

PARAMETERS OF SALVATION

Twenty Points to Discern a Sunnī



Imām Aḥmad Riḍā Khān al-Qādirī al-Bareilwī
Translation & Notes By Muhammad Kalim

Umūr e 'Ishrīn Dar Imtiyāz e 'Aqā'id e Sunniyyīn
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Twenty Points to Discern a Sunni

Third Edition

Shaykh al-Islām al-Mujaddid al-A'zam
Imām Aḥmad Riḍā Khān al-Qādirī al-Bareilwī

Translation & notes by Muhammad Kalim
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ABOUT THE SUNNIWAY

The SunniWay

The SunniWay is an organisation working towards the advancement of Sunnī Ṣufī Islām as outlined in the noble works of Imām Aḥmad Riḍā Khān, with the spiritual blessings of Tāj al-Sharī‘ah Muftī Akhtar Riḍā Khān al-Qādirī and Al-Muḥaddith al-Kabīr ‘Allāmā Ziā al-Muṣṭafā al-A‘zamī. Our work includes using modern technology, such as mobile applications and the internet to provide much-needed authentic Sunnī material, as well as printing books and holding educational courses and classes. We have also initiated a Dar al-Ifta service where people can seek answers for their religious queries. Moreover, we aim to provide funding and support for our ‘Ulamā, giving them the perfect platform to work for the noble Dīn. Visit our website to find out more and support our work.

Ridawi Translations

Imām of the Ahl al-Sunnah, Imām Aḥmad Riḍā Khān al-Qādirī has penned countless works, covering a wide array of topics and subjects, in many languages, including; Arabic, Urdu and Persian. Most of his monographs and books, however, are only accessible to those who can read and understand the Imām’s writings in their original language. Translations of the Imām’s expository and comprehensive works are not readily made available in the English Language for the English speaking public to read and benefit from.

Ridawi Translations is an initiative established by The SunniWay to translate the important monographs of the Imām. The aim is to translate and make available in English works written by the Imām and also works written about the Imām.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Imām Aḥmad Riḍā رحمته الله was born on 10 Shawwāl 1272 AH (circa 14 June 1856 CE) in Bareilly Sharīf, UP, India. His father, the Ghazzālī of his era, Mawlānā Naqī Alī Khān رحمته الله, and grandfather, Mawlānā Riḍā Alī Khān رحمته الله, were from the eminent scholars and saints of their time. His forefathers migrated from Qandahar, Afghanistan, to Lahore firstly, and then later took up residence in Bareilly.

Imām Aḥmad Riḍā رحمته الله at a glance:

- In 1276 AH (1860 CE), aged four, Imām Aḥmad Riḍā رحمته الله completed the reading of the Qur’ān.
- In 1278 AH (1862 CE), aged six, he conversed with an Arab in eloquent Arabic.
- In 1280 AH (1864 CE), aged eight, while studying the renowned book of Arabic grammar, *Hidāyah al-Naḥw*, he wrote a commentary on it in the Arabic language.
- In 1282 AH (1866 CE), aged ten, he wrote an astonishing commentary of the complex and intricate book on the principles of jurisprudence (*Uṣūl al-Fiqh*), *Musallam al-Thubūt*.
- On 14 Ramadān 1286 AH (1869 CE), aged 13, 10 months and five days, he completed his study of all the conventional sciences and graduated as a Muftī. He studied the remaining sciences by himself and mastered both Islamic and secular sciences. At that very age, he began teaching and also took up the responsibility of issuing edicts (*fatāwa*).
- In 1286 AH (1869 CE), aged 13, he wrote a monograph on the definition of praise (*ḥamd*) and guidance (*hidāyah*) in the Arabic language entitled, *Dū’ al-Nihāyah fī I’lām al-Ḥamd wa al-Hidāyah*.
- In 1294 AH (1877 CE), aged 22, he was blessed with successorship [*khilāfat*] and his spiritual guide, Shāh Āle Rasūl Marehrawī رحمته الله, proudly said, “If on the day of reckoning, Allāh asks me, ‘O offspring of the Prophet ﷺ! What have you brought from the world?’ I will present Imām Aḥmad Riḍā.”
- In 1295 AH (1878 CE), aged 23, he performed his first Ḥajj and

received *Ijāzah* in Ḥadīth and Fiqh from various Arab scholars.

