

AN APPRAISAL OF THE FEATURES AND CONTENT OF YASEEN IBRAHIM AL-SHEIKH'S *OUR OWN ISLAMIC CREED: BASICS AND PILLARS*

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Abstract

Yaseen Ibrahim Al-Sheikh can be regarded as one of the contemporary Muslim writers who have written significant works on Islamic fundamentals. One of his well-known works is *Our Own Islamic Creed: Basics and Pillars*. The fundamental part of any religion is its creed; and a creed can be linked to the ideas and thoughts about God and His relation to the world. This article aims at assessing the observations on the notion of Islamic creed, its scope and significance in the work of Yaseen Ibrahim Al-Sheikh's *Our Own Islamic Creed: Basics and Pillars*. The paper started the discussion on his life and the book, features of the book and its content analysis. This research is qualitative, in which a textual analysis technique was applied on a contemporary literature on Islamic creed. Findings show that the work is written to give a broad view of the essentials of the Islamic creed with evidence concisely deduced from the Qur'an and *Sunna*. The book covers certain fundamental principles, such as the Unity of God (*tawhīd*), the Unseen (*ghaib*), Messengers (*rusul*) and others. This paper concludes that these notions serve as core manifestations for understanding Islamic Faith and belief systems as evident from the work. Hence, it recommends Yaseen Ibrahim Al-Sheikh's *Our Own Islamic Creed: Basics and Pillars* as an important text in the exposition of Islamic fundamentals.

Keywords: Islamic creed, spirituality, contemporary scholar, Yaseen Ibrahim Al-Sheikh.

Introduction

The issue of creed is fundamental and important in religion. Creed, also called confession of faith, an authoritative formulation of the beliefs of a religious community (Lindbeck, 2020). Creed is that which is believed; accepted doctrine, especially religious; a particular set of beliefs; any summary of principles or opinions professed or adhered to while religion is the belief in and worship of supernatural controlling power (wikidiff.com, n.d.). Creeds are crucial elements of a person's faith, and one needs to have clarity, because through achieving clarity of the creed, one would be able to understand the faith at a much deeper level. This is why creed is regarded as what the actual declaration of faith stood for

(ukessays.com, 2018). Creed gives a sense of direction, unity, and fellowship and show others what one believes. It helps a religious adherent to understand the specifics of what they believe in a brief statement (Parsons, 2012).

One of the intellectual productions in which such endeavours have been noted from the Islamic outlook is *Our Own Islamic Creed: Basics and Pillars* authored by one of the contemporary Muslim scholars, Yaseen Ibrahim Al-Sheikh. In this book, the writer's understanding of Islamic beliefs, thoughts, ideas, and philosophy of Islam is documented. *Our Own* may be considered one of the essential books on Islamic creed in recent years. It is for this reason that this article intends to discuss the features as well as analyse the contents of *Our Own*.

Against this backdrop, the present study deems it necessary and expedient, before going into the main task, to first consider Al-Sheikh's background, his life and activities with particular reference to his works, thoughts and ideas, and what drives him to write many of his works.

An Account of the Life of Yaseen Ibrahim Al-Sheikh

Little is known about the youth life of Yaseen Ibrahim Al-Sheikh. However, a cursory look at the life of this great personality is enough a testification to the fact that he deserves a portion in the committee of Muslim scholars. This is because he has written several works on the fundamentals of Islam. From the little known about the life of Al-Sheikh one can deduce that he is of Arab descent and since many of his works were written in English, it can be said that he is someone who received both Western-styled and Islamic education to an advanced stage. This can be deduced from his translation of Ibn Rajab Al-Hanbali's *Jame'al-'Uloom wal-hikam* (Al-Hanbali, 2004). He is versed in religion and spirituality, especially of Islam. He wrote not only for an adult Muslim audience but also young Muslims as well (Al-Sheikh, 1989). Based on the themes of his works, it can be said that, he is particularly passionate about the discourse on the fundamentals of Islam and explicating them to members of the general public. Among the works attributed to him are *Saum: A Handbook of Sawm: Islamic Fast* (published by Qur'an Sciences Establishment in 1992, reprinted 2015), *Our Own Islamic Creed: Basics & Pillars* (published by Dar al-Qalam in 1998, 2004, 2006 by Dar Al-Manarah), *A Handbook of Salāt: Islamic Prayers* (published by Al-Maktab Al-Islami in 1998), *Jami' Al-'ulum Wal-hikam* [A Collection of Knowledge and Wisdom] (a 640-page translation of 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Aḥmad Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali's work published in 2002 by Umm Al-Qura and reprinted in 2016), *The Book of Islamic Fasting* (published by Millat Book Centre in 2013 at New Delhi, India), *Zakah: The Third Pillar of Islam* (published by Malek Publication, 2016, 176 pages). Other works by Al-Sheikh include *A Young Muslim's Companion to Salat* (picture-booklet, *A Guidebook to Hajj, Umra and Visitation of the Prophet's Mosque, Muhammad: A Perfect Model for Humanity* (Authored by Mustafa Ahmad al- Zarqa; translated by Yaseen Ibrahim al-Sheikh and published by Islamic Foundation in 1992). Al-Sheikh's commitment to the development of Muslims' minds through a detailed analysis of fundamental principles of Islam has led him to write several books on the issues.

