The Importance of the ʿAqīdah (Creed) in Islam and the Methodology of Studying It

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In the name of Allah, Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ʿAQĪDAH

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of all creation, and may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and all his Companions.

There is nothing as important as the study of *ʿAqīdah* (the Islamic Creed) because it is the thing that will enter you into the gardens of Paradise forever and save you from the Hellfire. It is the *ʿAqīdah* that takes you, through its doorway, into worship in Islām because if the *ʿAqīdah* is not sound, the deeds will not be sound as Shaykh Aḥmad an-Najmī رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ stated in his introduction to his explanation of *Uṣūl as-Sunnah* of Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ. If a person does not have the correct *ʿAqīdah* and understanding of *Tawhīd*, then his worship will not benefit him—and he has no true religion without the rectification of the *ʿAqīdah*. And the rectification of the *ʿAqīdah*, as every person of *Sunnah* and *Salafiyyah* knows, begins with the study of *Tawḥīd*.

Tawḥīd is the foundation of the *ʿAqīdah* of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamāʿah*. It is what all of the Prophets and Messengers called to, and it is the first thing Allāh commands with in the Qurʾān. He عَزَّوَجَلَّ says:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ٱعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَكُمْ وَٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

“O mankind, worship your Guardian Lord who created you and created those who came before you so that you may become God-fearing (dutiful and pious).” [Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:21]

Allāh has also stated:

يَٰقَوۡمِ ٱعۡبُدُواْ ٱللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنۡ إِلَٰهٍ غَيۡرُهُۥٓ

“O my people, worship Allāh alone for indeed you have no other deity that is worthy of your worship.” [Sūrah Hūd 11:50]

Allāh has also stated:

وَلَقَدۡ بَعَثۡنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٖ رَّسُولًا أَنِ ٱعۡبُدُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱجۡتَنِبُواْ ٱلطَّٰغُوتَ

“We did not send a Messenger except to every single nation calling them to the worship of Allāh and away from the worship of the false deities.” [Sūrah an-Naḥl 16:36]

In these verses and many others besides, Allāh تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ establishes the importance of the ʿ*Aqīdah*. If the ʿ*Aqīdah* is sound, then everything else thereafter will be upon a sound basis. The early scholars used to write books and treatises in the subject of ʿ*Aqīdah*, i.e., the Creed and Methodology of the Muslim so that the Muslims may remain upon the guidance that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ left them upon.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOKS OF THE SALAF

As for the purpose behind the books of the Salaf, *Shaykhul-Islām* Ibn Taymiyyah رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ said in *Al-ʿAqīdah al-Aṣfahāniyyah* (pg.31), that the purpose of these authorships that were compiled, mostly in summarised form, was to distinguish the Creed of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamāʿah* from the creeds of the unbelievers and the innovators among the Muslims. So, they would write for example, the affirmation of the Attributes of Allāh, and they would write that the Qurān is the *Kalām* (Speech) of Allāh, not created; and affirm the *Ru'yah* (that Allāh will be seen in the Hereafter by the believers), which was in refutation to the *Jahmiyyah* who are from the *Muʿtazilah*, and other than them. The authors would mention that Allāh تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ is the Creator of the actions of the servants; and He تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ has Will over all of the creation and that Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ does whatever He wills—and whatever Allāh wills, it occurs and that which Allāh does not will, does not occur. This they wrote in response to the *Qadariyyah* from the *Muʿtazilah* and other than them. And those works would include the affair of labelling and passing judgement upon people; and the promise of Allāh for those who do righteous deeds (*wa'ad*) and the threat of Allāh's punishment (*wa'īd*) against the sinners and those who disobey Him—and that the believer is not to be declared an unbeliever (*takfīr*) due to a sin he has committed; the believers who have committed sins will not be in the Hellfire forever—this was in refutation of the *Khawārij* and the *Muʿtazilah*. These books also established the matter of *īmān* and its definition. They affirmed the threat of punishment for the major sinners in general in response to the *Murji'ah* who believe that there is no threat upon the major sinners, and the *Murji'ah* hold that *īmān* is one entity, and it does not increase and decrease, and that the actions/deeds are not from *īmān*. So, the scholars penned down what *īmān* is and how to understand it, all in opposition to, and in refutation of the *Murji'ah*. And these authors would write

about the leadership of the four rightly-guided Caliphs, Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān and ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ, and their virtues, in response to the *Shīʿah* from among the *Rāfiḍah* and other than them. [End of the words of Ibn Taymiyyah رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ].

