

Famous Texts in Islamic Theology and Their Characteristics

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Abstract: Islamic theology has a long history of evolving texts that reflect the intellectual and theological demands of various periods. Among the most significant texts in the field of aqid (Islamic creed) in Uzbekistan are those that have been deeply ingrained in the cultural and religious lives of its people. One of the earliest and most influential works is *Fiqh al-Akbar*, attributed to Imam Abu Hanifa, which represents one of the first comprehensive theological texts on Islamic creed. This work outlines the essential beliefs every rational, mature Muslim should adhere to, focusing on core Islamic principles without delving into complex rational arguments, as it was written in a time when such reasoning was unnecessary. Over the centuries, *Fiqh al-Akbar* has inspired numerous commentaries, underlining its lasting significance in the intellectual and theological landscape of the Muslim world.

Keywords: Islamic theology, Aqid, *Fiqh al-Akbar*, Imam Abu Hanifa, Islamic creed, theological texts, Uzbekistan, Islamic beliefs, intellectual history, commentaries.

INTRODUCTION

Numerous works have been written in the field of Aqid (Islamic creed) throughout different periods, based on the intellectual and theological demands of each era. The most widely spread and beloved Aqid texts in Uzbekistan, which the ancestors have cherished and believed in, are primarily the following works:

Fiqh al-Akbar is a work attributed to the founder of the Hanafi school of thought, Imam Abu Hanifa (may Allah have mercy on him). It is considered the first text dedicated to the science of Aqid (Islamic creed). The work presents in a concise and clear manner the essential beliefs that a rational and mature Muslim should adhere to. Since this text was written in a period very close to the time of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH), it does not include rational proofs, as such arguments were not deemed necessary at the time. Over the centuries, *Fiqh al-Akbar* has been the subject of numerous commentaries.

- Mulla Ali Qori, *Minahu Rovzil Azhar Sharhu Fiqh al-Akbar*
- Muhyiddin Muhammad ibn Bahouddin, *Qavlul Fasl*
- Abul Muntaho, *Sharhu Fiqh al-Akbar*
- Abdulkarim Tatton, *Sharhu Fiqh al-Akbar*
- Imam Maturidi or Abu Lays Samarqandi, *Sharhu Fiqh al-Akbar*

There is a difference of opinion regarding whether this commentary belongs to Abu Mansur Maturidi or one of his prominent disciples, Abu Lays Samarqandi.

The *Fiqh al-Akbar* text serves as the foundation of the theological beliefs of the Maturidi school.

***Aqidat al-Tahawiyya*:** The work *Aqidat al-Tahawiyya* is attributed to one of the renowned scholars of the Hanafi school, Abu Ja'far Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Salama ibn Abdulmalik al-Tahawi (may Allah have mercy on him). Al-Tahawi, a distinguished hadith scholar and one of the prominent jurists of the Hanafi school, wrote this work during a time when philosophical ideas had mixed with theological beliefs, leading to various complexities. In composing this work, the author aimed to present the pure creed of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah, free from the influence of philosophical ideas.

The author originally titled this work *Aqida*. Later, the term *Tahawi* was added, and it became widely known as *Aqidat al-Tahawiyya*.

Both Imam Tahawi and Imam Maturidi lived during the same period. In fact, according to historical research, their birth years differ by just one or two years (Imam Tahawi around 239 AH, Imam Maturidi around 240 AH). However, they lived in very different regions—Imam Tahawi in Egypt and Imam Maturidi in Transoxiana—where they both played significant roles in the development of the Hanafi school of thought.

Aqidat al-Tahawiyya stands out among other theological texts due to the large number of commentaries it has inspired. Some of the famous commentaries on this work include the following:

- Muhammad ibn Alouddin Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Abul Iz Hanafiy Damashqi, *Sharhu 'Aqidat al-Tahawiyya*
- Abu Hafs Sirojiddin Umar ibn Is'haq Ghaznawi Hindi, *Sharhu 'Aqidati Imam Tahawi*. This commentary is considered one of

the best written according to the Maturidi school of thought.

- Muhammad Anwar Badaxshoniy, *Talkhisu Sharhi 'Aqidat al-Tahawiyya*. This book is an abridged version of the commentary by Ibn Abul Iz Hanafiy, with the author adding some necessary information. This book was translated into Uzbek by Shaykh Muhammad Sodiq Muhammad Yusuf (may Allah have mercy on him) and was published in 2014.

