

## Part 1: Ideological Laws

Ideological laws are of two kinds of belief (I will state all as “**We believe**”):

**Group One:** This group includes the beliefs that are obligatory to find the truth about them, to focus on, and about which a question is formed in one’s mind. However, to keep oneself in a state of doubt and uncertainty about these beliefs is forbidden. These beliefs consist of the following issues:

1. **We believe** in the necessary existence of Allah, the source of creation, and the origin of being. **We believe** in the unity and oneness of His Divine Essence and that He does not have any partner in His Attributes of Beauty and Majesty. This means, “There is no god but Allah.”
2. **We believe** in the Attributes of Beauty and Majesty of God Almighty. By the attribute of majesty, we mean that His Divine Essence is free from any defect and imperfection. By the attribute of beauty, we mean that His Pure Essence is adorned with all perfections and good traits.
3. **We believe** in God’s Prophets and Messengers whom He has sent for guiding and conducting humankind and chosen them to be of the same race of humankind. Through them, He has sent down divine books from heaven and delivered a religion for guiding, learning, and educating human race. We have particular faith in the Prophets whose names have been mentioned in the Holy Qur’an and general faith in those not mentioned therein.
4. **We believe** in the prophethood and messengership of Muhammad (s), the son of ‘Abdullah, the Arab, Medinite and Meccan Prophet. **We also believe** that he is the seal of the prophets. **We believe** in the everlastingness of his prophethood, messengership, faith, and Book, meaning that after his department from this worldly life, human society is in no need for any other religion or book, given that his religion includes all the needed individual and social laws and duties, both spiritual and material, for a complete life in this world. Even if this viewpoint seems logically incorrect to others, it is free of fault from the viewpoint of the Shi’ite School of Thought; for after his awaited reappearance, Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) will enjoy all the attributes of the Holy Prophet except that he is not prophet. Among these attributes, Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) will have full authority over the divine laws so that he will be authorized to change them in a way conforming to the circumstances of his time and the nature of the community.

5. **We believe** in the Next World and the physical resurrection; meaning that after the elimination of this material world, all humans who were born and who have died will be restored to life in a world beyond nature, in the gathering place of resurrection, in a time named the Judgment Day, and will be in the presence of God. Without doubt, all angels, jinn, and animals will also be resurrected in this magnificent and unprecedented event.

6. **We believe** in the lawful and divinely appointed vicegerency and leadership (*imamah*; Imamate) after the Holy Prophet. This means that before he departed this worldly life, Prophet Muhammad (s), by a divine commission, nominated individuals in successive order as his successors for the next leadership of the Muslim nation and gave them authority over the community. **We** also undoubtedly **believe** that the Prophet (s) did not depart this life before he had performed this duty completely, important to both the creation and the Creator.

7. **We believe** that the Holy Prophet (s), by the strict order of the Creator, named twelve individuals in a certain order for succeeding him in the leadership of his nation. The first of those twelve individuals is (1) 'Ali ibn Abi-Talib, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law. The other eleven are the descendants of 'Ali and the Prophet's daughter, Lady Fatimah. They are namely: (2) al-Hasan ibn 'Ali, (3) al-Husayn ibn 'Ali, (4) 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, (5) Muhammad ibn 'Ali, (6) Ja'far ibn Muhammad, (7) Musa ibn Ja'far, (8) 'Ali ibn Musa, (9) Muhammad ibn 'Ali, (10) 'Ali ibn Muhammad, (11) al-Hasan ibn 'Ali, and (12) Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Mahdi, peace be upon them all.

The era of the vicegerency of the first eleven Imams extended to the year 260 AH, but the vicegerency of the twelfth Imam, who is at present in occultation, has continued until now. When the Beneficent God wills, this Imam will reappear to fill the world with justice and peace.

8. **We believe** that the Holy Qur'an, this great divine book, which is now in the hands of Muslims, was sent down to the heart of the Noble Prophet (s) as the eternal miracle of his prophecy and he conveyed it to the people without adding or deleting even a single letter of it. **We** thus **believe** that the Holy Qur'an has never been and will never be altered or exposed to distortion.

