

Introduction to the Book Al-‘Aqīdah Al-Wāsiṭīyah

Compiled by Hassan Somali

The Reason Behind Its Compilation

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah (رحمته الله) said:

“A judge from one of the regions of *Wasīṭ* (in Iraq), who is known as Shaykh Raḍī al-Dīn al-Wasīṭī, from the adherents to the school of al-Shāfi‘ī, visited me on his way to Hajj (pilgrimage). He was a person of goodness and religiosity. He complained to me of the ignorance, injustice and the loss of religion and knowledge of the people in that country and in the country under the Tartar’s rule.

He asked me to write for him an ‘*Aqīdah* (creed) as a reference for him and his family. I declined, saying that many creeds have been written, so take from some of the books of creed penned by the *Imāms* of the Sunnah. However, he persisted in his request, saying, ‘I do not want any creed but one you write.’ So, I wrote this one for him, while I was sitting after ‘*Aṣr*.

Many copies of it spread throughout Egypt, Iraq and other places.”¹

It was also known as ‘*Aqīdah al-Furqah al-Nājiyah* [The Creed of the Saved Sect], as mentioned by Ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī in *al-‘Uqūd al-Duriyah*, p. 57, *al-Farūq al-Ḥadīth* print.

The Subject of this Book

Al-‘Allāmah al-Sa‘dī (رحمته الله) said:

“With its conciseness and clarity, this gathers everything that it is obligatory to believe in from the fundamental matters of faith and the correct beliefs pertaining to it.”²

The Methodology of the Author

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah (رحمته الله) said:

“Every word I mentioned [in this creed] I mention along with a verse, Ḥadīth or a consensus of the *Salaf*.”³

¹ *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā* (3/164), *Malik Faisal* print.

² *Al-Tanbihāt al-Laṭīfah*, p. 13, *Ri‘āṣah Idārah al-Buḥūth al-‘Ilmīyah Wa Iftā* print.

³ *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā* (3/189).

He said (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ):

“I did not gather except the creed [‘*Aqīdah*] of all of the rightly guided predecessors (*Salaf*). This is not only exclusive to Imām Aḥmad...This is the belief of Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).”⁴

It is clear from this that Shaykh al-Islām did not believe that there was any room for differing concerning matters of ‘*Aqīdah*.

He said (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ):

“I gave everyone who opposed me in anything concerning this creed [‘*Aqīdah*] three years. If they brought one letter from any of the three generations whom the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) praised...which opposes what I have mentioned here, then I will recant from it.”⁵

The Al- ‘*Aqīdah Al-Wāsiṭiyah* Inquisition

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

“The viceroy said to me, ‘This meeting has been arranged for you, as the order has come from the Sultan for me to ask you about your creed and the books you have written to the lands of Egypt calling the people to adopt this creed...’”

“I replied, ‘Creed is not taken from me, nor from those greater than me. Rather, it is taken from Allāh, His Messenger and what this nation unanimously agreed upon. It is compulsory to believe whatever is in the Qur’ān and likewise whatever is established in the authentic *Ḥadīth* like Bukhārī and Muslim.’”⁶

“Then he [Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah] was brought to trial in the year 705H [1305] and questioned about his belief by order of the Sultan. The viceroy assembled the judges and scholars at the palace. The Shaykh was then summoned, and they asked him concerning this matter. Thus, the Shaykh sent someone to bring a copy of *al- ‘Aqīdah al-Wāsiṭiyah* from his home. They read it in three sittings, analyzed it and conducted research concerning it. Finally, there was a unanimous agreement that this creed was *Sunnī Salafī* [conforming to the Sunnah and the way of the pious predecessors]. Some of the attendees expressed this willfully while others said it reluctantly.” *Dhayl ‘Ala Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah* of al-‘Allāmah Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī (d. 795H), by way of *al-Jāmi‘ Lī Sīrah Shaykh al-Islām*, p. 474.

Shaykh al-Islām said that these trials were instigated by the *Jahmīyah*, *al-Ittiḥādīyah*, *Rāfiḍah* and other malicious individuals.⁷

⁴ *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā* (3/169).

⁵ *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā* (3/169).

⁶ *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā* (3/161).

⁷ *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā* (3/160).

This is just one of many examples of how the people of innovation are prepared to overlook their fundamental differences to attack anyone who endeavors to purely adhere to the Sunnah.

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah summarized what took place in the three sittings himself, which can be found in *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwá* in volume three, starting at page one hundred and sixty (p.160).

As Ibn Taymīyah articulately stated:

“Allāh established the proof and clarified the clear path in a way that gave triumph to the Sunnah and the orthodox body and subdued the people of innovation and misguidance.”⁸

The Scholars Praise and Acceptance of This Book

This ‘*Aqīdah* was accepted by the scholars of the Sunnah, past and present, and it was praised by them.

Imām al-Dhahabī (رحمة الله) said about it:

“There was total agreement that this is a sound *Salafi ‘Aqīdah*.”⁹

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab (رحمة الله) said:

“There was total agreement that this ‘*Aqīdah* is *Sunnī Salafi*.”¹⁰

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr (رحمة الله) said:

“The gatherings concluded with the acceptance of this ‘*Aqīdah* [creed]...”¹¹

Our Shaykh, al-‘Allāmah Muqbil b. Ḥādī al-Wādi ‘ī (رحمة الله) said:

“Among the best books on ‘*Aqīdah* is *al-‘Aqīdah al-Wāsiṭīyah* of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymīyah.”¹²

⁸ *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwá* (3/180).

⁹ *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwá*, (3/201).

¹⁰ *Al-Dhayl Ala Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah* (2/396).

¹¹ *Al-Bidāyah Wa al-Nihāyah* by way of by way of *al-Jāmi‘ Lī Sīrah Shaykh al-Islām*, p. 420.

¹² Questions from the Women of Laḥj.

Benefit of Studying this Book

A person should not study ‘Aqīdah – or any knowledge of the religion – just to acquire information and facts. Rather, he should learn this sincerely for the sake of Allāh, as this is his religion and something that Allāh has commanded him with.

If he studies this with sincerity while adhering to the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, then he will see the fruits of this in his ‘Aqīdah, worship, character and all matters pertaining to his life.

I will give a practical example from the words of Ibn al-Qayyim (رحمة الله):

“Every attribute of Allāh necessitates a specific type of servitude...The servants knowing that Allāh possesses the attributes of hearing, seeing and knowledge, and that not an atom in the heavens and the earth is hidden from Him, that He knows what is hidden and apparent, and He knows the fraud of the eyes and what the breasts conceal, benefits the servant to safeguard his tongue and the inner whispers of his heart. It causes him to use anything related to the parts of the body in that which Allāh loves and is pleased with. This also benefits him to have shyness inwardly, and this shyness benefits him to stay away from indecency and the forbidden matters.”¹³

Ibn Taymīyah alluded to this himself as he closed the book with a discussion about the qualities, character and the conduct of the people who have this ‘Aqīdah.

If a person does not sense these positive effects, then they should scrutinize their intention, as Ibn al-Qayyim said:

“Every type of knowledge and action that does not increase the strength of faith and certainty has been corrupted; and all faith that does not encourage with [righteous] actions has likewise been corrupted.”¹⁴

We ask Allāh, by His Beautiful Names and perfect Attributes, to bless our studies of this classical text and make it a means to draw closer to Him; and we ask Him to bless us to die upon the Book and the Sunnah, as understood by the noble companions, and to protect us from the trials of this life and death.

¹³ *Miftāḥ Dār al-Sa‘ādah*, p. 90.

¹⁴ *Al-Fawā'id*, p. 86.