

# THE MUSLIM CREED

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## **Publisher's Note**

*“The Muslim Creed”* is the English translation of the scholarly work known as Al-Aqidah al-Tahawiya by the famous scholar Abu Ja'far Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Salama al-Tahawi (d. 321 A.H).

Though this great classical work on creed needs an exhaustive paraphrase like the one in Arabic known as ‘Sharah al-Aqida al-Tahawiya’ by Sadruddin Muhammad bin Alauddin bin Abu’l Izz (d. 792 A.H), the booklet in hand can be made use of by general readers.

Suhaib Hasan, who rendered the work into English, ‘has done his best to keep as close as possible to the original Arabic text’ and made it easy for laymen. Much gratitude is due to the translator who permitted us to publish the booklet.

May Allah make it beneficial to readers and accept it as a good work..

Abdul Malik Mujahid  
*General Manager*



## THE MUSLIM CREED

### ON *TAWHEED* (Oneness of Allah)

1. Allah is one and has no partners at all.
2. Nothing in the whole universe is similar to Him.
3. Nothing can surpass or outreach Him.
4. No one is worthy to be worshipped except Him.
5. He is the First, with no beginning and Eternal with no end.
6. He will never die nor perish.
7. Nothing happens in this universe except with His will.
8. No conjecture or thinking can perceive His real essence.
9. He does not resemble any of His creatures.
10. He is alive; death will not overtake Him. He is the protector; in no need of sleep at all.
11. He is the Creator of the whole universe but He is no need of it. He feeds all without difficulty.
12. He makes all taste death with no fear. He will resurrect them all without any difficulty.
13. Since eternity He has been there with all His attributes. He has always had these attributes and will always have these attributes. They did not increase after He brought His creatures into existence because they have always been there.
14. He was not the Creator (Khaliq) after He had created His creatures and neither was He the Designer (Al-Ban) after He had designed the universe.
  
15. He was The Nourisher (Rabb) before there was anyone to nourish and The Creator (Khaliq) before He had created anyone.
16. Although He is entitled to be called The Ressurector after giving life to the dead, He deserves this title even before the resurrection. Similarly, He deserves to be called The Creator even before He gave life to anyone.

17. He has power over everyone; everyone is in complete need of Him. He can do whatever he likes easily and is no need of anything.

Note: The Qur'an says:

“There is nothing like unto Him. And He is the All-Hearer, All-Seer.” (42:11)

A human being can listen and see as well but his listening faculties and sight are limited. Allāh Almighty listens to every sound and sees everything, even if it is a tiny insect in the depth of the ocean or hidden inside a stone. This is how Allah Almighty differs from all of His creatures as far as those attributes are concerned which seem to be common between Him and His creatures.

18.

19.

Allah Almighty created all consciously.

He estimated for each of His creatures what it needed (*Known as Taqdir or pre-destination. See lesson Nos. ]2&]3 of The study of Al-Qur'an series for more elaboration on his topic.*)

20.

21.

He planned the end of every creature.

Nothing was hidden from Him even before He brought His creatures into existence. He knew beforehand whatever His creatures would do in their lives.

22. Allah Almighty commands His people to obey Him and forbids them from disobeying.

23. Everything in this universe is bound to His will. What He wills occurs; what He does not will, could never happen.

24. Allah Almighty guides whom He likes. He protects everyone out of His kindness. On the firm ground of justice and equity He disgrace or withholds His guidance or places in trials whoever He likes.

25. All people are under His rule in this world; their lives are governed by His generosity and kindness at one end and His justice at the other.
26. He is above all partners and equals.
27. No one can change His pre—ordained decisions and neither can his orders be delayed. No one can overshadow His decisions.
28. We have complete faith in Him. We believe that every thing happens due to Him.

ON **MUHAMMAD** (peace be upon him)

29. Muhammad (peace be upon him) is undoubtedly His most exalted creature, His most beloved Messenger and a chosen Prophet.
30. He is the last of the Prophets, Imam of all the pious people, the Master of all the Messengers and the most beloved to the Creator of this universe.
31. Any claim to prophethood after him is ignorance and infidelity.
32. He is commissioned to both jinns and human beings and to the entire universe with a message of truth, guidance and light.

