By Imam Abu Abdullah Ubaydullah ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Hamdan Ibn Battah al-Ukbari (917–997 C.E., 304–387 A.H.) May Allah have mercy on him.

Al-Ibanah al-Sughra means The Smaller Ibanah. This is an important matn because it teaches the foundations of the Sunnah and the correct Islamic belief. It explains the beliefs that a Muslim should hold firmly and warns against beliefs and ideas that oppose the Quran and Sunnah. Imam Ibn Battah al-Ukbari was a Hanbali scholar known for his knowledge of Hadith, Sunnah and Aqeedah. He travelled in search of knowledge from a young age, studied with many scholars and wrote several works about Islam and the Sunnah. The full title of this book means Explanation and Clarification of the Foundations of the Sunnah and the Religion, Staying Away from Those Who Oppose It and Separating from the People of Misguided Desires. Learning these lessons helps a Muslim understand the correct Aqeedah, follow the Sunnah, stay away from false beliefs and remain firm upon the Quran and Sunnah. These lessons are taught upon the Quran and Sunnah as understood by the Salaf (Pious Predecessors) of this Ummah.

Introduction to Tawheed

Tawheed is the most important knowledge we can learn. It is the greatest and noblest subject to study because it teaches us about Allah and how to worship Him correctly. A person who truly believes in Tawheed and lives according to it will be saved from Jahannam by the mercy of Allah. Allah created the jinn and mankind for Tawheed which means that we were created to worship Allah alone. Tawheed is a cause of success in this life and in the Hereafter. The scales were created, the sky was raised and the earth was spread for Tawheed and the worship of Allah alone.

What Is Tawheed?

The Arabic root letters of Tawheed are:

و ح د

The word وَحَّدَ means to make something one or to single something out.

Linguistically: Tawheed means to make something one without giving it any equal and to single something out.

Technically: Tawheed means to single out Allah alone in everything that belongs only to Him. This includes His Lordship, worshipping Him alone and His Names and Attributes. So Tawheed means believing that Allah alone is our Lord, Allah alone deserves all worship and Allah has His perfect Names and Attributes.

Three Categories of Tawheed

1. Tawheed of Lordship (تَوْحِيدُ الرُّبُوبِيَّةِ): This means believing that Allah alone is the Creator, Provider and Controller of everything. For example, Allah alone created the heavens and the earth. Allah alone gives life and death and Allah alone provides for His creation.

2. Tawheed of Worship (تَوْحِيدُ الْأُلُوهِيَّةِ): This means singling out Allah alone in all acts of worship. For example, we pray to Allah alone, make Dua to Allah alone, rely upon Allah and worship Him alone. We do not direct acts of worship to anyone besides Allah.

3. Tawheed of Allah's Names and Attributes (تَوْحِيدُ الْأَسْمَاءِ وَالصِّفَاتِ): This means believing in the Names and Attributes of Allah that are mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah in the correct way. For example, Allah is Ar-Rahman (الرَّحْمَنُ), the Most Merciful and Allah is As-Sami (السَّمِيعُ), the All-Hearing. Tawheed was not invented by later scholars. It is the message that Allah sent all the Prophets with. Scholars use these three categories to organize and explain what is already taught in the Quran and Sunnah. Therefore Tawheed and Shirk must be understood from the Quran and Sunnah and not from personal opinions.

Is Tawheed Mentioned in the Quran?

Ibn al-Qayyim explained that every Surah in the Quran contains Tawheed. In fact every verse in the Quran contains Tawheed, gives proof for Tawheed or calls people to Tawheed.

1st Type: Some verses give us information about the Names and Attributes of Allah or the Actions of Allah. This is called Tawheed of knowledge and information. We must believe everything Allah has told us about Himself.

2nd Type: Some verses call us to worship Allah alone without giving Him any partners and to leave everything that is worshipped besides Allah. This is the Tawheed of worshipping Allah and seeking Him alone.

3rd Type: Some verses contain commands and prohibitions. They teach us to obey Allah's commands and stay away from what Allah has prohibited. These are from the rights of Tawheed.

4th Type: Some verses tell us about the people of Tawheed and the rewards Allah has prepared for them.

5th Type: Some verses tell us about the people of Shirk, what can happen to them in this life and about their punishment in the next life.

Therefore the whole Quran includes these types of Tawheed. [Madaarij As-Salikeen, Vol. 3, Page 450]

Words That Show Tawheed

Words in the Quran such as أَحَدٌ and وَاحِدٌ teach us about Allah being One.

First Verse: Allah says:

"Or were you witnesses when death approached Jacob, when he said to his sons, 'What will you worship after me?' They said, 'We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, one God. And we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.'" [Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 133]

Ibn Katheer explained the words إِلَٰهًا وَاحِدًا, "one God", to mean that Allah is made One in worship. In simple words, Allah alone must be worshipped.

Second Verse: Allah says:

"And Allah has said, 'Do not take for yourselves two deities. He is but one God, so fear only Me.'" [Surah An-Nahl, verse 51]

Imam At-Tabari explained the words إِلَٰهًا وَاحِدًا, "one God", to mean that Allah is made One in His worship and His Lordship. This means Allah alone is our Lord and Allah alone deserves our worship. [Jami' al-Bayaan fi Ta'weel Al-Quran]

Third Verse: Allah says:

"They have certainly disbelieved who say, 'Allah is the third of three.' And there is no god except one God. And if they do not desist from what they are saying, there will surely afflict the disbelievers among them a painful punishment." [Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 73]

This verse teaches us that Allah is One. Allah has no partners and no one else deserves to be worshipped with Him.

Is Tawheed in the Sunnah?

Yes. Tawheed is also clearly taught in the Sunnah.

Sunnah means: The statements and actions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, things that happened in front of him that he approved of and his physical and personal qualities.

1. Hadeeth of Ibn Abbas: Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما reported that when the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم sent Muadh ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه to Yemen he told him:

"You will go to the People of the Book. Let the first thing that you call them to be to make Allah One."

يُوَحِّدُوا اللَّهَ

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

The words "make Allah One" come from the same Arabic root as Tawheed. The Arabic word used here is a present tense verb. This teaches us that making Allah One is not something that has a time limit. A Muslim must always worship Allah alone.

2. Hadeeth of Ibn Abbas: Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما also reported that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم told Muadh ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه:

"You are going to the People of the Book. When you come to them call them to the oneness of Allah."

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

This teaches us that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم told Muadh رضي الله عنه to begin by calling people to Tawheed.

