



THE SUNNI CHARTER

COUNCIL OF SUNNI SCHOLARS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله المجمل في بلائه المجزل في عطائه العدل في قضائه المكرم أوليائه المنتقم من أعدائه الناصر لدينه بإيضاح الحق وتبينه فاضح البدع
بلسان العلماء نحمده على ما عرفنا من توحيده ونستعصمه من الخطأ والخلط والزيغ والزلل في القول والعمل ونسأله أن يصلي على
سيدنا محمد المصطفى وعلى آله مصاييح الدجى وأصحابه أئمة الورى

PREAMBLE

Praise be to Allāh ﷻ, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Blessings and salutations be upon our Master Muḥammad ﷺ and upon his noble companions and his progeny. Muslims were doing relatively well inasmuch as the fundamental belief system was concerned – despite political upheavals, internecine feuds, global wars, colonial rule, poverty, famine and various adversities, until evil scholars began to gain prominence. These scholars and introducing heretical ideas, sowing confusion in the minds of common Muslims. This has been foretold in the ḥadīth about final times:

There shall be among the last ones in my ummah, people who will narrate [things] which you would not have heard, nor your forefathers. Beware of them.¹

The prominent companion Ábdullāh ibn Ūmar ؓ said:

It will come to pass that devils chained by Sulaymān ؑ will reappear and start teaching religious knowledge to people.²

One of the most widely cited warning for Muslims and advice to safeguard their faith by keeping away from corrupt scholars, is by the *tābiyī* Imām Muḥammad ibn Sirīn who said:

This knowledge is your religion; look at who you take your religion from.³

¹ Preface of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, #6

² *Sunan Dārimī*, #442.

³ *Sunan Darimi*, #399, #433, #438; Preface of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, #5.

The *tābiyī* imāms, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Muḥammad ibn Sirīn have said:

Do not sit with heretics, do not argue with them, do not listen to them [or learn from them].⁴

ʿAbdullāh ibn Mubārak would say this aloud in gatherings:

Abandon the ḥadīth of ʿAmr ibn Thābit, [do not take it,] because he was abusive, and used to insult our elders.⁵

We shall all die, and death upon true faith and correct doctrine, is the most important thing one can aspire for – and this is the advice and instruction of the Messengers of Allāh.

وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ بَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

And Ibrāhīm enjoined his sons [concerning religion] and [so also] Yāqūb: “O my sons! Verily Allāh tāālā has chosen this religion for you . So die not, except as Muslims”.⁶

Imām Subkī cites Imām Abu’l Qāsim al-Qushayrī,⁷ who says reporting from his shaykh Abū ʿAlī al-Daqqāq, who narrates from Abū ʿAlī Zāhid ibn Aḥmad, in whose lap Imām Abu’l Ḥasan al-Ashārī breathed his last, that moments before he passed away, he said:

Allāh’s damnation be upon the Mūtazilah, they distorted and perverted, lied and fabricated.

Imām al-Qushayrī commenting on the above says:

Indeed, Imām Abu’l Ḥasan al-Ashārī was talking about fundamentals of Islām [*uṣūl al-dīn*] and was saying it in a manner of refuting the heretics, the perverts – fulfilling the duty Allāh tāālā has made obligatory upon scholars to defend the religion, and repel infiltration in their ranks, and to expose the distortions, misinterpretations and falsifications of heretics, atheists and apostates – and thus scholars have been steadfast on this path.⁸

He narrates another story of Shaykh Abū ʿAbdullāh ibn Khafīf, who as a young man, visited Imām Abu’l Ḥasan Ashārī in Basrah and was mesmerised by his knowledge, eloquence and the immense honour and respect bestowed upon him by other scholars and prominent people assembled in that gathering.

I asked someone sitting near me: ‘Who is this shaykh?’ He replied: ‘Abu’l Ḥasan al-Ashārī.’ After everyone stood up to leave I followed him and he noticed me and asked: ‘Young man, how did you find Ashārī?’ I said: ‘My master, just as it is befitting his [high] station. But there is a question.’ And he said, ‘Tell me, my son.’ I said: ‘You are a person of prominence among scholars, and hold a high position – how is it that you were not asked [questions] but others were?’ He replied: ‘I do not speak with them in the beginning. But if they talk about things which are not permissible in the religion of Allāh, we will refute them – by the authority of the obligation placed upon us by Allāh to refute those who contradict the truth. And this is the manner of our elders, the scholars of ḥadīth and the theologians among them who refuted those who oppose [the Ahl al-Sunnah], and those who sow discord and confusion.