ON **THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN**

33. The Qur'an, undoubtedly, is the word of Allah. It reveals the sayings of Allah. Allah Almighty revealed this Book to His Messenger. The believers testify to it as the whole truth with a firm faith that it is the word of Allah and that it is not a created thing like the words of the creatures themselves. Whoever listens to this Book and thinks that it is a word of a human being, commits infidelity. Allah Almighty condemns such a person and threatens him with chastisement in the Hell-fire.

He said:

“Soon will I cast him into Hell-fire.” (74:26) in reply to the one who said: about the Book of Allah:

“This is nothing but the word of a human being.” (74:25)

We believe that the Qur'an is the word of the Creator of the human beings. It does not resemble the words of human beings.

34. Whoever compares the attributes of Allah to those of human beings, commits infidelity. Anyone who thinks deeply and escapes the onslaught of the thinking of the infidels, will certainly realise that the attributes of Allah have no resemblance at all to those of a human being.

35. The dwellers of Paradise will see their Lord in accordance with the Quranic saying:

‘Some faces that Day shall be shining and radiant. Looking at their Lord.’ (75:22-23)

‘How this will happen’ is known to Allah Almighty. The above verse should be understood in a manner akin to Allah’s will and knowledge. The best explanation in this regard is that of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself as narrated in some authentic Ahadith. We must have no consideration for our own will or desire in this issue.

A man is safe as long as he refers back to Allah and His Messenger. Whenever in doubt he should try to consult a man of learning.

36. Whoever does not concede to the evidences produced by the Book and the Sunnah is no longer a Muslim. A man who indulges in the fundamentals of faith without proper knowledge and does not submit himself to these two sources, will remain deprived of true faith, of understanding of the religion and of pure belief in the Oneness of Allah. Instead he will find himself swinging between faith and infidelity, belief and unbelief, submission and denial. He will always be confused and doubtful. He will neither be a believer who has a strong faith, nor a disbeliever who rejects wholeheartedly.

37. To imagine Allah in a certain form is not correct. The safest way for a Muslim is to believe in all the attributes of Allah without adding any interpretation. To negate the attributes of Allah altogether or to compare Him to someone, is a deviation from the right path. Our Lord is unique and without any equal at all.

38. Allah Almighty is above all limits and anthropomorphic descriptions. Unlike other things He is not bound by the six directions.

*Note: Regarding the being of the Almighty, Ahlus Sunnah follow a middle way between the two extremes. anthropomorphists who say that Allah 's attributes are like those of the creatures themselves, and the negators who try to strip Almighty off all His attributes.*

*Ahlu Sunnah believe in all those attributes which He ascribes to Himself such as having a face, hands, eyes, and the sitting on the throne or descending to the lower heaven, without raising the question 'how?'*

*All we are in position to say is that he descends, but not like human beings just as He has a face but we do not know what it looks like as none of His attributes resemble those of His creatures.*

*When Imam Malik bin Anus was questioned about this verse:*

*"The Beneficent (Allah) rose over the (Mighty) Throne." (20:5) He replied:*

*"The act of rising on the Throne is well-known, but 'how' is unknown and to question about it is an innovation."*

*A Muslim should adopt this attitude regarding all the attributes of Allah. The learned scholars of Islam despise the rendering of interpretation to the attributes of Allah, such as interpreting the hand of Allah as power, the eye of Allah as taking care, the rising on Throne as ruling.*

*Don't we believe in the soul without perceiving how it is? Don't we believe in death without knowing how it happens? The same could apply to the attributes of Allah as well.*

#### **ON MI'RAJ**

39. Mi'raj (The Prophet's night journey to heaven) is true. Allah Almighty took His Prophet (peace be upon him) while he was awake on a splendid journey. Then his ascension took place in flesh. Allah took him as high as He wanted him in all respect and glory.

\*

“So did Allah convey the Revelation to His slave (Muhammad (peace be upon him) what He meant to convey. The (Prophet ‘s) heart lied not (in seeing) what it saw.” (53:10-11)

May Allah shower His blessing and mercy upon him in this world and in the Hereafter.

