

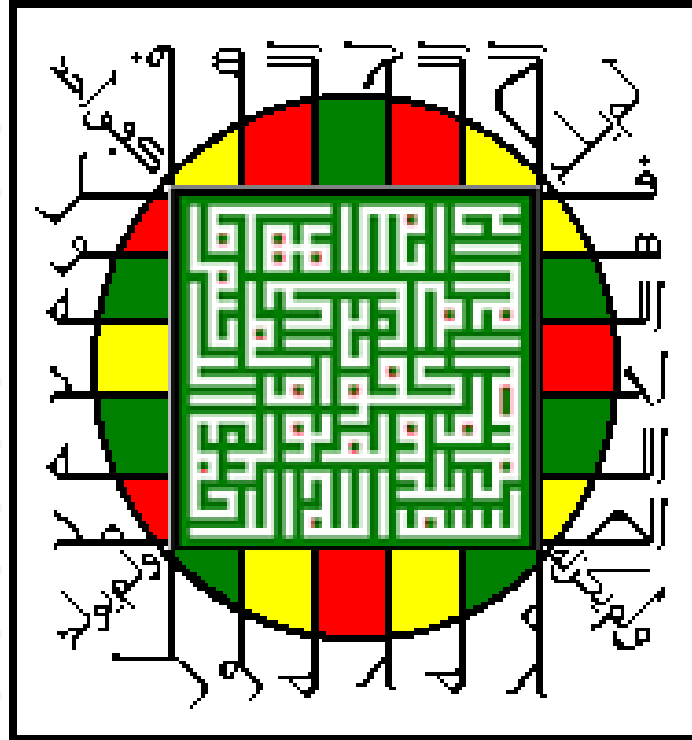
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كِتَابُ أُصُولِ الدِّينِ

The Book of the Foundation of the Religion



لِلشَّيْخِ عُثْمَانَ بْنِ فُودِيٍّ

Institute of Islamic - African Studies International

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The ornate design on the cover is the *hatumere`* of the *Qur'anic* chapter called *al-Ikhlaas* and comprises the essence of *tawheed* (Divine Unity) where Allah ta'ala says: "*Say: He Allah is One. Allah is the Eternally Self Subsistent. He neither begets, nor was He begotten, and there is none like Him.*" These five statements can be read in five directions representing: [1] the five fundamental principles of Islam; [2] the *fifth* of the spoils of war; [3] the five People of the House: Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, al-Hassan and al-Hussayn; [4] the five Vicegerents: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, al-Hassan and Muhammad ibn Abdullahi al-Mahdi; and [5] the five Spiritual Poles: *Shaykh* Abd'l-Qaadir, *Shaykh* Ahmad ar-Rufai', *Shaykh* Ibrahim ad-Dasuqi, *Shaykh* Ahmad al-Badawi, and *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`. The design also represents the *Wu Xing* (five elements) and their correspondence with the five organs, the five colors, the five powers, and the five forces.

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In the name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful, may Allah send blessings upon our master Muhammad, his family, Companions and given them abundant peace.

All praises are due to Allah who is the goal and source of all praises, who created all of creation from pure non existence and brought them into existence in order to know Him and to worship Him. Blessings of Allah and His peace be upon those He have chosen, and who chose for us from among them, the most noble of them to Him and the most honorable of them to Him, our master Muhammad, and upon his family and Companions, with the best blessings and most perfect peace, and upon those who follow him in the Path of his Living *Sunna*.

To continue: Indeed the science of Divine Unity is the most honorable of the sciences and the foundation of the *shari`a*. For belief in Allah, His Divine Unity and knowledge of Him is the sole reason Allah ta`ala revealed His Heavenly Books and sent the Messengers. By means of the Divine Unity and knowledge of Him, its possessor will enter into Paradise which is the ultimate goal for spiritual bliss; as the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said: "Whoever dies and testified that there is no deity except Allah, will enter Paradise." It is for this reason that Abd'r-Rahman ibn Muhammad al-Akhdari said in his Mukhtasar: "The first that is obligatory upon the responsible person is the rectification of his belief." *Sidi Ibn `Aashir* said in his al-Murshid'l-Mu`een:

"The first of the obligations upon the one made responsible
Who is well established in his discernment is to know
Allah and the Messengers by means of the attributes
From which the clear signs have been established."