So, this gives you a summary into the authorships that the early Salaf penned down. They would distinguish between the Creed of the people of *Īmān*, and they are *Ahlus-Sunnāh*, *Ahlul-Ḥadīth*, *As-Salafiyyūn* because they follow the Path of the *Ṣaḥābah* رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ and take their understanding of the Religion—and they would make clear distinctions between the people of truth and the people of falsehood. So, when a person looks at the Creed (*ʿAqīdah*) of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamāʿah*, he distinguishes between *haqq* and *bāṭil* (truth and falsehood), between *īmān* and *kufr*, between *Sunnah* and *bidʿah*—and that is what we find in these early books of Creed, and all praise is due to Allah for that. The study of *ʿAqīdah* is to distinguish; to know the true belief and that which opposes the true belief.

HOW THE SALAF WOULD TITLE THEIR WORKS

The early *Salaf* would write these works and give their books titles that would guide the believer to clarifying and establishing himself upon those distinctive features of *Ahlus-Sunnah* in the Creed and Methodology. From these titles are:

Books entitled *As-Sunnah:*

You may ask, if we are talking about the *ʿAqīdah* (Creed), then why would the early *Salaf* entitle title their books with the term *Sunnah*? Because from the meanings of the term *Sunnah* with the early *Salaf* meant the foundations of the *Sunnah* i.e., the *ʿAqīdah*.

This is why when you look at the book of Imām Aḥmad رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ titled *Uṣūl us-Sunnah* (the Foundations of the *Sunnah*), the intent of the term becomes clear, which is to clarify and explain the Creed and Methodology in summarised form. Many of the *Salaf* would author their works in Creed in list form, such as the *ʿAqīdah* of Imām aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, the *ʿAqīdah* of Sufyān ath-Thawrī, the *ʿAqīdah* of Al-Bukhārī, the *ʿAqīdah* of Abu Hātim and Abu Zur'ah Ar-Rāzi entitles *Aslus-Sunnah* and *Uṣūl us-Sunnah* of Imām Aḥmad. In essence, what you get is a list of that which the *Salaf* of this *Ummah* held as their Creed by *ijmā'* (consensus). Not to say that there was no differing in these works, because some of the points in these treatises deal with that which is referred to as the branches of the *ʿAqīdah*.

The foundations of the *ʿAqīdah* are agreed upon but the branches, then it possible for there to be some minor differing. For example, the belief in the *Qalam* (Pen) and the *ʿArsh* (Throne): then *Ahlus-Sunnah* believe that Allāh created the Pen 50,000 years before creation—and there is no difference of opinion amongst any of the scholars of *Ahlus-Sunnah* regarding the creation of the Pen—and He commanded it to write. So, the Pen said, "What shall I write?" And Allāh said, "Write everything

that shall occur from this hour until Day of Resurrection." So everything was written and preserved in *al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ* (the Preserved Tablet) that is with Allāh تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ. Allāh also created the *ʿArsh*, and *Ahlus-Sunnah* and the *Salaf* have agreed regarding that. The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: "And the Throne of Allāh was above the water." So, we know that Allāh created the Pen, the Throne and the water—and *Ahlus-Sunnah* do not differ these created entities. The point of differing is which one did Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ create first. Was it the Pen, the Throne or the water? Some scholars even discussed that it may have been the *Kursī* (the Footstool of Allāh), the place of the two Feet of Allāh, as is mentioned by some of the *Ṣaḥābah*. So, this discussion is from the branches of *ʿAqīdah* because the origin is agreed upon.