- In 1318 AH (1900 CE), aged 46, during the event held under the supervision of Shāh Amīn Firdausī رحمته الله, *Sajjādah* of *Khānqah e Mu'azzam*, Bihar Sharīf, in the presence of countless scholars and respectable spiritual guides of the Indian subcontinent,¹ Imām Aḥmad Riḍā رحمته الله was hailed as the 'reviver of the present century' (ie fourteenth century). Also, the first edition of approximately 100 books of Imām Aḥmad Riḍā رحمته الله were printed by *Toḥfa e Ḥanafīyyah*.
- In 1320 AH (1902 CE), aged 48, he issued a ruling of *kufr* upon four elders of Deoband in *al-Mustanad al-Mu'tamad alā al-Mu'taqad al-Muntaqad*.
- In 1323 AH (1905 CE), aged 51, during his visit to the holy sanctuaries, he presented his ruling of *kufr* extracted from *al-Mustanad al-Mu'tamad* to the scholars of Makkah Mu'azzamah and Madīnah Munawwarah to endorse. The scholars attested the ruling of *kufr* and their attestations along with the ruling of *kufr* were compiled in *Ḥussām al-Ḥaramayn*, which was later published in India.
- In 1324 AH (1906 CE), aged 52, the scholars of Makkah Mu'azzamah, Madīnah Munawwarah and other countries also gave Imām Aḥmad Riḍā the title of 'reviver' and praised him as the 'leader of the leaders' (*Imām al-A'immaḥ*).
- In 1326 AH (1908 CE), aged 54, Imām Aḥmad Riḍā رحمته الله compiled a detailed Arabic commentary, *Jadd al-Mumtār*, on the renowned Hanafī text, *Radd al-Muḥtār* of Allāmah Ibn Abidīn al-Shāmī رحمته الله in five volumes.
- In 1330 AH (1911 CE), aged 58, Imām Aḥmad Riḍā رحمته الله blessed the world with an accurate translation of the Qur'ān, *Kanz al-Imān* (the Treasure of Faith). Thereafter, he also blessed the world with a 12 volume jurisprudential encyclopaedia entitled, *al-Atāyā al-Nabawīyyah fī al-Fatāwa al-Riḍawīyyah* (The Prophetic Gifts in the Riḍāwī Edicts). This encyclopaedia is now available in 30 volumes after the translation and addition of monographs written by the Imām.²

Imām Aḥmad Riḍā رحمته الله left this mundane world on 25 Safar 1340 AH (28 October 1921) at the age of 68, according to the lunar calendar.

The number of known works written by Imām Aḥmad Riḍā رحمته الله amount to 679, of which 206 monographs are included in the 30-volume edition of *Fatāwa Riḍawīyyah*.

PREFACE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

All praise is for Allāh ﷻ, the Lord of all the worlds. Blessings and peace be upon our master Muḥammad ﷺ; the eradicator of falsehood and the light of guidance, and upon his noble family and his honourable companions.

Al-Mujaddid al-A‘zam, Alā Ḥazrat, al-Imām Aḥmad Riḍā, the Imām of the Ahl al-Sunnah, requires no introduction to many. His praises and commendations are being sung in the hearts of all gatherings and circles of knowledge. He is the one who taught us true love of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and he is the one who has protected the faith of the Sunnī Muslims with his sword-like pen single-handedly in a time of devastation.

In the times of the illustrious Imām, many heretical sects emerged, claiming to be part of the Ahl al-Sunnah and preachers of the true message but, in reality, were far from it. Alā Ḥazrat refuted these sects, leaving them utterly dumbfounded. They tried and tried, yet failed to reply; and until the day of reckoning – Allāh ﷻ willing – they will have no reply.

