

HSC 9488 Paper 1

1.4 Main Beliefs

Content

- belief in a single Creator God (*tawhid*)
- the role of prophets as human messengers, delivering revelations (*risalah*)
- angels as deliverers of books and recorders of human actions (*malaikah*)
- the revealed word of God as guidance to humankind (*wahy*)
- the Day of Judgement and the afterlife (*akhirah*)
- life as a test within the bounds of fate and predestination (*qadar*).

Candidates should be able to:

- consider how the main beliefs are strengthened and realised through a Muslim's actions
- make links between beliefs and actions and reference examples from the Five Pillars of Islam.

Cambridge Resources:

Tawhid: www.thoughtco.com/tawhid-2004294

Tawhid: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05s5ytj

www.cpsglobal.org/content/third-article-faith-belief-prophethood-risalah

Tawhid: www.al-islam.org/allah-the-concept-of-god-in-islam-a-selection-yasin-al-jibouri/unity-allah-tawhid

Risalah: www.thoughtco.com/islam-prophets-of-islam-4133183

Risalah: www.al-islam.org/prophethood-sayyid-saeed-akhtar-rizvi/nubuwwah

Angels: www.islamreligion.com/articles/41/belief-in-angels/

Angels: www.thoughtco.com/angels-in-islam-2004030

Revelation: <http://www.cpsglobal.org/content/revelation-wahy>

Revelation: www.thoughtco.com/books-of-revelation-2004108

Afterlife: www.thoughtco.com/islam-on-the-afterlife-2004337

Afterlife: www.whyyislam.org/on-faith/belief-in-judgement-day/

www.youtube.com/watch?v=5QJEH4ekHe0

www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6IIDV3cGgY

www.encyclopedia.com/environment/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/free-will-and-predestination-islamic-concepts

www.al-islam.org/justice-of-god-ayatullah-makarim-shirazi/issue-predestination-and-free-will

www.pakpassion.net/ppforum/showthread.php?219960-Differing-Islamic-Views-on-Free-Will-amp-Predestination

Students' Notes

Belief in a single Creator God (*tawhid*)

Imaam At Twahawiy (ra) (239-321 A.H) said:

“We say about Allah's Tawhid (Allah being different from the creation in every way) while believing that Allah is the One who enables us to be obedient- that Allah is One, without any partners. There is nothing like Him. There is nothing that makes Him powerless. There is no god other than Him. He is the Eternal without a beginning and the Everlasting without end. He will never perish or come to an end. Nothing happens except what He wills. No delusion can conceive of Him and no comprehension can encompass His Reality. He is different from any created being. He is Alive and never dies and He manages the entire creation and never sleeps. He creates without His being in need for His creation and

provides for His creation without encountering any hardship. He causes death with no fear and quickens without difficulty. He has always existed having His Attributes Eternally before creating the creation. Bringing creation into existence did not add anything to His Attributes that did not exist in Eternity.

As He was, having His Attributes, in Eternity, so He will remain Everlastingly. It was not only after the act of creation that He is Attributed as the Creator nor was it only by the act of bringing the creation into existence that He is Attributed as the One who made the creation begin. He was always the Lord (Owner) even when the created beings were nonexistent, and always the Creator even when there was no creation. By the same analogy that He is the Bringer to life of the dead, after He has brought them to life, and deserves this name before bringing them to life, so too He deserves the name of Creator before He has created them. This is because He has the power to do everything, everything is dependent on Him, everything is easy for Him, and He does not need anything.

"There is nothing like Him in any way and He is the Hearer, the Seer". [ash-Shura 42:11]

He created the creation with His knowledge. He gives guidance to whoever He wills, and protects them from sinning, and keeps them healthy in their religion and safe from harm, out of His generosity; and He makes astray whoever He wills, and casts them down and deprives them His support, and afflicts them, out of His justice. All of them are subject to His will between either His generosity or His justice. He is exalted beyond having opposites or equals. We believe in all of this and are certain that all things come from Him.