There were Books of Creed entitled *Al-Īmān:*

These works, in essence, cover each of the pillars of Īmān. For example, the chapter heading *Kitabul-Īmān* in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim where the ʿAqīdah is discussed.

There were Books of Creed entitled *Ash-Sharīʿah*:

Such as *Ash-Sharīʿah* of Imām al-Ājurrī. In essence, it is a book of ʿAqīdah and Manhaj that the Salaf were united upon.

There were Books of Creed entitled *At-Tawḥīd*:

We have, for example, *Kitāb at-Tawḥīd* of Ibn Khuzaymah, *Kitāb at-Tawḥīd* of Ibn Mandah, likewise the chapter heading in *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* titled *Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*.

There were Books of Creed entitled *Al-ʿAqīdah* or *Al-I'tiqād*:

We have, for example, *Lumʿatul-Iʿtiqād* of Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī (d. 620H), *Sharḥ Uṣūl Iʿtiqād Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamāʿah* (the Explanation of the Foundations of the *ʿAqīdah* of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamāʿah*) of Imām al-Lālakāʾī.

THE WEAPON OF AHLUS-SUNNAH AGAINST THE DEVIANT SECTS

The point here being, as Shaykh al-Fawzān (حفظه الله) explains in his introduction to *Sharhus-Sunnah* of Al-Barbahāri (d. 329H) and to *Al-Hā'iyyah* of Ibn Abī Dawūd As-Sijistāni (d. 316H), is that the *ʿAqīdah* is that which is firmly established as the belief in the heart by way of which one practices his religion, and by way of which he firmly establishes his Creed in Allāh.

So, *ʿAqīdah* is the knowledge that is poured into the vessel known as the heart—such as knowing that the Qurʾān is the Speech of Allāh and is uncreated, that Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى is above the seven heavens, above His Throne, separate from His creation and there is none like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer—that there is a Bridge over the Hellfire, which everyone shall have to cross—that there is party for Paradise and a party for the Hellfire decreed by Allah, that there is punishment and reward of the grave and the questioning in the grave—all of this is mentioned in these books of *ʿAqīdah*, as well as matters that are not related to the unseen. It is not possible for a person to be upon true *Īmān* and *ʿAqīdah* of the *Ṣaḥābah* unless he believes in what is stated in these books of *ʿAqīdah*: that includes how we revere the *Sahābah* and do not revile a single one them; that we obey the Muslim rulers whether they be pious or tyrannical and we do not raise the sword against them or rebel against them; that we abandon innovations, *ahlul-bid'ah*, the callers to innovation, etc. And as Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمه الله) mentioned in the statement we quoted from him earlier, that these books discuss these important issues of Creed and Methodology such as *Takfīr*, i.e., that we do not declare the major sinners from the people of *Tawhīd* who has not fallen into major shirk or major kufr to be unbelievers—so we withhold from *takfīr* because that is the *madhhab* of the *Khawārij*.

These books of *ʿAqīdah* are the weapon of *Ahlus-Sunnah* against *Ahlul-Bid'ah* such as the *Khawārij*, the *Muʿtazilah* and the modern-day sects who adopt the deviated ideologies of the early *Khawārij* such as *Jamā'at al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*, *Jamā'atul-Jihād*, *Jamā'at al-Hijrah wat-Takfeer*, *Al-Qā'idah*, *Daesh*, *Hizbut-Tahrīr* and others who declare the Muslim rulers to be apostates and disbelievers. We refute them with the sayings of Imām al-Bukhārī in his *Iʿtiqād* as collected by Imām al-Lālakāʾī in his *Sharḥ Uṣūl Iʿtiqād* wherein he brought the *ijmā'* (agreement of the *Salaf*) that forbids rebellion against the Muslim ruler—and likewise the books of Imām Aḥmad bin Hanbal, Imām al-Barbahārī and so on. These books are a reference point for *Ahlus-Sunnah* and a thorn in the necks of *Ahlul-Bid'ah*.