That is to say, that the first element which is obligatory upon every responsible person is to know Allah, His Messenger and everything which he came with in the realm of sound faith, as it has been clarified in the *Qur'anic* verses, and sound prophetic traditions. Allah ta`ala says: "*However, true righteousness is for the one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Heavenly Books and the Prophets.*" The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace said as it was related by Muslim on the authority of Umar ibn al-Khataab when he was asked about the reality of faith: "It is that you believe in Allah, His Angels, His Heavenly Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day; and that you believe in the decree, its good and evil." Thus, belief is the source of the religion and its foundation. It comprises knowledge of Allah, and acceptance of His Absolute Existence and that He is described with the Attributes of Perfection, and is free of all attributes of defect. It comprises acceptance of the existence of the Angels and that they are as Allah ta`ala described them: "...*honored servants.*" It comprises acceptance of the Heavenly Books, that they are the Speech of Allah, and what they contain is the Truth. It comprises acceptance of the Messengers, that they are truthful in all that they conveyed from Allah, regarding the Last Day, and what will occur during It, such as death, the Reckoning, the Scales, the Paradise, the Fire, and others than these from the matters of the Unseen. It comprises acceptance of the fact that Allah ta`ala knows the destinies of all things and their allotted times before their existence, then He causes them to exist based upon His prior knowledge of them; and that every created thing comes into existence from His Knowledge, Power and Will. This constitutes what is known from the religion based upon decisive proofs, and it is upon this that the earlier ancestors from the

Companions and the best of the *Tabi`uun* adhered to. It is for this reason, that our scholars designated this science and made it the most superior and important of the sciences of the religion. The erudite jurists of Black Lands, *Shaykh* Abdullahi ibn Fuduye` said in his Manan'l-Manaan:

“The most superior of the sciences is the foundation of the religion
Its superiority will be made manifest on the Day of Judgment.”

That is to say, that the superiority of the science of the foundation of the religion will manifest in the Hereafter because by means of it all of the remaining deeds of the servants will be accepted in that realm, and without it nothing will be accepted from them. Belief and the science of Divine Unity are called the foundation of the religion because it is its basis upon which the religion is constructed. The knower of Allah, *Sidi Shaykh* Ali ibn Maymuun said: “Allah ta`ala says: ‘*Is the one who constructed his house upon the foundation of fearful awareness of Allah and His pleasure better or one who constructed his house upon the foundation of a crumbling overhanging precipice such that it topples with him into the Fire of Hell?*’ For fearful awareness of Allah, and His pleasure are knowledge of Him, for His pleasure is in knowing Him. The absence of His pleasure is in being ignorant of Him. Thus, the meaning of ‘knowing Him’ is awareness of what is necessary with regard to Allah ta`ala, what is impossible regarding Him, what is conceivable regarding Him, and what is necessary regarding the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, what is impossible for him and what is conceivable for him. For when the student first knows what is obligatory upon him regarding knowledge of Allah, and His Messenger, then he will be naturally led to what is incumbent upon him to know from what Allah and His Messenger has commanded him.”

It is thus, incumbent upon the student, the teacher and the knower of Allah, to place as a priority the knowledge of the foundation of the religion, since it is what is given priority in the *shari`a*. That which has priority in the *shari`a*, it is then obligatory to be given priority in nature, custom and convention. These are the obligatory beliefs which are incumbent upon every responsible person regarding the rights of Allah, His Messenger and all that he came with from Him.

