

THE CREED OF IMAM SUFYAN IBN UYAYNAH

Day 4: Eschatology, Faith, Kalam, and Absolute Testimony

Program Context: This companion represents the exhaustive academic and theological codification of the fourth and final lecture delivered on July 12th, 2026, at Darul Hadith Edmonton. The speaker, adhering closely to the classical methodology of the *Salaf* (Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah), navigates the final six articles of the ten-point creed of Imam Sufyan ibn Uyaynah (107-198 AH). Grounded strictly in authentic scriptural proofs, the discourse establishes theological boundaries against deviant historical sects.

I. POINT 4 OF THE CREED: BELIEF IN INTERCESSION (ASH-SHAFa'AH)

Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah affirm absolute belief in the Intercession (*Ash-Shafa'ah*) on the Day of Judgment, defining it linguistically as making *dua* or seeking help/aid for someone else, and technically as seeking an intermediary to attain a benefit or remove harm. Under this article of faith, every *dua*, request, or call made by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ on the Day of Judgment falls under the broad umbrella of Intercession. The speaker details three distinct historical stances on this doctrine:

Sectarian Position	Core Belief & Theological Deviation	Scriptural Refutation / Sunnah Correction
The Sufis & Extremists (<i>Al-Gulat</i>)	They commit <i>hulu</i> (extremism) by seeking intercession directly from the dead, grave occupants, trees, and rocks in this worldly life, utilizing them as intermediaries between themselves and Allah.	They resemble the ancient polytheists of Makkah who claimed: ' <i>We only worship them so they may bring us closer to Allah.</i> ' (Quran 39:3).
The Mu'tazilah, Khawarij & Jahmiyyah	They categorically negate the intercession of the Prophet ﷺ and others for Muslims who die while persisting in major sins (<i>Kaba'ir</i>), asserting they will reside in Hell forever.	They reject <i>Mutawatir</i> (mass-transmitted) traditions. The Prophet explicitly declared: ' <i>My intercession on the Day of Judgment is for the people of major sins from my nation.</i> '
Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah	The balanced middle path. They affirm the physical reality of intercession as established in the Quran and Sunnah, adhering strictly to its mandatory boundaries and conditions.	They restrict the request of intercession solely to Allah in this life, affirming it will only manifest in the Hereafter under Allah's ultimate control.

The Seven Canonical Types of Hereafter Intercession

The speaker systematically details seven distinct classifications of intercession that will occur on the Day of Judgment:

1. Al-Shafa'ah al-Udhma (The Greatest Intercession): This is the exclusive station of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, known as *Al-Maqam al-Mahmud* (The Praiseworthy Station). When humanity

stands in agonizing distress under the scorching, close sun, they will seek an intermediary to commence the Judgment. They will plead with Adam, Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, and Isa—all of whom will excuse themselves by mentioning their shortcomings. Finally, they will reach the Prophet Muhammad, who will prostrate beneath the Throne (*Arsh*), praise Allah with divinely inspired words, and be told: *'O Muhammad, raise your head. Ask and you shall be given; intercede and your intercession shall be accepted.'*

2. Intercession for the Sinful Monotheists (Ashab al-Kaba'ir): Intercession for Muslims who entered the Hellfire due to major sins. By way of this intercession, they will be exited from Hell as burnt coal and placed in the River of Life (*Nahr al-Hayah*), where they will sprout and rejuvenate like seeds in a fertile stream. This type is *not* exclusive to the Prophet; it is also granted to other prophets, angels, and righteous believers.

3. Intercession for the People of the Heights (Ashab al-A'raf): This is for those whose good and bad deeds are perfectly equal, preventing them from entering Paradise but saving them from the fire. They are stationed on a dividing wall between Paradise and Hell, gazing at the believers with hope and the damned with fear. The Prophet will intercede for them to be admitted into Paradise.

4. Intercession to Elevate the Ranks of Believers: Interceding for the inhabitants of Paradise so that Allah may raise their spiritual and physical stations beyond what their raw deeds merited. Proofs include the Prophet's specific *duas* for Abu Salamah (*'O Allah, raise his rank among the guided'*) and Abu 'Amir.

5. Intercession to Enter Paradise Without Account (Hisab): This is for the elite 70,000 of this Ummah who will enter Paradise without any reckoning or punishment. As established in the hadith of Ukashah ibn Mihsan, these individuals possess perfect reliance (*Tawakkul*) on Allah, characterized by: (a) not seeking bad omens in birds or nature (*la yatatayyarun*), (b) not seeking cauterization (*la yaktawun*), (c) not requesting Ruqyah from others (*la yastarqun*), and (d) trusting completely in their Lord.

