

UNDERSTANDING TRADITIONAL SUNNI ISLAM

QUESTIONS ON AQIDAH, FIQH, AND TASAWWUF ANSWERED



What is Traditional Sunni Islam?

It is the Islam of the majority of the Ummah, defined by Ash'ari or Maturidi creed, adherence to one of the four madhhabs in Fiqh, and the path of Tasawwuf in realising Ihsan.
→ Ibn 'Asakir, Tabyīn Kadhīb al-Muftarī.

Who are the Ash'aris and Maturidis?

They are the two theological schools of Sunni Islam that defended orthodox belief using revelation and sound reasoning.

What are the four Sunni madhhabs?

They are the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali schools, each rooted in Qur'an, Sunnah, ijmā' (consensus), and Qiyās (legal reasoning).

Who are the founders of the madhhabs?

Imams Abu Hanifah, Malik ibn Anas, Muhammad al-Shafi'i, and Ahmad ibn Hanbal — all giants of sacred law.

Did the Prophet ﷺ follow a madhhab?

No, because he is the source of the Shari'ah. The madhhabs were developed by scholars to follow his Sunnah with clarity and discipline.
→ Qur'an 53:3-4; Imam al-Shafi'i.

Why follow a madhhab?

Allah commands us to ask the people of Zikr (e.g. Ahlul Qur'an), if we do not know, and scholars like Imam al-Nawawi made clear that laypeople must follow qualified jurists. → Qur'an 16:43.

Can I mix between madhhabs?

No, unless permitted by a scholar, because randomly mixing rulings causes confusion and inconsistency.
→ Imam al-Nawawi.

Should I choose one madhhab and stick to it?

Yes. Scholars have consistently recommended sticking to one school for clarity and consistency.

What is the role of Hadith in Sunni Islam?

Hadith explains and expands the Qur'an. The Sunnah is the second source of law in Islam.
→ Imam al-Shafi'i.

What is the Sunni creed on Allah's attributes?

We affirm His attributes without asking how (bi-lā kayf) and without likening Him to creation.
→ Qur'an 42:11; Imam Mālik.

What does 'bi-lā kayf' mean?

It means affirming Allah's attributes as they are, without asking how, since He is beyond human comparison.
→ Imam Mālik.

Is Allah "above" the Throne in a physical sense?

No. Allah is not confined by space or direction. He established Himself over the Throne in a manner befitting His Majesty, without likeness to creation.
→ Qur'an 112:4; Imam al-Tahawi.

Can we use logic in creed?

Yes, when used under revelation to defend the truth, as done by Imams like al-Sanusi and al-Taftazani.

Is it wrong to say "I'm Ash'ari" or "Sufi"?

No. It defines your school of theology or spiritual path, just as saying "I'm Hanafi" refers to legal school.
→ Imam al-Taftazani.

Is it wrong to just follow Qur'an and Sunnah?

Not if it means following them through qualified scholars, but interpreting them personally without training leads to misguidance. → Qur'an 16:43.

What is Wahhabism?

It is a sect that emerged in Najd in the 1700s, known for attacking Ash'ari theology, Tasawwuf, and established Sunni traditions. → Refuted by scholars like Ibn 'Abidin and Ahmad Zayni Dahlan & others

What is Salafism?

It is a modern movement that seeks to replicate the early Muslims but often rejects centuries of Sunni scholarship and spiritual tradition.

What is Ihsan?

Ihsan is to worship Allah as though you see Him, and if you do not see Him, know that He sees you.
→ Hadith Jibril, Sahih Muslim.

What is Tasawwuf?

Tasawwuf is the science of purifying the soul and attaining sincerity in worship. It focuses on refining one's character, removing spiritual diseases like pride and envy.
→ Qur'an 91:9; Imam al-Ghazālī.

Are Sufi orders part of Islam?

Yes, they are structured methods of Ihsan passed down by scholars to preserve spiritual refinement.
→ Imam al-Junayd, al-Ghazālī.

Did classical scholars practice Tasawwuf?

Yes. Imams like al-Ghazālī, al-Nawawi, al-Suyuti, al-Qushayri, al-Junayd, al-Subki and many others were all known to be people of Tasawwuf.

Can I follow Tasawwuf without a Shaykh?

Yes, but having a qualified spiritual guide helps protect and accelerate your inner path.
→ Imam al-Haddad.

What is bay'ah in Sufi practice?

It is a spiritual pledge to Allah & His Messenger ﷺ firstly, and to a guide who is the connection that assists in ones purification and spiritual discipline.
→ Qur'an 48:10.

Is group dhikr allowed in Islam?

Yes. The Prophet ﷺ approved it and said the angels surround circles of remembrance.
→ Sahih Muslim.

Is visiting graves shirk?

No. The Prophet ﷺ encouraged visiting graves as a reminder of the hereafter, when done without shirk.
→ Sahih Muslim.

Is celebrating Mawlid allowed?

Yes. Many major scholars permitted it as a praiseworthy act of love and remembrance of the Prophet ﷺ.
→ Imam al-Suyuti, Ibn Hajar, al-Sakhawi.

How do I begin learning Traditional Islam?

Start by learning basic Fiqh, Aqidah, and Tasawwuf under a qualified teacher, and commit to a structured path of knowledge.