

Ilm Essentials

Aqīdah Lesson 1

The Jibrīl Hadīth

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- “While we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah one day (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam), a man came up to us whose clothes were extremely white, whose hair was extremely black, upon whom the traces of traveling could not be seen, and yet none of us knew him
- He sat down close by the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam), such that he rested his knees against his and placed his hands upon his thighs, and said, ‘Oh Muhammad! Inform me about Islām...’

The Jibrīl Hadīth: Islām

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- Testify that there is nothing worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah
- Establish the salāh
- Pay zakāh
- Fast during Ramadān
- Perform Hajj if you are able

The Jibrīl Hadīth: Īmān

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- It is that you believe in
 - ▣ Allah
 - ▣ His angels
 - ▣ His books
 - ▣ His messengers
 - ▣ The Last Day
 - ▣ His decree, both the good of it and the bad it

The Jibrīl Hadīth: Ihsān

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- That you worship Allah as if you see Him
 - ▣ And if you are not able to see Him
 - Then surely He sees you
- Tell me about the Hour
 - ▣ The one being asked about it knows no more than the one asking...
- Oh Umar, do you know who that questioner was
 - ▣ I replied, Allah and His Messenger know best
- That was Jibrīl, he came to teach you your dīn” (Muslim)

What is Aqīdah

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- Linguistically means to tie/bind or to make firm
- Islāmically it is that science which deals with those things which are necessary to believe in
- Refines one's understanding of
 - ▣ Our Creator and His attributes
 - ▣ His messengers and their function
 - ▣ His communication with man
 - ▣ Purpose of creation
 - ▣ Death and beyond

The Reality of Faith

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- Language cannot express the reality of faith
 - ▣ But it can explain what one believes and why
- “Say, ‘This is my way. I invite to Allah with inner vision, I and whoever follows me’” (Quran 12:108)
- The Quran itself does not try to prove the existence of Allah
 - ▣ Instead it affirms His oneness
 - Because everything around us proves His existence
 - “If you ask them who created the heavens and the earth and subjugated the sun and the moon
 - They will certainly reply ‘Allah’” (Quran 29:61)
- Quran comes then to remove the misconceptions people had

Aqīdah vs. Īmān

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Aqīdah

- Does not increase or decrease
- Specific
- Was not discussed much by the early generations

Īmān

- Can increase or decrease
- General
- Discussed often by the early generations

Importance of Aqīdah

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- Baseline for whether one is within the fold of Islām
 - ▣ Kufr stems from corrupt belief, not corrupt actions
- Corruption in action can be forgiven
 - ▣ Corruption in belief cannot
- The tie that binds the ummah together

Origins of Aqīdah

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- Early generations had little need for a codified form of theology
 - ▣ Sūrah al-Ikhlās was often sufficient for them
- Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was there to answer questions
 - ▣ Islām remained protected, for the most part, for the first 3 generations (salaf)
- Still, subtle cracks began to form early on, leading to the formation of deviant sects
 - ▣ Theology became codified to refute these sects

The Beginnings of Aqīdah

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- As Islām spread and moved into other regions
 - ▣ Muslims were confronted with Greek and Jewish theologians
- New questions began to arise which had not previously
 - ▣ Is the Quran created
 - ▣ Intellect vs. revelation
 - ▣ How can a true Muslim ever disobey Allah

The Beginnings of Aqīdah

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- So the need arose to clearly articulate the Islāmic beliefs
 - ▣ Before this, everyone lived and experienced their īmān, but it was not codified
 - Explain how to drive a car
- Inherent difficulty in expressing the reality of īmān in words
 - ▣ And through man-made constructs (time, place, existence)

The Beginnings of the Sects

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- Uthmān ibn Affān was murdered
 - ▣ Alī ibn Abī Tālib was made his successor
- Difference of opinion regarding how to deal with the murderers of Uthmān
 - ▣ Muāwiyah wanted to bring the murderers to justice immediately
 - Alī felt that enacting justice at that point would have led to greater disunity
 - ▣ Resulted in a battle between the Muslims (Battle of Siffīn) and an arbitration thereafter

Khawārij (Separatists)