3. Hadeeth of Ibn Umar: Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما reported that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"Islam is built upon five: that Allah is made One, establishing the prayer, paying the Zakah, fasting Ramadan and Hajj."

[Saheeh Muslim]

This narration directly connects Islam with making Allah One.

4. Hadeeth of Ibn Umar: Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما reported that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"Islam is built upon five: testifying that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, establishing the prayer, paying the Zakah, performing Hajj to the House and fasting Ramadan."

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari and Saheeh Muslim]

The first foundation mentioned is لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ, Laa ilaaha illa Allah: There is no one worthy of worship except Allah.

5. Hadeeth of Ibn Umar: Another narration from Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما mentions that Islam is built upon five and begins with worshipping Allah and rejecting everything worshipped besides Him.

[Saheeh Muslim]

From these narrations we understand that worshipping Allah alone is Tawheed.

Tawheed in the Statements of the Salaf

The Salaf are the Companions and the early generations of Muslims who came after them.

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"The best of you are my generation, then those who follow them, then those who follow them."

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

Their understanding of Tawheed came from the Quran and Sunnah.

Jaabir ibn Abdullah رضي الله عنه: Jaabir described the Hajj of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and explained that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم began his Hajj by declaring Tawheed in the Talbiyah:

لَبَّيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ لَبَّيْكَ، لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ، إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ وَالنِّعْمَةَ لَكَ وَالْمُلْكَ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ

"Here I am, O Allah, here I am. Here I am. You have no partner. All praise, blessings and the kingdom belong to You. You have no partner."

[Saheeh Muslim]

Jaabir رضي الله عنه used the word Tawheed to describe what the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was saying and doing. This shows that the Companions understood that declaring that Allah has no partners is Tawheed.

Hadeeth of the Delegation of Abdul Qais: A group from Abdul Qais came to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم commanded them to believe in Allah alone and asked:

"Do you know what is meant by believing in Allah alone?"

They replied:

"Allah and His Messenger know best."

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم explained:

"To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger."

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

This teaches us that believing in Allah alone includes believing that only Allah has the right to be worshipped.

Ataa ibn Abi Rabah

Ataa ibn Abi Rabah was from the Tabi'un. The Tabi'un were Muslims who learned from the Companions. He was also a Mufassir which means a scholar who explains the Quran.

Allah says:

"And whoever denies the faith, his work has become worthless, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers." [Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 5]

Ataa ibn Abi Rabah explained that faith or Iman in this verse means Tawheed.

[Tafseer At-Tabarani]

How the Scholars Explained Tawheed

The scholars of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah explained Tawheed through the statement:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

Laa ilaaha illa Allah

There is no one worthy of worship except Allah.

Imam Ad-Darimi said that the explanation of Tawheed in this Ummah is:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

Laa ilaaha illa Allah, Muhammadur Rasulullah. There is no one worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. [Naqd or Ar-Rad ala Bishr al-Mirrisi, Vol. 1, Page 152]

Imam Al-Ajuri said that Tawheed is to say:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

Laa ilaaha illa Allah with certainty in your heart. [Kitaab Ash-Shariah, Vol. 2, Page 553]

Having certainty means you truly believe it in your heart without doubt.

Why Do We Study Tawheed?

1. Allah created us to worship Him alone. We were created to single out Allah alone in our worship. We pray to Allah alone, make Dua to Him alone and direct our worship to Him alone.

2. Allah does not accept worship without Tawheed. Our worship must be sincerely for Allah alone and cannot be mixed with Shirk.

3. Tawheed is a cause of entering Jannah. A person must learn Tawheed, believe in it and live according to it. A person who dies upon true Tawheed will enter Jannah.

4. Tawheed is a cause of increasing the reward of good deeds. The stronger a person's Tawheed and sincerity to Allah are, the greater the blessings and rewards in their good deeds can be.

5. Tawheed is a cause for sins to be forgiven. Allah may forgive sins because of a person's sincere Tawheed and faith in Him.

6. Tawheed is a cause of guidance and security. Those who truly believe in Allah and protect their Tawheed from Shirk are promised guidance and security.

7. Tawheed is a cause of peace in the heart. Allah places peace and calmness in the hearts of the believers. True belief in Allah helps a believer remain firm and turn to Allah during easy and difficult times.

8. Tawheed is a cause of receiving the Prophet's ﷺ intercession. By the mercy and permission of Allah, the people of sincere Tawheed may receive the intercession of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Two Conditions for Correct Worship

Correct worship requires two conditions:

1. Sincerity to Allah (الْإِخْلَاصُ): All worship must be sincerely for Allah alone. The opposite of sincerity is Shirk. For example, when a person makes Dua they must make Dua to Allah alone and not direct their Dua to someone besides Allah.

2. Following the Prophet (الْمُتَابَعَةُ) ﷺ: We must worship Allah in the way that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught us. The opposite is inventing acts of worship that the Prophet ﷺ did not teach. For example, we pray Salah according to the way the Prophet ﷺ taught us. We do not invent a new type of Salah and call it part of Islam. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever does a deed which has not been ordered by us, then it is rejected." [Saheeh Muslim, Hadeeth 1718]

Sincerity without following the Sunnah is not enough. For example, a person may sincerely want to worship Allah but invent a new act of worship that the Prophet ﷺ never taught. Their good intention does not make the invented worship correct. Following the outward Sunnah while directing worship to someone other than Allah is also not enough. For example, a person may perform an act in the correct outward way but direct that worship to someone besides Allah. Both conditions are required. The worship must be sincerely for Allah alone and it must follow the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ is the only person Muslims must completely follow in the religion.

Why We Must Learn About Shirk

We must learn about Shirk so we can recognize it and stay away from it. Allah did not prohibit Shirk without explaining it. The Quran and Sunnah explain its meaning, types and dangers. Shirk is the opposite of Tawheed. Generally, Shirk means giving someone or something a share in something that belongs only to Allah. In worship it means directing an act of worship to someone or something besides Allah. Shirk is divided into Major Shirk and Minor Shirk.

Major Shirk (الشِّرْكُ الْأَكْبَرُ)

Major Shirk is directing an act of worship to someone or something besides Allah. It takes a person outside of Islam. For example, making Dua to the dead and asking them for something that only Allah can do is Major Shirk. Sacrificing an animal as an act of worship for someone besides Allah is another example. Major Shirk causes misguidance, removes security and destroys a person's deeds. If a person dies upon Major Shirk without repenting from it, Allah will not forgive it. It prevents the person who dies upon it from entering Paradise and leads to the Fire. Major Shirk is also the greatest injustice.

