50 Scenario Questions

1. **What is the main purpose of The Creed of the Four Imaams?**

   Answer: It gathers important statements about creed from Imam Abu Haneefah, Imam Maalik, Imam ash-Shaafi'ee and Imam Ahmad. It shows their agreement in the main foundations of Sunni creed and explains the important reported difference concerning Iman.

2. **What are the main subjects studied in the book?**

   Answer: The main subjects are Tawheed, Allah's Names and Attributes, Qadar, Iman, the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and Kalaam.

3. **What should be the foundation when learning Islamic creed?**

   Answer: The Qur'an and authentic Sunnah should be the foundation. The human mind is used to understand revelation but it does not create new beliefs.

4. **What does Qur'an 9:100 teach about the early Muslims?**

   Answer: It praises the earliest Muhajirun and Ansar and those who follow them with excellence. The book uses this as evidence for following the way of the Salaf.

5. **Who are the Salaf?**

   Answer: The Salaf are the early Muslims, especially the Companions, the generation after them and the next generation who followed them correctly.

6. **What is Kalaam in the discussion of this book?**

   Answer: Kalaam means speculative theological argument that makes human reasoning and invented terms the foundation for discussing creed instead of beginning with revelation.

7. **Why did the early Imams warn against Kalaam?**

   Answer: They believed that creed should be taken from the Qur'an, Sunnah and the way of the early Muslims. Endless speculation can create confusion and move a person away from clear evidence.

8. **Does warning against Kalaam mean Muslims cannot ask questions or explain evidence?**

   Answer: No. Useful questions, teaching and explaining evidence are necessary. The warning is against replacing revelation with speculative arguments and invented religious ideas.

9. **Why does the book warn against unclear invented words in creed?**

   Answer: A new word can have more than one meaning. A person may accept or reject a word without knowing what the speaker means. The safer method is to use clear revealed language and explain any later term carefully.

10. What main beliefs did the four Imams agree upon?

Answer: They agreed on the main foundations, including affirming Allah's Names and Attributes, the Qur'an as Allah's Speech and not created, seeing Allah in the Hereafter, Qadar, respect for the Companions and warning against theological methods that oppose revelation.

11. What important difference does the book mention concerning the four Imams?

Answer: The book specifically discusses a reported difference concerning Iman. The position presented from Maalik, ash-Shaafi'ee and Ahmad includes words and actions and says Iman increases and decreases. A different definition is reported from Abu Haneefah.

12. What was Imam Abu Haneefah's method concerning Allah's Names and Attributes?

Answer: The reports say to affirm what Allah revealed about Himself without comparing Allah to creation and without asking exactly how His Attributes are.

13. What does Qur'an 7:180 teach?

Answer: Allah has the Beautiful Names and believers are commanded to call upon Him by those Names.

14. What does Qur'an 42:11 teach about Allah?

Answer: It teaches that nothing is like Allah and that He is All-Hearing and All-Seeing. This is important evidence for affirming Allah's Attributes without comparing Him to creation.

15. What did Abu Haneefah affirm concerning Allah's Speech?

Answer: He affirmed that speech is an Attribute of Allah, that Allah spoke directly to Musa (peace be upon him) and that the Qur'an is Allah's Speech and is not created.

16. What Qur'an verse states that Allah spoke directly to Musa (peace be upon him)?

Answer: Qur'an 4:164 states that Allah spoke directly to Musa (peace be upon him).

17. What does Qur'an 9:6 call the Qur'an?

Answer: It calls it the Speech of Allah. The book uses this as evidence that the Qur'an is Allah's Speech.

18. What did Abu Haneefah teach about Qadar?

Answer: Allah knew everything before it happened, everything was written, nothing happens outside Allah's knowledge, will and decree and people are still responsible for their real choices and actions.

19. What two wrong extremes about Qadar should a student avoid?

Answer: Do not say people act completely independently of Allah. Also do not say people have no real choices or responsibility. Allah decrees what happens and people are responsible for what they choose.

20. What definition of Iman is reported from Abu Haneefah in the book?

Answer: The reported position defines Iman as affirmation with the tongue and confirmation in the heart. The book presents this as different from the other three Imams concerning actions and increase or decrease of Iman.

21. How did Abu Haneefah teach Muslims to speak about the Companions?

Answer: He taught that the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) should be mentioned with goodness and respected.

22. What is the order of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs?

Answer: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman then Ali (may Allah be pleased with them).

23. What is Imam Maalik's famous lesson about Istiwa?

Answer: The meaning of Istiwa is known, its exact manner is unknown to us, believing in it is required and asking about its exact manner is an innovation.

24. What did Imam Maalik believe about seeing Allah in the Hereafter?

Answer: He affirmed that the believers will see Allah in the Hereafter.

25. What Qur'an evidence is used in the book concerning seeing Allah?

Answer: Qur'an 75:22–23 speaks about radiant faces looking toward their Lord. Qur'an 83:15 says some people will be veiled from their Lord and Sunni scholars used this in the discussion of the believers being granted the opposite honour.

