



AKH WORLD DA'WAH FOUNDATION

COURSE 101

AQEEDAH & TAWHEED

Six-Lesson Independent Study Handbook

Free introductory educational resource | Chicago, Illinois

This handbook brings together the six introductory lessons published in the Akh World Learning Library. It is self-study material, not a certification, formal course enrollment, or religious verdict. Readers should check primary sources in their full context and consult qualified teachers about detailed questions. Scholarly review of this educational resource is recommended before broad distribution.

Official website: <https://akhworlddawah.org>

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How to use this handbook

Read one lesson at a time. Follow the cited Qur'an and hadith references. Answer the review questions before reading the suggested responses. Complete the reflection activities in a notebook. Online source links are reproduced as readable addresses where practical.

Understanding Tawheed

A guided introduction to the oneness of Allah, why worship belongs to Him alone, and how Muslims understand this teaching from the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah.

What you will learn

1. What is Tawheed?

Tawheed is the affirmation of the oneness of Allah. In Islamic belief, Allah is uniquely the Creator and Sustainer, and He alone deserves worship. Tawheed is more than a statement about the existence of one God; it shapes prayer, reliance, gratitude, and sincere devotion.

The Qur'an's Surah Al-Ikhlās (chapter 112) describes Allah's oneness and incomparability. Read all four verses together before moving on.

Surah Al-Ikhlās (Qur'an 112:1-4) affirms that Allah is One and that none is comparable to Him.

Reference: <https://quran.com/112>

2. Why were humans created?

Qur'an 51:56 states that the jinn and mankind were created to worship Allah. In this context, worship includes outward acts such as Salah (prayer) and inward acts such as sincerity, reverence, and trust.

In the well-known report from Mu'adh ibn Jabal, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) explained that Allah's right over His servants is that they worship Him and associate nothing with Him. This report is found in Sahih Muslim 30b.

- Qur'an 51:56 - Purpose of creation
- Sahih Muslim 30b - Report of Mu'adh ibn Jabal

Reference: <https://quran.com/51/56>

Reference: <https://sunnah.com/muslim:30b>

3. Recognizing Allah and worshipping Him

The Qur'an frequently calls people to reflect on who created and sustains the world and then to worship Allah alone. A central lesson is that recognizing Allah's creative power should lead to sincere devotion without associating partners with Him.

Examples of worship include prayer, supplication (du'a), fasting, and other acts undertaken in obedience to Allah. Muslims are taught to direct acts of worship to Allah alone.

Qur'an 2:21 calls humanity to worship its Lord; Qur'an 2:163 affirms the oneness of God.

Reference: <https://quran.com/2/21>

Reference: <https://quran.com/2/163>

4. A foundation for the lessons ahead

Later lessons will introduce a traditional Sunni teaching framework distinguishing Allah's lordship (Rububiyyah), His exclusive right to worship (Uluhiyyah), and His names and attributes (Al-Asma' wa'l-Sifat). These are study categories used to organize scriptural teachings; they are not three different gods.

The following lessons will also discuss shirk, the six pillars of Iman, Allah's names and attributes, and the relationship between revelation and scholarly explanation.

Review your understanding

Try to answer these questions before opening the suggested responses.

1. How would you describe Tawheed in your own words?

Suggested response: Tawheed affirms Allah's oneness and that worship belongs to Him alone.

2. Which chapter speaks concisely about Allah's oneness?

Suggested response: Surah Al-Ikhlās, chapter 112 of the Qur'an.

3. What does Qur'an 51:56 teach about the purpose of creation?

Suggested response: It teaches that jinn and mankind were created to worship Allah.

4. According to the narration of Mu'adh, what is Allah's right over His servants?

Suggested response: That they worship Him and do not associate anything with Him (Sahih Muslim 30b).

Suggested study activity

Read Surah Al-Ikhlās slowly in a translation you understand. Write three observations about what it teaches concerning Allah. Then read Qur'an 51:56 and the narration of Mu'adh. Compare how these sources connect belief with worship.