Minor Shirk (الشِّرْكُ الْأَصْغَرُ)

Minor Shirk does not take a person outside of Islam but it is still a serious sin. It makes a person's Tawheed and faith weaker and it can become a path that leads towards Major Shirk. One example is showing off in worship. For example, a person begins praying sincerely for Allah but then makes their prayer look better because they notice other people are watching them. This showing off can destroy the part of the worship in which it happens. Another example of Minor Shirk is swearing by someone or something besides Allah such as saying, "I swear by my father." A Muslim should swear by Allah or remain silent.

Hidden Shirk (الشِّرْكُ الْخَفِيُّ)

Shirk can also be hidden because it may be connected to what is inside a person's heart and may not be clear to other people. Showing off in worship is an example. A person may look like they are worshipping Allah while secretly wanting people to see them, praise them or think they are very religious. A Muslim should never feel completely safe from Shirk. Even Ibrahim عليه السلام asked Allah to protect him from Shirk.

Allah says:

"And [mention, O Muhammad], when Abraham said, 'My Lord, make this city [Makkah] secure and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols.'" [Surah Ibrahim, verse 35] If Ibrahim عليه السلام feared Shirk and asked Allah to protect him from it then we should also fear Shirk, learn about it and ask Allah to protect us from it.

The Prophet ﷺ also taught us to say: "O Allah, I seek refuge in You from associating partners with You knowingly and I seek Your forgiveness for what I do not know." [Musnad Ahmad] This teaches us to ask Allah to protect us from the Shirk we know about and the Shirk we may not recognize.

Final Summary

Tawheed means to single out Allah alone. We believe that Allah alone is our Lord, we worship Allah alone and we believe in Allah's Names and Attributes. Tawheed has three categories: Tawheed of Lordship, Tawheed of Worship and Tawheed of Allah's Names and Attributes. The Quran teaches Tawheed from beginning to end. It teaches us about Allah, calls us to worship Him alone, teaches us to obey His commands, tells us about the rewards for the people of Tawheed and warns us about Shirk. The Sunnah also teaches Tawheed. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم called people to worship Allah alone and taught his Companions to begin their call to others with Tawheed. For worship to be correct it must be sincerely for Allah alone and it must follow the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. We also learn about Shirk so we can recognize it and stay far away from it.

The meaning of Tawheed is clearly shown in:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ

There is no one worthy of worship except Allah. upon The Qur'aan & Sunnah as Understood by the Salaf (Pious Predecessors) of this Ummah,

Bismillah

Bismillah means "In the Name of Allah."

We begin with Bismillah for four reasons:

1. Following the Quran

Allah begins the Quran with Bismillah. This teaches us to begin with the Name of Allah.

2. Following the Prophet ﷺ

When the Prophet ﷺ wrote letters to kings and rulers, he began his letters with Bismillah. We follow his example by beginning with the Name of Allah.

3. Following the scholars

The scholars of Islam followed this practice and began their books and writings with Bismillah. We follow their example when beginning Islamic writings and lessons.

4. Seeking Allah's blessing

We begin with Bismillah to seek Allah's blessing in what we are doing. Saying Bismillah reminds us that all blessings come from Allah and that we depend upon Him.

When we say Bismillah before doing something, the action is understood even if we do not say it. For example, if we say Bismillah before drinking, it means, "In the Name of Allah, I drink." This teaches us to begin good actions with Allah's Name and seek His blessing.

The Basmalah contains three Names of Allah:

1. Allah: The One who alone deserves to be worshipped.
2. Ar-Rahman: The One whose mercy is vast and reaches all of creation.
3. Ar-Raheem: The One who gives special mercy to His believing servants.

We can see Allah's mercy through the many blessings He gives us such as rain, food, water and everything we need for life.

Ibn Battah's Introduction

Ibn Battah begins by praising Allah for His blessings. He says one of the greatest blessings is that Allah guided people to know Him, accept His Lordship, follow Islam and learn the Sunnah. He praises Allah for teaching what people did not know and asks Allah to guide him to correct speech and righteous action. He asks that his work be sincerely for Allah and that Allah protect him and the reader from mistakes and wrong opinions.

Why He Wrote the Book

He explains that he saw serious problems spreading among people: following desires, ugly opinions, changing the Sunnah, division, arguing without knowledge and following ignorant leaders after knowledge had already come. He says people were making religious arguments based on guesses, speaking about matters without proof and copying the religion of people who did not have evidence from the Qur'an or agreed teaching. Because of this, he collected teachings from the Prophet ﷺ and early Muslim scholars. His goal was to remind the reader to hold to the Sunnah, follow the Prophetic path and recognize religious innovations and confusing opinions.

The Four Parts of the Book

- Part One: holding to the Sunnah and Jama'ah and warning against division, desires and innovations.
- Part Two: the main beliefs that the author presents as the belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah.
- Part Three: worship, fiqh rulings, manners and daily practices.
- Part Four: practices the author classifies as innovations or prohibited newly introduced practices.

Part One: Holding Firmly to the Sunnah and Warning against Bid'ah

1. Staying with the Jama'ah

The first lesson is to stay united upon the religion of Allah and not create religious division. The editor explains that Jama'ah is not simply the largest crowd. It means holding to the truth, the Prophetic way and the path of the Companions.

Qur'an evidence: Allah commands the believers to hold firmly together to His rope and not become divided.

Reference: Surah Aal Imran, 3:103.

Explanation: Unity must be built on Allah's guidance. A large number of people does not make an idea correct if it leaves revelation.

Qur'an evidence: Allah warns the believers not to become like people who divided after clear proofs came to them.

Reference: Surah Aal Imran, 3:105.

Explanation: Knowledge should lead to following the truth, not creating new religious paths.

Qur'an evidence: Allah praises believers who stand together in His cause like a firm structure.

Reference: Surah as-Saff, 61:4.

Explanation: Believers should be united upon obedience to Allah and should support one another upon the truth.

2. The Qur'an and Sunnah Must Be Followed Together

The Sunnah explains the Qur'an. The author strongly rejects the idea that a Muslim should accept the Qur'an while refusing the authentic teachings of the Messenger ﷺ.

Qur'an evidence: Allah sent the Reminder to the Messenger ﷺ so that he could explain to people what was revealed to them.

Reference: Surah an-Nahl, 16:44.

Explanation: The Prophet ﷺ was sent to explain revelation, not only to recite it.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ said that he was given the Book and something like it with it.

Reference: Sunan Abi Dawud, 4604.

Explanation: The authentic Sunnah has authority in the religion. A Muslim does not say that only the Qur'an matters while rejecting the Prophet's explanation.

