oneness of the Lord in creation, provision, and the types of control of the world.
- Tawḥīd al-Asmā' wa al-Ṣifāt, which is affirming what He affirmed for Himself, and what His Messenger affirmed for Him of the Most Beautiful Names and the Perfect, Lofty Attributes, without tashbīh or tamthīl (likening to the creation), and without taḥrīf (distorting) or ta'tīl (negating).
- Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah and al-'Ibādah, which is singling Him alone out with the categories of worship and their types, and singling them for Him without associating

anything with Him in any of them, along with believing in the perfection of His Ulūhiyyah.

Included within Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah is affirming al-qaḍā' and al-qadar (Divine Decree), and that whatever Allāh wills occurs, and whatever He does not will does not occur, and that He is over all things capable, and that He is the Free of need and the Praiseworthy (al-Ghanī, al-Ḥamīd), and everything besides Him is in need of Him from every aspect.

Included within Tawḥīd al-Asmā' wa al-Ṣifāt is affirming all the meanings of the Most Beautiful Names of Allāh, the Exalted, which have come in the Book and the Sunnah.

Faith in them is of three levels:

- Faith in the Names.
- Faith in the Attributes.
- Faith in the rulings of His Attributes.

Such as knowing that He is ‘Alīm, possessing knowledge, and that He knows all things; Qadīr, possessing power, and that He has power over all things, and likewise the rest of what belongs to Him of the sacred Names.

Included within that is affirming His Highness above His creation, His rising over His Throne, and His descending every night to the lowest heaven in a manner befitting His Majesty and Greatness.

Included within that is:

Affirming the attributes ascribed to His Self (al-Sifāt al-Dhātiyyah), which are the attributes that are intrinsically bound to Him, such as hearing, seeing, knowledge, highness, and the like.

As well as the attributes ascribed to His Actions (al-Sifāt al-Fi’liyyah), which are the attributes connected to His will and His power, such as speech, creation, provision, mercy, rising over the Throne, and descending to the lowest heaven, as He wills.

All of them are affirmed for Allāh without tamthīl (likening to the creation) or taʿṭīl (negating), and all of them belong to His Essence, and He is described with them, and He, the Exalted, has not ceased and will not cease to speak and to act, and He is Doer of whatever He wills; He speaks with whatever He wills, when He wills, how He wills. He has not ceased being described with speech and known for mercy and goodness.

Included within that is faith that the Qurʾān is the speech of Allāh, sent down, not created; from Him it originated and to Him it returns; and that He is the One who truly spoke it, and that His speech does not end nor perish.

Included within that is faith that He is Near and Responsive (Qarīb Mujīb), and along with that He is Most High and Most Elevated (Aliyy Aʿlá), and that there is no contradiction between the perfection of His Highness and the perfection of His Nearness, because there is nothing like unto Him in all of His descriptions and attributes.

Tawḥīd of the Names and Attributes is not complete until one believes in everything that has come in the Book and the Sunnah of the Names, Attributes, actions, and their

rulings, in a manner befitting the greatness of the Creator, and knows that just as no one resembles Him in His Essence, then no one resembles Him in His Attributes.

Whoever assumes that some rational considerations require interpreting some of the attributes upon other than their known meaning, then he has gone astray with a clear misguidance.

Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah is not complete until the servant believes that the actions of the servants are created for Allāh, and that their will follows the will of Allāh, and that they have actions and a will by which their actions occur, and that is the object of the command and prohibition.

The two matters do not contradict one another: affirming the universal, all-encompassing will of Allāh over essences, actions, and attributes, and affirming the servant's ability over his actions and his statements.

Tawḥīd al-'Ibādah is not complete until the servant makes his intent, his statements, and his actions sincerely for Allāh, the Exalted, and until he abandons major shirk,

which completely nullifies Tawḥīd, and it is directing any type of worship to other than Allāh, the Exalted.

Its perfection is that he abandons minor shirk, which is all means (wasīlah) that lead to major shirk, such as swearing by other than Allāh, a small amount of showing off, and the like.

The people vary in Tawḥīd in differing levels according to how much they establish of knowing Allāh and fulfilling His servitude. So the most complete of them in this matter is the one who knows the details of the Names of Allāh, His Attributes, His Actions, His favours, and their meanings established in the Book and the Sunnah, and understands them with a sound understanding. Then his heart becomes filled with knowledge of Allāh, reverence for Him, magnification of Him, glorification of Him, love for Him, turning back to Him, and directing everything in his heart toward Allāh, the Exalted, devoting himself to Him alone with no partner.