The *Khawārij*, *Jahmiyyah*, *Kullābiyyah*, *Ash'ariyyah*, *Māturīdiyyah*, *Sūfiyyah* and *Muʿtazilah* all oppose the truth and they tried to corrupt the ranks of *Ahlus-Sunnah* and especially their youth—so these books of *'Aqīdah* came in succession, generation after generation to repel the doubts and unite the Muslims upon one *ʿAqīdah* that would cause them to remain united and strong so that the enemy could not overpower them—and so that Allāh would save them from the Hellfire because their *ʿAqīdah* is that of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and the *Sahābah* رضي الله عنهم.

Even though the titles of the works that were used by the scholars may have differed, nevertheless, all of them refer back to the same affairs, and the content was the same. In fact, if you remove the names of the books and their authors, and put them side by side, you will not know who authored which book because they are all the same, united upon the same *'Aqīdah* and *Manhaj* as if authored by the same scholar! And all praise is for Allah.

If new doubts were introduced over time that were not previously there, the later scholars would answer them in their writings. There came a

time when *Al-Ashʿariyyah* and *Al-Māturīdiyyah* became widespread for example, and likewise *Sufiyyah* and Philosophy—so as the generations went on, many of the books of *ʿAqīdah* became more and more detailed in order to deal with the doubts of the *Ashʿarīs* and their various corrupt beliefs. Likewise, with the *Sūfīs*, the grave-worshippers and so on. So, these books of *ʿAqīdah* would affirm what was already there and also deal more specifically with the doubts of their times.

This is what you find in the works of *Shaykhul-Islām* Ibn Taymiyyah رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ and *Al-ʿAllāmah* Ibn al-Qayyim رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ—they would clarify and write with great detail the people of innovation and how their deviations developed over the generations, so may Allah reward these two noble *imāms* of *Salafiyyah*. Indeed, there have been many generations where the majority of the Muslims were upon deviation and misguidance such as the time of *Shaykh ul-Islām* Ibn Taymiyyah when the *Ashʾarīs*, the offshoots of the *Jahmiyyah* and *Muʾatazilah*—who distorted and misinterpreted, denied and rejected the Attributes of Allāh. Likewise, *Sufism* was widespread whose adherents would venerate the graves and establish worship around them and to them.

These doctrines continued to be widespread until the time of *Shaykhul-Islām* Muḥammad bin ʿAbdul-Wahhāb رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ. When you look at his books, he dealt predominantly with *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah* or *Tawhīd al-ʿIbādah* (singling out Allāh alone with worship) because of the state of the people in his time. The majority of the people in the Islamic lands: Persia, Iraq, the Najd, Hijāz, Egypt, across Africa, Turkey, India and elsewhere—they were worshipping the graves, calling upon the dead, wearing amulets, visiting magicians and fortune-tellers and believing in them. So, he began writing and teaching to rectify the *ʿAqīdah* of the people. The *Daʿwah* of Shaikh Muḥammad bin ʿAbdul-Wahhāb رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ has today reached every corner of the world. There is not a country except that his books are being taught—all that is from by the Grace

and Bounty of Allāh. He رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ spoke about issues that the people deviated in severely and till this day are falling into: the worship of the dead, the veneration of the graves, building tombs over them and so on.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SAVED SECT AND THE GROUPS OF MISGUIDANCE

As for the one who rejects all of this and says there is no evidence for studying the *ʿAqīdah*, *Tawḥīd* and *Manhaj* in the Qurʾān and *Sunnah*, then such people are ignorant and they desire to dismantle the distinction between the groups of misguidance and the Saved Sect. The more that they can remove the distinction between *Ahlul-Ḥaqq* (the people of truth) and *Ahlul-Bāṭil* (the people of falsehood), the more they can lead the people into misguidance and group-partisanship (*hizbiyyah*) and to their destruction. Their goal is that the distinction between the people of *īmān* and the people of *kufr* is removed, the distinction between *Ahlus-Sunnah* and *Ahlul-Bidʿah* is removed, the distinction between the Saved Sect and the deviated groups is removed. The people become rabble in their various parties, each one fighting the other just to aid their party and its leadership—and we seek Allah's refuge from blind-following, ignorance and fanaticism.