Anyone who attributes to Allah attributes in any way the same as a human being has become an unbeliever. All those who grasp this will take heed and refrain from saying things such as the unbelievers say, and they will know that He, in His Attributes, is not like human beings."

awhid Ar-Rububiyah: Oneness of Lordship

Muslims believe that Allah caused all things to exist. Allah is the only one who created and maintains all things. Allah is not in need of help or assistance over creation. While Muslims greatly respect their prophets, including Mohammad and Jesus, they firmly separate them from Allah.

Tawhid Al-Uluhiyah/'Ebadah: Oneness of Worship

Because Allah is the sole creator and maintainer of the universe, it is to Allah alone that Muslims direct their worship. Throughout history, people have engaged in prayer, invocation, fasting, supplication, and even animal or human sacrifice for the sake of nature, people, and false deities. Islam teaches that the only being worthy of worship is Allah. Allah alone is worthy of prayers, praise, obedience, and hope.

Tawhid Adh-Dhat wal-Asma' was-Sifat: Oneness of Allah's Attributes and Names

The Quran is filled with descriptions of Allah's nature, often through attributes and special names. The Merciful, the All-Seeing, the Magnificent, etc. are all names which describe Allah's nature. Allah is seen as distinct from his creation. As human beings, Muslims believe that one may strive to understand and emulate certain values, but Allah alone has these attributes perfectly, in full, and in their entirety.

The role of prophets as human messengers, delivering revelations (risalah)

Imaam At Twahawiy (ra) (239-321 A.H) said:

“And we are certain that Muhammad (s) is His chosen servant and selected Prophet and His Messenger whom He highly accepts. And that he is the Seal of the Prophets and the Imam of the God-fearing and

the Most Honored of all the Messengers and the Beloved (highly accepted) of the Lord of all the Worlds. Every claim to prophethood after Him is falsehood and deceit. He is the one who has been sent to all the jinn and all mankind with Truth and Guidance and with Light and Illumination. We say with belief, acceptance and submission that Allah took Ibrahim as a Khalil (a special status of being vastly accepted) and that He spoke directly to Musah. We believe in the angels, and the Prophets, and the books which were revealed to the messengers, and we bear witness that they were all following the manifest Truth.”

Meaning of ‘Nabi’ and ‘Rasul’

The word ‘Nabi’ (نبي) is derived from ‘Nubuwwat’ (نبوة). ‘Nubuwwat’ means ‘to be high’ and, thus ‘Nabi’ means a ‘High person’: high in the presence of Allah, The word ‘Nabi’ shows the exalted position of the prophet which he enjoys in the presence of God. Another interpretation of 'Nabi' is that it is derived from 'Nubu-at i.e., to prophesize. According to this interpretation 'Nabi' means one who prophesizes. The word 'Rasul' (رسول) is derived from 'Risalat' (رسالة).

'Risalat' means to send; and 'Rasul' means one who is sent. Thus the word 'Rasul' means 'one who is sent from Allah.' According to Muslim terminology. 'Nabi' means 'A man sent directly by God to the mankind to lead them to right path.' The word 'man' excludes the angels who are sent by God for various purposes, but they are not called Nabi or Rasul in Islamic terminology. Also, it excludes women. A woman cannot be a Nabi or Rasul.

The phrase 'sent directly' shows that the Nabi does not get his inspiration or revelation through the agency of any other man. A Nabi was the highest person of his time in the eyes of God. It was necessary that the Nabi and Rasul be from amongst man-kind; because if Allah were to send an angel to lead mankind, people would have felt shy of him, as he would have been a stranger. That is why God always sent Nabi and Rasul from amongst the mankind.

The Nabi or Rasul resembles human beings in his body, appearance and needs; but his spiritual perfection is so great, his soul is so pure and his mind so receptive of the messages of Allah that he can be said to be quite different from other human beings.