**ON KAUTHAR**

40. The pool of Kauthar is true. Allah Almighty will let the Ummah quench its thirst from this exalted pool.

11

**ON INTERCESSION**

41. The intercession (Shafa’a) for this Ummah by the Prophet (peace be upon him) is true in accordance with a number of Ahadith.

**ON THE COVENANT**

42. The pledge that Allah took from Syyedina Adam (peace be upon him) and his descendants is true.

*Note: Refer to verse No. 172 of Sura A ‘raf which is as follows:*

“And (remember) when your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants and made them testify as to themselves (saying:) ‘Am I not your Lord? They said: ‘Yes! We testify’ (This) lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: ‘Verily we have been unaware of this’. Or lest you should say: it was only our fathers aforetime who took (others as) partners (in worship along with Allah), but we are (merely their) descendants after them; will you then destroy us because of the deeds of men who practised the futile”? (7: 172,173)

**ON TAQDIR**

43. Allah Almighty has known since eternity those who will enter Paradise and those who will go to the Hell-Fire. No increase or decrease in this divine knowledge will occur at all.
44. Allah Almighty knows all the actions that the people will undertake. The actions that are destined for each individual will be made easier to him. Actions are valued according to their ends. Fortunate is the one whose Taqdir is in his favour and wretched is the one whose Taqdir falls against him.
45. Taqdir is a secret placed by Allah Almighty among His creatures which is not known even by any close angel or by a Messenger. The more you think about it, the more you will find yourself depressed, deprived and arrogant. This is why a Muslim should abstain from thinking deeply about it. Allah has withdrawn the knowledge of Taqdir from His creatures and forbade them from arguing about it. He says:  
 “He cannot be questioned as to what He does, but they will be questioned.” (2 1:23)
- By asking ‘why did Allah do this?’, a man rejects one of the injunctions of the Qur’an and whoever does this, enters the rank of the infidels.
46. Only the friends of Allah whose hearts are lit by a light of Allah, believe in the Shar’ia practically and dogmatically as revealed from Allah. People with deep knowledge receive such status.

Knowledge is of two kinds:

- (i) Knowledge of the present (i.e. that of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him))
- (ii) Knowledge of the absent (i.e. that of Taqdir which is hidden from the creatures).

To deny the knowledge of the present and to claim to have knowledge of the absent amount to infidelity. A man’s faith is strengthened by accepting what is present and leaving aside what is absent.

47. We believe in the pen and the tablets and whatever is associated with the writing of Taqdir. What Allah has decreed must happen even though all the creatures may try their best to stop it happening. Similarly if Allah has decreed for anything not to happen, it will never happen though all the creatures will try their utmost to do it. Allah has decreed whatever is going to happen until the Day of Judgment. Allah's decree will never fail. Whoever does wrong, would never have been able to do otherwise. And whoever does right, would never have been able to do wrong.
48. Let all the people know that whatever happens in this universe is known to Allah before it happens. No one can change or *overrule* or increase or decrease whatever is decreed by Him. To believe in these facts indicates a firm belief, recognition of truth and well awareness of the Oneness of Allah.

Allah says:

“He has created everything, and has measured it exactly according to its due measurements.” (25:2)

“And the command of Allah is a decree determined.” (33:38)

A man subjects himself to destruction by unknowingly disputing on the issue of Taqdir, in a vain pursuit of the hidden knowledge through superstition and conjecture and ends up eventually as a liar and *forger*.

*(Note: A more detailed article on Taqdir will follow in this series.)*

#### **ON *THRONE AND CHAIR***

49. The Divine Throne ('Arsh) and Chair (Kursi) are true.
50. Allah Almighty is in no need of the Throne or anything beyond it.
51. Allah Almighty is above everything. He dominates them all. Nothing can surpass Him.

#### ***THE STATUS OF IBRA HIM AND MUSA***

52. We believe wholeheartedly that Allah Almighty declared Sayyiddina Jbrahim (peace be upon him) as His Khalil (friend) and

Sayyidina Musa (peace be upon him) as His Kalim (speaking directly to Him).

**ON *THE BOOKS OF ALLAH***

53. We believe in all those books which were revealed to the Prophets and the Messenger of Allah and bear witness that all of them spoke the truth.