“Sahl Tustariy’s Creed”: Abu Muhammad Sahl ibn Abdullah Tustariy (200-283 AH / 815-896 CE), may Allah have mercy on him, was one of Islam’s most renowned Sufi mystics, theologians, hadith scholars, and exegetes. He authored several influential works with mystical themes, including *Raqoiq al-Muhibbin*, *Mavoiz al-Arefin*, *Javabot Ahl al-Yaqin*, *al-Ghayat li-Ahl al-Nihayat*, *Tafsir al-Qur’an*, and *Qisas al-Anbiyo*. His Tafsirs were published in 1908 in Egypt.

Sahl Tustariy’s creed is recorded in the works of Abul Qasim Hibbatullah Lalkoiy (may Allah have mercy on him), particularly in his work *Sharh Usuli I’tiqad Ahl al-Sunna wa-l-Jama’a*, which compiles the teachings of Ahl al-Sunna wa-l-Jama’a [1].

In this wonderful creed of the holy prophet Sahl Tustariy, it is taught that a Muslim who does not deviate from the teachings of the Sunnah and the community must place ten creeds in his heart.

Aqidatu Ibn Asokir: Known by the name of Faxriddin ibn Asokir, the esteemed scholar Abu Mansur Abdurahman ibn Muhammad ibn Hasan Dimashqi (550-620 AH / 1155-1223 CE), may Allah have mercy on him, was a prominent scholar of his time and the Mufti of the Shafi’i school in the Levant. He was the nephew of the famous historian Ali ibn Asokir (may Allah have mercy on him), who authored *Damashq Tarikh* (History of Damascus). Faxriddin ibn Asokir’s work *al-Arba’in* is widely renowned, in which he compiled hadiths related to the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the “Mothers of the Believers.”

Faxriddin ibn Asokir (may Allah have mercy on him) served as the head teacher in several madrasas in Damascus and Jerusalem, and he was the first teacher at the well-known “Azroviya” madrasa in the Levant. Despite being offered the position of Qadi (judge), he declined.

The Ibn Asokir family produced many renowned scholars, all of whom followed the Shafi’i school of thought and adhered to Ash’ari theological teachings. Faxriddin ibn Asokir (may Allah have mercy on him) also composed his theological beliefs based on the Ash’ari creed of Ahl al-Sunna wa’l-Jama’a. His work was brief, simple, and clear, written in straightforward and comprehensible terms.

Al-Aqoid an-Noblusiya: Abd al-Ghani al-Nablusi (may Allah have mercy on him) was one of the most blessed scholars of the Islamic world. He wrote hundreds of works, with countless poems to his name. He began writing commentaries on *Tafsir al-Qazi Baydawi* and completed three volumes before even reaching half of Surah al-Baqarah. Remarkably, he started writing these major works in his nineties. His famous commentary on *Tariqat al-Muhammadiya* is titled *al-Hadiyya an-Nadiyya*.

Abd al-Ghani al-Nablusi (may Allah have mercy on him) also wrote a concise poetic work on Aqida (creed), which has been commented upon by several scholars. The poem explains the concept of Tawhid (Oneness of God) according to the Maturidi school of thought. It can also be considered a commentary on the “Shahada (Testimony of Faith).”

Tawhid Risolasi: Imam Maturidi (may Allah have mercy on him) authored more than ten works promoting pure Islamic teachings, with two of them being particularly significant. One of these is related to Qur’anic exegesis, titled *Ta’wilat al-Qur’an*. It was later published as a 12-volume work under the title *Ta’wilat Ahl al-Sunna* (“Explanations of the People of the Sunnah”). His seminal work that outlines the foundation of Ahl al-Sunna wa’l-Jama’a’s creed is *Kitab al-Tawhid* (“The Book of the Oneness of Allah”). Given the comprehensive nature of *Kitab al-Tawhid*, which covers complex matters of Ahl al-Sunna wa’l-Jama’a’s theology in great detail, it was later condensed into a shorter work titled *Risalat al-Tawhid* (“The Treatise on Tawhid”).

In *Risalat al-Tawhid*, the key issues of *Kitab al-Tawhid* are summarized, providing a concise form of the original, thus making it a useful introduction to the larger work. The Arabic text and Turkish translation of the treatise were published in Istanbul. The issues discussed in *Risalat al-Tawhid* set the path for the Maturidi school within Ahl al-Sunna wa’l-Jama’a. Even though this

treatise is brief, it provides a clear understanding of the core concepts of the *Kitab al-Tawhid*, making it relevant to those who wish to familiarize themselves with these pure Islamic beliefs, even in contemporary times.