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- The first sect to split from mainstream Islām
 - ▣ Name originated because they seceded from the khilāfah of Alī and Muāwiyah
- Believed that anyone who committed a major sin became an unbeliever
 - ▣ Therefore should be put to death
 - Essentially included action within the definition of īmān
- Believed that you can revolt against the khalīfah if he was deemed insufficiently pious

Khawārij (Separatists)

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- “Verily the judgment belongs to none but Allah”
(Quran 12:67)
 - ▣ If you did not obey Allah’s commands, you were not Muslim
 - Since “Muslim” means the one who submits
- Many different groups of Khawārij with differing beliefs

Mu'tazilah (Rationalists)

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- Literally means “dissenters”
 - ▣ Asserted that the one who commits a major sin was neither a believer nor an unbeliever
- Strongly influenced by rationalistic (Hellenistic) thought
 - ▣ Called themselves Ahl ‘t-tawhīd wa ‘l-adl

Mu'tazilah Creed

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- Believed it is impossible for Allah to be seen by man
 - ▣ Denied the beatific vision of Allah by the people of Jannah
- Believed that man is the creator of his willful actions
- Believed that it is obligatory for Allah to punish the sinner and reward the obedient
- Claimed the Quran was created

Qādariyyah and Jabariyyah

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- The Qādariyyah (Libertarians) believed in absolute free will
 - ▣ Denied the idea of qadar (predestination)
- The Jabariyyah (Fatalists or Determinists) believed essentially the opposite
 - ▣ Man did not have any free will of his own
 - Man is under total compulsion in his action since everything is pre-determined

Mujassimah and Murji'a

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- The Mujassimah (Anthropomorphists) attributed human-like qualities to Allah
- The Murji'a (Postponers) postponed judgment between Alī and Muāwiyah
 - ▣ “There are others who have been deferred until Allah’s decree. Either He will punish them or He will forgive them” (Quran 9:106)
- Claimed that disobedience does not harm one, but that Allah forgives all sins as long as one has faith
 - ▣ Essentially the opposite of the Khawārij
 - Frequently neglected the sharīah and its commands
- Postponed judgment about anyone’s īmān

Literalists

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- Believed there was no room for the intellect in understanding sacred revelation
 - ▣ Therefore denied using intellectual or rational arguments to respond to the detractors of Islām and the deviant sects
- Basically left Islām un-defendable

Finding a Middle Ground

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- Mu'tazilah subjugated tradition to reason
 - ▣ Put reason above tradition
- Literalists subjugated reason to tradition
 - ▣ Put tradition above reason
 - Felt there was no place at all for reason
- Imām Abū Hanīfah's creed laid a middle ground between the 2 extremes
 - ▣ Wrote extensively about aqīdah
 - Greatly influenced Imām Tahāwī

Enter Imām Tahāwī

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- Imām Tahāwī (d. 321 AH) tried to present the basics
 - ▣ Avoiding disputations
- Adhered as closely as possible to the sacred texts
 - ▣ Adding explanations only when absolutely necessary
- Highlighted the synthesis between tradition (naql) and reason (aql)
 - ▣ Helped his creed become widely accepted
 - Left the need for more-detailed texts

Schools of Aqīdah

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- Abū Mansūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333 AH)
 - ▣ Born in Samarqand, in Māturīd
- Abu 'l-Hasan al-Ash'arī (d. 324 AH)
 - ▣ Born in Basrah
 - Descendent of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī
 - Was originally a Mu'tazilī, until age 40
 - More well-known since many of the deviants sects were prevalent in Basrah
- Both worked independently
 - ▣ Yet arrived at the same conclusions

Schools of Aqīdah

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- These two became the definition of orthodox sunni creed (Ahl 's-sunnah wa 'l-jamā'ah)
 - ▣ Māturīdīs are considered under the umbrella of the Ash'arīs when contrasted with the various deviant sects
 - Their followers took up the work of refuting the philosophers, rationalists and others

Questions and Discussion

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- Audio series on the Signs of the Last Day
 - ▣ By Muftī Abdur-Rahmān ibn Yūsuf
 - <http://www.zamzamacademy.com/view/audios/signs-of-the-last-day/>