6. The Specific Exemption of Abu Talib: This is a unique, restricted intercession of the Prophet for his uncle, Abu Talib. Because of his crucial role in protecting and shielding the Prophet in Makkah, the Prophet's intercession will lessen his punishment, placing him in the shallowest part of Hell where the fire reaches his ankles yet boils his brain. This is an explicit, singular exception to the Quranic rule that disbelievers do not benefit from intercession.

7. Intercession to Open the Gates of Paradise: The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ will be the first person to knock on the gates of Paradise and seek entrance on behalf of all the believers.

The Two Non-Negotiable Conditions of Shafa'ah:

Intercession is not a chaotic or arbitrary right. It is bound by two divine principles:

- 1. Al-Idhn (The Permission):** Allah must explicitly permit the intercessor to speak. *'Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission?'* (Ayatul Kursi, 2:255).
- 2. Ar-Rida (The Approval):** Allah must be pleased with the one being interceded for. *'And they cannot intercede except for him with whom He is pleased.'* (Quran 21:28).

The Theological Secret: The speaker explains that these conditions exist due to the perfect sovereignty (*Mulk*) and complete knowledge (*Ilm*) of Allah. Because Ayatul Kursi unites these concepts, it stands as the greatest verse in the Quran.

II. POINT 5 OF THE CREED: BELIEF IN THE SCALE (AL-MIZAN)

Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah believe in a literal, physical Scale (*Al-Mizan*) erected on the Day of Judgment to weigh deeds. The speaker contrasts this orthodox position against the intellectualized deviations of the rationalist sects:

Sect / Group	Theological Stance & Arguments	Sunnah Synthesis & Scriptural Proofs
The Mu'tazilah	They deny a physical Scale, claiming it is a metaphor for absolute justice (<i>Al-'Adl</i>). They argue that actions (speech and deeds) are abstract 'meanings' or 'accidents' (<i>A'radh</i>) that have no physical body and therefore cannot be placed on physical plates. They mockingly claim only grocers (<i>al-baqqa</i>) need physical scales.	They place human intellect over textual transmission. Allah is all-powerful and will transform abstract deeds into physical entities to be weighed. As proof, the Prophet narrated that Death—an abstract concept—will be brought on the Day of Judgment in the physical shape of a black-and-white ram and slaughtered between Paradise and Hell.
Ahl al-Sunnah	They believe in a real, physical Scale with two plates (<i>katan</i>) and a tongue (<i>lisan</i>). The two plates are established by authentic hadiths (e.g., Hadith al-Bitaqah). The tongue, while not explicitly mentioned in prophetic texts, is established by the Sahaba (Ibn Abbas) and Tabi'un (al-Hasan al-Basri) with consensus.	Cites multiple verses: ' <i>And We place the scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection, so no soul will be treated unjustly at all...</i> ' (Quran 21:47). The plural 'scales' (<i>mazin</i>) refers to the diverse categories of things being weighed, rather than a multiplicity of scales.

The Four Entities Weighed on the Scale

The speaker proves from the authentic Sunnah that four distinct entities will physically be weighed on the Scale:

- **The Actions (A'mal):** Physical deeds will be given physical form. The Prophet declared: '*There is nothing heavier on the Scale of a believer on the Day of Judgment than good manners.*'
- **The Statements (Aqwal):** Spoken words will be weighed. The concluding hadith of Sahih al-Bukhari states: '*Two statements are light on the tongue, heavy on the scales, and beloved to the Most Merciful: Subhanallahi wa bihamdihi, Subhanallahil 'Adheem.*'
- **The Registers of Deeds (Sijillat):** The massive books containing a person's life history will be placed on the scale. This is established by the famous **Hadith al-Bitaqah (Hadith of the Card)**, where a man with 99 scrolls of evil deeds—each stretching as far as the eye can see—is saved because his single card containing *La ilaha illallah* is placed on the opposite plate, completely outweighing the registers of sin.
- **The Person (Ashkhas):** The physical body of the human will be weighed, reflecting their spiritual worth rather than their worldly mass. The Prophet said: '*A large, fat man will be brought on the Day of Judgment, and he will not weigh even the wing of a mosquito in the sight of Allah.*' Conversely, when companions laughed at the thinness of the shins of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, the Prophet swore: '*By Him in Whose Hand is my soul, they are heavier on the scale than Mount Uhud.*'

III. POINT 6 OF THE CREED: BELIEF IN THE BRIDGE (AS-SIRAT)

Ahl al-Sunnah believe in the physical Bridge (*As-Sirat*) erected over the center of Hellfire (*Jahannam*) that every human must cross. It is described in authentic Hadiths as being thinner than a hair, sharper than a sword, slippery, and fitted with iron hooks (*Kalalib*) that snatch people according to their deeds. The speed of crossing is strictly determined by the spiritual light (*Noor*) a person is given, which is directly proportional to their worldly righteous actions. Crossing speeds vary from the blink of an eye, the flash of a star, the speed of wind, running, walking, to crawling on hands and knees.