This concise treatise *Umūr e ‘Ishrīn Dar Imtiyāz e ‘Aqā’id e Sunnīyyīn* is one of the Imām’s many masterpieces. It was written by the Imām in 1318 AH upon the request of an admirer who wished that Alā Ḥazrat would write a few words regarding a particular scholar. The great Imām, however – as outlined in the introduction to the treatise – did not know the scholar particularly well, so he listed twenty brief points and requested it to be presented to the scholar to affirm. The initial request for some words about the scholar were to appease the public, who had agreed to accept the scholar if the Imām endorsed him as a scholar of the Ahl al-Sunnah; and though the Imām did not know the scholar well enough to write anything with certainty, he wrote a list of creedal points that would serve the same purpose if the scholar agreed to them.

It is the beauty of the Imam’s work that it can be used universally as a means of differentiating a true Sunnī and a false claimant.

This translation has been done from the Urdu text found in volume 29 of al-Fatāwa al-Riḍawiyyah, published by Markaz e Ahl e Sunnat Barkāt e Razā, Porbandar, India (2003). As the original Urdu text does not contain footnotes, they have been added in certain places to aid understanding and explain terminology, as well as to provide important clarification, which may be beneficial to the reader. Additionally, for the twenty points made by Alā Ḥazrat, names of the monographs and tracts he has authored on those particular points and matters have also been included in the footnotes; for reference purposes.

Many thanks to all those who reviewed this translation. Any errors that remain are mine alone.

Muhammad Kalim (Preston, UK)

10th Shawwāl al-Mukarram 1436

27th July 2015



کام وہ لے لیجئے تم کو جو راضی کرے
ٹھیک ہونا مِ رضا تم پہ کروں درود



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب الانس والجنّة، والصلوة والسلام
على نبينا العظيم والمنّة، المنقذ من النار
والمعطي الجنّة الذي ذكره حرز وحبّه جنّة وعلى
أله وصحبه وأهل السنّة

Allāh, in the name of, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise is for Allāh ﷻ, the Lord of mankind and Jinn. Blessings and peace be upon our majestic and kind Prophet ﷺ, the protector from hell and granter of paradise; whose remembrance is protection and whose love is a shield, and upon his family, companions and the Ahl al-Sunnah.

INTRODUCTION

In the month of Ramaḍān, 1318 AH, I [Alā Ḥazrat ﷺ] received a letter from Jaipur (Rajasthan) summarised as follows -

Letter from Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad ‘Uthmān Ṣāhib addressed to this faqīr:

In the noble court of Mawlānā Molvī Aḥmad Riḍā Khān Ṣāhib Bareilwī, Muḥaddith and Imām of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah.

After greeting you in accordance with the Sunnah, respectfully, I must inform you that our city, Marwar (Rajasthan), is profoundly fortunate that Mawlānā Molvī Aḥmad ‘Alī Shāh Ḥanafī Naqshbandī Uwaysī has come to bless us. We had been blessed with his works and now we are being blessed with eloquent sermons, which are spiritually uplifting and enthral the hearts.³ Ghayr Muqallidīn⁴ and others with heretical beliefs repent after listening to his speeches. There has not been one discourse in which he has not explained the evil of Nadwah.⁵ The people here used to praise Nadwah; now they detest it as much as they despise an evil devil (Jinn). One Molvī of the Nadwīs has also arrived here. He says that if Molvī Aḥmad ‘Alī Shāh opposes Nadwah, then he is an ignoramus and a deviant himself. Some people have been duped by his words. They say that if Molvī Aḥmad Riḍā Bareilwī writes something in praise of Molvī Aḥmad ‘Alī Shāh, we will accept his words and repent from our ideologies. I therefore respectfully request you to write what you think of Molvī Aḥmad ‘Alī Shāh. These words of yours will be very beneficial for the rebels.