For further study: Ask a qualified teacher to explain unfamiliar Arabic terms and provide reliable tafsir (Qur'anic commentary) and hadith commentary.

Online version: <https://akhworlddawah.org/lesson-01-understanding-tawheed.html>

The Three Categories of Tawheed

An introduction to a widely used Sunni study framework for understanding Allah's lordship, His exclusive right to worship, and His names and attributes.

Learning objectives

1. Tawheed ar-Rububiyyah - Allah's Lordship

This category concerns affirming that Allah alone creates, owns, sustains and governs creation. The Qur'an identifies Allah as the Creator of everything (39:62).

Read Qur'an 39:62 and ask: what does the verse affirm about Allah's relationship to creation?

Reference: <https://quran.com/39/62>

2. Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah - Worship Allah Alone

This category concerns directing acts of worship to Allah alone. In Surah Al-Fatihah, believers declare that they worship Allah and seek His help. The Qur'an also commands humanity to worship its Lord (2:21).

Read Qur'an 1:5 and consider what it teaches about worship and reliance.

Reference: <https://quran.com/2/21>

Reference: <https://quran.com/1/5>

3. Tawheed al-Asma' wa's-Sifat - Names and Attributes

This category concerns affirming Allah's names and attributes as conveyed in the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah, while recognizing that Allah is not comparable to creation. Qur'an 7:180 refers to Allah's beautiful names. Qur'an 42:11 teaches that nothing is like Him and refers to His hearing and sight.

Read the two passages together; note the importance of revelation and Allah's incomparability.

Reference: <https://quran.com/7/180>

Reference: <https://quran.com/42/11>

4. How the categories relate

These three terms help students organize closely connected teachings about the one Allah. Recognizing His lordship points toward worshipping Him alone, and learning His names and attributes deepens understanding of whom Muslims worship. Sunni scholars have discussed the terminology and its usage in different ways; this lesson uses the common three-category framework.

Important: These are not three independent kinds of godhood. Tawheed concerns Allah's absolute oneness.

Review your understanding

Try answering before expanding each response.

1. Which category concerns Allah being Creator and Sustainer?

Suggested response: Tawheed ar-Rububiyyah (lordship).

2. Which category concerns directing worship to Allah alone?

Suggested response: Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah (worship).

3. Which two Qur'anic verses in this lesson address Allah's names and His incomparability?

Suggested response: Qur'an 7:180 and 42:11.

4. Are these categories three different gods?

Suggested response: No. They are terms for organizing teachings concerning the one Allah.

Study assignment

Read Qur'an 39:62, 1:5, 7:180 and 42:11 in a translation you understand. Write one sentence on the central teaching of each verse and identify which study category it relates to. Revisit Lesson 1 if the foundations need review.

For more detailed discussion of theological terminology, consult reliable tafsir and knowledgeable instructors.

Online version: <https://akhworlddawah.org/lesson-02-categories-of-tawheed.html>

Understanding Shirk

An introductory study of associating partners with Allah, the difference between major and minor shirk, sincerity in worship, and the door of repentance.

Learning objectives

1. What does shirk mean?

Shirk means associating partners with Allah. In the context of worship, this includes directing worship that belongs to Allah alone to another. Luqman advised his son against associating partners with Allah and described it as a grave wrong in Qur'an 31:13 .

Read Luqman's advice. What is he warning his son against, and how does the verse characterize it?

Reference: <https://quran.com/31/13>

2. Major and minor shirk

In a common Sunni classification, major shirk refers to associating partners with Allah in a way that contradicts the foundation of Tawheed, such as worshipping another deity alongside Allah. Minor shirk refers to acts that revelation and scholarship describe as shirk without necessarily taking a person outside Islam; showing off in an act of worship (*riya'*) is a frequently discussed example. Classification of a particular action can require nuance and scholarly explanation.