26. What did Imam Maalik teach about Qadar?

Answer: He rejected the belief that human actions happen independently of Allah's decree. Allah's will and decree cover what happens.

27. What did Imam Maalik teach about Iman?

Answer: He taught that Iman includes words and actions and that Iman increases and decreases.

28. How is Qur'an 2:143 used as evidence concerning Iman?

Answer: Allah refers to the Muslims' earlier Salah as their Iman. The book uses this to show that an action can be included in Iman.

29. What does Qur'an 59:10 teach about earlier believers and the Companions?

Answer: It teaches later believers to ask Allah to forgive those who believed before them and to ask Allah not to place hatred in their hearts toward believers.

30. Why did Imam Maalik warn against changing religion because of skilled debaters?

Answer: If religion changed whenever a stronger debater appeared, a person would never remain firm upon revealed truth. Religion must be based on evidence, not debate skill.

31. What did Imam ash-Shaafi'ee teach about swearing oaths?

Answer: An oath should be made by Allah or His Names, not by created things. The book connects this with the belief that Allah's Names are not created.

32. What Hadith evidence is used about swearing?

Answer: The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) prohibited swearing by one's fathers and taught that a person who swears should swear by Allah or remain silent.

33. How did ash-Shaafi'ee use the creation as evidence for the Creator?

Answer: He directed a student away from speculative questions and toward the clear signs Allah placed in creation. Qur'an 2:163-164 is used to show that the heavens and earth contain signs pointing to the One Creator.

34. What did ash-Shaafi'ee teach about the Qur'an?

Answer: He affirmed that the Qur'an is the Speech of Allah and is not created.

35. What did ash-Shaafi'ee teach about Iman?

Answer: Iman includes words and actions. It increases through obedience and decreases through sin.

36. Which verses show an increase in faith or guidance?

Answer: Qur'an 9:124 says revelation increases believers in faith. Qur'an 18:13 says Allah increased the believing youth in guidance. Qur'an 8:2 also describes faith increasing when Allah's verses are recited.

37. How did ash-Shaafi'ee view the Companions?

Answer: He praised and respected them and recognized their special place in Islam. The order of excellence presented is Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman then Ali (may Allah be pleased with them).

38. What was ash-Shaafi'ee's position toward Kalaam?

Answer: He strongly warned against making Kalaam the foundation of religion. He directed people back to the Qur'an, Sunnah and knowledge of Hadith.

39. How did Imam Ahmad define Tawakkul in the reports of the book?

Answer: He described Tawakkul as the heart depending on Allah instead of depending on what created people possess.

40. What did Imam Ahmad teach about the Qur'an and Allah's Speech?

Answer: Allah has always been a Speaker and the Qur'an is Allah's Speech. It is not created.

41. How did Imam Ahmad deal with authentic reports about Allah's Attributes?

Answer: He accepted the authentic reports and passed them on as they came without inventing an exact manner or comparing Allah to creation.

42. What did Imam Ahmad teach about Iman?

Answer: Iman includes words and actions and it increases and decreases. Salah, Zakah and other acts of obedience are connected to Iman.

43. How does Qur'an 8:2–4 support the discussion of Iman?

Answer: The verses describe true believers whose faith increases when Allah's verses are recited. They then mention prayer and spending, connecting faith with belief and actions.

44. What did all four Imams teach about the Companions?

Answer: They respected the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and rejected attacking or insulting them. The book presents love and respect for the Companions as part of the Sunni way.

45. Give one short biography fact about each of the four Imams.

Answer: Abu Haneefah was a leading scholar of Iraq. Maalik was the great Imam of Madinah and author of al-Muwatta. Ash-Shaafi'ee was known for Qur'an, Hadith, Arabic and Fiqh. Ahmad was a major Imam of Hadith and Fiqh who travelled widely for knowledge.

46. What does Appendix One teach about the Sunni definition of Iman?

Answer: It teaches that Iman includes belief of the heart, words of the tongue and actions of the body. It also explains that Iman increases and decreases.

47. Why might an early scholar say, 'I am a believer, if Allah wills'?

Answer: The appendix explains that this could be said out of humility and to avoid claiming that one's Iman is complete and perfect. It did not necessarily mean doubt about being Muslim.

48. How should students understand the appendix about Muhammad Zahid al-Kawthari?

Answer: It is the author's criticism of al-Kawthari and should be kept separate from the earlier collected creed statements of the four Imams. Strong evaluations in that appendix belong to the author and the scholars he quotes.

49. What does Appendix Three mean when it says 'The Path Is One'?

Answer: It means Allah's revealed truth is one straight path. Qur'an 6:153 commands believers to follow Allah's straight path and not other paths that divide them.

50. What is the final main lesson of the book?

Answer: Return creed and religious understanding to the Qur'an, authentic Sunnah and the way of the early Muslims. Learn correct knowledge, act upon it and do not replace revelation with speculation or newly invented religious beliefs.