العبد محمد عثمان
The servant, Muḥammad ‘Uthmān

[Alā Ḥazrat ﷺ writes] Before this, I was not given a detailed introduction to the scholar, and the matter of bearing witness, especially for ‘*aqīdah*, is important and paramount. I therefore sent the following letter in reply -

Letter from faqīr [Alā Ḥazrat ﷺ] addressed to Ḥāfīz [Muḥammad ‘Uthmān] Ṣāḥīb:

For the honourable attention of Ḥāfīz Muḥammad ‘Uthmān Ṣāḥīb, may Allāh increase his kindness:

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

I received your kind letter. I am grateful that you remembered me. Molvī Aḥmad ‘Alī Shāh Ṣāḥīb blessed my humble abode with his presence, and it was the first time we met. After that, we met in Azeemabad (Patna, Bihar), which was briefer than the first; besides Salām and a handshake, there was no opportunity for further dialogue. The matter of bearing witness (ie the request) is paramount. I – Allāh forbid! – do not harbour bad assumptions; in fact, the virtues of Mawlānā that I now know briefly [from your letter], I wish to know in more detail. I have hope that Mawlānā will be content and delighted with this request of mine due to his love for the truth. Nowadays, it is not only the tribulation of the Ghayr Muqallidīn or Nadwah in India, but – Allāh Protect us! – there are countless calamities.

I present twenty points; Mawlānā’s written attestation, wherein he clearly expresses his approval, will be sufficient and satisfactory – it should then be imprinted with his stamp and sent to me.

فتين احمد رضا قادري عفى عنه

*Faqīr Aḥmad Riḍā Al-Qādirī, may he be pardoned
Bareilly, 27 Ramḍān 1318 AH*

THE TWENTY POINTS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān⁶ of Aligarh and his followers are all *kāfirs*.⁷
2. Any Rāfiḍī⁸ who says the Qur'ān is incomplete or considers Mawlā 'Alī عليه السلام or any other non-Prophet to be superior to any Prophet is a *kāfir* and an apostate (*murtadd*).⁹
3. The Rāfiḍī Tabarrā'ī¹⁰ are *kāfirs* according to the jurists, and there is a consensus that they are deviants, innovators and bound for hell.¹¹
4. Whosoever gives Mawlā 'Alī عليه السلام superiority over the Shaykhayn (Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه and 'Umar رضي الله عنه), in terms of closeness to Allāh ﷻ,¹² is a deviant and is opposing the Sunnah.¹³
5. In the battles of *Jamal* and *Siffin*, the one on the truth and the adherent of the truth was Amīr al-Mu'minīn, Mawlā 'Alī عليه السلام. However, the error of the opposing honourable companions was an error of judgement,¹⁴ and to censure them for such is strictly *ḥarām*. To utter any disrespectful words about them is undoubtedly *rifḍ* (being a Rāfiḍī) and is leaving the boundaries of the Ahl al-Sunnah. Whosoever hurls insolent and disrespectful remarks at any of the companions or considers any of them to be bad or transgressors (*fāsiq*), or bears animosity for any of them, is categorically a Rāfiḍī.
6. For centuries, no one has reached the station of absolute *ijtihād*;¹⁵ *taqlīd* is obligatory (*farḍ*)¹⁶ upon the one who has not reached the level of *ijtihād*. Therefore, the *Ghayr Muqallidīn*¹⁷ are deviants.¹⁸
7. For centuries, the Ahl al-Sunnah has remained within the four groups [Ḥanafīs, Shafi'īs, Mālikīs and Ḥanbalīs]. Whosoever is not from among them is an innovator, deserving of hell.¹⁹
8. The first teacher of the Wahābīs, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Najdī and their second teacher, Ismā'īl Dehlwī, author of *Taqwiyyat al-Īmān*, were both extremely misguided deviants.
9. The books authored by Ismā'īl Dehlwī: *Taqwiyyat al-Īmān*, *Ṣirāṭ e Mustaḳīm*, *Risālah Yakrōzī* and *Tanwīr al-'Aynayn* contain explicit