Not every mistake, sin, or disagreement is shirk. Students should avoid casually labeling individuals, or treating these descriptions as permission for accusations.

This verse underscores the gravity of associating partners with Allah. In Sunni explanations, its warning about unforgiven shirk concerns dying without repentance from it. Read it alongside the Qur'an's wider teaching on repentance.

Reference: <https://quran.com/4/48>

3. Sincerity and *riya'*

Ikhlas means sincerity: worship is performed for Allah rather than to gain admiration or status. The Qur'an calls believers to worship Allah with sincere devotion in 98:5 . Students can reflect on their intentions before, during, and after good deeds without obsessively doubting every action.

What does the verse teach about sincerity in worship?

Reference: <https://quran.com/98/5>

4. Repentance and hope

Islam teaches that Allah's mercy is vast and calls people not to despair. Read Qur'an 39:53 together with 4:48: the seriousness of shirk does not close the door to sincere repentance during one's life. A person wishing to repent can turn to Allah, leave the wrongdoing, regret it, and resolve not to return.

What encouragement does this verse give to someone who wishes to return to Allah?

Review your understanding

Try answering each question before opening its response.

1. In this lesson, what is shirk?

Suggested response: Associating partners with Allah in matters belonging to Him alone, particularly worship.

2. How do scholars commonly distinguish major and minor shirk?

Suggested response: Major shirk contradicts the foundation of Tawheed; minor shirk describes other acts characterized as shirk but not necessarily taking a person outside Islam. Specific cases may need scholarly guidance.

3. What does ikhlas mean?

Suggested response: Sincerity: performing worship for Allah rather than for the praise of others.

4. Does a serious warning about shirk mean someone cannot repent?

Suggested response: No. The Qur'an calls people to repentance and warns against despairing of Allah's mercy; see 39:53.

5. Is it appropriate to use this lesson to declare a named individual outside Islam?

Suggested response: No. This introductory study does not make judgments about individuals.

Study assignment

- Read Qur'an 31:13, 4:48, 98:5, and 39:53 in context.
- Write a short definition of shirk and explain why sincerity matters in worship.
- Reflect privately on ways to strengthen intention and repentance without judging others.
- Discuss questions about detailed classifications with a qualified teacher.

Further study: Consult reliable tafsir on these verses, and review Lesson 1 and Lesson 2 .

Online version: <https://akhworlddawah.org/lesson-03-understanding-shirk.html>

The Six Pillars of Iman

Explore the six foundations of faith taught in the Hadith of Jibril, with Qur'anic readings and a self-paced knowledge review.

Learning objectives

1. What is Iman?

Iman means faith or belief. In the Hadith of Jibril, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) explains that Iman includes belief in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and divine decree (al-Qadar), its good and its evil. The narration also distinguishes the related concepts of Islam and Ihsan.

Read the question about Iman and the Prophet's answer in the Hadith of Jibril.

Reference: <https://sunnah.com/muslim/1/1>

2. The six pillars

Reference: <https://quran.com/112>

Reference: <https://quran.com/66/6>

Reference: <https://quran.com/2/285>

Reference: <https://quran.com/33/40>

Reference: <https://quran.com/99>

Reference: <https://quran.com/54/49>

3. Faith, action and responsibility

The six pillars provide a framework for understanding faith. They encourage reflection on the Creator, gratitude for revelation, accountability for actions, and hope in Allah's mercy. The subject of al-Qadar is profound: believing in divine decree does not justify wrongdoing or eliminate the duty to strive and act responsibly.

Notice how this verse describes belief in Allah, angels, books and messengers, together with the believers' response of obedience and asking forgiveness.

Reference: <https://quran.com/2/285>

Check your understanding

Answer before revealing each response.

1. What are the six pillars of Iman?

Suggested response: Belief in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and divine decree.

2. Which hadith outlines these pillars?

Suggested response: The Hadith of Jibril, narrated in Sahih Muslim 8a, among other transmissions.