Shaykh al-Fawzān (حفظه الله) stated that when we (i.e., *Ahlus-Sunnah*) speak about the distinction between the Saved Sect and the sects of misguidance, the people of falsehood become enraged because they do not want the people of *bidʿah* to be refuted. And this is something stated by the leadership of the groups of innovation—and as for the ignorant rabble from amongst their followers, they just merely repeat the speech of their leaders and blindly follow them, get angry for them and fight other sects of their behalf. These sects openly refute the *Salafīs* and invent terminologies to warn and put fear in the hearts of the general people. For example, the derogatory term used by them, *Wahhābīs*, is a derived from the name of Shaikh Muḥammad bin ʿAbdul-Wahhāb رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ (d. 1206H) who was a scholar and reviver of the twelfth century.

The rabble take the speech of their leaders and carry it amongst the people, and it is often hard to convince them to read the books of *ʿAqīdah* of *Ahlus-Sunnah* and sit in the gatherings of knowledge even though we expend effort in calling them. And our Salafi youth should do not create for us another layer of hardship where we are exerting effort to convince our own brothers and sisters to stay away from *Ahlul-Bidʿah*—this should be something inbuilt and default in every *Salafī*. Shaykh Al-Fawzān and Shaikh Rabee' have clarified that it is not permissible to look towards *Ahlul-Bid'ah*, to pay attention to them, to listen to their doubts or to look into their writings—and this obligation to avoid *Ahlul-Bid'ah* is found in virtually every book of *ʿAqīdah*.

The opposers, innovators and *hizbies* seek to blend all of the people together so there is no longer a difference between a *zindīq* (heretic) and the one who is on the Straight Path. They want to throw all of these misguided groups into the same melting pot alongside the people of *Sunnah* and *Salafiyyah* as if we are all upon one path—*Allāhul-musta'ān*. They will even excuse those who commit *kufr* openly from among the *Jahmiyyah*, *Sūfīs* and grave-worshippers because they want to melt them alongside those who affirm the *ʿAqīdah* of *Ahlus-Sunnah*. They want to bring them all together, claiming that we are all under the banner of Islām for the sake of unity of the Muslims as they claim. We say to them that the Muslims will not be united except upon the *ʿAqīdah* of the *Salaf* because that is the correct Creed, rooted in the Qur'an and *Sunnah* and affirmed in the books we have mentioned—and that we unite upon that which the *Ṣaḥābah* رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ were united upon, even though before the revelation, they were divided and split just as Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ stated:

وَٱذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنتُمْ أَعْدَآءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُم بِنِعْمَتِهِۦٓ إِخْوَٰنًا وَكُنتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ ٱلنَّارِ فَأَنقَذَكُم مِّنْهَا كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

"…and remember Allāh's Favour on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that by His Grace, you became brothers with each other. And you were on the brink of the pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus, Allāh makes His Āyat clear to you, that you may be guided." [Sūrah Āli ʿImrān 3:103]

So, what was it that brought their hearts together? It was the *shahādatayn* that none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh and that Muḥammad ﷺ is the Messenger of Allāh. Therefore, nothing gathers the people together and unites them except the correct and sound *ʿAqīdah*—that which our *Salaf as-Sālih* were upon. And as for those who differ in *ʿAqīdah*, they will never be united, and history has shown us that. As for differences in issues of *fiqh* that are subject to *ijtihād* and have proofs that are used to derive rulings, they do not affect or harm our *ʿAqīdah*, nor our unity—this differing does not bring about separation and enmity between *Ahlus-Sunnah*.

Allāh does not permit anyone to oppose the Book and Sunnah, and the foundations of the Sunnah (the *Usūl*) once that that is made clear to them. Those who differ concerning *ʿAqīdah* and the *Manhaj* will never be able to bring about unity regardless of how hard they try because they desire to unite opposites. If they truly desire the unity of the Muslims, upon them is to rectify the *ʿAqīda*h first, so that it is in accordance with the *ʿAqīdah* that the Messengers (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ) came with, from the first of them to the last of them.