3. Hold Firmly to the Sunnah

The book repeatedly praises the person who remains firm upon the Sunnah when confusion, arguments and new religious ideas spread.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ instructed Muslims to hold firmly to his Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly guided Caliphs.

Reference: Sunan Abi Dawud, 4607; Jami at-Tirmidhi, 2676. At-Tirmidhi graded it Hasan Sahih.

Explanation: When disagreements appear, the student returns to Prophetic guidance rather than inventing a new religious path. Early scholars described the Sunnah as a protection and a path that should be followed even when other ideas become popular. They warned that leaving established guidance for personal opinion can lead a person away from the truth.

4. Bid'ah and Newly Invented Religious Practices

Bid'ah in this section means adding a religious belief, rule or act of worship without evidence from Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. The book treats this as a serious danger because religion is received from revelation.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ said that whoever introduces into the religion something that does not belong to it will have it rejected.

Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 2697; Sahih Muslim, 1718.

Explanation: Good intentions do not make a new religious practice correct. Worship must agree with revealed guidance.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ taught that newly invented religious matters are misguidance.

Reference: Sahih Muslim, 867, in the Hadith of Jabir ibn Abdullah.

Explanation: The safe path is to follow what was taught instead of trying to improve the religion by invention.

The book also records statements that an innovation can become more dangerous than an ordinary sin when a person believes the innovation itself is religion and refuses correction.

5. Do Not Make the Qur'an Fight against Itself

A repeated warning is not to take one verse and use it to cancel another verse. Revelation is all true. Verses are understood together and through the Prophetic explanation.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ became angry when people argued by setting parts of revelation against other parts.

Reference: Sunan Ibn Majah, 85.

Explanation: A student should collect the evidence and understand it together instead of using one text to attack another.

6. Avoid Religious Argument for Pride or Confusion

The book distinguishes sincere learning from useless argument. Asking to understand is good. Arguing to defeat people, show off, create doubts or force personal opinions into revelation is condemned.

Qur'an evidence: Allah condemns people who argue about His signs without authority.

Reference: Surah Ghafir, 40:35 and 40:56.

Explanation: Religious discussion needs knowledge, evidence and sincerity.

Students should stop when there is no clear knowledge, say "I do not know" when necessary and not chase strange questions simply to create debate.

7. Personal Opinion Does Not Overrule Revelation

The author includes many statements criticizing ra'y when it means personal religious opinion that opposes a clear text. This does not mean scholars never reason. It means human reasoning remains under revelation.

Qur'an evidence: Allah tells believers not to put themselves forward before Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

Reference: Surah al-Hujurat, 49:1.

Explanation: When clear revelation is established, personal preference does not become more important than it.

8. Hawa: Following Desire

Hawa means desire that pulls a person away from truth. The book warns that repeated following of desire can make a person begin to see wrong as right.

Qur'an evidence: Allah warns against following desire because it can lead away from His path.

Reference: Surah Sad, 38:26.

Explanation: Wanting something strongly does not make it true or lawful.

Qur'an evidence: Allah describes a person who takes his desire as if it were his god.

Reference: Surah al-Jathiyah, 45:23.

Explanation: A person must not let feelings become the final judge of religion.

9. Be Careful Who Teaches You

A major theme is that students are affected by teachers, close friends and the people they regularly listen to. The book tells the reader to choose people of knowledge, Sunnah and good character.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ taught that a person is strongly affected by the religion and way of a close friend, so a person should look carefully at whom he takes as a close friend.

Reference: Sunan Abi Dawud, 4833; Jami at-Tirmidhi, 2378. At-Tirmidhi graded it Hasan.

Explanation: Friends and teachers can strengthen good habits or slowly change a person's beliefs and behaviour.

10. Knowledge Must Come before Speaking

The book warns that when scholars die, ignorant people may be treated as leaders. They can answer without knowledge and mislead themselves and others.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ said Allah does not remove knowledge by simply pulling it out of people. Knowledge is taken away through the death of scholars until ignorant leaders are asked and answer without knowledge.

Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 100; Sahih Muslim, 2673.

Explanation: Students should respect qualified knowledge and should not rush to give religious rulings.

11. Respect the Companions

The Companions have a large place in the book. The reader is taught to love them, speak about them with respect and avoid turning the disputes that happened among some of them into a reason for insults.

Qur'an evidence: Allah says He is pleased with the first Muhajirun and Ansar and those who follow them correctly.

Reference: Surah at-Tawbah, 9:100.

Explanation: Allah praised the early Companions, so students should speak about them with respect.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ warned people not to insult his Companions.

Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 3673; Sahih Muslim, 2541.

Explanation: Their closeness to the Prophet ﷺ and their service to Islam gives them a special place.

12. Warnings about Taking Religion from People of Innovation

The book contains many early statements warning against taking religion from teachers whose teachings were viewed as innovations. Some statements use very strong language. Students should understand the lesson as protecting their religion and choosing trustworthy teachers.

The recurring lesson is to protect one's religion, not to learn beliefs from unreliable sources and not to turn religious disagreement into endless arguments. The edition also records detailed historical rulings about prayer, marriage, food, funerals and social contact with different groups.

Part Two: Belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah

Ibn Battah then moves into a direct summary of belief. He covers Iman, Qadar, the Qur'an, Allah's Attributes, the Hereafter, angels, Prophets, the Companions and leadership.

1. Iman: Belief, Speech and Action

The book presents Iman as something connected to the heart, the tongue and actions. It is not treated as a word with no effect on behaviour.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ said Iman has many branches. The highest is the statement that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and removing harm from the road is also a branch of Iman.

Reference: Sahih Muslim, 35.

Explanation: The Hadith includes speech, belief and action under the name Iman.

Hadith evidence: In the Hadith of Jibril, the Prophet ﷺ explained the main foundations of Iman.

Reference: Sahih Muslim, 8.

Explanation: A Muslim believes in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day and Qadar.

2. Iman Increases and Decreases

Qur'an evidence: Allah says that when His verses are recited to the believers, their faith increases.

Reference: Surah al-Anfal, 8:2.

Explanation: The Qur'an directly describes Iman as increasing.

Qur'an evidence: Allah sent calmness into the hearts of the believers so they would increase in faith along with their faith.

Reference: Surah al-Fath, 48:4.

Explanation: Obedience, knowledge and worship can strengthen Iman.

The book also discusses the phrase "I am a believer, if Allah wills" and records early discussion about avoiding self-praise when speaking about one's own complete faith.