3. Does belief in the messengers include respecting earlier prophets?

Suggested response: Yes. The Qur'an affirms belief in Allah's messengers; see Qur'an 2:285.

4. What does belief in the Last Day encourage?

Suggested response: Awareness of resurrection, judgment and accountability before Allah.

5. Does divine decree mean a person has no responsibility for wrongdoing?

Suggested response: No. Faith in divine decree does not remove accountability or the duty to make responsible choices.

6. What is one passage to read on Allah's angels, books and messengers?

Suggested response: Qur'an 2:285 is a concise starting point.

Study assignment

- Read Sahih Muslim 8a and write down the six pillars in order.
- Read Qur'an 2:285, 33:40, 54:49 and Surah 99 with reliable translation and tafsir.
- Write two sentences about how belief in the Last Day can shape everyday conduct.
- Bring difficult questions about al-Qadar to a knowledgeable teacher.

Reference: <https://sunnah.com/muslim/1/1>

Online version: <https://akhworlddawah.org/lesson-04-six-pillars-of-iman.html>

Allah's Names and Attributes

Study how Allah describes Himself in the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah, and how to approach His beautiful names with reverence and care.

Learning objectives

1. Allah's most beautiful names

The Qur'an teaches that the most beautiful names belong to Allah and instructs believers to call upon Him using them. These names communicate divine perfection and guide worship, remembrance and supplication.

Read the verse and reflect on its instruction to call on Allah by His beautiful names.

Reference: <https://quran.com/7/180>

2. Allah is unlike creation

Qur'an 42:11 affirms both Allah's complete uniqueness and His attributes of hearing and seeing. Classical Sunni scholars have discussed how to understand revealed attributes; the approach taught in this introductory course emphasizes accepting authentic revelation without imagining that Allah resembles created beings. Detailed theological discussions should be studied with qualified teachers.

Notice how this verse combines Allah's incomparability with an affirmation of His hearing and sight.

Reference: <https://quran.com/42/11>

3. Examples from revelation

Reference: <https://quran.com/1>

Reference: <https://quran.com/59/22>

Reference: <https://quran.com/42/11>

4. The hadith of the ninety-nine names

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught about ninety-nine names of Allah and the reward for knowing and attending to them. This narration does not necessarily mean that Allah has only ninety-nine names. Rather than treating an unverified circulating list as a single authenticated prophetic enumeration, begin with names clearly established in the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah.

Read the narration in full, and consider how learning the meanings of Allah's names can influence prayer and character.

Reference: <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/97/21>

5. Learning with care

Study the Arabic names with their context, reliable translations and explanations. Avoid inventing descriptions of Allah, reducing divine attributes to human likenesses, or presenting disputed interpretations as though no scholarly discussion exists. This course introduces a traditional affirmation-centered Sunni approach; detailed differences across theological schools merit further guided study.

Check your understanding

Try answering before opening each response.

1. Which verse directs believers to invoke Allah by His beautiful names?

Suggested response: Qur'an 7:180.

2. What two teachings appear together in Qur'an 42:11?

Suggested response: Allah is unlike creation, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.

3. Name two divine names discussed in this lesson.

Suggested response: Examples include Ar-Rahman (the Most Merciful), Al-'Alim (the All-Knowing), and As-Sami' (the All-Hearing).

4. Where is the authentic hadith concerning ninety-nine names found?

Suggested response: Sahih al-Bukhari 7392, among other authentic narrations.

5. Should we picture Allah as resembling human beings?

Suggested response: No. Qur'an 42:11 teaches His incomparability.

6. How can learning Allah's names affect worship?

Suggested response: It can inform supplication, remembrance, gratitude, humility and trust in Allah.

Study assignment

- Read Qur'an 7:180 and 42:11 .
- Read Qur'an 59:22-24 and identify names explicitly mentioned.
- Read Sahih al-Bukhari 7392 .
- Choose three names established by revelation. Write their meanings and an appropriate supplication using each.