All that he does, whether moving or still, occurs in complete faith and sincerity, free from any corrupt motives. Thus, he becomes tranquil with Allāh in knowledge,

turning to Him, action, abandonment, completing himself, and completing others by calling to this great foundation. So we ask Allāh, from His bounty and generosity, to bestow that upon us.

## **The Second Fundamental Faith in the Prophethood of All the Prophets in General, and the Prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ in Particular**

This foundation is built upon believing and having faith that all the Prophets were chosen by Allāh with His revelation and His sending, and that He made them intermediaries between Him and His creation in conveying His legislation and His religion.

That Allāh supported them with proofs indicating their truthfulness and the correctness of what they brought.

That they are the most complete of creation in knowledge and action, the most truthful of them, the most righteous of them, and the most complete of them in character and deeds, and that Allāh singled them out with special qualities and virtues in which no one reaches them. And that Allāh made them free from every vile characteristic.

That they are protected from error in what they convey from Allāh, the Exalted.

That nothing remains established in their reports and their conveying except truth and correctness.

That it is obligatory to have faith in them, and in everything they were given from Allāh, and to love them and revere them.

That these matters are established for our Prophet Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) in the most perfect manner.

That it is obligatory to know everything he came with from the legislation, in general and in detail, and to have faith in that, and to commit to obeying him in every matter by believing his reports, complying with his commands, and avoiding his prohibitions.

From that is believing that he is the seal of the Prophets; his legislation has abrogated all previous legislations, and that his prophethood and his legislation remain until the establishment of the Hour. So there is no prophet after him, nor any legislation besides his legislation in the foundations of the religion and its branches.

Included in faith in the Messengers is faith in the Books. Thus, faith in Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) necessitates faith in everything that he came with from the Book and the Sunnah, in their wording and their meanings.

So faith in him is not complete except with that. Whoever has greater knowledge of that, stronger belief in it, stronger acknowledgement of it, and stronger action upon it, then his faith is more complete.

Faith in the angels and in the Divine Decree (al-qadar) is included in this great foundation. From the completeness of īmān in him (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is that one knows that whatever he came with is truth; it is impossible for any rational proof or sensory proof to establish anything contrary to it, just as no textual proof establishes anything contrary to it. Rather, the beneficial rational matters and definitive realities are such that the Book and the Sunnah affirm them and urge their learning and their practice.

As for that which is not beneficial from the mentioned matters, then there is nothing in them that negates their existence, even if the legislative proof prohibits and censures the harmful matters from them.

Included within faith in what the Messenger came with and likewise what all of the Messengers came with is:

## The Third Fundamental

### Faith in the Last Day

So everything that has come in the Book and the Sunnah concerning what will occur after death is from faith in the Last Day, such as the states of al-Barzakh, and the conditions of the Day of Resurrection, and what is within it of reckoning, reward, punishment, intercession, the Scale, the records taken in the right hand and the left, the *Şirāt*, and the conditions of Paradise and the Fire, and the conditions of their people, and the various forms of recompense that Allāh has prepared therein for their people, in general and in detail.

So all of that is included within faith in the Last Day.

## The Fourth Fundamental The Issue of Īmān (Faith)

Ahl al-Sunnah believe in what has come in the Book and the Sunnah, that Īmān is: the affirmation of the heart which includes the actions of the limbs.

So they say: Īmān is the beliefs of the hearts, the actions of the hearts, the actions of the limbs, and the statements of the tongue, and that all of them are from Īmān.

Whoever establishes them outwardly and inwardly has indeed completed Īmān, and whoever falls short in anything from them has fallen short in his Īmān, and these matters are seventy-some branches.

The highest of them is the statement ‘Lā ilāha illā Allāh’, and the lowest of them is removing harm from the path, and modesty is a branch of Īmān.

They build upon this foundation that the people, with respect to Īmān, are of levels: those brought near (muqarrabūn), the companions of the right (aṣḥāb al-

yamīn), and those who wrong themselves (dhālimūn li-anfusihim), according to their ranks in religion and īmān.

Additionally, that it increases and decreases; so whoever does something prohibited or leaves an obligation, his obligatory īmān decreases so long as he does not repent to Allāh.

They build upon this foundation that the people are of three categories:

- (1) From them is the one who establishes all the rights of īmān; he is the true believer.
- (2) From them is the one who abandons all of it; this person is a disbeliever in Allāh, the Most High.
- (3) From them is the one in whom there is īmān and kufr, or īmān and hypocrisy, or good and evil; so he has a share of the allegiance (Walāyah) of Allāh and deserves His honour according to what he has of īmān, and he has a share of the enmity of Allāh and deserves the punishment of Allāh according to what he has neglected of īmān.