3. Islam, Iman and Major Sins

The edition discusses the relationship between Islam and Iman and the disagreement with the Murji'ah. It also teaches that committing a major sin does not automatically make every Muslim a disbeliever. The sinner remains under Allah's judgement unless the act itself includes clear disbelief.

Qur'an evidence: Allah says He does not forgive Shirk for the person who dies upon it, but He may forgive what is less than that for whom He wills.

Reference: Surah an-Nisa, 4:48.

Explanation: This verse is used to distinguish Shirk from sins that are below it.

4. Tawheed in Worship

Worship belongs to Allah alone. The fiqh and warning sections later apply this principle to oaths, sacrifice, Du'a, unseen knowledge, omens and charms.

Qur'an evidence: Allah says that He alone is worshipped and that no partner is to be associated with Him.

Reference: Surah an-Nisa, 4:36.

Explanation: Every act of worship must be directed to Allah alone.

The book warns against swearing by other than Allah, attaching religious power to omens, fortune-telling and claims of independent knowledge of the unseen.

5. The Qur'an Is the Speech of Allah

The book strongly affirms that the Qur'an is the Speech of Allah and is not created. It records the severe historical language used by early scholars during the created-Qur'an controversy.

Qur'an evidence: Allah calls the Qur'an the Speech of Allah.

Reference: Surah at-Tawbah, 9:6.

Explanation: The Qur'an is directly described as Allah's Speech.

Qur'an evidence: Allah spoke directly to Musa عليه السلام.

Reference: Surah an-Nisa, 4:164.

Explanation: Speaking is affirmed for Allah in a way that suits His Majesty.

The text also discusses people who stopped and refused to say whether the Qur'an was created and people who used the phrase "my pronunciation of the Qur'an is created." The historical rulings are preserved as part of the source, but students should learn the positive belief clearly: the Qur'an is the Speech of Allah.

6. Allah's Names and Attributes

The book accepts the Attributes that came in the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah. It warns against denying them, changing their meanings to escape the wording or comparing Allah to creation.

Qur'an evidence: Nothing is like Allah and He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

Reference: Surah ash-Shura, 42:11.

Explanation: The verse combines two truths: Allah has real Attributes and nothing resembles Him.

The text discusses Allah's Face, Hands, hearing, seeing, speech, rising over the Throne, descent and other Attributes found in revelation. These are accepted in a way that suits Allah's Majesty.

7. Allah Rose over the Throne

Qur'an evidence: The Most Merciful rose over the Throne.

Reference: Surah Ta-Ha, 20:5.

Explanation: The text accepts the wording as revelation and does not compare Allah's rising over the Throne to created beings.

8. Allah Descends during the Last Third of the Night

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ taught that Allah descends to the lowest heaven during the last third of the night and calls His servants to ask, make Du'a and seek forgiveness.

Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 1145; Sahih Muslim, 758.

Explanation: The book accepts the Hadith as it came. The practical lesson is to value night prayer, Du'a and seeking forgiveness.

9. The Believers Will See Allah in the Hereafter

Qur'an evidence: Allah describes bright faces on the Day of Resurrection looking toward their Lord.

Reference: Surah al-Qiyamah, 75:22-23.

Explanation: The text uses this as evidence that the believers will see Allah in the Hereafter.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ said the believers will see their Lord clearly, as people clearly see the full moon without crowding or confusion.

Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 7434; Sahih Muslim, 633.

Explanation: The comparison is about the clarity of seeing. It is not a comparison between Allah and the moon.

10. Qadar

Qadar means Allah's decree. The book teaches that Allah knew everything before it happened and that His knowledge is complete. It strongly rejects the early form of Qadari belief that denied Allah's prior knowledge.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ included belief in Qadar among the foundations of Iman.

Reference: Sahih Muslim, 8.

Explanation: Belief in Qadar is part of basic Islamic faith.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ said Allah wrote the decrees of creation fifty thousand years before creating the heavens and earth.

Reference: Sahih Muslim, 2653.

Explanation: Nothing surprises Allah. His knowledge is complete.

Qur'an evidence: Allah says He created everything according to a decree.

Reference: Surah al-Qamar, 54:49.

Explanation: Everything happens within Allah's knowledge and decree.

The book also warns against arguing about Qadar without knowledge and records strong historical rulings against those who denied Allah's knowledge.

11. Angels

Belief in the angels is required. The book names Jibril as the trusted angel of revelation, Israfil as the angel who blows the Trumpet and the angel of death who takes souls. It also discusses the two angels who question the dead.

Qur'an evidence: Allah praises Jibril as the trustworthy messenger who brings revelation by Allah's permission.

Reference: Surah al-Baqarah, 2:97.

Explanation: Jibril عليه السلام is a real angel entrusted with revelation.

12. The Trial and Punishment of the Grave

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ regularly sought Allah's protection from the punishment of the grave.

Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 1377; Sahih Muslim, 588.

Explanation: The punishment of the grave is treated as a real matter of the unseen.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ taught that the dead person is questioned in the grave.

Reference: Jami at-Tirmidhi, 1071. At-Tirmidhi graded it Hasan Gharib.

Explanation: The life of Barzakh includes a real test after death.

13. Resurrection, the Gathering and Judgement

Qur'an evidence: Allah says that people die and then will be raised on the Day of Resurrection.

Reference: Surah al-Mu'minun, 23:15-16.

Explanation: Death is not the end. Every person will return to Allah.

The book affirms the blast of the Trumpet, resurrection from the graves, gathering, questioning and Allah's perfect justice.

14. The Sirat

The Sirat is affirmed as part of the events of the Last Day.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ described the bridge and said that the supplication of the Messengers at that time will be: "O Allah, keep us safe, keep us safe."

Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 7439; Sahih Muslim, 183.

Explanation: The Hereafter is serious. Faith and righteous action prepare a person to meet Allah.

15. The Scale

Qur'an evidence: Allah says that He will set up just scales on the Day of Resurrection and no soul will be wronged.

Reference: Surah al-Anbiya, 21:47.

Explanation: Allah's judgement is perfectly fair.

The book affirms the Scale and teaches that Allah will give perfect justice on the Day of Resurrection.

16. The Hawd and Intercession

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ described the Hawd given to him on the Day of Resurrection.

Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 6579; Sahih Muslim, 2292.

Explanation: The Hawd is a real event of the Last Day.

Qur'an evidence: No one can intercede with Allah except with His permission.

Reference: Surah al-Baqarah, 2:255.

Explanation: Intercession is real but completely under Allah's authority.

17. Paradise and Hell

The book teaches that Paradise and Hell are real and already created.