misguidances, deviances and statements of *kufṛ*.²⁰

10. The book *Mi'atah Masā'il* of Molvī Iṣḥāq Dehlwī is full of erroneous and disapproved matters, opposing the Ahl al-Sunnah and the majority.
11. To seek help and aid from the Prophets ﷺ and *awliyā'* ﷺ, to call upon them or make them a medium at the time of need saying: “Yā Rasool Allāh ﷺ”, “Yā 'Alī ﷺ”, “Yā Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī ﷺ” and to believe them to be a means of attaining blessings from Allāh ﷻ is definitely correct and permissible.²¹
12. Within the universe, the *taṣarruf*²² of the Prophets ﷺ and the *awliyā'* ﷺ is, by the bestowal of Allāh ﷻ, ongoing both during their worldly life and also after their demise. And until *qiyāmah*, their river of blessings will remain flowing.²³
13. The general deceased can see the living, hear their speech and also understand it. The hearing of the deceased is true, and the status of the *awliyā'* ﷺ are much greater than them. (If the general deceased can hear, then why would the *awliyā'* ﷺ, whose stations are much higher, not be able to?)²⁴
14. Allāh ﷻ has divulged the knowledge of every single atom from the first day until *qiyāmah*, that which was and that which will be,²⁵ to His most beloved ﷺ. The knowledge of the Prophet ﷺ encompasses all these unseen matters.²⁶
15. The possibility of Allāh ﷻ lying, as believed by Ismā'īl Dehlwī in *Risālah Yakrōzī* and now by Rashīd Gangōhī in his [attestation of] *Barāhīn e Qāṭī'ah*, is explicit misguidance. The lying of Allāh ﷻ is undeniably and by consensus intrinsically impossible (*muḥāl bī al-dhāt*). The matter of *khulf e wa'id*²⁷ has no relevance whatsoever to these polluted thoughts.²⁸
16. To believe the knowledge of Shayṭān to be greater and vaster than the knowledge of the Prophet ﷺ, as stated in *Barāhīn e Qāṭī'ah* of Gangōhī,²⁹ is explicit misguidance and insulting the Messenger of Allāh ﷻ.³⁰

17. The gatherings of *mīlād* [also known as *mawlid*] and standing (*qiyām*) in his honour, as has been widely practised and established for centuries in the two Holy Sanctuaries (Makkah al-Mukarramah and al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah), are permissible.³¹
18. The food of *gyārahwī sharīf*,³² *fātiḥah* for the deceased, 'urs of the *awliyā'* etc. that are free from music and other wrongdoings, are all permissible and commendable.³³
19. Sharī'ah and Ṭarīqah are not separate. Without following the Sharī'ah, reaching Allāh ﷻ is impossible. Whichever grand station a person reaches, as long as he remains sane, he is not exempt from the laws of Sharī'ah. False Ṣūfīs (*mutaṣawwif*), who consider it their excellence in opposing the Sharī'ah, are all misguided and the playthings of Shayṭān. *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*³⁴ is true and [the false belief of] indwelling (*ḥulūl*), as uttered by some false Ṣūfīs, is explicit *kufr*.³⁵
20. Nadwah is the root of misguidance and the collection of innovations. Associating and uniting with deviants is *ḥarām*, and respecting them causes the anger of Allāh ﷻ. To stop refuting them is inviting the curse of Allāh ﷻ and to make them the members of an Islamic organisation is destroying the religion. The lectures and conferences of Nadwah are filled with those things that Allāh ﷻ and his Messenger ﷺ are displeased with and free from.³⁶

May Allāh ﷻ grant us refuge from all the deviant and heretical sects, and keep us steadfast on the true, pristine Sunnah.

Mawlānā Shāh Aḥmad 'Alī agreed and endorsed these twenty aforementioned points outlined by the Imām and wrote the following attestation:

The twenty aforementioned points are very well and correct. *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* is true; however, according to this faqīr³⁷ it is best not to debate and discuss it. Such things are from spiritual unveilings (*kashf*), and only the *awliyā'* understand it well. As this faqīr does not have a stamp, I have signed it instead.