About the Book: *Our Own Islamic Creed: Basics and Pillars*

The work under review appears to be the second book written by Yaseen Ibrahim Al-Sheikh. Before it, he had written *Saum: A Handbook of Sawm: Islamic Fast*. *Our Own* was written as a way to procure a comprehensive understanding of the pillars of Islam and to provide a greater spotlight for the meaning of *Shahadah* (Testifying that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger). This point occupies a very important spot among the fundamentals of Islamic creed. Therefore, the title of the book reflects its contents which are basically on Islamic creed with some chapters on Islam in general serving as an introduction.

Literary Forms and Styles

The literary form used by Al-Sheikh in *Our Own* can be likened to the writings of traditional Muslim scholars who tended to start their works by praising Allah and then seeking blessings on Rasulullah (S.A.W.), his family, companions, and all adherents of Islam. This is then followed by the Preface of the work. However, the author added some dimensions to his work by including a Dedication, *Kalimat Shukur* (A Word of Thanks) – in both Arabic and English. This was later followed by the Contents of the work. In the Dedication, for instance, the author writes:

To those who seek truth with an impartial look, an open mind and a sound heart.

I do dedicate this humble study (p. 8).

Also, according to the author, the work “gives a bird’s-eye view of the essentials of Tawhid (Islamic Faith) depending on a pure, concise and authentic exposition from al-Qur’an al-Karim and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (Blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)” (p. 9). In addition, *Our Own* is basically prosy with many Qur’anic quotes. It appears that, the author’s pre-occupation is the explication of the issues from the Qur’anic perspective. The author writes to give a proper perspective while avoiding unnecessary digression. That is why he chooses to write lucidly. There is hardly a place in the work he employs poetic verse(s) which is considered a regular feature in much traditional discourse of such works. Since the work is thematically religious; religious terms and dictions were judiciously used by the author. The common terms and dictions found in works of similar titles such as Tawhid, Sunnah, Qadar, Akhirah, etc. are found on different pages of the work.

It is also pertinent to note that the author, rather than write as an authority in the field, prefers to quote primary sources, while he also, occasionally made independent decisions in explaining some points. This helped him to express his views within the proper context of the discourse.

Arrangement of Ideas and Thoughts

Analysing *Our Own* shows the clarity and coherence in the flow of thoughts and ideas. The author was clear about the message he wanted to pass to the readers and the best approach to do so. The progress of the sections when examined closely shows that appropriate order

was followed; and it is only when the author has exhausted his points on a particular discourse will he then move to another one. Therefore, in keeping to this spirit, the author at times uses footnotes to elaborate further on a point without losing focus on the main discussion. An example of this can be found on pages 11, 16, 18, 20, 26, amongst others. Furthermore, the author makes these footnotes for additional references to draw the attention of readers to other sources that will help them in appreciating the point being driving at. This allows the author to avoid unnecessary verbosity and to convince his readers especially those not too familiar with the subject.

Presentation of Evidence and Quotation of Sources

Yaseen Ibrahim Al-Sheikh, most times cites accurate sources to support his points. This enhances the scholastic level of the work. The author of *Our Own* acknowledges and provides his sources, even if he is quoting from his other works, for instance, he said; “See my Translated book “Muhammad The Perfect Model for Humanity” (p. 63). The author frequently quotes Qur’an verses which in our view shows his knowledge of the Qur’an. Although, when the author quotes a *hadith*, the full citation of the *hadith* is not given, he merely says “Reported by Imam al-Bukhari” or “Reported by Imam Muslim”. However, he uses the most authentic sources of *ahadith* in his explanations. Moreover, the author’s firm touch with the two primary sources in Islam can be seen in the many references he made to them. Many of the citations, especially of the Qur’an, are done with due reference to their locations in the Qur’an, citing chapters and specific number of verses.