**Group Two:** The second group includes the beliefs about which neither investigation nor research is obligatory; therefore, it is not necessary to believe, disbelieve, or depend on personal views regarding them. However, if a person investigates and learns the truth about them, it is her/his obligation to form his/her own beliefs according to her/his findings. To deny these beliefs without reason, only because of doubt, is not permissible. These beliefs are formed in the following issues:

9. **We believe** that God Almighty is not material, He is not composed of parts, He is not exposed to any alteration or change, and His attributes are not apart from His Divine Essence. He is beyond time and place. He was not born from anything, nor was anything born of Him, and His existence is necessary. Understanding the truth of His Divine Essence is beyond the capacity of any intellect, including those of prophets, angels, or scientists.

10. **We believe** in the existence of angels, their inerrancy, and their vast and widespread control over the world, under the administration of God Almighty. The Divine Book is full of references to them, their missions, and proficiency in various fields all over the creation. **We believe** that to deny them, especially the ones named in the Holy Qur'an, brings about disbelief. We also have faith in the existence of *jinn* and devils, be they of one kind or of two.

11. **We believe** in all the heavenly books sent down to the prophets prior to the last prophet Muhammad (s). We have specific faith in the books named in the Qur'an and general faith in the ones not mentioned therein.

12. **We believe** in divine revelation, i.e. the secret spiritual communication between the prophets and God Almighty, and that all the divine religions and heavenly books were delivered to humankind from God through them. They also received other laws and sciences and delivered them to the people. There were three methods of revelation:

- a. Inspiration of divine words to the heart of the prophet through a method beyond physical senses.
- b. Inspiration of God's words through the hearing sense, without the appearance of anything.
- c. Descent of an angel to the prophet and inspiration of God's words in a face-to-face manner.

It is likely that all three kinds of revelations were sent down to all prophets, with differences in degree, time, place, and subject.

13. **We believe** in the infallibility and immunity of all prophets from sin, mistake, and error in the religious affairs. This means that they never committed any sin, be it small or great, neither in childhood nor in maturity, neither before being raised up as prophets nor afterwards. They also never made mistakes or errors, neither in the stage of learning the laws of God nor in the stage of delivering them to the people by means of speech or writing, neither in the stage of carrying out and enforcing the laws in the society nor in the stage of personally following the laws and showing reverence to God.

14. **We believe** that extravagance (*ghuluww*) and digression concerning the Holy Prophet or any of the Infallibles (*ma'sumin*; the Holy Prophet, Lady Fatimah, and the Twelve Imams) is forbidden and rationally wrong. This is also applicable to the Companions (*Sahabah*)<sup>1</sup>, the angels, and any other mortal being no matter how close to the Prophet and the holy persons. Likewise, we also deny any exaggeration concerning all sacred things.

Extravagance means to exceed the limits in belief, such as:

- a. To believe that these individuals are gods along with denial of the existence of God Almighty.
- b. To believe that both they and God Almighty are gods, each independent of the other.

- c. To attribute partnership in godhead with God, similar to what Christians say about Prophet Jesus (‘a).
- d. To characterize them with one of the particular Attributes of God Almighty, such as claiming that they are the creators of heavens and the earth, creators of humans and animals, sustainers of all living beings, taking life away from the living beings and bringing them back to life, or any other things that are exclusively God’s. In most cases, such extremist beliefs are deemed disbelief (*kufir*).

15. **We believe** that the Holy Qur’an, the Divine Book, which is now in the hands of Muslims, has not been distorted. This means that the present words of the Qur’an are the same as those that the Angel of Revelation inspired to the heart of the Holy Prophet from God Almighty. They are the same words that the Holy Prophet conveyed to the Muslims. They were written by the scribes of revelation and later others and they became available to the people. We have thus received them as undistorted as they were revealed. In other words, the luminous Book we are having in our hands today is the same Book that was descended to the heart of the Holy Prophet (s), and it is the same as what exists in the pre-eternal knowledge of the Almighty.