Continue with the final lesson on following the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah.

Reference: <https://quran.com/7/180>

Reference: <https://quran.com/42/11>

Reference: <https://quran.com/59/22>

Reference: <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/97/21>

Online version: <https://akhworlddawah.org/lesson-05-allahs-names-and-attributes.html>

Following the Qur'an and Authentic Sunnah

Complete the introductory course by studying the sources of Islamic guidance, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) example, and responsible ways to seek knowledge.

Learning objectives

1. Returning to Allah and His Messenger

The Qur'an calls believers to obey Allah and the Messenger and, when disagreements arise, to refer matters back to Allah and His Messenger. Sunni scholarship takes the Qur'an and the established Prophetic Sunnah as foundational sources while recognizing that interpreting evidence requires knowledge.

Read the entire verse. Identify the instructions about obedience and resolving disagreements.

Reference: <https://quran.com/4/59>

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) as an example

Qur'an 33:21 presents the Messenger of Allah as an excellent example for those who hope in Allah and the Last Day. His Sunnah includes transmitted teachings, actions, and approvals used by scholars to understand religious practice.

Consider what following a prophetic example can mean for worship, truthfulness, mercy and daily conduct.

Reference: <https://quran.com/33/21>

3. The importance of obedience

In an authentic narration, the Prophet (peace be upon him) connects entering Paradise with obeying his guidance. The narration stresses that faith is expressed through response to divine and prophetic instruction; it should be read with the broader teachings on Allah's mercy and repentance.

Read the full narration and reflect on why the Companions asked for clarification.

Reference: <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7280>

4. Understanding the early generations

The term Salaf commonly refers to the earliest generations of Muslims, especially the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and those who followed them. In Salafi teaching, their understanding is an important guide for approaching revelation. Muslims across Sunni traditions also honor these generations, while scholars can differ on interpretive methods and particular legal or theological questions.

Read the narration on the excellence of the Prophet's generation and those after them; discuss its meaning with a knowledgeable teacher.

Reference: <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:2652>

5. Read and verify responsibly

Check your understanding

Try answering each question before opening its explanation.

1. What should believers refer disagreements back to according to Qur'an 4:59?

Suggested response: To Allah and the Messenger, as the verse instructs. Understanding how to apply texts may require qualified explanation.

2. Which Qur'anic verse describes the Messenger as an excellent example?

Suggested response: Qur'an 33:21.

3. Which authentic narration in this lesson emphasizes obeying the Prophet (peace be upon him)?

Suggested response: Sahih al-Bukhari 7280.

4. Who are the Salaf, in the usual historical sense?

Suggested response: The earliest generations of Muslims, especially the Companions and the generations following them.

5. Why is it important to check a hadith's authenticity and context?

Suggested response: Because not every circulated report is established, and partial quotations can lead to misunderstandings.

6. Does this introductory course qualify someone to issue religious verdicts?

Suggested response: No. Complex questions and religious rulings require appropriate knowledge and qualified scholarship.

Study assignment

- Read Qur'an 4:59 and write a short summary.
- Read Qur'an 33:21 . Identify one way to improve your character through the Prophet's example.
- Read Sahih al-Bukhari 7280 and check the narration's source.
- Write three questions for a qualified teacher about Sunnah, hadith verification or the earliest generations.
- Review Lessons 1-5 and summarize one important principle from each.

Reference: <https://quran.com/4/59>

Reference: <https://quran.com/33/21>

Reference: <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7280>

Online version: <https://akhworlddawah.org/lesson-06-quran-and-sunnah.html>

Further Study & Responsible Use

The Qur'an and authentic prophetic traditions are primary sources for Islamic study. This handbook summarizes selected themes, and no short summary replaces reading the sources in context or obtaining qualified instruction. Different Sunni scholarly traditions may vary in terminology or explanation of certain theological points. This material represents a particular introductory Sunni framework and should not be mistaken for a scholarly consensus on every detail.

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