Advanced Eschatological Nuances of the Sirat

Sectarian Denial: The Mu'tazilah and philosophers deny the physical Sirat, arguing that walking on a bridge thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword is physically impossible. Ahl al-Sunnah refute this by noting that the laws of the Hereafter are distinct from the physical laws of this worldly life; we submit blindly to the texts of the unseen.

The Fiqh of Wurud: The speaker explains the verse, *'There is none of you except that he will do Wurud over it...'* (Quran 19:71). In the correct Tafsir of the Salaf, *Wurud* refers to passing over the bridge, not entering Hell itself. The Prophet confirmed this when Hafsaah questioned him, reciting the subsequent verse: *'Then We will save those who feared Allah and leave the wrongdoers on their knees.'* (Quran 19:72).

The Lineage Principle: The speaker emphasizes a profound eschatological reality: *'Whose actions slow him down, his lineage will not speed him up.'* Unlike worldly status, wealth, and power—which completely depart a person—one's lineage remains with them in the Hereafter and Hellfire, yet it yields absolutely no benefit if their deeds are deficient.

IV. POINT 7 OF THE CREED: FAITH (IMAN) IS SPEECH AND ACTION

Imam Sufyan ibn Uyaynah explicitly defined Faith as **Speech and Action** (*Qawl wa 'Amal*), which increases with obedience (*Ta'ah*) and decreases with disobedience (*Ma'siyah*). The speaker details the five distinct dimensions of this definition:

1. **Qawl al-Qalb (Speech of the Heart):** The absolute conviction, affirmation (*Tasdiq*), and knowledge (*Ma'rifah*) of Allah and the religion.
2. **Qawl al-Lisan (Speech of the Tongue):** The physical pronunciation of the two testimonies of faith (*Shahadatayn*).
3. **'Amal al-Qalb (Action of the Heart):** The internal acts of worship, such as sincere love (*Mahabbah*), fear (*Khawf*), hope (*Raja'*), and reliance (*Tawakkul*).
4. **'Amal al-Lisan (Action of the Tongue):** Spoken acts of worship, such as reciting the Quran, making Dhikr, and commanding good.
5. **'Amal al-A'da (Action of the Limbs):** Physical deeds of worship, such as standing, bowing, and prostrating in prayer, fasting, and performing Hajj.

The Crucial Balance of Intention and Sunnah: some of the Salaf formulated this as *'Speech, Action, and Intention (Niyyah) in accordance with the Sunnah.'* They warned: *'Speech and action without intention is hypocrisy (Nifaq), and speech and action without Sunnah is innovation (Bid'ah).'*

The Spectrum of Deviations on the Definition of Iman

The speaker maps out the complex theological spectrum of deviations concerning the nature of Faith:

Theological Sect	Definition of Faith (Iman)	Resulting Theological Deviation
Jahmiyyah (Extreme Murji'ah)	Iman is restricted solely to the Knowledge (Ma'rifah) of the heart.	This absurdly includes Iblis, Pharaoh, and the polytheists as complete believers, since they internally recognized Allah.

Karramiyyah	Iman is restricted solely to the Speech of the Tongue .	This includes the hypocrites (Munafiqun) who speak faith but harbor disbelief as perfect believers.
Ash'aris & Maturidis	Iman is restricted solely to the Affirmation (Tasdiq) of the heart.	They erroneously claim that a major sinner who commits every vice has the exact same level of faith as Abu Bakr al-Siddiq.
Murji'at al-Fuqaha (Hammād ibn Abī Sulaymān)	Iman is Belief in the heart and speech of the tongue . They exclude the actions of limbs from the definition of faith.	Though closer to the Sunnah, they claim faith does not fluctuate (increase or decrease) based on physical deeds.
Khawarij & Mu'tazilah	Actions are a fundamental pillar of faith. However, they hold that faith is a single entity; if one part goes, all goes.	The Khawarij rule that a major sinner is a disbeliever in this life. The Mu'tazilah place him in ' <i>a station between two stations</i> '. Both agree he is in Hell forever.

V. POINT 8 OF THE CREED: THE QURAN IS THE UNCREATED SPEECH OF ALLAH

Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah hold the unshakeable belief that the Quran is the literal, uncreated Speech of Allah (*Kalamullah*). It is His speech in all its states—whether memorized in hearts, recited on tongues, or written in the physical *Masahif*. It initiated from Him and to Him it will return. The speaker contrasts this with the theological deviations of other sects:

- **The Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah:** They claim the Quran is created (*makhluq*), completely negating the attribute of Speech for Allah. They claim Allah created the speech in Jibril, or in the tree when He spoke to Musa.
- **The Kullabiyyah and Ash'arilah:** They introduced the highly deviant concept of **Kalam Nafsi (Self-Speech)**. They argue that Allah's speech is a single, pre-eternal meaning residing in His essence without letters or sound. If expressed in Arabic, it is the Quran; if in Hebrew, the Torah; if in Syriac, the Gospel. Thus, they believe the physical Quran we recite is merely a created representation (*hikayah* or *'ibarah*) of Allah's pre-eternal self-speech, essentially agreeing with the Mu'tazilah that our recited Quran is created.