16. **We believe** that the twelfth Imam—Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, the Argument of God against His creatures (*al-hujjah*), the expected—al-Mahdi (‘a), was born during the Imamate of his father, Imam al-Hasan al-‘Askari (‘a). Before the martyrdom of his father and according to the predetermined command of God and His Prophet, Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) was appointed as the leader, ruler, and guide for all the duty-bound (*mukallaf*; a person too sane and mature to be excused for violating religious obligations) persons on earth. Since that time, he has been entrusted with the position of leadership and authority over humankind, and he has undertaken the unseen dignities of divine jurisdiction in the society. When God Almighty wills, Imam Mahdi (‘a) will reappear to turn the corrupted world into a virtuous community.

17. **We believe** that the Holy Prophet (s) received the religious laws and principles through divine education. He knew all the sciences and secrets of the Qur’an, all the Books of the former prophets, all the different fields of knowledge, which the human society of his time was unaware of, all that which he would be questioned about, and the divine knowledge and hidden secrets that are beyond the realm of our imagination. We also have the same belief about his Infallible Successors.

18. **We believe** in the complete validity of God’s Book, the Qur’an. In other words, it is necessary to accept the fundamental and subordinate religious rulings mentioned in the Holy Qur’an as well as the knowledge and wisdom it explicitly or apparently denotes, with their specified circumstances. Hence, it is forbidden to deny them.

19. **We believe** in the traditions (*Sunnah*) of the Holy Prophet (s) as valid argument against us. The *Sunnah* consists of the words that the Holy Prophet stated as religious laws and divine knowledge. We also believe that the Holy Imams are transmitters and explainers of the *Sunnah*, which was completely transferred to them free of fault, doubt, or alteration. On the Judgment Day, God will interrogate all the people of the world with regard to two documents: His Book and the *Sunnah*, and they will refer to these

two to prove their claims and acquit themselves from religious liability.

20. **We believe** in reason and reason-based understanding as valid argument against us. This means that the understanding of every person about the validity and invalidity of beliefs and the goodness and evilness of things is the perfect evidence and convincing proof, just like the Holy Book and *Sunnah*. On Judgment Day, when God settles account with His creatures in full justice, the reason-based judgment about one's good and evil acts will be a proof for whether they are deserving of reward or punishment.

21. **We believe** in the temporal contingency of the world, meaning that God created and gave life to all the creatures in the universe from absolute nonexistence. Therefore, His Holy Being is the pre-eternal necessary existence and everything other than Him is a possibly existent (i.e. contingent) product. This means that it exists when He exists and is not other than Him.

22. Regarding persons' actions, **we believe** in the median between free will and compulsion. This means that both humans and God have influence in any action humans perform. If a human wills and acts, God will help him/her by providing the provisions for the action. Humans are not completely independent such that their will is the complete cause for their actions with God exerting no influence; nor is the will of God the absolute cause for their actions, so that their own will has no influence in their actions, like the movement of a flag by the wind, which is compulsion.

Thus, the median between free will and compulsion denotes the interference of both the person and God in voluntary actions. In this position, there is no difference between obligatory and forbidden actions, although these two differ in other ways. God is content with a permitted action and discontent with a forbidden one. He has ordered or allowed the permitted actions and has forbidden the forbidden ones. He will reward humans for doing permitted and favorable actions and punish them for committing forbidden actions. These distinctions concern the external aspect of the voluntary actions of a person.

23. **We believe** in *Barzakh* (the period between burial and the final judgment). This period is a temporary abode of the human souls that have departed their bodies in this world. The angels who run the affairs of this *intermediate world*, which also has a temporary heaven and hell and temporary reward and punishment, also reside there. When they come to this intermediate world, the souls are divided into three groups:

- a. Some souls will be awake and joining blissful life. These are the souls of the pure and faithful believers.
- b. Other souls will be awake, yet undergoing chastisement. These are the souls of the unbelievers and infidels.
- c. Other souls will be put in a state of dormancy (known as *subat*) until the Judgment Day. These are the souls of those who spent their lives with a mixture of uprightness and sinfulness as well as the souls of the mentally enfeebled ones.

24. **We believe** that on the Judgment Day, all duty-bound persons will be questioned about their beliefs and actions and will be put on trial and settled to account. God will thus impartially judge in all the intellectual and physical disputes, beginning with the issue of His Oneness to the most trivial discrepancies about property and dues.