The author is also conversant with works of contemporary Muslim scholars and this can be attested to in the way he made references to them in some of his expositions to advance arguments or explain terms or justify a point. Among the contemporary writers whose works were referenced are Marmaduke Pickthall, Sayyid Abu’l A’la Maududi, Shaikh Ali Al-Tantawi, Ismail R. Al-Faruqi, Jaafar Sheikh Idris, Sayyid Qutb, Hammudah Abdal-Ati, Muhammad Manazir Ahsan, amongst others.

Use of Keywords and Phrases

Some of the keywords and phrases found in *Our Own* include: *tawfiq* (Grace from Allah); *Qadar* (Divine Destiny), *Tawhid* (Unitization of Allah), *Sunnah* (practice of the Prophet), *al-Dajjal* (Anti-Christ), *Barzakh* (the period between death and resurrection). These were the terms he used when discussing some of the major points in the book. Although words such as *subhanahu wata’ala* (the glorified, the most high) and *in sha Allah* (Allah willing) were also used but only in the introductory section of the work. Moreover, the expressions: *wallahu ta’ala a’lam* (Allah the Most High Knows best); *sallahu alayhi wasallam* (May the Peace and Blessing of Allah be with him); *radiyallahu ‘anhu* (may Allah be pleased with him); *qalallah subhanahu wa ta’ala* (Allah, glorified be He and the Most High says); translations of these terms which are often found in the traditional works of Muslim scholars were used rather than the Arabic words. The author took this approach to make the work more accessible to a larger audience.

Consistency

Throughout the work, Al-Sheikh, in *Our Own* displayed some level of consistency. For example, every major section or chapter of the work starts with a title and this is maintained throughout the work. Also, all chapters in the work can be said to be of average length, none is too short or too long. The author also made effort not to make paragraphs in the work too long as found in some other works. This makes the work easy to read and the ideas or points easier to follow.

Preference to a Higher Authoritative Evidence

A critical assessment of *Our Own* shows that the author appears to be overtly more comfortable or could be adjudged more apologetic with the Qur'an than hadith references. This is because there are areas in which the usage of hadith could have made the point clearer and easier to understand the doctrine or principle, especially terms, some of which, to those outside the fold of Islam may be considered strange or unjustifiable.

Content Analyses

Our Own, consists of a Preface which explains matters the author called attention to. Each chapter of the work constitutes a distinct and independent theme/topic. Although some topics have related ideas to a few others. Examples of such are chapters one (An Innate Sine Qua Non!) and two (What is Al-Islam) both of which contain issues about Islam in general. The summary of what is contained in other chapters are given in the first two chapters.

Our Own, is essentially a book on Islamic belief system. It appears, the author wrote the work not only to introduce basic ideas about Islam but also to serve as a work exposing the fundamental principles of a Muslim Faith to the general public. Going through the work, the impression one can easily take away is that, the author wrote the work to explicate Islamic creed to those who are open-minded and seekers of the truth.

The eight chapters with the Preface forming the bulk of the contents of *Our Own*, can be classified under the following headings: Introduction, Islam, Tawhid, Unseen, Messengers, Books, Hereafter, Destiny.

Introduction: This focuses on the purpose of writing the work and how the author wants the readers to approach the work. He also used the opportunity to thank those who contributed immensely to the work to see the light of the day. From the introductory section, one can begin to see the international outlook of the author and the zeal as well as effort put into the work. The author did not just base the work on his ideas without consulting others who can assist even in the editing and proofreading of the work. So, from the beginning, one can see that it is a production of "careful weighing of contents of the Arabic manuscript of this book" (p. 5) to valuable suggestions, serious discussions, comments, suggestions, and sound advice. That is why, the author states:

In bringing this preface to a close, I'd like to affirm that I spared
neither pains nor time in making this research work as clear as

possible. Thus, the gentle reader will overlook my shortcomings. Finally, I ask Allah, *Subhanahu wata'ala*, to make this booklet interesting and informative to those who speak English worldwide (p. 9).

Islam: As this work is principally a work on Islamic creed, the author opens the book after the introduction with ought to be “An Innate *Sine Qua Non!*” or in a general sense, the essential conditions or things that are necessary. This is in line with “the basic foundation of Islam and all its intellectual and dogmatic principles” (p. 11). Thus in line with this principle, it becomes compulsory for a Muslim to believe in the Existence, Divinity, and Oneness of Allah (Kamaruzaman, 2007). Such belief, leads to ultimate success in this world and the next. This is because, humankind by their nature are created pure, straight, and upright which lead humans to their Creator, Allah. However, going through history one can see many communities that deviated from the straight path by worshipping gods and not the Creator, Allah, the One, Supreme, Irresistible God (Stark, 2003).