Abul-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ (died 324H) after repenting from the beliefs of the Muʿtazilah and the falsehood of ʿAbdullāh bin Kullāb (the *Kullābiyyah*) he stated at the beginning of his work, *Al-Ibānah ʿan Uṣūl ad-Diyānah,* **"If someone says to us, 'You have refuted the saying of the *Muʿtazilah*, the *Qadariyyah*, the *Jahmiyyah*, the *Ḥarūriyyah* (*Khawārij*), the *Rāfiḍah* and the *Murji'ah*, so explain to us the sayings with which you speak and the beliefs you take as your religion.' So, we say to him, 'Our speech with which we speak and our belief that we take as our religion is to hold fast to the Book of our Lord, to the *Sunnah* of our Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and that which was reported from the best of the Companions, the *Tābiʿīn* and the *imāms* of *Ḥadīth*. This is what we cling to and that which was stated [and affirmed] by Abū ʿAbdillāh Aḥmad bin Muḥammad bin Ḥanbal, may Allāh cause his face to shine, his rank to be elevated and grant him reward from His Kindness. And that is what we speak with, and those who oppose his sayings, then they are far from the from the truth.'"**

So, when Abul-Hasan repented, he distinguished between *Ahlul-Haqq* and *Ahlul-Bātil*, i.e., between the people of truth and the people of falsehood. He refuted the *Muʿtazilah*, the *Qadariyyah*, the *Jahmiyyah*, the *Ḥarūriyyah* (*Khawārij*), the *Rāfiḍah* and *Murji'ah* with very strong words and then he clarified what he was upon. And this is the way of the People of Sunnah, and this is how we speak to clarify to the people the sound and correct *ʿAqīdah* and *Manhaj*.

So, we say to those who oppose us: We are not the ones who cause division—rather, we want vehemently to unite the people—but upon a singular Creed and Methodology. And that is the Creed and Methodology of the Messenger of Allāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and his *Ṣaḥābah* just like *Imām* Abul-Ḥasan Al-Ashʿarī صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ stated. We say to the partisans and

innovators: you will not be able to unite the Muslims upon other than the ʿ*Aqīdah* of the *Salaf*. Allāh تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ stated:

هُوَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَيَّدَكَ بِنَصْرِهِۦ وَبِٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنفَقْتَ مَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مَّآ أَلَّفْتَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ أَلَّفَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّهُۥ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

"He it is who has supported you with His help and with the believers. And He has united their hearts. If you (O Prophet) had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have united their hearts, but Allāh has united them. Certainly, He is All-Mighty, All-Wise." [Sūrah al-Anfāl 8:62-63]

وَٱعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ ٱللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَٱذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنتُمْ أَعْدَآءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُم بِنِعْمَتِهِۦٓ إِخْوَٰنًا وَكُنتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ ٱلنَّارِ فَأَنقَذَكُم مِّنْهَا كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

"And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allāh (Qur'an and Sunnah), and be not divided among yourselves, and remember Allāh's Favour on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His Grace, you became brothers—and you were on the brink of the pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus, Allāh makes His verses and signs clear to you, that you may be guided." [Sūrah Āli ʿImrān 3:103]

Shaykhul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ stated in *Minhājus-Sunnah* that the *Ṣaḥābah* never differed in any of the fundamentals of Islām, not in the Creed nor in any of the *Uṣūl*. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ stated:

وَإِنَّ هَٰذِهِۦٓ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَٰحِدَةً وَأَنَا۠ رَبُّكُمْ فَٱتَّقُونِ

"And verily, your religion is one religion, and I am your Lord, so keep your duty to Me." [Sūrah al-Mu'minūn 23:52]

And He تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ said:

إِنَّ هَٰذِهِۦٓ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَٰحِدَةً وَأَنَا۠ رَبُّكُمْ فَٱعْبُدُونِ

"Truly, your Ummah is one Ummah, and I am your Lord, so worship Me alone." [Sūrah al-Anbiyā 21:92]