Difference Between Nabi And Rasul

Muslim scholars have tried to pin-point the difference between Nabi and Rasul. According to the popular belief a 'Rasul' was that prophet who brought a new *Shariah* (Cods of law) while those prophets who did not bring any new *Shariah* (and followed the *Shariah* of a previous 'Rasul') were called 'Nabi'. Thus the grade of a 'Rasul' is higher than that of a 'Nabi.'

Angels as deliverers of books and recorders of human actions (malaikah)

Imaam At Twahawiy (ra) (239-321 A.H) said:

“We believe in the angels, and the Prophets, and the books which were revealed to the messengers, and we bear witness that they were all following the manifest Truth. Belief consists of belief in Allah. His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and belief that the Decree - both the good of it and the evil of it, the sweet of it and the bitter or it - is all from Allah. We believe in Kiraman Katibin (the noble angels) who write down our actions for Allah has appointed them over us as two guardians. We believe in the Angel of Death who is charged with taking the spirits of all the worlds. We believe in the punishment in the grave for those who deserve it, and in the questioning in the grave by Munkar and Nakir about one's Lord, one's religion and one's prophet, as has come down in the religious reports from the Messenger of Allah (s) and in reports from the Companions (ra).”

In common folklore, angels are thought of as good forces of nature. In Islamic doctrine, they are real creatures who will eventually taste death, but are generally hidden from our senses. They are not divine or

semi-divine, and they are not God's associates running different districts of the universe. Also, they are not objects to be worshipped. They all submit to God and carry out His commands.

In the Islamic worldview, they are not divided into 'good' and 'evil' angels. Human beings do not become angels after death. Satan is not a fallen angel, but is one of the *jinn*, a creation of God. Angels were created from light before human beings were created. They are generally beautiful beings with wings as described in Muslim scripture.

The greatest of them is Gabriel. The Prophet of Islam actually saw him in his original form. Also, the attendants of God's Throne are among the greatest angels. They love the believers and beseech God to forgive them their sins. They do not eat or drink. The angels do not get bored or tired of worshipping God. How many angels there are? Only God knows.

The angels possess great powers given to them by God. They can take on different forms. The Muslim scripture describes how at the moment of Jesus' conception, God sent Gabriel to Mary in the form of a man: "...Then We sent to her Our angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects." (Quran 19:17)

Angels also visited Abraham in human form. Similarly, angels came to Lot to deliver him from danger in the form of handsome, young men. Gabriel used to visit Prophet Muhammad in different forms. Sometimes, he would appear in the form of one of his handsome disciples, and sometimes in the form of a desert Bedouin. Angels have the ability to take human forms in some circumstances involving common people.

Tasks of the Angels

Some angels are put in charge of executing God's law in the physical world. Michael is responsible for rain, directing it wherever God wishes. He has helpers who assist him by the command of his Lord; they direct the winds and clouds, as God wills. Another is responsible for blowing the Horn, which will be blown by *Israafeel* at the onset of the Day of Judgment. Others are responsible for taking souls out of the bodies at the time of death: Angel of Death and his assistants. Then there are guardian angels responsible for protecting the believer throughout his life, at home or traveling, asleep or awake. Others are responsible for recording the deeds of man, good and bad. These are known as the "honorable scribes." Two angels, *Munkar* and *Nakeer*, are responsible for testing people in the grave. Among them are keepers of Paradise and the nineteen 'guards' of Hell whose leader is named '*Malik*.' There are also angels responsible for breathing the soul into the fetus and writing down its provisions, life-span, actions, and whether it will be wretched or happy. Some angels are roamers, traveling around the world in search of gatherings where God is remembered. There are also angels constituting God's heavenly army, standing in rows, they never get tired or sit down, and others who bow or prostrate, and never raise their heads, always worshipping God.