Qur'an evidence: Allah says Paradise has been prepared for the people of Taqwa.

Reference: Surah Aal Imran, 3:133.

Explanation: The word "prepared" supports the teaching that Paradise already exists.

Qur'an evidence: Allah says the Fire has been prepared for the disbelievers.

Reference: Surah Aal Imran, 3:131.

Explanation: Hell is treated as a real creation, not only a symbol.

18. The Jinn and Shayatin

Qur'an evidence: Allah tells us that a group of jinn listened to the Qur'an and believed in it.

Reference: Surah al-Jinn, 72:1-2.

Explanation: Jinn are real created beings. Some believe and some reject faith.

Qur'an evidence: Allah says He created the jinn from a smokeless flame of fire.

Reference: Surah ar-Rahman, 55:15.

Explanation: Jinn are a creation different from human beings.

The book also warns against trying to use jinn, magic writings, fortune-telling and practices connected to claims about hidden knowledge.

19. The Dajjal and the Return of Isa عليه السلام

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ repeatedly warned his Ummah about the Dajjal.

Reference: Sahih Muslim, 2937, with many other authentic narrations.

Explanation: The Dajjal is a real future trial. Students should learn the authentic teaching without rumours or guessing.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ taught that Isa ibn Maryam عليه السلام will descend near the end of time.

Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 3448; Sahih Muslim, 155.

Explanation: The return of Isa عليه السلام is part of the signs of the Last Day.

20. The Prophets

The book affirms the Prophets and discusses Adam, Ibrahim, Musa, Isa and Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. It affirms that Allah spoke to Musa, took Ibrahim as a close friend, created Adam and sent Muhammad ﷺ as the final Messenger.

It also discusses the Isra and Mi'raj and special virtues of the Prophet ﷺ.

21. The Companions

The Companions are praised and respected. The book teaches love for Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali, may Allah be pleased with them all, and warns against insulting the Companions.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ said the best people are his generation, then the generation after them, then the generation after them.

Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 2652; Sahih Muslim, 2533.

Explanation: The earliest generations have a special rank because of their closeness to the Prophetic teaching.

Qur'an evidence: Allah says He is pleased with the first Muhajirun and Ansar and those who follow them correctly.

Reference: Surah at-Tawbah, 9:100.

Explanation: Allah Himself praised the early Companions.

22. Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali

The book presents Abu Bakr as the best of the Ummah after the Prophet ﷺ, followed by Umar, Uthman and Ali, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Hadith evidence: Ibn Umar said that during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ they regarded Abu Bakr as the best, then Umar, then Uthman.

Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 3655.

Explanation: This is used to show the early recognition of their special rank.

The book also records the virtues of Ali and warns against both insulting him and exaggerating about him.

23. Aishah may Allah be pleased with her

Qur'an evidence: Allah revealed verses clearing Aishah from the false accusation.

Reference: Surah an-Nur, 24:11-26.

Explanation: The Qur'an itself established her innocence. Accusing her of what Allah cleared her from is treated very seriously in the book.

24. Leadership and Obedience

The source includes a section on Muslim leadership. It teaches obedience in what is right and rejects obedience when a person is ordered to disobey Allah. It also warns against chaos and religious division.

Qur'an evidence: Allah commands believers to obey Allah, obey the Messenger ﷺ and those in authority among them.

Reference: Surah an-Nisa, 4:59.

Explanation: Authority is recognized but obedience to people never cancels obedience to Allah.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ taught that obedience is only in what is right.

Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 7257; Sahih Muslim, 1840.

Explanation: No human being is obeyed in a command to commit a sin.

Part Three: Fiqh Issues and Islamic Manners

Part Three includes many practical matters. Some issues are matters in which jurists differed. These notes keep the position presented in this book without pretending every fiqh issue has only one scholarly view.

1. Salah: Main Practices

- Raise the hands at the opening Takbir, before Ruku' and after rising from Ruku'. Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 735; Sahih Muslim, 390.
- Pray with calmness and do not rush the movements.
- Follow the Imam and do not deliberately race ahead of him.
- Avoid unnecessary movement, playing with clothing, beard, fingers or stones during Salah.
- The book discusses where to look, hand placement, saying Amin aloud, Qunut, Witr and other prayer details.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ taught the man who prayed badly to repeat his prayer and to become calm in each position.

Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 757; Sahih Muslim, 397.

Explanation: Salah is not meant to be rushed. Each main position should be performed with calmness.

2. Congregational Prayer and Jumu'ah

- The book encourages walking to the Masjid and praying with the congregation.
- It discusses praying behind Muslim Imams and questions about praying behind people the author classified as innovators.
- It teaches listening quietly to the Friday Khutbah and facing the Khateeb.
- It discusses Tahiyyat al-Masjid even when the Imam is giving the Khutbah.

Qur'an evidence: Allah tells believers to leave ordinary trade and go to the remembrance of Allah when the call for Jumu'ah is made.

Reference: Surah al-Jumu'ah, 62:9.

Explanation: Jumu'ah has a special place in the week and ordinary business is left for it.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ warned that even telling another person to be quiet during the Friday Khutbah counts as idle speech.

Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 934; Sahih Muslim, 851.

Explanation: The listener should pay attention to the Khutbah.

3. Masjid Manners

- Enter with the right foot and leave with the left, using the Du'a taught in the Sunnah.
- Walk to the Masjid with calmness and dignity.
- Do not turn the Masjid into a marketplace.
- The book discourages loud worldly talk, lost-property announcements and unsuitable speech in the Masjid.
- It criticizes decorating Masjids for display and making pulpits unnecessarily tall.

4. Adhan

The book discusses the wording of the Adhan, criticizes singing or over-melodizing it and records the author's view against taking payment for the Adhan.

5. Food and Drink

- Eat and drink with the right hand.
- Eat from the part of the dish nearest to you and avoid taking from the middle in a way that disturbs others.
- Respect food that falls by removing dirt from it when safe and not wasting it.
- Do not breathe into the drinking vessel.
- The book discusses washing the hands around meals, avoiding very hot food and other table manners.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ told a young boy to mention Allah's Name, eat with his right hand and eat from what was near him.

Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 5376; Sahih Muslim, 2022.

Explanation: Islam teaches manners even in ordinary actions such as eating.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ instructed Muslims to eat and drink with the right hand.

Reference: Sahih Muslim, 2020.

Explanation: The right hand is used for eating and drinking as part of Prophetic manners.

6. Animals and Slaughter

The book teaches kindness when slaughtering animals and warns against sharpening a knife in front of the animal. It also discusses which animals and foods are lawful or disliked according to the author's fiqh positions.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ taught excellence and kindness in slaughter and instructed that the blade be sharpened and the animal be spared unnecessary suffering.