***MUSLIM AND MU'MIN***

54. We hold all those who turn their faces to the Ka'ba as Muslims and Mu'min as long as they accept the Shari'a of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and all of his sayings with an open heart.
55. We do not indulge in discussions about the essence of Almighty Allah, nor do we dispute in the matters of religion.
56. We do not dispute concerning the words and meanings of the Qur'an. We bear witness that the Qur'an is the word of Allah Almighty. The Archangel Jibrail brought it to Muhammad (peace be upon him) the master of the Messengers, through revelation. There is no doubt that it is the word of Allah. The words of human beings can never equal it, and we do not regard it as a created thing. We do not disagree with the Muslim Ummah in any of these issues.
57. We do not declare anyone from among the Muslims as an infidel because of a sin unless the person believes that it is not a sin.
58. We do not believe that if a man has faith, his sins will not affect him.
59. We hope that Allah Almighty will forgive all those who were good in their actions (i.e. Muhsinin) and will let them enter Paradise out of His mercy. We are hopeful of this but we do not testify that they will definitely enter Paradise.

We seek forgiveness for all those who do wrong. Although we are scared of their end, we do not allow for despair either.

60. Being regardless of the punishment of Allah or despairing of the mercy of Allah forces a person out of the pale of Islam. The people of the Qibla should adopt a middle way between those extremes.
61. A man does not come out of the bond of faith until he denies all that made him enter the faith originally.
62. Iman (i.e. faith) has to be announced verbally and testified in the heart. *Note: Good actions are the fruit of Iman. A faithful man without Aml Salih (i.e. good actions) is just like a fruitless tree. This is why faith is incomplete unless it is frdlowed by good deeds.*
63. All authentically-reported commandments of the Prophet (peace be upon him) are true.
64. The essence of faith is one. All faithfull are the same as far as the fundamental of faith is concerned. However, they vary in ranks due to the variation in their fear of Allah and in their rejection of lust and desire and in keeping with the most preferable duties.
65. All believers are the friends of Rahman (Allah). The most respected among them in the eyes of Allah are those who obey and follow the Qur'an the most.
66. Faith includes belief in Allah and His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, The Last Day, Taqdir and that good or bad, sweet or sour, are all from Him.

#### **MESSENGERS**

67. We believe in all the above mentioned. We do not differentiate among the Messengers of Allah. We believe that all that they preached was true.
68. The people who committed major sins (i.e. Kaba'ir) from among the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

will not remain in Hell-fire forever, provided that they died on Tawheed, although they had not repented. Such people who met their Lord as faithful will be subject to the will of Allah and His decision. If He wills, He forgives them and pardons them out of His Grace, as He says in His Book:

“But He forgives anything else (except Shirk) to whom He pleases.” (4:48)

But if He wills, He will punish them in the Hell-fire out of His justice and later release them out of His mercy and due to the intercessions made by His obedient servants. He will then let them enter Paradise. This is because Allah Almighty protects those who recognise Him and does not treat them like those who deny Him, those who miss His guidance and lose His friendship.

O Allah! Thou who befriends Islam and its followers! Keep us firmly on Islam until we meet Thee with this faith.

69. We allow prayer behind every pious or sinful person among the people of the Qibla. Similarly, we deem it permissible to pray the funeral prayer over both of them.
70. We do not declare anyone of them as a dweller of Paradise or Hell-fire, nor do we label them with infidelity or idolatry or hypocrisy unless any of these characteristics is very apparent in them. We leave their hidden characters to Allah.
71. We do not approve of the killing of anyone from among the followers of Muhammad (peace be upon him) except those who deserved it according to the Shari'a.

*IN GENERAL*

72. We do not approve of rebellions against our Imams and rulers, even though they may act unjustly. We do not pray against them, nor do we refuse to obey them. We hold that obedience to them is part of obedience to Allah, as long

as they do not command the committing of sins. We pray to Allah that He may guide and forgive them.