Thereafter, Alā Ḥazrat wrote the following, signed and stamped it:

Many people today claim to be Sunnīs, and the innocent common folk fall for their deception. Some, taking advantage of the moment, utter things with their tongue and then retract it when they get the opportunity to do so. These twenty points are sufficient – Allāh ﷻ willing – as a test in most situations. Those who are truly Sunnīs – through the aid of Allāh ﷻ – will sign it without hesitation; otherwise if they shy away, it will inform you of the extent of their misguidance.

فَمَنْ نَكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ

*And whoever breaks his oath
only breaks it to the detriment of himself.³⁸*

وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَىٰ عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَن يَضُرَّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا

*And whoever turns back on his heels will
never cause any harm to Allāh.³⁹*

وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

*And whoever turns away – then indeed,
Allāh is the Independent, the Praiseworthy.⁴⁰*

And all praise is for Allāh, the Lord of all the worlds.

‘Abd al-Muṣṭafā Aḥmad Riḍā Khān al-Qādirī al-Bareilwī



NOTES

1. Before the splitting of what was then India. Thus including what today is India as well as Pakistan and Bangladesh.
2. Extracted from *Ḥāyat e Alā Hazrat* by Allāmah Zafar al-Dīn al-Bihārī.
3. Referring to the skills of Mawlānā Aḥmad ‘Alī Shāh Ḥanafī.
4. Those who do not follow a particular school of thought (*madhhab*) and consider it impermissible to specifically follow one Imām from the four.
5. The Ṣulḥ-kullī movement in India. Nadwah (Nadwatul Ulema) is an organisation that was established in 1893 (1311 AH) under the leadership of Mawlānā Lutfullah of Aligarh. The aim of this organisation was to unite all sects under one banner, regardless of creed.
6. Born 17 October 1817 and died 27 March 1898. He is more commonly known and referred to as Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. He was a naturalist and considered to be a philosopher and pragmatist by his followers, and held severely heterodox and incorrect beliefs. He rejected anything that opposed human nature and rejected many explicit verses of the Qur’ān as well as rejecting the concept of miracles, among other false beliefs.
7. See *al-Dalā’il al-Qāhirah ‘alā al-Kufrāh al-Nayāshirah (al-Fatāwa al-Riḍawiyyah*, volume 15).
8. A subset of the Shī‘ah group.
9. See *Radd al-Rifāḍah* (volume 14); *al-Adillah al-Tā’inah fī Adhān al-Mulā’anah* (volume 23); *A’ālī al-Ifāḍah fī Ta’ziyat al-Hind wa Bayān al-Shāhādah* (volume 24).
10. “The Rāfiḍī Tabarrāī of today are generally (*‘alā al-umūm*) infidels and apostates. Among them, maybe there are a handful who have some portion of Islam in their hearts. Their general (*‘ām*) beliefs are that this Holy Qur’ān which we have today – all praise is for Allāh – did not remain complete after the time of the Messenger of Allāh; from it either some parts (*pāra*), chapters (*sūrah*) or verses (*āyah*) were effaced by the companions or others from the Ahl al-Sunnah – Allāh forbid. Also, it is believed by all of their followers that Mawlā ‘Alī and other Imāms were much superior to the previous Prophets: these two tenets are absolute kufr (*khālīṣ kufr*).” (volume 20/244).
11. See note 9.
12. Some of the Shī‘ah, particularly those referred to as the *Tafḍīliyyah*, believe that Sayyidunā ‘Umar and Sayyidunā Abū Bakr have superiority in terms of temporal matters, such as the caliphate, leadership and diplomacy. But in

terms of spirituality, such as dignity in the court of Allāh and closeness to Allāh, Mawlā ‘Alī has superiority over the Shaykhayn. This particular clause has therefore been inserted here by the Imām to indicate that the Shaykhayn also have superiority in spiritual matters; namely, closeness to Allāh.