⁴ *Sunan Darimi*, #415.

⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, #5. *kāna yasubbu al-salaḥ*.

⁶ *Sūrah Baqarah*, 2:132.

⁷ *Shikāyat al-Ahl al-Sunnah*, cited by Imām Subkī in full in his *Ṭabaqāt*, 3/399.

⁸ *Ibid.* 3/402.

It is an obligation upon scholars to refute false ideas and to defend the true creed of Ahl al-Sunnah. Many scholars were persecuted in the way of discharging this noble duty; some were imprisoned⁹ and some were executed¹⁰ – but they stood firm in the face of tribulation and forcefully refuted heresies, never shirking from the call of duty.

We are faced with similar challenges in our own time – and it is the duty of all those who know to clarify issues and aid the Ahl al-Sunnah by teaching, preaching and refuting heresies and heretics.

We are committed to the service of Ahl al-Sunnah; and to protect Sunni interests, we have drafted the following charter for guidance of members, workers and expects guests invited to the masjid to accept and sign this charter as an assurance for the Sunni constituency of the masjid that only bona-fide Sunnis are allowed to speak or teach in the masjid.

نسأل الله العافية



⁹ Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was imprisoned for refusing the Mūṭazilī heresy.

¹⁰ Shaykh al-Islām Sayfuddīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Saāduddīn Masūūd al-Taftāzānī, the grandson of the famous kalām scholar was the chief of scholars in Herat; he was executed for refusing to curse the Companions, when the Rāfidīs overran the hitherto Sunni country. This was in the year 916 AH. [*Shamm al-Āwāriḍ* of Ālī al-Qārī, p42; *Hadiyyatu'l Āārifiḥ*, 1/138].

STATEMENT OF BELIEF

1. We believe that Allāh ﷻ is One. He has no partner, no rival and no equal. He was not born of anyone, nor is anyone born of Him. He has no father, no son, no wife. We believe that He is Living¹¹ and that He has absolute Power over all things. He Hears and Sees everything. He has Knowledge of everything; that Divine Speech¹² is His Attribute and not His creation. We believe in His Names and His Attributes as He has described Himself, and mentioned in seminal texts such as *al-Āqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyyah*. We believe in Divine Predestination. We believe in all the Divine Books given to mankind; however, earlier Books¹³ were tampered with, and altered by evil scholars. Only the holy Qurʾān remains unaltered and shall remain thus, in its pristine form, until Judgement day.¹⁴
2. We believe in all the Prophets of Allāh. We acknowledge only those names as mentioned in the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth (or mentioned in books of *āqīdah*) without adding any new ones.¹⁵
3. We believe that our Master Muḥammad ﷺ is the last Prophet and the Messenger of Allah; anyone who claims prophethood in any form or degree after his time¹⁶ is a disbeliever – and an apostate if he/she professed Islām prior to this claim. Such a claimant has no relation to Islām, regardless of their external piety and deeds deemed good and charitable according to worldly wisdom..
4. We believe in Judgement Day. We believe that everyone who lived and died in this world, will be resurrected on that day and held to account for their deeds. Muslims will be sent to Paradise and disbelievers¹⁷ will be sent Hell. We also believe that not all the sinners among Muslims will go to Hell; Prophets and saints will intercede for them – and our Master Muḥammad ﷺ is the chief of all intercessors. We believe that disbelievers will remain in Hell forever and Muslim sinners in hell will stay for a period (as Willed by Allāhﷻ) and eventually taken out of Hell, and granted paradise. We believe that both Hell and Paradise, and their inhabitants will abide therein forever.
5. We believe that all the companions of the Prophet ﷺ are upright and righteous; the most superior of all the companions is Sayyidunā Abū Bakr ؓ and then Sayyidunā Ūmar ؓ and then Sayyidunā Ūthmān ؓ and then Sayyidunā Ālī ؓ. After these four, the remainall others and superiority in a specific trait has been mentioned in the ḥadīth,

¹¹ Living, Hearing and Seeing are Divine Attributes that are unlike attributes of anything or anyone in the creation.

¹² Divine Speech is transcendent from letters and sounds, because they are accidents and Divine Speech is Preeternal.

¹³ Such as the *Torah* and *Injīl*, known as the Old Testament and the New Testament.

¹⁴ It shall be taken away a short while before the Final Day.

¹⁵ Such as considering Buddha, Krishna or Guru Nanak as prophets; *al-iyadhu billāh*.