Al-Aqoid al-Bojuriya: Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Bojuri (1198-1281/1783-1864) was a Shafi'i scholar and the 19th Shaykh of al-Azhar University. He was born in the town of Bojur in Egypt. He studied at al-Azhar and, from 1847 until the end of his life, held the position of Chief Shaykh at al-Azhar, where he spent his days teaching from dawn until dusk. His classes were attended by amirs, ministers, and scholars. Over the course of his life, he authored over 40 important works, including *Kifayat al-Awam*, *Jawharat al-Tawhid*, *Sharh al-Aqoid al-Nasafiya*, and *al-Aqoid as-Sanusiya*, which are commentaries on important creedal texts. He also wrote commentaries on works like *Ash-Shamoil al-Tirmidhi*, *al-Mawlid an-Nabi*, and *Qasida al-Burda*. His *Al-Aqoid al-Bojuriya* is one of the most famous works in Islamic theology, offering a clear and accessible explanation of the essentials of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'a's creed, particularly from the Shafi'i perspective.

Ibrahim al-Bojuri's Al-Aqoid al-Bojuriya: This work is a concise treatise on Islamic creed and has been published several times in lithographed editions. In this short work, Ibrahim al-Bojuri explains the fundamental beliefs of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'a regarding Allah and the Prophets in a clear, simple, and direct style. It is a key text for understanding Sunni Islamic theology and serves as a foundational work for those seeking to understand basic Islamic creed.

"Mizan al-Aqoid": Abdulaziz al-Dihlawi (rahimahullah), a renowned scholar of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'a and a prominent Hanafi scholar, was one of the first to confront Wahhabism in India. He was known for his rapid writing and prolific output. It is said that he wrote his excellent and succinct treatise on Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'a's creed in just half a minute, a feat that was considered miraculous at the time. In fact, it would take much longer to transcribe or read this text fluently. The treatise is called *Mizan al-Aqoid* ("The Balance of Creeds") or *Mizan al-Kalam* ("The Balance of the Science of Kalam"). The author himself provided a commentary on this brief but profound work.

Despite its small size, *Mizan al-Aqoid* is divided into three sections: an introduction, a main body, and a conclusion. In it, the most crucial aspects of Islamic creed are addressed in brief yet comprehensive phrases, covering core beliefs succinctly.

"Imam Bukhari's Creed": Imam Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari (rahimahullah) (194-256 AH / 810-870 CE) is one of the most revered scholars in Islamic history and is considered the "Prince of Hadith Scholars." He is the author of *Sahih al-Bukhari*, the most authentic collection of hadith in Islam. As a leading scholar of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'a, Imam Bukhari not only transmitted hadith but also expressed his own theological views.

In his writings, Imam Bukhari conveyed his beliefs in line with the Ahl al-Sunnah and emphasized that his creed was based on the consensus of the most prominent scholars in the Islamic world. He mentioned the names of his teachers and the great scholars of the Islamic tradition to show that his beliefs were in agreement with the established and correct understanding of the faith. Imam Bukhari's creed is one of the cornerstones of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'a and emphasizes the importance of adhering to sound Islamic beliefs and practices. His legacy continues to guide Muslims in the proper understanding of their faith.

Imam Bukhari's (rahimahullah) creed is mentioned in the famous multi-volume work "*Tarikh Madinat al-Dimashq*" by Ibn Asakir (rahimahullah) and in "*Sharh Usuli I'tiqad Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama'a*" by Hibbatullah Lalko'i (rahimahullah) [2].

Imam Dhahabi (may Allah have mercy on him) also referred to this doctrinal text of Imam Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) with a chain of narration in his work "*Siyar a'lam an-nubala*" [3].

As mentioned, before Imam Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) stated his beliefs, he specifically noted that all his teachers and the most famous scholars in the entire Islamic world agreed with him on these beliefs. This shows how true this set of beliefs is, and how correct the teachings of the Ahlus Sunnah and the community are on these beliefs.

"Al-Aqoid al-Sanusiyya": His full name was Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Yusuf ibn Umar ibn Shuayb al-Sanusiyy Talmasaniyy Hasaniyy (832-895/1428-1490), a hadith scholar, commentator, and a scholar of logic, recitation, history, and natural sciences from the city of Talmasan in the Maghreb. He also wrote a commentary

on “Sahih Muslim”. He completed two large and small works on the beliefs of the Ahlu Sunnah and the community. The smaller volume is called “Umm ul-Barahiyn” (“Mother of Evidence”). It is known as “al-Aqoid al-Sanusiyya”. A manuscript copy of this work is also kept in the Center for Oriental Manuscripts in Tashkent, and the text of the work has been published several times.

The author himself wrote a commentary on the work “al-Aqoid as-Sanusiyya” (“Umm ul-Barahiyn”), and more than ten commentaries have been written on it. It has served as the main textbook on the science of theology in the Arab world. Haji Khalifa (may Allah have mercy on him) said in “Kashf az-Zunun”: “This work covers all the issues of monotheism.” In fact, this treatise covers the issues of monotheism, and an attempt is made to explain this issue briefly and concisely. The treatise describes the two sides of the phrase “La ilaha illallah, Muhammad-r-Rasulullah!” - the Islamic teaching about Allah and the prophets. The work first enumerates the specific attributes of Allah, as well as the attributes that are unworthy of Him and those that are permissible for Him, and then discusses them in detail. The Islamic teaching about prophets is viewed in the same way.