This is what the *Salaf* intended when they authored their works, to call the people to the correct Belief and Methodology, and to refute the falsehood of the innovators who seek to corrupt the *ʿAqīdah* of the Muslims and divide their ranks. These books being an explanation and a clarification of the correct and sound *ʿAqīdah*—so when the tribulations, splitting and misguidance occurred, they wrote these books of *ʿAqīdah* and *Manhaj* explaining by way of them the *Sunnah* which the Messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and his Companions and the early virtuous generations رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ were upon. Whomsoever adhered to that was saved, and whomsoever opposed that was destroyed. This is the *Sunnah* and his Path about which the Messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, **"Indeed, I have left you upon clear proof, its night is like its day, and no one strays from it except that he is destroyed."** And it is about this *ʿAqīdah* and Religion that Allāh عَزَّوَجَلَّ said:

ٱلْيَوْمَ يَئِسَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ مِن دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَٱخْشَوْنِ ٱلْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِى وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ ٱلْإِسْلَٰمَ دِينًا

"This day, those who disbelieved have given up all hope of your Religion, so fear them not, but fear Me. This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islām as your religion." [Sūrah al-Mā'idah 5:3]

THE BOOKS OF ʿAQĪDAH ARE AVAILABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TO THE ONE WHO DESIRES THE TRUTH

Do not take this affair lightly, may Allah bless you. The *ʿAqīdah* has been authored, penned down and it is available to you, even in English. If a person were to ask what to read, I would say open up *Sharḥ As-Sunnah* of Imām Barbahārī—there is a tremendous explanation by Shaykh Sālih Al-Fawzān (حفظه الله) in two volumes, in English. And take the book *Mountains of Knowledge* published by *Al-Maktabah Al-Salafiyyah* Birmingham where you have the *ʿAqīdah* of twelve of the great Scholars of the *Salaf* such as Al-Awzā'ī, At-Tustarī, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, Sufyān ath-Thawrī, Abu Hātim, Abu Zur'ah, Abul-Hasan Al-Ash'arī and others, may Allah's mercy be upon them.

There are other books that have been translated into English such as *Uṣūl As-Sunnah* (Foundations of the Sunnah) of *Imām* Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, *Kitāb at-Tawḥīd* of *Imām* Muḥammad bin ʿAbdul-Wahhāb, *The Creed of Imām Al-Bukhārī*, the *ʿAqīdah of Muḥammad bin ʿAbdul-Wahhāb* which is his letter to the people of Qasīm, so what is preventing you my brothers and sisters? Study these works with a person of understanding and live by them. Many of these works have been explained and they are available online or in written form, such as the explanations of Shaikh Ibn Bāz, Shaikh Ibn 'Uthaimīn, Shaykh al-Fawzān, Shaykh Aḥmad an-Najmī, Shaykh Rabee' and Shaykh ʿUbayd al-Jābirī, or through the explanations of their students, the students of knowledge—you will find some of them on salafisounds.com and elsewhere.

So, the texts of the precise and summarised books of *ʿAqīdah* of the early Scholars are recorded and accessible for the one who seeks the truth, and some of them can be found in English as I've stated. Here is a short list of the Scholars who clarified the *'Aqīdah* and the *Manhaj* of

the Saved Sect which has been preserved and recorded generation after generation:

- ʿAbdur-Raḥmān bin ʿAmr al-Awzāī (d. 157H)
- ʿUmar bin ʿAbdul-ʿAzīz (d. 101H)
- Sufyān ath-Thawrī (d. 161H)
- ʿAbdul-ʿAzīz bin al-Mājishūn (d. 164H)
- Mālik bin Anas (d. 179H)
- ʿAbdullāh bin Mubārak (d. 181H)
- Yūsuf bin Asbāṭ (d. 195H)
- Sufyān bin ʿUyaynah (d. 198H)
- Muḥammad bin Ismāʾīl ash-Shāfiʿī (d. 204H)
- ʿAbdullāh bin Zubyar al-Ḥumaydī (d. 219H)
- Isḥāq bin Rāhūyah, the companion of Imām Aḥmad (d. 238H)
- Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal (d. 241H)
- ʿAli al-Madīnī (d. 243H)
- Muḥammad bin Ismāʾīl al-Bukhārī, the great imam of Hadīth (d. 256H)
- Muḥammad bin Yaḥyá al-Dhuhalī, who was praised by Imām Aḥmad (d. 258H)
- Aḥmad bin Hānī al-Athram (d. 260H)
- Ismāʾīl bin Yaḥyā al-Muzanī (d. 264H)
- Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī (d. 277H)
- Abū Zurah ar-Rāzī (d. 264H)
- Abū ʿAbdur-Raḥmān bin Abī Ḥātim ar-Rāzī (d. 266H)
- Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī (d. 275H)
- Al-Ḥarb bin Ismāʾīl al-Kirmānī (d. 280H)
- Sahl bin ʿAbdillah at-Tustarī (d. 283H)
- Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim (d. 287H)
- Muḥammad bin Jarīr aṭ-Ṭabarī (d. 310)
- Ibn Abī Dāwūd as-Sijistānī (d. 316H)

- Ḥasan bin ʿAlī al-Barbahārī (d. 329H)
- Muḥammad bin Ḥusayn al-Ājurrī (d. 360H)
- Aḥmad bin Shāhīn (d. 385H)
- Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī (d. 386H)
- Ibn Baṭṭah al-ʿUkbarī (d. 387H)
- Ibn Abī Zamanīn (d. 399H)
- Maʿmar bin Aḥmad al-Aṣbahānī (d. 418H)
- ʿAbdul-Ghaniy al-Maqdisī (d. 600H)
- Shaykhul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728H), and of course he has treatises and books in the *ʿAqīdah* such as *Al-Hamawiyyah*, *At-Tadmuriyyah*, *Al-Wāṣiṭiyyah*, *Kitābul-Īmān* and other than them, which are too numerous to mention.

Many of them have not been translated into English yet, but some of them have. Seek them out—go to salafibookstore.com and other reputable *Maktabāt* and find out if they are available.

From the scholars of today who have also authored works and explained them, we have: ʿAbdul-ʿAzīz bin Bāz, Ibn ʿUthaymīn, Al-Fawzān, Rabee' Al-Madkhali, Muhammad Amān Al-Jāmī, Aḥmad an-Najmī, Zayd al-Madkhalī, etc. Likewise, we have the books in clarification of the *ʿAqīdah* and *Tawḥīd* of *Shaykhul-Islām* Muḥammad bin ʿAbdul-Wahhāb such as *Thalāthatul-Uṣūl*, *Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*, *Qawāʿid al-Arbaʿ*, *Uṣūl us-Sittah*, *Risālah ilā Ahlil-Qasīm*—some of which are small treatises, and some are larger works. These works and their explanations are available. Many available in English, in audio and written form. So, what excuse do you have?

Furthermore, there is the *ʿAqīdah* of *Imām* Aṭ-Ṭahāwī رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ, and the explanation of *Aṭ-Ṭahawiyyah* by Ibn Abil-ʿIzz al-Ḥanafī رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ checked, annotated and verified by Shaykh al-Albānī رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ. It was also explained by Sālih Al-Fawzān, Ibn Bāz and Ibn ʿUthaymīn—all of these are available.

May Allāh place the love of the *ʿAqīdah* in our hearts so that we never become bored and tired of it. We have mentioned a handful of books from the *Salaf*. If you cannot access the Arabic language, then some of the students of knowledge have explained them in English. Go to them, go to *salafisounds* online and begin upon your journey of knowledge, or re-embark upon your journey of knowledge. This subject of the *ʿAqīdah* and *Manhaj*, which encompasses the *Uṣūl* of *Ahlus-Sunnah*, one never gets bored of it, nor do we tire of it and it is foundation of our Religion and the basis of the unity of the *Ummah*. It is the foundation upon which we live and will die upon, إن شاء الله.

And all praise is due to Allah, Lord of all creation, and may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and all his Companions.

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