¹⁶ Sayyidunā ʿĪsā ؑ was a prophet before RasūlAllāh ﷺ; he has not yet tasted death and will descend before the Final Hour.

¹⁷ **Kāfir**, which describes anyone who has disbelieved in one or more of the necessary precepts of religion [*ḍarūriyāt*].

6. We accept and believe in the five pillars of Islām: Shahādah, Ṣalāt, Zakāt, Ṣawm and Ḥajj.¹⁸ These are the foremost Essentials [*ḍarūri*] of religion and anyone rejecting or disagreeing with these is an outright disbeliever. We believe that the sources of Law are four: Qur’ān, Sunnah, Ijmāā and Qiyās; and that after the fourth century, it is ruled impermissible for common people to follow any madh’hab other than the four schools of jurisprudence: Ḥanafī, Shāfiyī, Mālikī and Ḥanbalī.
7. We believe that good deeds like recitation of the Qur’ān, etc. will benefit the dead; we believe that visiting RasūlAllāh ﷺ in Madīnah is the most superior act after obligatory deeds. We also consider celebrating the birth of the Prophet ﷺ as a commendable act and that poetry in praise of our master, the Prophet ﷺ is proven from the Sunnah; and that the *Burdah*, *Dalāyil al-Khayrāt*, *Ṣalāt of Tāj* and various litanies established by Sufi Scholars such as *Hizb al-Baḥr* etc. are commendable, praiseworthy and merit reward. We reject dissenters from the Sunni creed and all forms of extremism – whether literal interpretation of anthropomorphists or the esoteric interpretations of heretical sufis that contradict the shariāh. We reject anyone who professes beliefs that are not concordant with the Sunni creed, as explained by imāms of Māturīdī and Ashārī¹⁹ schools.



¹⁸ *Shahādah*=Profession of Faith; *Ṣalāt*=Prayer; *Zakāt*=Poor due, obligatory charity; *Ṣawm*=Fasting in Ramadān; *Ḥajj*=Pilgrimage to Makkah if one is able bodied and can afford to undertake the journey.

¹⁹ Many Sunni Ḥanbalī scholars do not call themselves Māturīdī or Ashārī, but their beliefs are consistent with Ashārīs; hence they can be termed as Ashārīs even if they do not accept the description per se; and this is what we mean when we say that only Ashārī-Māturīdī are Ahl al-Sunnah.

CONVICTIONS

Please indicate whether you agree with the points by ticking the box. In case you disagree or abstain, please state your reasons.

SI	Statement	Yes / No / Abstain
1	Only Māturīdīs, Ashārīs and non-anthropomorphic Ḥanbalīs are Sunnis.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
2	There is no difference of opinion on primary issues of <i>ʿaqidah</i> among Sunnis. Differences in secondary issues are tolerated and those who have differing opinions on secondary issues cannot be ruled as heretic or misguided.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
3	Following a madh'hab has been the norm for the past one thousand years. Major ḥadīth scholars and imāms have all followed one of the four madh'habs – including scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Qayyim who identified themselves as Ḥanbalīs. Those who reject these four madh'habs and claim to be free of madh'habs have dissented from the way of Sunni scholars of a thousand years or more (and indeed, those whom they consider as their elders).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
4	Major ḥadīth imāms and commentators; including the very pioneers of ḥadīth classification and masters of ḥadīth principles followed one of the four madh'habs; imāms such as Qādī Íyād, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, Badruddīn al-ʿAynī, ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq Dihlawī, and Murtada Zabīdī were all followers of a madh'hab.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
5	Further to #4 above, it is wājib to follow a specific madh'hab; one who does not follow a	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain

SI	Statement	Yes / No / Abstain
	madh'hab in our time is a heretic. Such people call themselves as, <i>Salaḥī</i> , <i>Ghayr Muqallid</i> , <i>Ahl e Ḥadīth</i> . The last term should not be confused with the literal meaning used for ḥadīth scholars.	
6	Al-Albani, Bin Baz, Úthaymīn are all heretics – they were prominent Wahābī and <i>la-madh'habi</i> (aka Salafi) leaders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
7	Wahābīs are the followers of Muḥammad ibn Ābd al-Wahhāb; they are heretics.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
8	Deobandis from India/Pakistan are an offshoot of Wahābīs. They agree with most of their aberrations except certain things such as following a madh'hab, because Deobandis are mostly Ḥanafīs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
9	Tablighi Jamaat is the proselytising arm of Deobandis; and follow Deobandi scholars.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
10	Concerning Wahābī, Ghayr Muqallid, Salafī: If their heresy is beyond kufr (like anthropomorphic beliefs which cannot be justified or explicit blasphemies) they are kāfir; otherwise, they are heretics.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
11	Blasphemy of prophets is kufr. One who utters blasphemy is an apostate. Qāḍī Íyāḍ in his <i>Shifā</i> , Ibn Taymiyyah in his <i>Ṣārim</i> , Imām Subkī in his <i>Sayf</i> and Ibn Ābidīn in his <i>Tanbīh al-Wulāt</i> have all cited ijmāā of all Muslims that anyone who disparages or denigrates the Prophet ﷺ, such a person is a kāfir.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain

SI	Statement	Yes / No / Abstain
	One who does not deem a blasphemer as an apostate is himself a kafir; <i>man shakka fi kufrihi wa ádhābihi fa qad kafar</i> .	
12	Qādiyānis are apostates and have no relation to Islām.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
13	If any Rāfiḍī denies an Essential precept, he/she is a kāfir. Denying that Abū Bakr ؓ was a companion; or faulting the chastity of Sayyidah Āyishah ؓ; or that any imām (non-prophet) is superior to any prophet; or that Sayyidunā Jibril made a mistake in delivering the revelation – and other such things which are <i>ḍarūriyāt</i> , are all kufr.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
14	If a Shīāh does not deny or reject any Essential precept, but only elevates Ālī ؓ over Abū Bakr ؓ, he is a heretic. Such a person is called <i>Tafḍīli</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
15	Jews and Christians are disbelievers; anyone who disagrees with this statement is an apostate.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
16	Perennialist philosophy is disbelief – those who believe that all religions are valid and truth are disbelievers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
17	Anyone who subscribes to <i>religio perennis</i> , the philosophy of Frithjof Schuon is a kāfir. Those who do not consider it kufr even after learning about it are also kafirs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
18	It is necessary to stay away from heretics of all stripes – mild ones, extreme heretics and kāfir heretics. Those who do on	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain

SI	Statement	Yes / No / Abstain
19	<p><i>Ĥusām al-Ĥaramayn</i> is a collection of attestations by the scholars of the 14th century AH for the fatwā of Alahazrat ruling Deobandi elders who committed blasphemy as kāfir.</p> <p>There is no proof that the persons who committed blasphemy recanted or repented from those statements; therefore, the ruling of apostasy remains unchanged.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
20	The fatwā in <i>Ĥusām al-Ĥaramayn</i> and attestations are correct and valid.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
21	Rashīd Aĥmad Gangohi is ruled kāfir for his fatwā that falsehood has indeed transpired in the Divine Speech of Allāh (<i>wuqūū al-kadhib</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
22	Ashraf Ālī Thānawī is ruled kāfir for his blasphemous passage in <i>Ĥifẓ al-Īmān</i> , in which he compared knowledge of RasūlAllāh ﷺ with that of madmen and beasts. In spite of being refuted	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
23	Khalīl Aĥmad Ambhetwī is ruled kāfir for his blasphemous passage in his <i>Barāhīn al-Qāṭiāh</i> , where he explicitly says that the knowledge of RasūlAllāh ﷺ is lesser than that of the Devil.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
24	Qāsim Nānotwī is ruled kāfir for passages in <i>Taĥdhīr an-Nās</i> , in which he says that even if a new prophet comes after our Prophet ﷺ, it will have no bearing on his being the seal of all prophets (<i>khātam an-nabiyyīn</i>).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain
25	Abū'l Ālā'a Maudūdī is a heretic, and his sect Jamāat e Islamī has elements of Wahābī ideology.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Abstain

SI	Statement	Yes / No / Abstain
26		

CHALLENGES

Muslims today face a number of challenges in our age and are subjected to vicious attacks on Sunni thought, beliefs and practices from disbelievers and from those who call themselves Muslims but are still . The following are the major challenges from claimants to Islām, those against Islam

ATHEISM:

PERENNIALISM / SYNCRETISM: There are various actors who promote that Islām is not the sole

ANTHROPOMORPHISM:

RĀFIDĪS:

QADIANIS:

WAHĀBĪS

DEOBANDĪS:

PROFLIGATE SŪFĪS

HERETICAL SŪFĪS

EXTREMISM/TERRORISM:

HEDONISM:

SECULARIST LIBERTARIANS

FREETHINKERS

RESURGENT MÚTAZILAH

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