The revealed word of God as guidance to humankind (*wahy*)

Imaam At Twahawiy (ra) (239-321 A.H) said:

"The Qur'an is the word of Allah. The Qur'an descended from Him but be certain the Speech of Allah is without a manner of being. He sent it down on His Messenger as revelation. The believers accept it, as absolute truth. They are certain that it is, in truth, the word of Allah. It is not created, as is the speech of human beings. Hence, anyone who hears it and claims that it is human speech has become an unbeliever. Allah warns him and censures him and threatens him with Fire when He says, Exalted is He:

"I will burn him in the Fire." [al-Muddaththir 74:26]

When Allah threatens with the Fire those who say:

"This is just human speech." [al-Muddaththir 74:25]

We know for certain that it is the Speech of the Creator of mankind and that it is totally unlike the speech of mankind.”

Muslims believe that God (Allah) has sent guidance through His prophets and messengers. Among them, several have also brought books of revelation. Muslims, therefore, believe in the Gospel of Jesus, the Psalms of David, the Torah of Moses, and the Scrolls of Abraham. However, the Quran which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad is the only book of revelation which remains in its complete and unaltered form.

Quran: The holy book of Islam is called the Quran. It was revealed in the Arabic language to the Prophet Muhammad in the 7th century C.E. The Quran was compiled during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad, and remains in its original form. The Quran contains 114 chapters of varying length, with interspersed themes describing God's nature, guidance for daily living, stories from history and their moral messages, inspiration for believers, and warnings for disbelievers.

Gospel of Jesus (Injeel): Muslims believe Jesus to be an honored prophet of God. His native language was Syriac or Aramaic, and the revelation given to Jesus was conveyed and shared among his disciples orally. Muslims believe that Jesus preached to his people about monotheism (the Oneness of God) and how to live a righteous life. The revelation given to Jesus from Allah is known among Muslims as the *Injeel* (Gospel).

Muslims believe that Jesus' pure message has been lost, mixed with others' interpretations of his life and teachings. The current Bible has an unclear chain of transmission and no proven authorship. Muslims believe that only the actual words of Jesus were "divinely inspired," yet they have not been preserved in writing.

Psalms of David (Zabur): The Quran mentions that revelation was given to the Prophet Dawud (David): "... and We preferred some of the prophets above others, and to David We gave the Psalms" (17:55). Not much is known about this revelation, but Muslim tradition confirms that the Psalms were recited much like poetry or hymns. The Arabic word "zabur" comes from a root word meaning song or music. Muslims believe that all of Allah's prophets brought essentially the same message, so it is understood that the Psalms also contain praises of God, teachings about monotheism, and guidance for righteous living.

Torah of Moses (Tawrat): The *Tawrat* (Torah) was given to the Prophet Musa (Moses). Like all revelation, it included teachings about monotheism, righteous living, and religious law. The Quran says: "It is He Who sent down to you, in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it. And He sent down the Law [of Moses] and the Gospel [of Jesus] before this, as a guide to mankind. And He sent down the criterion [of judgment between right and wrong]" (3:3) The exact text of the Tawrat generally corresponds to the first five books of the Jewish Bible. Many Biblical scholars concede, however, that the current version of the Torah was written by numerous authors over several centuries. The exact words of the revelation to Moses are not preserved.

Scrolls of Abraham (Suhuf): The Quran mentions a revelation called the *Suhuf Ibrahim*, or the Scrolls of Abraham. They were reportedly written by Ibrahim himself, as well as his scribes and followers. This holy book is considered to be lost forever, not due to deliberate sabotage but rather just due to the passage of time. The Quran refers to the scrolls of Abraham several times, including this verse: "Most surely this is in the earlier scriptures, the Books of Abraham and Moses" (87:18-19).

The Day of Judgement and the afterlife (‘akhirah)

Imaam At Twahawiy (ra) (239-321 A.H) said:

“The grave is either one of the meadows of Paradise or one of the pits of the Fire. We believe in being brought back to life after death and in being recompensed for our actions on the Day of Judgment, and al-‘Ard, having been shown them and al-Hisab, brought to account for them, and Qira'at al-Kitab, reading the book, and the reward or punishments and in as-Sirat (the Bridge) and al-Mizan (the Balance). Paradise and Hellfire are now created things that never come to an end and we believe that Allah created them before the rest of creation and then created people to inhabit each of them. Whoever He wills goes to Paradise out of His Bounty and whoever He wills goes to Hellfire through His Justice. Everybody acts in accordance with what is destined for him and goes towards what he has been created for. Everything happens according to Allah's Will, Knowledge, Destining and Decree. His Will overpowers all other wills and His Decree overpowers all stratagems. He does whatever He wills and He is never unjust. He is exalted and clear from any evil or perdition and He is perfect and clear of any fault or flaw.