25. **We believe** that, on the Judgment Day, some “Witnesses” will testify for or against some people with regard to settling account with and judging them. This means that if the disbelievers and wrongdoers deny the missions of the Prophets or deny that they conveyed the message of God to them out of fear and horror of the Resurrection, these “Witnesses,” the Prophets, or private plaintiffs, will rise and give evidence on the inaccuracy of these denials. Accordingly, the disbelievers and wrongdoers will be judged. Such testimonies will also be made to refute the baseless claims of those who deny that they have been invited to the Religion of God, deny the completion of proof against them, deny their sins, or deny their violating the others’ rights.

These “Witnesses” are God Almighty Himself, the Prophets of each nation, the Prophets’ Successors ordained by God, the angels appointed to certain jobs, the angels commissioned to record the good and evil deeds of each person, the scholars, the righteous people, those who have witnessed the deeds of the deniers, times and places of the committed sins, and finally the limbs and body parts of the deniers.

26. **We believe** in the weighing up of actions in the Hereafter. This means that the good and evil actions of every person, including the internal beliefs, external and physical actions, and moral and mental attributes, will be spiritually and rationally weighed up and measured and will be given reward or punishment depending on the assessment of this Scale (*mizan*). In this assessment, pious and reward-deserving actions are weighed up as “heavy” and less deserving actions as “light.”

27. **We believe** that all good and evil deeds of a person in the worldly life, from the time he/she has the ability to distinguish right from wrong until the last moment of his/her life, are written by the assigned angels. These deeds will be compiled in a book and given to the right or left hand of the person in the Hereafter. This book contains beliefs and actions, be they big or small. The person him/herself will be familiarized with the contents of that book and will be informed of the method of the calculation of her/his deeds before the actual judgment.

28. **We believe** that intercession (*shafa’ah*) will play a role in the final judgment of some people. In other words, when a sinner is sentenced to punishment in hell, God will allow certain individuals to intercede and ask Him on behalf of the sinner to release him/her. In this way, God may forgive the sinner. However, intercession is contingent upon God’s permission after it is requested by the “interceders” or the wrongdoers. The “interceders” are particularly the Prophets, the angels, the scholars, the martyrs, and the righteous persons.

Of course, intercession is made for minor sins, not disbelief and polytheism. The result of intercession is either complete rescue or reduction of punishment. Occasionally, there will be intercession for those who

enter heaven. This means that those whose reward-deserving deeds are few and their rewards are accordingly little, thus given a low rank, will attain a higher status and given more reward by means of intercession.

29. **We believe** in an eternal heaven following the conclusion of the Judgment Day. This means that upon the end of the settling of accounts with the creatures on the Judgment Day, some are deserving of reward for their good deeds or by means of intercession and others are to be sentenced to chastisement on account of their invalid beliefs or wicked deeds. At such time, God will place the pious and the rescued ones in heaven (*jannah* or Paradise), a place of inexplicable beauty and most pleasing splendor and glory. The promised heaven is eternal and everlasting, and it has chambers, different ranks, gardens, trees with bountiful fruits, spouses, and maids, all beyond imagination. One who enters this environment will never have to exit it. Aging, tiring, sickness, anxiety, sadness, harmful creatures, and any kind of evil, harm, or calamity are nonexistent there. Heaven has already been created.

30. **We believe** in an eternal hell upon the conclusion of the Judgment Day. This means that those sentenced to punishment and chastisement in the tribunal of the Judgment Day will be confined to hell, a place full of fire, with various kinds of castigations beyond imagination. Hell is the place of the disbelievers and the ideologically and principally corrupt; it is eternal and everlasting, and those entering it can never leave. Although Hell is temporary for those of minor sins.

<sup>1</sup>. - Sahabah, an Arabic word meaning companions, is a term exclusively said to the companions of the Holy Prophet (s) and, terminologically, all those who saw, heard, or witnessed him (s), regardless of their age. However, various opinions have been expressed in this regard. For more information, see Ahmad Husayn Ya'qub: *The Conception of the Sahabah's Ultimate Decency*; translated by Badr Shahin, Ansariyan Publications - Qum, 1999.

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