They build upon this tremendous foundation that major and minor sins that do not reach the level of disbelief decrease the īmān of the servant without taking him out of the fold of Islām, and he will not remain forever in the Fire of Jahannam.

They do not apply to him the label of ‘disbelief’ as the Khawārij say, nor do they negate īmān from him as the Mu‘tazilah say.

Rather they say: he is a believer due to his īmān and a sinner due to his major sin; so he has the basis of īmān, and as for complete īmān, it is negated from him.

With these foundations, īmān in all of the texts of the Book and the Sunnah is attained.

Also built upon this foundation is:

- That Islām wipes away what came before it.
- That repentance wipes away what came before it.

- That whoever apostates and dies upon that, then his deeds have been nullified.
- That whoever repents, Allāh accepts his repentance.

They also build upon this foundation the correctness of making exception in īmān; so it is correct for one to say: “I am a believer, if Allāh wills”; because he hopes from Allāh, the Most High, the completion of his īmān, so he makes the exception for that, and he hopes for firmness upon that until death, so he makes the exception, without doubting the presence of the essence of īmān.

They also build upon this foundation that love and hatred, their basis and their measure, follow īmān in existence and absence, and in completion and deficiency.

Then following that is allegiance and enmity; and for this reason, from īmān is loving for the sake of Allāh and hating for the sake of Allāh, and allegiance to Allāh and enmity for Allāh.

Also from īmān—and īmān is not complete except by it—is loving for his brother what he loves for himself.

Also from īmān is loving the unity of the believers, encouraging hearts to come together and mutual love among them, and not breaking ties.

Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah disassociate themselves from partisanship, division, and mutual hatred. They hold this principle as one of the most important principles of īmān, and they do not see differing in matters which do not lead to disbelief or to an innovation which necessitates splitting.

Also from īmān is loving the Companions of the Prophet, according to their ranks, and that they have virtues, precedence, and merits by which they excelled the rest of the Ummah.

They hold as their religion loving them and spreading their virtues, and they withhold from discussing what occurred between them of disagreements, and that they are the most deserving of this Ummah of every praiseworthy trait, the foremost of them in every good, and the furthest of them from every evil.

They believe that the Ummah cannot do without a leader (Imām) who establishes for it its religious and worldly affairs, and repels from it the aggression of the transgressors; and his leadership is not complete except by obedience to him in other than disobedience to Allāh, the Most High.

They hold that īmān is not complete except by commanding the good and forbidding the evil with the hand, and if that is not possible, then with the tongue, and if not, then with the heart, according to their legislated levels and established methods.

In summary, they hold that establishing all of the legislative foundations in the legislated manner is from the completion of īmān and the religion.

Also from the completion of this foundation is their path in knowledge and action:

## The Fifth Fundamental Their Path in Knowledge and Action

Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah believe and hold firmly that there is no path to Allāh and to His honour except by beneficial knowledge and righteous action.

Beneficial knowledge is that which the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) brought from the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger; so they strive in knowing their meanings and gaining deep understanding in them, in the foundations of the religion and its branches.

They apply all the ways of deriving meaning from it (al-Dalālāt): Muṭābaqah (direct meaning), Taḍammun (included meaning), and Iltizām (necessary implication).

They expend their efforts in attaining that according to what Allāh has given them, and they believe that these are the beneficial sciences, as well as what branches from them of sound analogical reasoning and legal deductions.

In addition, every aspect of knowledge that aids that, supports it, or is built upon it, then it is a legislative

knowledge; just as that which opposes it and contradicts it is false knowledge. So, this is their path in knowledge.

As for their path in action, then they draw near to Allāh, the Most High, with complete affirmation and acknowledgement of the beliefs of faith which are the foundation of the acts of worship and their basis. Then they draw near to Him by performing the obligations of Allāh related to His rights and the rights of His servants, along with abundant voluntary deeds, and by leaving the prohibited and forbidden matters as an act of worship to Allāh, the Most High.

They know that Allāh, the Most High, only accepts deeds that are sincere for His Noble Face, carried out upon the path of the noble Prophet. They seek aid from Allāh, the Most High, in traversing these fruitful paths, which are beneficial knowledge and righteous action that lead to every good, success, and happiness in this life and the next.

All praise is for Allāh, Lord of the worlds. May Allāh send peace and blessings upon Muḥammad and upon his family and his Companions, and grant abundant peace.

Written by  
'Abdul-Raḥmān ibn Nāṣir al-Sa'dī  
5 Ramaḍān 1357<sup>AH</sup>  
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