"He will not be asked about what He does but they will be asked." [Al- Anbiya' 21: 23]

There is benefit for dead people in the supplication and alms-giving of the living. Allah responds to people's supplications and fulfills their needs. Allah has absolute control over everything and nothing has any control over Him. Nothing can be independent of Allah even for the blinking of an eye, and whoever considers himself independent of Allah for the blinking of an eye is guilty of unbelief and becomes one of the people of perdition. Allah's Ghadab (severe unacceptance by Allah) and Rida (genuine acceptance by Allah) are not similar to any creature.

The Seeing of Allah by the People of Paradise (Al-Jannah) is true, without their vision being all-encompassing and without a manner of being. As the Book of our Lord has expressed it:

"Faces on that Day radiant, looking at their Lord". [al-Qiyamah 75:22- 3]

The explanation of this is as Allah knows and wills. Everything that has come down to us about this from the Messenger (s) in the Swahih Hadith (authentic sayings), is as he said and means what he intended. We do not delve into that with baseless interpretation according to our own opinions or deluding ourselves by unsound inclinations. No one is safe in his religion unless he submits himself completely to Allah, the Exalted and Glorified and to His Messenger (s) and leaves the knowledge of things that are ambiguous to the one who knows them.

Al-Hawd, (the Basin which Allah will grant the Prophet (s) as a succor to His Ummah on the Day of Judgment), is true.

Ash-Shafa'ah, (the intercession of the Prophet (s) on the Day of Judgment, which he saved for the enormous sinners of his Ummah), is true, as related in the Hadiths.

Al-‘Arsh (the Throne) and al-Kursiyy (the Chair) are true. He is not in need of the Throne and what is beneath it. He encompasses with his knowledge everything and subjugates it, and what He has created is incapable of encompassing Him.”

Islam teaches that on Yaum al-Qiyamah, all living things will be raised to life again and called in front of God for the final judgment in the Afterlife. People will be divided: Some will enter Jannah (paradise, the garden, or a place of physical and spiritual pleasure with delicious food and drink, virgin companions and lofty mansions). Some will enter Jahannam (hellfire), which is reserved for the "vilest of all creatures" and where "the pagans shall burn forever in the fire of hell." Simply stated, on the day of Yaum al-Qiyamah, the dead are resurrected and given an afterlife according to the way they lived their lives while they were alive. The Quran describes this Day as one of happiness for the believers and terror for those who disbelieved in its existence. The Quran emphasizes the power of God: "Surely, He who brings life to the dead earth (through rainfall) can surely give life to men who are dead" (Quran 41:39).

Life as a test within the bounds of fate and predestination (qadar).

Imaam At Twahawiy (ra) (239-321 A.H) said:

He Destined destinies for those He created. He appointed to them fixed death times. Nothing about them was hidden from Him before He created them, and He knew everything that they would do before He created them. He ordered them to obey Him and forbade them to disobey Him. Everything happens according to His decree and will, and His will is accomplished. The only will that people have is what He wills for them. What He wills for them happens and what He does not will does not happen. No one can ward off His destiny or put back His ruling or overpower the happening of the matters He willed for them to happen.