Reference: Sahih Muslim, 1955.

Explanation: Even when an animal is lawfully slaughtered for food, unnecessary suffering is not allowed.

7. Clothing, Grooming and Appearance

- Begin with the right side when putting on clothing and the left when removing it.
- The book discusses beard and moustache grooming, dyeing hair, men wearing saffron-coloured fragrance or dye and clothing length.
- It prohibits gold and silk for men in the way presented by the Sunnah and discusses vessels made from gold and silver.
- It includes some fiqh opinions where the strength of the evidence differs. Students should distinguish the author's fiqh choice from matters supported by stronger Hadith evidence.

8. Family, Marriage and Privacy

The book covers marriage, divorce, the waiting period, the guardian and witnesses, fairness between wives, privacy between spouses and kind treatment.

Qur'an evidence: Allah commands husbands to live with their wives in kindness.

Reference: Surah an-Nisa, 4:19.

Explanation: Marriage requires good treatment and fairness.

Qur'an evidence: Allah commands a man who fears he cannot be just between multiple wives to marry only one.

Reference: Surah an-Nisa, 4:3.

Explanation: Justice is a serious responsibility.

The book also discusses marital manners. Some evidence in this area is weaker or very detailed, so students should focus on the clear principles: protect privacy, avoid harm and follow authentic guidance.

9. Good Character and Social Manners

- Do not declare something halal or haram without evidence.
- Do not lie in oaths.
- Avoid wastefulness and also avoid unhealthy stinginess.
- Treat neighbours well.
- Do not attack people's family lineage.
- Treat workers and dependants with kindness, food and clothing.
- The book also discusses modesty, tattoos, removing facial hair, standing for people and other social customs.

10. Knowledge

Knowledge has a major place in the book. Students are warned not to give rulings without knowledge, not to chase trick questions and not to speak about Allah's Book from ignorance.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ warned that when scholars die, ignorant leaders may answer questions without knowledge and mislead people.

Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 100; Sahih Muslim, 2673.

Explanation: Religious knowledge needs qualified learning, not guessing.

- Preserve Hadith and return disputes to the Qur'an and Sunnah.
- Do not take religious knowledge from a person whose teaching is not trusted.
- The book criticizes speculative Kalam and books the author believed contained harmful innovations.
- It allows learning practical astronomy used for directions and navigation while rejecting astrology and claims about the unseen.

11. Qur'an and Tafsir

- Do not make Qur'an verses contradict each other.
- Do not argue about the Qur'an without knowledge.
- Reciting the Qur'an is praised.
- The book discusses the seven modes/letters in which the Qur'an was revealed.
- It criticizes screaming or striking oneself while listening to Qur'an and criticizes reading it in theatrical melodies.
- It discusses decorating Mushafs and taking payment for teaching Qur'an as positions held by the author.

12. Purification and Wudu

The book contains practical rulings about purification, Wudu and cleanliness. It connects outward cleanliness with preparation for Salah and daily manners.

Where the author gives a specific fiqh choice, students should remember that some detailed purification issues have recognized scholarly differences.

13. Fasting, Zakah and Charity

The fiqh index includes fasting, Zakah and charity. The book keeps these subjects brief compared with Salah and manners. The main approach is to perform obligations according to the Sunnah and avoid adding invented religious forms.

14. Hajj

The book includes Hajj-related practices and grooming matters connected to Hajj and Umrah. It also uses Hajj examples to show the importance of following the Sunnah rather than personal opinion.

15. Business and Earnings

The book discusses lawful earnings, sales and practices it considers unlawful. It also warns against buying and selling inside the Masjid and against earnings connected to prohibited activities.

16. Illness, Funerals and Graves

- The book discusses the number of Takbirs in the funeral prayer.
- It prohibits wailing and extreme mourning practices.
- It warns against building over graves and making religious journeys specifically to graves.
- It lists practices around death that the author considered innovations.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ prohibited plastering graves, sitting on them and building over them.

Reference: Sahih Muslim, 970.

Explanation: Graves are respected without turning them into decorated religious sites.

17. Games, Singing and Entertainment

The book warns against gambling-type games and criticizes singing and professional singing as understood by the author and editor. It also criticizes a devotional performance called taghbir in the Masjid.

18. Ruqyah and Medicine

The book distinguishes lawful treatment and Ruqyah from occult practices, fortune-telling, magic writings and trying to control jinn. Protection and healing are sought from Allah through lawful means.

Part Four: Practices and Innovations the Author Warns Against

In Part Four, Ibn Battah sometimes uses the word Bid'ah broadly for prohibited practices that are not part of the revealed religious way. This means not every item in this part is a newly invented act of worship in the narrow technical sense. Some are ordinary prohibitions that he groups under the wider idea of leaving the Sunnah.

1. Wailing and Extreme Mourning

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ said that wailing over the dead was among practices from the time of ignorance that remained among some people.

Reference: Sahih Muslim, 934.

Explanation: Sadness is natural but Islam forbids extreme mourning practices that oppose patience.

2. Singing and Paid Performers

The author includes singing and paid female singers among practices he condemns. The edition also discusses how early scholars understood this issue.

3. Fortune-Telling, Omens and Astrology

Qur'an evidence: Allah says no one in the heavens and earth knows the unseen except Allah.

Reference: Surah an-Naml, 27:65.

Explanation: No fortune-teller or astrologer has independent knowledge of the unseen.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ gave a severe warning about going to a fortune-teller and asking about hidden matters.

Reference: Sahih Muslim, 2230.

Explanation: A Muslim does not build faith or major decisions on fortune-telling.

The book allows practical knowledge of stars for directions and navigation while rejecting astrology that claims stars reveal destiny or hidden events.

4. Charms, Amulets and Occult Writings

The author warns against amulets, magic writings and books of spells. He also warns against practices that claim to use jinn.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ warned against Tamimah, an amulet worn for protection.

Reference: Musnad Ahmad, 17422, with related narrations.

Explanation: Protection is sought from Allah. Objects are not given hidden powers without evidence.

5. Excessive Reactions while Hearing Qur'an

The author criticizes screaming, striking oneself or turning Qur'an recitation into dramatic performance. The goal of Qur'an is guidance, reflection, fear of Allah and obedience.

6. Religious Groups, Alliances and Partisanship

The author warns against forming religious loyalties that compete with loyalty to the revealed religion. The editor later applies some of these warnings to groups from his own time. Those modern applications are the editor's comments, not words written by Ibn Battah in the fourth century AH.