There are several proofs discussed by the author to explain issues such as the nature of man to recognise Allah (Q31:25); when faced with some hardship; none can claim to have created him/herself (Q52:35-36); no factory works without a manager, workers, observers (Q2:258); the phenomenon of death and life; human’s inability to go into the Unseen; and *al-Qur’an al-Kareem*, the everlasting miracle (Q15:9, Q17:88) (p. 11, 12, 13, 14).

One of the aims of the author in writing the book as earlier mentioned is to make people understand what Islam is basically about. To give an enlightened and penetrating insight into Islam. The author, later went into a full-length breakdown of Islam in terms of the Arabic meaning of the word, also, as a name chosen by Allah for Muslims and why it is technically not right to say Muhammadanism like other faiths named after their founders (p. 16), because, Islam was not founded by Prophet Muhammad (SAW). In addition, the author quoted a very long hadith and then deduced what Al-Islam implies when testifying faith in Allah and His messenger, establishing the obligatory prayers, paying *zakah* (manner, place, and time), fasting in the month of Ramadan, pilgrimaging to Makkah, avoiding the forbidding, and doing good acts and upright deeds. The author further explained the pillars or articles of Iman noting that:

...Al-Islam (The Surrender) is a positive act of committing oneself to live in peace with Allah and bringing one’s likes and dislikes, one’s attitudes, behaviour and conduct into harmony with the Divine Will. In simple words, A Muslim is one who adopts Al-Islam as a way of life, follows Allah’s commands to the very end of ability and does not disobey Him in word or in action, in private as well as in public (Yaseen Ibrahim Al-Sheikh, 2006, pp. 20–21).

Tawhid: In this section under this division, the author introduces what he calls “the foundation of Al-Islam and its very Essence” (p. 22). According to him, the idea of ‘there is no god but Allah’ is not just the bedrock on which all beliefs, laws, and commands of Islam stand but also their main source. One will be regarded as either a Muslim or a non-Muslim

on its basis. Furthermore, it is also the first thing all Messengers of God called their people to, i.e. to say there is no god but Allah and receive salvation. In fact, it is pertinent to note that, humankind and Jinns were created to make this statement and put it into practice as that will make them actualise the purpose of being true believers. This shows the author's justification for the concept of *Tawhid*.

In addition, under this section comes the discussion of *Tawhid Rububiyya*, *Tawhid al-Ilahiyya*, and *Tawhid Asma wa siffat* (names and attributes of Allah) (Siddiqi, 1979). The author devotes several pages to trace these points in the Qur'an. He also discussed the issue of shirk, the opposite of tawhid. He mentioned some points that can be considered "milestones and landmarks on the road" of Tawhid; doctrines such as directing all forms of 'Ibadah to Allah alone, knowing that Allah can make, give, and issue commands, or laws, or orders, etc. He further capsulises the most fundamental of the Islamic Creed as follows:

- (1) Allah is One God, the Creator and the Lord of all the worlds. (2) All others than Him, Even Angels and Prophets are only created servants who share nothing with Him. (3) Allah in the Living [sic], Self -Subsisting, Eternal, the First without a beginning and the Last without an end. (4) The Hearer and the Seer of everything. (5) He has the most beautiful Names and the Noblest Attributes. (6) He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful and Able. (7) He has created us in the best form from naught. (8) He has granted us all bounties. (9) None except Him deserves worship and submission... (p. 27-28).

In bringing this section to a close, the author mentioned other issues related to tawhid such as shirk, *al-Riya* (which he regarded as minor shirk), and hypocrisy. All these are things that misdirect one from making one's actions for Allah alone and therefore leads to evil and injustice.

Unseen: Another issue raised by the author is the unseen world, i.e. the belief in angels and jinn. In this section, the author discusses the Muslim understanding of Allah's ordainment to send messengers or "celestial Message-bearers" (p. 32). This entails sending angels to Prophets and Messengers who were in turn expected to instruct human beings in matters related to religion. This shows angels serve as a link between God and humans in pursuit of Divine Will and Guidance (Yahya, 2002).

Several Quranic verses on angels were mentioned by the author such as Q16:2, Q2:285, Q2:30, Q21:20, Q19:17, Q19:64, etc. The author raised a lot of points as regards the attributes and nature of the angels and he buttressed these with several references from the Qur'an. In terms of the attributes and nature of the angels, mention was made of their serving Allah without ceasing to obey His commands and they are proud to do so, they can appear in human form, they descend and ascend from/to heaven their abode on God's command, they are powerful creatures of God, they do not marry nor propagate, they are winged creatures (p. 34-36).