Good and evil have both been decreed for people. The capability at the time of performing a deed such as at-Tawfiq (the enabling of one, by Allah, to do acts of obedience and have a good ending) cannot be ascribed to a created being, rather it is integral with action and is created by Allah at the time of encountering the deed. Whereas the capability of an action in terms of having the necessary health, and ability, being in a position to act and having the necessary means, exists in a person before the action. It is this type of capability which is the object of accountability. Allah the Exalted says:

"Allah does not charge a person except according to his ability." [al- Baqarah 2: 286]

People's actions are created by Allah but acquired by people. Allah, the Exalted, has only charged people with what they are able to do and others may only require of them to do what Allah has charged them to do. This is the explanation of the phrase: "There is no protection against sinning and no strength to perform obedience except by Allah." We add to this that there is no evasion or way by which anyone can avoid or escape disobedience to Allah except with Allah's protection; nor does anyone have the strength to perform obedience to Allah into practice and remain firm in it, except if Allah enables them to do so.

The covenant which Allah made with Adam and his offspring is true. Allah Eternally knew the exact number of those who would enter Paradise (Al-Jannah) and the exact number of those who would enter Hellfire (Jahannam). This number will neither be increased nor decreased. The same applies to all actions done by people, which are done exactly as Allah knew they would be done. Everyone is facilitated to what he was created for and it is the actions with which a man's life is sealed which defines his ending. Those who are fortunate winners in the Hereafter are fortunate by the Destining of Allah, and those who are deprived losers are losers by the Destining of Allah. The exact nature of the Destining is Allah's secret in His creation, and no angel near the Throne, nor Prophet sent with a message, has been given knowledge of it. Delving into it and reflecting too much about it only leads to destruction and deprivation, and results in tyranny. So be extremely careful about thinking and reflecting on this matter or letting doubts about it assail you, because Allah has kept knowledge of the Destining concealed from human beings, and forbidden for them to enquire about it, saying in His Book,

"He is not asked about what He does but they are asked". [al-Anbiya' 21:23]

So anyone who asks (in objection): "Why did Allah do that?" has gone against the judgment of the Book, and anyone who goes against the judgment of the Book is an unbeliever. This in sum is what those of Allah's Awliya (highly pious Muslims) with enlightened hearts need to know and constitutes the degree of those firmly endowed with knowledge. For there are two kinds of knowledge: knowledge which is accessible to created beings, and knowledge which is not accessible to created beings. Denying the knowledge which is accessible is disbelief, and claiming the knowledge which is inaccessible is disbelief. Belief can only be firm when accessible knowledge is accepted and inaccessible knowledge is not sought after.

We believe in al-Lawh (the Tablet) and al-Qalam (the Pen) and in everything written on it. Even if all created beings were to gather together to make something fail to exist, whose existence Allah had written on the Tablet, they would not be able to do so. And if all created beings were to gather together to make something exist which Allah had not written on it, they would not be able to do so. The Pen has dried having written down all that will be in existence until the Day of Judgment. Whatever has missed a person it would have never inflicted him, and whatever has inflicted a person it would have never missed him. It is necessary for the slave to know that Allah already knows everything that is going to happen in His creation and destined it masterfully and firmly. There is nothing that He has created in either the heavens or the earth that can contradict it, or add to it, or erase it, or change it, or decrease it, or increase it in any way. This is a fundamental aspect of belief and a necessary element of all knowledge and recognition of Allah's clearance of resembling the creation, and of Allah's Lordship. As Allah says in His Book:

"He created everything and destined it in a detailed way." [al-Furqan 25:2]

And He also says:

"What Allah creates is always a decreed destiny". [al-Ahzab 33:38]

So woe to anyone who displays enmity with Allah concerning the Destiny and who, with a sick heart, starts delving into this matter. In his delusory attempt to investigate the Unforeseen, he is seeking a secret that can never be uncovered, and he ends up an evil-doer, telling nothing but lies."