Shaykh Ibn Abu'l-`Izza said in his commentary upon the `Aqeedat't-Tahaawiyya: “The science of the foundation of the religion is the most noble of the sciences, because the nobility of a science is ennobled by what that science encompasses. It is the immense jurisprudence (*al-fiqh 'l-akbar*) with respect to the jurisprudence of the branches, and it was for this reason that the *Imam* Abu Haneefa, may the mercy of Allah be upon him named it such and gathered it in pages from the foundation of the religion, when he said: ‘It is the immense jurisprudence and the key concern of the servants which is above all other concerns; and their main necessity which is above all other necessities.’ This is because there is no reviving of the hearts, no blessing and no tranquility except after knowing the worshipped Lord and Originator of creation by His Names, Attributes and Actions. Thus, the entirety of this science by itself becomes more beloved to the seeker than any other. And thus the one who rushes to it and draws near to Allah by means of it, is more beloved and near to Him than the remainder of His creation.”

It is for this reason that this science is called ‘the Foundation of the Religion’. The author *Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, may the mercy of Allah be upon him said in his Umdat'l-Ulama: “Realize that the *deen* which Muhammad may Allah bless him and

grant him peace came with has its foundations (*usuul*) and its branches (*furu`u*). As for its foundations, it is *al-imaan* and the science that verifies *al-imaan* is the foundation of the religion (*usuul d-deen*).” There thus, branches off from this root or foundation two branches: an outward branch which is *Islaam* and the knowledge which corroborates it is the science of the *shari`a* and jurisprudence; and an inward branch which is *Ihsaan* and the knowledge which corroborates it is the science of the *haqeeqa* and spiritual purification. Thus, *Islaam* and *Ihsaan* cannot be made sound except by first rectifying *Imaan*. For this reason the scholars are agreed that the first obligation upon all responsible people is the rectification of their faith.

The *Shehu* may Allah be merciful to him, also said in his Mi`raaj ‘l-`Awaam regarding the meaning of the name ‘the foundation of the religion’: “It is the science of Divine Unity and is divided into three divisions. The first division concerns Divinity (*ilaahiyyaat*) and revolves around what is necessary (*waajib*) for Allah ta`ala, what is impossible (*yastaheel*) to Him and what is conceivable (*yajuuz*) for Him. The second division concerns prophetic (*nabawiyyaat*) and revolves around what is necessary (*waajib*) for the Messengers upon them be blessings and peace, what is impossible (*yastaheel*) to them and what is conceivable (*yajuuz*) for them. The third division concerns the after-life (*sam`eeyaat*) and revolves around what the Messenger upon them be blessings and peace transmitted regarding the matters of the Unseen (*mughayyabaat*).”

He also said in his Fat’h ‘l-Basaa’ir: “Realize that the science of divine unity (*fann’t-tawheed*) is divided into two divisions: [1] the foundations of the religion (*usuul’d-deen*); and [2] the science of scholastic theology (*ilm’l-kalaam*). The foundation of the religion (*usuul’d-deen*) is apart of the individual obligations (*furuud’l-`ayaan*) and the science of scholastic theology (*ilm’l-kalaam*) is apart of the collective obligations (*furuud’l-kifaaya*).” From all the above we know that the science of the foundation of the religion is among the most important of the sciences which the beginner should be preoccupied with. And it is for this reason that the *Shehu*, may Allah be merciful to him composed this concise and succinct handbook, and named it The Foundation of the Religion (*Usuul’d-Deen*).

I first came across this text when I was still a teenager, when it had first been translated then by *Sayyida A`isha at-Turjumaan Bewley* from Arabic into English. It was thus the first book that I had read on the science of Divine Unity. My spiritual master, *Shaykh Muhammad al-Amin ibn Adam al-Khateeb*, may Allah be merciful to him and provide us with his *baraka* once said: “*Shehu* *Uthman ibn Fuduye`* composed this text during the beginning of his affair when he discovered that most of the people were ignorant of the science of the foundations of the religion. Thus, he composed the Kitaab Usuul ‘d-Deen in order to establish the common among the Muslims firmly upon what will suffice them with in this discipline. Thus, it is a fundamental text regarding the doctrine of beliefs of the common people and the beginner.” However, subsumed in this text is the nourishment and drink of those who have attained spiritual arrival and the knowers of Allah. It is my intention, Allah ta`ala willing of composing a commentary upon the blessed book called Quut’l-`Aarifeen Fee Sharh `Ala Kitaab Usuul’d-Deen (the Nourishment of the Knowers of Allah Regarding a Commentary Upon the Book ‘the Foundation of the Religion’).