The Three Life Stages of Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari (d. 324 AH):

The speaker details the critical biographical trajectory of Imam al-Ash'ari to clarify modern misconceptions:

1. **The Mu'tazili Stage:** He spent his first 40 years as a staunch defender of the Mu'tazilah, studying directly under the famous rationalist theologian Abu 'Ali al-Jubba'i.
2. **The Kullabi Stage:** He left the Mu'tazilah and adopted the synthesis of Abdullah ibn Kullab (d. 245 AH)—developing the doctrine of *Kalam Nafsi*. The speaker notes that the modern Ash'aris are actually stuck in this second phase.
3. **The Sunni / Athari Stage:** Before his death, he repented and returned fully to the creed of the Salaf and Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal. He affirmed all of Allah's attributes on their apparent meaning without distortion (*tahrif*), negation (*ta'til*), or modality (*takyif*), authoring his famous final work *Al-Ibanah 'an Usul ad-Diyanah*.

VI. POINT 9 OF THE CREED: BELIEF IN THE PUNISHMENT & TRIAL OF THE GRAVE

Ahl al-Sunnah believe in the physical punishment, reward, and trial of the grave (*Fitnat al-Qabr*). Upon being buried, every individual is questioned by two blue-eyed, black-skinned angels named **Munkar and Nakir** regarding three fundamental questions: *Who is your Lord? What is your religion? Who is your Prophet?*

Theology of the Barzakh and Refutation of Rationalism

Refuting the Rationalists: The Mu'tazilah and modern philosophers deny the punishment of the grave. They argue that unburied people (those drowned, burned, or eaten by wild beasts) cannot be questioned, and that opening a physical grave reveals no physical signs of constriction or fire. Ahl al-Sunnah refute this through several principles:

1. **The Life of the Barzakh:** This is an entirely independent realm (the barrier between life and resurrection). The term 'grave' is used merely because it is the default state for most humans. Anyone who dies—regardless of the manner of death—will experience their portion of trial, punishment, or reward in the Barzakh.
2. **Soul and Body:** The punishment and reward affect the soul (*Ruh*) and body (*Jasad*) together or separately, completely outside the scope of worldly sensory perception.
3. **Scriptural Proofs:** The Quran explicitly states regarding Pharaoh's people: *'The Fire, they are exposed to it morning and afternoon. And the Day the Hour is established: "Admit the people of Pharaoh to the severest punishment."*' (Quran 40:46). The Prophet also passed by two graves and declared: *'They are being punished, and they are not being punished for a major thing [in their minds]: one did not protect himself from his urine, and the other carried tales (Namimah).'*

VII. POINT 10: PROHIBITION OF ABSOLUTE TESTIMONY (TAF'A'UL)

The final tenet of Imam Sufyan's creed forbids giving absolute, definitive testimony that a specific Muslim is in Paradise or Hellfire, unless explicitly named by the Prophet (such as the Ten Promised Paradise). Because the Hereafter is a matter of the Unseen (*Ghayb*), we stop where the text stops.

- **The Rule of Hope and Fear:** Ahl al-Sunnah maintain a balanced stance: we hope for reward for the good-doer (*Muhsin*) and fear punishment for the sinner (*Musi'*), without declaring their final destination.
- **The Apparent vs. Hidden:** A person may outwardly perform the actions of Paradise, but possess a corrupt, hidden intention that Allah exposes at death. Conversely, we judge disbelievers who die upon open *Kufur* to be in the Hellfire based on their apparent state, without trying to assume hidden faith at their last breath.
- **Correcting Common Linguistic Errors:** The speaker warns against highly prevalent phrases used today:
 1. Calling a deceased Muslim '*Al-Marhum*' (The one who received mercy) or '*Al-Magfur lahu*' (The forgiven one) definitively. This is a claim of the Unseen. Instead, we must phrase it as a prayer: '*Rahimahullah*' (May Allah have mercy on him).
 2. Declaring someone a '*Shahid*' (Martyr) definitively. The Prophet said: '*Only Allah knows who is killed in His path.*' We must say: '*Inshallah, he is a martyr.*'

The Golden Rule of the Creed: "The Sunnah is ten matters; whoever implements them has completed the Sunnah, and whoever leaves any of them has abandoned the Sunnah." By finalizing this Day 4 companion, we have covered the full spectrum of the Creed of Imam Sufyan ibn Uyaynah, preserving the authentic transmission of *Ahl al-Hadith*.