7. Taghbir and Religious Performance in Masjids

Taghbir was a type of rhythmic devotional performance. The author criticizes it, especially when it turns the Masjid into a place of entertainment rather than worship and knowledge.

8. Practices Connected to Graves

The author warns against building over graves and making special religious journeys to graves. He wants respect for the dead without turning graves into places of invented worship.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ warned against taking graves as places of worship.

Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, 435; Sahih Muslim, 531-532.

Explanation: Respect for righteous people must not become worship at their graves.

9. Over-Decorating Masjids

The author criticizes decorating Masjids for display and making religious buildings a place for competition in appearance.

Hadith evidence: The Prophet ﷺ warned that a time would come when people would compete in decorating Masjids.

Reference: Sunan Abi Dawud, 449; Sunan an-Nasa'i, 689.

Explanation: The purpose of a Masjid is worship, not showing wealth or competing in decoration.

10. Melodizing the Adhan and Qur'an

The author criticizes turning the Adhan or Qur'an into a performance style that changes the normal dignity of recitation. The issue is not having a pleasant voice. The concern is theatrical singing that changes the form or meaning.

11. Decorating Mushafs

The author criticizes making Mushafs objects of luxury and decoration. The Qur'an is meant to be read, understood and followed.

Qur'an evidence: Allah describes the Qur'an as a blessed Book revealed so people will reflect on its verses and take reminder.

Reference: Surah Sad, 38:29.

Explanation: The main purpose of the Mushaf is guidance and reflection, not decoration.

12. Payment for Religious Duties

The author records strict views about taking payment for teaching Qur'an, Adhan, leading Salah and washing the dead. These are fiqh positions in the source. Later jurists discussed these questions in more detail and did not all give the same ruling.

13. Harmful Books and Religious Writings

The author and editor strongly warn against books they believe spread false beliefs. The student lesson is to be careful about sources and to learn religion from trustworthy scholarship. Historical statements about physically destroying books are not instructions for students to damage other people's property.

14. Naming and Warning against Historical Sects

The final pages name historical sects and individuals connected to Jahmiyyah, Qadariyyah, Murji'ah, Rafidah, Khawarij and other theological movements. The purpose in the source is to identify teachings the author rejects.

Students should learn the beliefs being discussed rather than using labels carelessly against people today. A label can have a technical historical meaning and should not be applied without knowledge.

15. The Closing Advice

The book closes with a prayer asking Allah for protection from false beliefs, for life upon Islam and Sunnah and for death upon them. The final message returns to the main purpose of the whole work: learn the religion from revelation, hold firmly to the Prophetic way and protect the heart from confusion.

Detailed Topic Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure you understand the main subjects covered in the book.

Belief and Sunnah Topics

- Islam as one of Allah's greatest blessings and the meaning of a good life through Islam and Sunnah.
- Prophets and Messengers: Musa عليه السلام, Ibrahim عليه السلام, Isa عليه السلام, Adam عليه السلام and special matters connected to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.
- Iman: its meaning, its parts, increase and decrease, Islam and Iman, major sins and the historical disagreement with the Murji'ah.
- Tawheed in worship: fear and hope, oaths, claims about stars, fortune-telling, omens, occult writings, jinn and journeys connected to graves.
- Holding to the Sunnah and Jama'ah, defining Jama'ah, reasons people leave the Sunnah, following the Salaf and warnings against abandoning the Sunnah.
- Criticism of unsupported religious opinion, desires, argument and theological disputation.
- Bid'ah: its danger, how innovations replace Sunnah and specific practices the author classifies as innovations.
- Jinn and devils.
- Paradise and Hell.
- Leadership, authority, obedience in what is right and avoiding religious chaos.
- The Companions and their virtues, especially Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali and Aishah, may Allah be pleased with them.
- Allah's Attributes and accepting revealed texts without comparing Allah to creation.
- The grave, questioning and punishment or comfort in Barzakh.
- Qadar and Allah's complete prior knowledge.
- The Qur'an as the uncreated Speech of Allah.
- Trials, signs of the Hour, resurrection, Sirat, Scale, Hawd, intercession, Paradise, Hell, Dajjal and the return of Isa عليه السلام.
- Historical treatment of people the author classified as innovators.
- Angels, including Jibril, Israfil, the angel of death and the questioning angels.
- Matters the author and editor list under beliefs that contradict Islam. These are presented as source material, not as permission for students to make personal takfir judgments.

Fiqh and Manners Topics

- Character, family ties, neighbours, oaths, modesty, wastefulness, social manners and kindness to workers and dependants.
- Adhan, congregational Salah, raising the hands, Qunut, Witr, Jumu'ah, Khutbah manners and detailed prayer manners.
- Food, drink, slaughter, right-hand manners, dropped food, drinking vessels and meal etiquette.
- Business and earnings.
- Hajj.

- Legal punishments as a fiqh category in the source. These notes do not turn historical legal material into instructions for students.
- Jihad as a legal/religious category in the source. These notes keep it non-operational and do not provide instructions for violence.
- Dhikr.
- Zakah and charity.
- Witness testimony.
- Fasting.
- Medicine and Ruqyah.
- Purification and Wudu.
- Knowledge, Hadith, Tafsir and the danger of speaking without knowledge.
- Qur'an recitation and Tafsir.
- Clothing, grooming and adornment.
- Masjid manners.
- Illness, funerals and graves.
- Games and entertainment.
- Marriage, divorce, waiting periods, family privacy and fair treatment.

How to Read the Strong Historical Statements

This book comes from a very different historical setting and includes strong statements about sects, religious disputes and punishment. In these notes, those statements are kept as part of what the source contains but they are not rewritten as personal instructions.

Students should learn the belief or principle being discussed. Questions about declaring a specific person outside Islam, carrying out punishments or dealing with modern political groups require qualified scholarship and proper legal authority. They are not jobs for students.

Final Review of the Book

- Know Allah through the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah.
- Worship Allah alone.
- Hold firmly to the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.
- Respect the Companions and early generations.
- Do not make personal desire or unsupported opinion more important than revelation.
- Learn before speaking.
- Avoid useless religious argument.
- Understand Iman, Qadar, the Qur'an, Allah's Attributes and the Hereafter clearly.
- Follow the Sunnah in Salah, manners, food, clothing, family life and daily conduct.
- Do not invent worship or turn customs into religion without evidence.
- Use trustworthy sources and be careful with claims about the unseen.
- Keep the heart attached to Allah, ask Him for guidance and ask Him for a good ending upon Islam and Sunnah.