So, here we present to you the Kitaab Usuul 'd-Deen of the Light of the age, the renewer of the religion, the *Imam* of the *awliyya*, the Sword of Truth, the *Amir'l-Mu'mineen Shehu* Uthman ibn Fuduye`, may Allah ta`ala engulf him in His mercy Amen and benefit us by his *baraka* on the Day of Judgment. We present it so that it can be of benefit Allah willing for those whom He will from His servants; and there is no power or might besides Allah the Exalted the Mighty.

Shaykh Muhammad Shareef bin Farid

19th *Dhu'l-Hijja*, 1431

[November 25, 2010]

In the land about which the master of existence said:

“Seek knowledge even in China.”



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In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful, may Allah send blessings upon our master Muhammad, his family and Companions and give them abundant peace.

Says, the poor slave in need of the mercy of his Lord, **Uthman ibn Muhammad ibn Uthman**, known as **Ibn Fuduye`**, may Allah engulf him in his mercy Amen: “*All praises are due to Allah the Lord of the worlds*”; and blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. To continue: this is

The Book of the Foundations of the Religion

It will be of benefit, Allah willing for those who rely upon it. Therefore, I say and success is with Allah:

The entire universe from its Throne to the spread carpet of its earth is in-time creation (*haadith*), and its creator is Allah ta`ala. He, Allah ta`ala, is Necessary Existent, (*waajib`l-wujuud*) Pre-Eternal (*qadeem*), no beginning to Him; Eternally Continuous (*baaq*), no ending to Him. He is unlike in-time created things (*mukhaalif li`l-hawaadith*). He does not have corporeal dimension (*jirm*) nor any of the attributes of mass. He does not have a direction (*jihat*) or place (*makaan*). Rather, He is now as He was in pre-eternity before the existence of the universe. He is Rich and Independent (*ghaniy*) of location (*mahal*) and designation (*mukhassas*). He is One (*waahid*) in His Essence, Attributes and Actions. He is Omnipotent (*qaadir*) with power, a Willer (*mureed*) with volition, All Knowing (*`aalim*) with knowledge, Ever Living (*hayy*) with life, All Hearing (*samee`*) with hearing. All Seeing (*baseer*) with sight; and Speaking (*mutakallam*) with speech. He is Choosing (*mukhtaar*) in doing a thing or leaving it undone. And all Divine Perfections are necessary (*waajib*) for Him by right. Conversely, and all deficiencies which are opposite the Divine Perfections are impossible (*mustaheel*) to Him.

And all of His Messengers from Adam to Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace are all truthful (*saadiqun*), trustworthy (*umanaa`*), and delivering (*muballaghuun*) what they were ordered to deliver to creation. And all human perfections are necessary (*waajib*) for them by right. Conversely all human imperfections are impossible (*mustaheel*) for them. Conceivable (*yajuuz*) for them regarding their rights are eating (*akl*), drinking (*shurb*), marriage (*nikaah*), buying (*bay`a*), selling (*sharaa`*), and sickness (*marad*) as long as the sickness does not lead to deficiency in their prophetic rank.

And all the Angels (*malaa`ika*) are infallible (*ma`suumun*), who do not disobey Allah in what He has ordered them, and they do exactly what they have been ordered. They are creatures made of light (*nuuraaniyuun*). They are not male or female and they neither eat or drink.

All of the Heavenly Books (*al-kutub as-samaawiyya*) are True and Veracious (*haqq wa sidq*).