13. See *al-Zulāl al-Anqā Min Bahri Sabqah al-Atqā* (volume 28).
14. *Ijtihādī*: reasoning or judgment.
15. *Muṭlaq ijtihād*. *Ijtihād*: legal interpretation or reasoning conducted by a *mujtahid*, a capable jurist qualified to conduct *ijtihād*, through which he derives laws from the two main sources: the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, by using the principles (*uṣūl*) devised by the imām of his *madhhab*. They also have the right to exercise analogical reasoning (*qiyās*). *Muṭlaq ijtihād* (absolute *ijtihād*) refers specifically to those who exercise this right independently and do not follow any other, neither in principles (*uṣūl*) nor in derived rulings (*furū’*). Although some scholars who are not absolute *mujtahids* retain the authority to conduct *ijtihād*, such as the direct students of al-Imām al-A‘ẓam, they follow the principles devised by the Imām and are also *muqallid* of the Imām. Ultimately, only those who have reached the rank of *muṭlaq ijtihād* have the permission to not follow any other.

The four famous *mujtahids* who attained the rank of *muṭlaq ijtihād* and their schools have endured the passage of time are: al-Imām al-A‘ẓam Abū Ḥanīfah, al-Imām al-Shāfi‘ī, al-Imām Mālik and al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

16. *Muṭlaq Taqlīd* (absolute imitation) is to turn to and follow the people of knowledge in general. This type of imitating is farḍ: “So, O people, ask the people of knowledge if you do not know” [Qur’an 21:7].

Taqlīd-e-Shakhṣī (imitating a person) is to imitate one of the four Imāms in jurisprudential matters. This type of imitation is *wājib* [For details see volume 6/703-704; 11/404; 29/392].

17. Those who do not follow a particular school of thought (*madhhab*) and consider it impermissible to specifically follow one Imām from the four.
18. See *al-Nahy al-Akīd ‘an al-Ṣalāh Warā’ Idā al-Taqlīd* (volume 6); *al-Nayyir al-Shihābī ‘alā Tadrīs al-Wahābī* (volume 27); *Aṭāyib al-Ṣayyib ‘alā Arḍ al-Ṭayyib* (volume 27).
19. Ibid.

20. See *al-Istimdād ‘alā Ijyāl al-Irtidād*; *al-Kawkabah al-Shihābiyyah fī Kufriyyāt Abī al-Wahābiyyah* (volume 15); *Ḥayāt al-Mawāt fī Bayāni Samā’ al-Amwāt* (volume 9); see also 29/102-106
21. See *Barakāt al-Imdād li-Ahl al-Istimdād* (volume 21); *Anwār al-Intibāh fī Ḥilli Nidā’ Yā Rasūl-Allāh* (volume 29).
22. *Taşarruf*: being entrusted with the management and disposal of worldly affairs. For example, to benefit others, to alleviate difficulties, to dispense bounties etc.
23. See *Munyah al-Labīb anna al-Tashrī bi-Yad al-Ḥabīb* (volume 30); *al-Amn wa al-‘Ulā li-Nā’iti al-Muṣṭafā bi-Dāfi’ al-Balā’* (volume 30).
24. See *al-Wifāq al-Matīn Bayna Samā’ al-Dafīn wa Jawāb al-Yamīn* (volume 9); *Ḥayāt al-Mawāt fī Bayāni Samā’ al-Amwāt* (volume 9).
25. *Mā kāna wa mā yakūn*.
26. See *Khāliṣ al-Itiqād* (volume 29); *Inbā’ al-Muṣṭafā bi-Ḥāli Sirr wa Akhfā* (volume 29); *Izāḥat al-‘Ayb bi-Sayf al-Ghayb* (volume 29); *al-Dawlat al-Makkiyah bī al-Māddat al-Ghaybiyyah*.
27. *Khulf e wa’id*: waiving or foregoing the promise of punishment. The Deobandī elders used this idea in an attempt to prove that lying is included within Divine Power. See *Subḥān al-Subbūḥ ‘an ‘Ayb Kadhib Maqbūḥ* (volume 15/404).
28. See *Subḥān al-Subbūḥ ‘an ‘Ayb Kadhib Maqbūḥ* (volume 15); *Dāmān e Bāgh Subḥān al-Subbūḥ* (volume 15); *al-Qam’ al-Mubīn li-Aāmāl al-Mukadhibīn* (volume 15).
29. Written by Khalīl Aḥmad Ambhetvī and endorsed by Rashīd Gangōhī.
30. The writer, Khalīl Aḥmad, was pronounced *kāfir* in 1320 AH for this blasphemous statement. As these 20 points (*Umūr e Ishrīn*) were written in 1318 AH, two years before the ruling of kufr upon the four Deobandī elders was issued, takfīr has not been mentioned in these points by Alā Ḥazrat. The ruling of *kufr* was issued in 1320 AH in *al-Mu’tamad al-Mustanad* by Alā Ḥazrat, which was endorsed by 33 scholars of Ḥaramayn in 1323 AH and was later published as *Ḥussām al-Ḥaramayn* in 1325 AH. Thereafter, 268 scholars of the subcontinent endorsed this fatwa, which was published as *al-Sawārim al-Hindiyyah* in 1345 AH by ‘Allāma Ḥashmat ‘Alī Khān. Along with Ghulām Aḥmad Qādiyānī, four Deobandī elders were ruled *kāfir* in 1320 AH for their blasphemous passages written in their books: Rashīd Aḥmad Gangōhī, Khalīl Aḥmad Ambethvī, Ashraf ‘Alī Thānvī and