The conception of the *ajal*, or term of life, also occurs several times, but it is God who both fixes the *ajal* beforehand and then brings about the person's death: "He is the one who created you from clay, and then fixed an *ajal*" (6:2); "God will not defer [the death of] any person when his *ajal* comes" (63:11). "No misfortune has happened either in respect of the land or of yourselves but it was in a book before we [God] brought it about" (57:22). All Muslims hold that human freedom in some sense and human responsibility in acting are implied in the Qur'anic teaching that God judges mortals on the Last Day and that their good and bad deeds are weighed in balances. Human freedom is not necessarily contradicted by such verses as: "Do not say of anything, I am doing that tomorrow, without [adding], If God wills" (18:23); "... to him of you who wills to go straight; but you will not [so] will, unless God wills" (81:28). Such verses may be understood as expressing God's control of the outcome of acts. But a number of verses also speak of God guiding and aiding people or of leading them astray and abandoning them: "If God wills to guide anyone, He enlarges his breast for Islam" (6:125); "He leads astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills" (16:93), so that those whom he guides become believers and those whom he leads astray become unbelievers.

Other verses, however, assert that this guiding or leading astray is, as it were, in recompense for what the people in question have done previously: "Those who do not believe in God's signs, God does not guide" (16:104); "He leads astray none but the wrongdoers" (2:26). The phrase "leading astray" might be compared with God's "hardening of the heart" of the pharaoh and others in the Bible. One verse (18:28) specifically points to the ability of humans to choose to believe or not. It states, "The truth is from your Lord, so let him who will, believe; and let him who will, disbelieve." Verses such as 90:9-10, "Have we not created for him two eyes and a tongue and two lips and guided him in the highways, but he will not attempt the steep," and 4:31, "God wishes to explain to you and to guide you into the ordinances of those who were before you," also suggest human choice in responding to God's guidance. The numerous verses in the Qur'ān that exhort humans to ponder the "signs" of nature around them that reflect God's majesty and power and to draw moral lessons from the fate of previous generations are also suggestive of human choice in and responsibility for their actions.

How A Muslim Should Be:

Imaam At Twahawiy (ra) (239-321 A.H) said:

“A man's Islam is not secure unless it is based on submission and surrender. Anyone who desires to know the things that are decreed as not knowable, and does not content with surrender, will find that his desire veils him from the pure clearing of Allah from resemblance to the creation (Tawhid), clear knowledge and correct belief, and that he wavers between disbelief and belief, confirmation and denial and acceptance and rejection. He will be subject to whisperings and will be lost and doubtful, being neither an accepting believer nor a denying rejecter.

Belief of a man in the seeing of Allah by the people of the abode of peace (Paradise) is not correct if he imagines it in his delusions, or interprets it according to his baseless own understanding since the baseless interpretation of this seeing or, indeed, the meaning of any of the matters which are in the realm of Lordship, is by avoiding its unfounded interpretation and strictly adhering to the submission. This is the Religion of Muslims.

Anyone who does not guard himself against negating the Attributes of Allah, or likening Allah to the creation, has gone astray and has failed to clear Allah from non-befitting attributes, because our Lord, the Glorified and the Exalted, is attributed with the Attributes of Oneness and Absolute Exclusivity and no creation is in any way like Him. He is clear from having limits, boundaries, sides, organs or limbs. Nor is He contained by the six directions as all created things are.

We call the people of our qiblah Muslims and believers as long as they acknowledge what the Prophet (s) brought, and accept as true everything that he said and told us about. We do not enter into talk about the Reality of Allah nor do we allow vicious debates with the believers about the religion of Allah. We do not argue about the Qur'an and we bear witness that it is the Speech of the Lord of all the Worlds. The Trustworthy Soul (Jibril) came down with it and taught it to the most honored of all the Messengers, Muhammad (s). It is the Speech of Allah and no speech of any created being is comparable to it. We do not say that it was created and we do not go against the Jama'ah of the Muslims regarding it.

We do not consider any of the people of our qiblah to be unbelievers because of any sin they have done, as long as they do not consider that sin to have been lawful. Nor do we say that the sin of a man, as long as he is a believer, does not have a harmful effect on him. We hope that Allah will pardon the people of right action among the believers and grant them entrance into Paradise through His Mercy, but we cannot be certain of what they conceal genuinely, and thus we cannot bear witness that they will be in Paradise. We ask forgiveness for the people of wrong action among the Believers and, although we are afraid for them, we do not hold them in despair of the Mercy of Allah.