73. We follow the Sunnah and abide by the Jama'at and keep away from dissension, disagreement and partition.

*Note: Sunnah is the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Jama'at is the Companions and all those who follow them truly till the Day of Judgment. Abu Shama, a great Muslim scholar said: The command is given to abide by the Jama'at. It means to follow the truth and those who stand by it even though they are found to be less in number than their opponents who outnumber them. This is because the truth is what was strongly believed and implemented by the earliest Jama'at i.e. the Companions. So no value should be attached to the great number of wrongdoers after them. (Al-Ba'ith Ala Inkar al-Bida' wal Hawadith)*

74. We love the people of justice and trust and despise those of tyranny and betrayal.

75. We say "Allah knows best" whenever we are in doubt.

76. We allow the rubbing of moccasins (or boots of soft leather, used as socks) during ablution, both while travelling and when at home, in accordance with the Hadith.

*Note: Normally, a Muslim must wash his feet during ablution before prayer. But rubbing (Masah) with a slightly wet hand over the boot or sock is allowed for a Muslim, provide that:*

- (i) *the person put on the boot or sock after performing a complete Wudu or Ghusul;*

- (ii) *he or she must not perform the Masah for more than one day and night if at home, or for more than three days and nights if travelling. Once this specific period is over, the feet should be washed as a part of the ablution.*

77. Hajj and Jihad should both be carried out under the guidance of the people of authority among the Muslims, regardless of their being pious or wrongdoers, until the Day of Judgement. Nothing can suspend or nullify them.

78. We believe in *Kiraman Katibin* (i.e. the angels who are commissioned to record whatever we utter or do), as Allah Almighty also made them protectors over us.
79. We believe in the angel of death who is commissioned to take away the souls of everyone.
80. We believe in the chastisement of the grave concerning those who deserve it. We believe that two angels known as *Munkar* and *Nakir* question everyone in their graves about the Creator, the religion and the Prophet (peace be upon him) in accordance with the **Ahadith of the Prophet** (peace be upon him) and sayings of the Companions.
81. The grave is either a garden from gardens of Paradise, or a ditch from the ditches of Hell.
82. We believe in the resurrection and the requital of deeds. We believe in the presentation of deeds (to Allah), the account, the reading of everyone's record, the reward, the punishment, the bridge (over the Hell-fire), and the scale.
83. Both the *Jannah* (Paradise) and Hell-fire are created. They will never perish or come to an end. Allah created both of them before the creatures and created those who will dwell therein. He will admit whom he likes into Paradise out of His Grace, or into the Hell-fire out of His Justice. Everyone does what he is supposed to do and everyone is heading towards what was created for him.
84. **Both evil and virtue are destined for mankind.**
85. Ability to do something is of two kinds:
  - (i) *Taufiq*: Grace from Allah which enables a person to carry out a command or to abstain from something forbidden. It is always connected with a specific action and does not exist before the action. It cannot be attributed to creatures, as they have no control over it.
  - (ii) Ability due to health, variety of means, access to them, and the use of body organs. This type of ability precedes a specific action. A person is held responsible for a command if he has this ability, as Allah says in the Qur'an:

“Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope.” (2:286)

*(The passage is translated freely as the original is too complicated.)*

*A man could argue: “I did not carry out this coniniandnzent because I was unable to do it.” If he means inability due to health reasons, lack of funds, insecure journey, etc., he will be right in his claim. But if he means that he did not do it because he could not make the necessary effort, he will be relying o a very lame excuse. He would have got the encouragement to fulfill the command (i.e. the grace of Allah), had he really intended to do it. Even human beings make this distinction: a master will not ask his blind servant to write a letter for him (as he is incapable of doing it), but he can certainly ask him to stand ~ff he is sitting.*

86. People’s actions are created by Allah but earned by themselves.

*Note: As Allah gives a person the ability to do something, the action itself is rea~ded as a creation of Allâh, but because the man has to reap the consequences of his action, it is considered his own earning.*

87. Allah Almighty has only asked people to do what they can manage. They themselves are not able to do anything except what he has enabled them to do. This is what is meant by “There is no movement or power except by Allah.”

We say that no one can turn himself away from sin except with the assistance of Allah. No one has any power at all to carry out an act of obedience to Allah and to remain firm on it, except by the grace of Allah.

88. Everything happens by the Will of Allah, His Knowledge, His Decree and His Pre-estimation. His Will has dominated those of others, and has changed them completely. His Decree has overpowered the planning of all others. He does what He likes. He is never unjust.

