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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين

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Intro to Usul Al Din Lesson 1 Overview

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Introduction

Alhamdulillāhi Rabbil ʿĀlamīn, and may blessings and peace be upon the Messenger Muḥammad ﷺ, his family, and his companions.

The discussion begins with the definition of **Uṣūl al-Dīn**, followed by a **historical overview** of how this science developed—from the era of the **Prophet** ﷺ, to the **Ṣaḥābah**, to later scholarship, up to the *mutaʾakhkhirūn*. The goal is to understand the evolution of the science and the value of its compilations.

The Linguistic and Technical Meaning of "Aṣl"

1.1 Linguistic meaning (al-aṣl lughatan)

It is defined as:

> **ما يُبتنى عليه غيره من حيث إنه يُبتنى عليه**
>
> That upon which something else is built, *specifically because* it serves as its foundation.

Al-Tanwī notes that the phrase **من حيث إنه يبتنى عليه**—the "clause of ḥaythiyyah"— **excludes** matters that are built upon uṣūl indirectly or metaphorically.

For example, although **fiqh evidences** (أدلة الفقه) ultimately depend on the principles of tawḥīd, they are not considered "uṣūl" in *this* strict sense.

The Term "Aṣl" in Sharʿī Usage

The jurists (fuqahāʾ) and uṣūlīs use the term **aṣl** for several meanings:

(1) دليل (Evidence)

Example:

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الأصل في هذه المسألة الكتاب والسنة

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Here **aṣl** = **dalīl**.

(2) قاعدة كلية (Universal principle)

e.g.,

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الأصل في الفاعل أنه مرفوع

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(3) راجح (Default or preference)

e.g.,

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الأصل في الكلام الحقيقة لا المجاز

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(4) الاستصحاب (Presumption of continuity)

e.g.,

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الأصل بقاء ما كان على ما كان

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What is Uṣūl al-Dīn?

General meaning

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ما يقوم الدين عليه ويعتبر أصلاً له

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That upon which the religion stands and which serves as its foundation.

Since Islam is established upon **tawḥīd**, the science dealing with tawḥīd, divine attributes, prophethood, and the unseen is called **'Ilm Uṣūl al-Dīn**.

Technical definition

A widely accepted istlāḥī definition is:

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معرفة النفس عن الأدلة ما يصح لها وما يجب عليها من العقائد الدينية

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Meaning:
 The soul's knowledge, **via evidences**, of what beliefs are correct and obligatory.

Why the clauses matter:

- It **restricts** the definition to matters proven by **evidence (adilla)**.

- It **excludes**:

    - God's own knowledge (which is from **waḥy**, not adillah),

    - the Prophet's knowledge acquired through revelation,

    - the belief of the **muqallid al-ṣirf** (blind follower), whose belief is not based on evidence.

Historical Terminology of the Science

The term **Uṣūl al-Dīn** developed gradually. Earlier generations used other names.

2nd Century AH — "Al-Fiqh al-Akbar"

The earliest name used for this science.

Major works:

- **Al-Fiqh al-Akbar – Imām Abū Ḥanīfa**
    - Narrated through *Abū Muṭī' al-Balakhī* (Al-Fiqh al-Absat)

- And through *Ḥammād ibn Abī Ḥanīfa* (Al-Fiqh al-Akbar)
- **Al-ʿĀlim wal-Mutaʿallim** (also attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa)
- A text attributed to **Imām al-Shāfiʿī** called *Al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, though its attribution is disputed.

3rd Century — "Al-Īmān" and "Al-Sunnah"

Works titled "Kitāb al-Īmān":

- by **Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām**
- by **Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal**
- by **Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭaḥāwī**

Works titled "As-Sunnah":

- by **Ibn Abī Shaybah**
- by **Imām Aḥmad** and his son ʿAbdullāh
- by **Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī**
- "Bayān al-Sunnah wal-Jamāʿah" = the creed of al-Ṭaḥāwī.

4th Century — "At-Tawḥīd", "Ash-Sharīʿah", "Al-ʿAqīdah", "Uṣūl al-Dīn"

"At-Tawḥīd"

- By Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Baghdādī
- By Ibn Khuzaymah (Kitāb at-Tawḥīd)

"Ash-Sharīʿah"

- By al-Ājurrī
- By al-Khallāl

"Al-ʿAqīdah"

The triliteral root (ع-ق-د) was not used in Qurʾān/Sunnah for beliefs, but became standard later.
 Examples:

- **ʿAqāʾid** of al-Bayhaqī
- **ʿAqīdah al-Qudūrī**
- **ʿAqīdah al-Ṭaḥāwī**

"Uṣūl al-Dīn"

Becomes common mainly in the **4th–5th centuries**.

Examples:

- **Al-Ibānah ʿan Uṣūl ad-Diyānah — Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī**
- **Uṣūl al-Dīn — Abū al-Yusr al-Bazdawī**

The Virtue of Uṣūl al-Dīn

The greatest purpose of creation is:

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وما خلقتُ الجن والإنس إلا ليعبدون

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Worship is only valid **with īmān**, and ṣaḥīḥ ʿaqīdah.

The narration of **Aʿishah** about **Ibn Judʿān** makes this clear:
 Despite his generosity, he will not benefit because he never affirmed the Hereafter.

Thus:

ما لا يتم الواجب إلا به فهو واجب

Belief is obligatory because worship cannot be valid without it.

Statements of the scholars:

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah said:

الفقه في الدين أفضل من الفقه في الأحكام

Understanding creed is superior to understanding fiqh rulings.

Because fiqh rulings have no value without correct īmān.

He further said the greatest fiqh is to learn:

- belief in Allah,
- then sharā'i' and sunan,
- then the issues of the Ummah.

Imām al-Bayyāḍī explains:
Studying **īmān billāh** means:

مباشرة أسباب التصديق بالله تعالى

Adopting the means that strengthen certainty in Allah.

These include:

- Reflecting on **Allah's power**, like Ibrāhīm asking: *"Show me how You revive the dead"*
- Reflecting on **the creation** (إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ...)
- Reflecting on **the Qur'ān** (أفلا يتدبرون القرآن)

The Subject Matter (Mawḍū‘) of Uṣūl al-Dīn

In summary, despite technical debates:

The subject of Uṣūl al-Dīn is the "States and Attributes of the Creator" (أحوال الصانع).

Under this fall:

- His attributes (ṣifāt)
- His actions (afʿāl)
- Creation of the universe
- Prophethood
- Day of Judgement
- And everything related to divine acts.

The famous objection

How can the **proof of God's existence** be included in "His states," when existence is proven *before* discussing His attributes?

The resolution

According to the Māturīdīs:

إثبات أن جميع الموجودات تنتهي إلى الصانع، وأنه مبدأ الوجود

goes back to the **ṣifat at-takwīn** (creative attribute).

Thus:

- proving His existence
- is inseparable from
- discussing His **creative act** and **causal relation to the world**.

Therefore, **ithbāt wujūd aṣ-ṣāniʿ** *is part of the ahwāl of the Sāniʿ*.