Certainty and despair of the Mercy of Allah both remove one from the religion, but the path of truth for the people of the qiblah lies between the two (a person must fear and be conscious of Allah's reckoning as well as be hopeful of Allah's Mercy). A person does not step out of belief except by denouncing what brought him into it. Belief consists of affirmation by the tongue and acceptance by the heart. And the whole of what is Sahih (authentic) from the Prophet (s) regarding the laws of the Religion and its interpretation is true. Belief is, at base, the same for everyone, but the superiority of some over others in it is due to their piety and fear of Allah, their opposition to their desires, and their choosing what is more acceptable to Allah. All the complete believers are Awliya of Allah and the noblest of them in the sight of Allah are those who are the most obedient and who most closely follow the Qur'an.

Belief consists of belief in Allah. His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and belief that the destiny - both the good of it and the evil of it, the sweet of it and the bitter or it - is all from Allah. We believe in all these things. We do not make any distinction between any of the Messengers, we accept as true what all of them brought. Those of the Ummah of Muhammad (s) who have committed enormous sins will not be in the Fire forever, provided they die and submit before Allah as believers

affirming His Oneness even if they have not repented. They are subject to His Will and Judgment. If He Wills, He will forgive them and pardon them out of His generosity, as is mentioned in the Qur'an when He says:

"And He forgives anything less than that (shirk³⁰) to whoever He wills" [an-Nisa' 4: 116]

And if He Wills, He will punish them in the Fire out of His justice and then bring them out of the Fire through His mercy, and for the intercession of those who were obedient to Him, and send them to Paradise. This is because Allah is the Protector of those who properly know Him and will not treat them in the Next World in the same way as He treats those who deny Him and who are bereft of His guidance and have failed to obtain His protection.

We agree with doing the prayer behind any of the people of the qiblah whether right-acting or wrong-acting, and doing the funeral prayer over any of them when they die. We do not say that any of them will categorically go to either Paradise or the Fire, and we do not accuse any of them of kufr (disbelief), shirk (associating partners with Allah), or nifaq (hypocrisy), as long as they have not openly demonstrated any of those things. We leave their secrets to Allah. We do not agree with killing any of the Ummah of Muhammad (s) unless death penalty is their due punishment under the Law.

We do not recognize rebellion against our Imam or those in charge of our affairs even if they are unjust, nor do we wish evil on them, nor do we withdraw from following them. We hold that obedience to them is part of obedience to Allah, the Glorified, and therefore obligatory as long as they do not order to commit sins. We pray for their right guidance and pardon from their wrongs. We follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (s) and the Jama'ah of the Muslims, and avoid deviation, differences and divisions. We love the people of justice and trustworthiness, and hate the people of injustice and treachery. When our knowledge about something is unclear, we say: "Allah knows best". We agree with wet wiping over the foot gear (khuff) whether on a journey or in dwelling places, just as has come in the religious reports. Pilgrimage (Hajj) and struggle under the leadership of those in charge of the Muslims, whether they are right or wrong-acting, are continuing obligations until the Last Hour comes. Nothing can annul or controvert them.

We agree that holding together is the true and right path and that separation is deviation and torment. There is a single Religion acceptable to Allah in the heavens and the earth and that is the Religion of Islam. Allah says:

"Surely the acceptable Religion in the sight of Allah is Islam". [Al`Imran 3:19]

And He also says:

"I have accepted Islam for you as a Religion". [Al-Ma'idah 5:3]

Islam lies between exceeding the proper bounds and falling short, between Tashbih (likening of Allah's Attributes to that of the creation), and Ta'til (denying Allah's Attributes), between Fatalism and refusing Decree as proceeding from Allah and between certainty (without being conscious and hopeful of Allah's reckoning) and despair (of Allah's Mercy). This is our religion and it is what we believe in, both inwardly and outwardly, and we renounce any connection, before Allah, with anyone who goes against what we have said and made clear."