“He cannot be questioned as to what He does, but they will be questioned.” (21:23)

89. The dead benefit from the deeds of their lives, such as prayer and acts of charity.
90. Allah Almighty responds to the prayers and fulfils the needs.
91. He owns everything. None owns Him. No one can be needless of Him, even for one blink of an eye. The one who thinks of himself in no need of Allah, even for the blink of an eye, commits infidelity and perishes.
92. Allah Almighty becomes angry and is pleased, but His anger and pleasure are n'ot like those of a creature.
93. We love the Companions of the Messenger of Allah. Our love for any one of them does not exceed that for any others, and neither do we reject any of them. We hate those who despise them or talk of them disrespectfully. We talk of them with respect. Love of them is a sign of faith, conviction and piety, and hatred for them is nothing but infidelity, hypocrisy and tyranny.
94. We hold that the first right Khalifa after the Prophet (peace be upon him) was Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) as he was the most preferable person of this *Ummah*. After him, it was right for Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, then Uthman, and finally Au Tbn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) . They are the rightly-guided Khulafa and Imams.
95. We testify that those ten Companions who were given the glad tidings of Paradise by the Prophet (peace be upon him) with their names, are the dwellers of Paradise because of the testimony of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who was always true in his saying. They are:  
 Abu Bakr, Umar bin Al-Khattab, Uthman bin Affan, Alib bin Abi Talib, Talha bin Ubaidullah, Al-Zubair bin AlAwwam, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, Sa'id bin Zaid, Abdul Rahman bin Auf, Abu Ubaida bin Al-Jarrah (May Allah be pleased with him) who is known as the Amin (trustworthy) among this *Umrnah*.
96. Absolved from hypocrisy is the one who speak well of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah and of his wives who

were clean from any impurity and of his offspring who were purified from all dirt.

97. No one among the early scholars and those who followed them, whether in the field of narrating the sayings and events, or in the field of understanding and thinking, should be mentioned except in a proper way. Whoever speaks ill of them is not on the right path.
98. We do not give preference to any Wali over any of the Prophets (peace be upon them) We say that a single Prophet is preferable to all Awlia.
99. We believe in whatever has been reported of their *Karamat* (i.e. unusual happenings) and whatever is authentically conveyed of their sayings.
100. We believe in the signs preceding the Hour, such as the advent of Dajjal, the descent of Isa ibn Maryam from Heaven, the rising of the sun from the west, the appearance of a subterranean beast from its place.
101. We do not believe in any soothsayers, sorcerers or anyone who claims anything contrary to the Book and Sunnah and the consensus of the Ummah.
102. We hold that to be united as *Jama'at* is the true and right way, whereas disunity and partition are misleading and destructive.
103. In the heaven and the earth, the *Deen* of Allah is one, i.e. Islam. Allah says:  
“Verily, the religion with Allah is Islam.” (2:19) And He says:  
“And I have chosen for you Islam as your religion.” (5:3)
104. Islam is between the extremes of:  
Exceeding the limit or falling short of it (anything or commandment).  
Comparing Allah to creatures or stripping Him of His attributes.  
Human beings as bound to do what is destined or totally free to do what they like.

Not fearing the punishment of Allah or totally despairing of His mercy.

105. This is our Deen and belief, in open and in the depths of the heart. We absolve ourselves to Allah from anyone who opposes what is already expounded and explained by us. We pray to Allah Almighty to guide us firmly on the path, to let us die on it, to protect us from the opposing and contradicting views, and from disparaging factions such as:

\* *Mushabbiha: those who compare Allah to creatures.*

\* *Mu'tazila: those who deviate from the way of early scholars as far as the interpretation of the attributes of Allah are concerned.*

\* *Jahmiyya: those who negate the attributes of Allah.*

\* *Jabriyya: those who believe that Man is bound to do what is destined, with no free will of his own.*

\* *Qadariyya: those who believe that Man is completely free to do what he likes.*

All of these went against the people of Sunnah and Jama'at and so misled themselves. We absolve ourselves from them, as they have deviated from the right path to that of destruction.

And with Allah lies all strength and Taufiq (capability).