Death at its appointed time (*mawt bi ajli*) is real and true (*haqq*). The questioning of *Munkar* and *Nakeer* for those buried and others is real and true. The punishment of the grave is real and true. The blessing of the grave is real and true. The Day of Judgment is real and true. The resurrection of the dead (*ba`ath `l-amwaat*) on that Day is real and true. The gathering of mankind (*jam`u `n-naas*) on that Day in a singular place (*fee makaan waahid*) is real and true. The giving of books of deeds (*`eetaa` `l-kutub*) is real and true. The weighing of actions (*wazn `l-`amaal*) is real and true. The reckoning (*hisaab*) is real and true. The Bridge of Hell (*siraat*) is real and true. The *Kawthar* is real and true. The

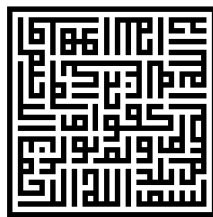
Fire (*naar*) is real and true. The eternity of the Fire with its inmates (*dawaam 'n-nar ma'a ahlihi*) is real and true. The Paradise (*janna*) is real and true. The eternity of the Paradise with its inhabitants (*dawaam'l-janna ma'a ahlihi*) is real and true. The Vision of the believers (*ruu'yat 'l-mu'mineen*) of their Lord the Exalted in the Hereafter is real and true. And everything which Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace came with is real and true.

These are foundations of the religion, their divine (*ilaahiyyaat*), prophetic (*nabawiyyaat*) and after-life (*sam'eeyaat*). Allah ta'ala has established all of them in the Mighty *Qur'an*. It is obligatory (*waajib*) upon every responsible person (*mukallaf*) to believe in them just as they have come. Belief in all of these foundations regarding the common people stands in the place of knowledge with regard the rights of the spiritually elite. This is due to the fact of the difficulty of their arriving at evidence (*adilat*).

The Sultan of the scholars, 'Izza'd-Deen said in his *Qawaa'id'l-Ahkaam Fee Islaah'l-Anaam*: "It is for this reason that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace did not necessitate anyone who had accepted Islam to delve deeply into those matters. Rather, he firmly established them on what is known and would not be parted from them. Further, the Righteous Caliphs and the rightly guided scholars also continued to confirm them in that."

I say: As for the one who is from among the people of piercing insight (*ahl'l-baṣeera*), it is obligatory for him to employ his reflection (*yu'mil'l-fikr*) into these foundations, in order that he may be brought out of blind following (*li yakhruja min 't-taqleed*), and be among those who have well researched spiritual insight (*'ala baṣeera*) in his beliefs (*i'tiqaadihi*). This is because the religion is constructed on piercing researched insight (*ad-deen mabniyyun 'ala 't-tabassur*) for the people of spiritual discernment (*ahl'l-baṣaa'ir*). Especially, if a person among them attains the station of calling people to Him. Allah ta'ala says: "Say: *this is my Way, I invite to Allah by spiritual insight, I and those who follow me.*"

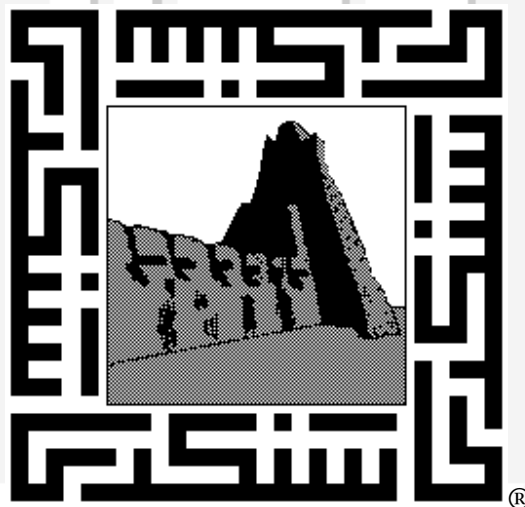
Here ends the **Book of the Foundation of the Religion**. O Allah make us successful in following the *Sunna* of Your Prophet, Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. It is complete with the praise of Allah and the best of His assistance, and blessings and peace be upon the most noble of the Messengers, Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace Amen and again Amen.



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