“Aqoidah of Abu Madyan” Abu Madyan Shu'ayb ibn Husan Maghrib al-Andalusi (514-593/1120-1196), may God have mercy on him, was born and raised in the Ashbiliya region, belonged to the Maliki school, and was one of the great Sufis of his time. He had his own madrasa there. Many Andalusian scholars graduated from his madrasa. He first lived in the city of Bajoya, then in Talmason. He was one of the sheikhs known for his devotion to the Tariqa and his knowledge and asceticism. He made a great contribution to the spread of Sufism and asceticism in Andalusia. Imam Zahabi (may Allah have mercy on him) praised him for his great achievements in knowledge, action, ijtiḥad, and education. Muhyiddin ibn Arabi, the holy mystic, referred to him as “Sultan al-warisin” (the Sultan of the heirs of the Prophet) and “Shaykh ash-shuyukh” (the Sheikh of Sheikhs). He died around 590-598/1193-1198, and his last words were “Allah, al-Hayyu!” He has works titled “Mafatih al-ghayb”, “Uns al-wahid va behjat al-murid”.

“Al-Jawahir Al-Kalomiyya”. Tahir ibn Salih Al-Jazairi, may God have mercy on him, is the author of more than 20 works and is fluent in five or six Eastern and Western languages. He is the author of such works as “Madhal at-tullab ila ilm al-hisab” (“Introduction of students to the science of arithmetic”), “Risala fi-n-nahw” (“Treatise on

grammar”), “Munyat al-azkiyo fi qisas al-anbiyo” (“The dream of the intelligent in the stories of the prophets”), “al-Fawaid al-jassam fi ma'rifati hawass al-ajsam” (“Great benefits in recognizing the properties of bodies”), “Irshad al-alibba ila ta'limi alifba” (“Guide the intelligent to the teaching of the alphabet”). His most important works are “al-Jawahir al-kalomiyya fi izzah al-aqidat al-islamiyya” (“Jewels of the Word in the Explanation of Islamic Belief”), “Tajjeh an-nazar ila usul al-asar” (“Directing the Eye to the Foundations of the Science of Hadith”), “at-Tibyön li-ba'z al-mabahis al-mutaallika bi-l-Qur'an” (“Clarifying Some of the Topics Related to the Qur'an”), “Asna al-maqasid fi ilm al-aqoid” (“The Highest of Goals in the Science of Beliefs”), and “Tafsir al-Qur'an al-hakim”.

“Al-Jawahir al-kalomiyya” is his work on faith. It was published in Beirut in 1902 during the author's lifetime as a 63-page volume and in Kazan in 1910 as a 47-page volume. There are also many modern editions of it. However, in modern editions, including the 1986 edition in Beirut, some questions and answers have been removed and some have been changed. “Al-Jawahir al-kalomiyya” is a simple, fluent, and understandable Arabic treatise written in a question-and-answer format. Since its writing, this work has been taught in schools in some Arab countries. It is memorable because the faith issues in it are presented in a short and concise manner.

“Al-Aqoid al-azudiyya”. Abu-l-fazl Azudiyddin Abdurrahman ibn Ahmad ibn Abdulghafar Iyji (may Allah have mercy on him), known as Azudiyddin Iyji (c. 708-756/1308-1355), was from Iyj, one of the districts of Shiraz. He was known as a skilled scholar in the sciences of usul al-fiqh, kalam, ma'aniyyah, and balaghat. He also served as a judge of the Shafi'i school of thought for a time, and was a wealthy but extremely generous man. He mentored scholars such as Allama Sa'duddin Taftazani. Many of his works were included in the main curriculum of madrasas in Islamic lands in the Middle Ages and later periods. In particular, his two works on theology, “al-Aqoid al-Azudiyya” and “al-Mawaqif”, are important guides in the study of Ash'ari-Maturidi doctrine.

In **“al-Aqoid al-Azudiyya”**, an effort was made to address the most important theological issues using brief and simple phrases. The work has been the subject of more than ten commentaries, with several notable annotations and explanations added to these commentaries.

“al-Aqoid al-Azudiyya” was used as a primary textbook for the study of kalam (Islamic theology) in the madrasas of Mawarannahr and was

memorized by students. Furthermore, the commentary “*Sharh Mulla Jalol*” on this work was also taught in the later stages of study. The issues raised in this work continue to be of significant relevance today.

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