- Qāsim Nānotwī. See *Ḥussām al-Ḥaramayn ‘alā Manḥar al-Kufri wa al-Mayn; Tamhīd e Īmān ba-Āyāt e Qur’ān*.
31. See *Iqāmah al-Qiyāmah ‘alā Ṭā’ in al-Qiyām li-Nabī al-Tihāmah* (volume 26); *Izāqat al-Āsām li-Māni’ Amal al-Mawlid wa al-Qiyām* (written by Muftī Naqī ‘Alī Khān and marginalia written by Alā Hazrat).
 32. 11th Rabī‘ al-Thānī. The demise date of Sulṭān al-Awliyā’ al-Ghawth al-A‘zam al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.
 33. See *al-Ḥujjah al-Fā’ihah li-Ṭīb al-Ta’ayyun wa al-Fātihah* (volume 9).
 34. Oneness of Being. See *Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍawiyyah* 14/641-45.
 35. See *Maqāl al-‘Urafā’ bi-Izāzi Shar’ wa ‘Ulamā’* (volume 21).
 36. See *Fatāwā al-Ḥaramayn bi-Rajf Nadwat al-Mayn*.
 37. Referring to himself.
 38. Qur’ān 48:10.
 39. Qur’ān 3:144.
 40. Qur’ān 57:24.

The Sunni Way
Ridawi Translations

PARAMETERS OF SALVATION

Twenty Points to Discern a Sunnī

Since the time of the Messenger of Allāh, many heterodox sects have emerged, claiming to be part of the Ahl al-Sunnah and preachers of the true message but, in reality, are far from it. Umūr e Tshrīn Dar Imtiyāz e 'Aqā'id e Sunniyyīn – Parameters of Salvation: Twenty Points to Discern a Sunnī – penned by Imām Aḥmad Riḍā Khān al-Qādirī, contains a list of twenty creedal points that allow Sunnīs to differentiate between a real Sunnī and a false claimant.

In the words of the author, Imām Aḥmad Riḍā Khān al-Qādirī:

“These twenty points are sufficient – Allāh willing – as a test in most situations. Those who are truly Sunnīs – through the aid of Allāh – will sign it without hesitation; otherwise if they shy away, it will inform you of the extent of their misguidance.

Do the people think that they will be left to say,
“We believe” and they will not be tested?
[Qur'ān 29:2]

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