In addition, the author mentioned the names of some of the well-known angels and what the Qur'an says about them. Among the angels mentioned are Jibril (Gabriel), Mika'il (Michael), Israfil, Azrail. Other angels whose names were not mentioned but identified based on their duties are angels in charge of bearing the Throne of Allah, angels that surround the Throne of Allah, angels of Mercy and Paradise, angels of Punishment and Hell-Fire, angels in charge of recording or keeping deeds of humankind, angels assigned to blow the breath of life, angels assigned as guardians of people, angels of death, angels who support and pray for the faithful during Jihad, angels of glad tidings at the point of death, angels who warn bad people on their death bed, angels who drive the dead and witness for/against them on the Day of Resurrection, angels who lead disbelievers and sinners to Hell-Fire, angels who greet or welcome people of Paradise, angels of the dawn prayer,. However, the author pointed out that no one knows the number of angels except God (p. 43).

The author also notes the benefit of belief in the heavenly creatures as a way to recognise the glory, greatness, and mercy of God to the faithful (p. 44). Besides, it infuses the faithful with peace and tranquility. The issue of jinns was also noted in this section of the book. The author mentions their characteristics and essence as created from the flame of fire, created before humankind, marry, procreate and have children, can see but cannot be seen, do evil and good deeds and will be judged on the Day of Accountability. There are believers and disbelievers among them, they are skilled workers, they eavesdrop information from the angels in the Heavens, eat bones, dung and coal, can appear in many shapes, have no authority over a faithful believer in God, they do not know the unseen. In elaborating on the unseen world, the author made several references to *ahadith*.

Messengers: The section on the Messengers discussed their characteristics, technical terms associated with them, the need for them, their truthfulness, functions and duties, numbers and names, and the final Messenger. The author notes that Messengers or Prophets of God are human beings who have been honoured to convey God's Messages to human beings. He observes that it is not by a designed effort that one attains the rank rather by the "grace that Allah grants to those who deserve it" (p. 52).

Among the attributes of Messengers mentioned by the author are their high level of morality, spirituality, and intellectual capacity. Also, others include acumen, infallibility and inviolability. The author referenced Sheikh 'Abdul-Rahman H. Habannaka who notes that to know the trueness of a Messenger one only needs to observe the essence of the message; the character, manner of behaviour and conduct, the kind of miracles performed and mentioned in Divine Books (p. 54).

In terms of technical terms related to the Messengers, the author mentions *Nabi* (Prophet) and *Rasul* (Messenger) briefly, however, he added that "we can deduce that every Messenger is a Prophet and not every Prophet is a Messenger" (p. 55). The author also observes the need for prophets and Messengers. Five points were adduced for this, among which include their role in guiding humankind to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, justice and principles of religion; they serve as a trial for humankind to know the best in

deeds; forming morals, virtues, and values that can help people to have an organised community; perfect model to copy and imitate; a convincing explanation for the Unseen (p. 56).

The functions and duties of the Messengers were also mentioned by the author with Qur'anic references to support them. Messengers, according to the author, are to proclaim, clarify, guide, educate, lead, and serve as witnesses against/for their communities on the Day of Judgement (p. 58-59). The author mentions all the Messengers and Prophets in the Qur'an including the Ulu al'Azm i.e. the possessors of constancy among them. The last of the Messengers received the special attention of the author with a concise/brief history of his life. The author notes that "Today, thirteen (fifteen) centuries after his (Muhammad) death, his influence (i.e. the influence of his Message) is still powerful and pervasive" (author cites Michael H. Hart). To end his discussion on Messengers, the author included a discussion on many Prophets and Messengers but one message (p. 64). He notes that the message of all the Messengers is "proclaim the Creed of Tawhid and the importance of following Allah's Behests, in word and deed" (p. 65). Each prophet was to convey the message in the language of his community and Islam is embedded with the essence of all principles of the earlier Revealed Religions as well as the final message. This is why it contains general laws and commands that suit all times and places (Raba, 2001).

Books: Belief in the Divine Books is one of the six Islamic creeds mentioned by the author in *Our Own*. The author notes that, without belief in the Divine Books one is not considered to be within the fold of Islam.

The Prophets in accomplishing their tasks were supported with the Divine Guidance presented in Books which are considered the True Words and Command of Allah. Among the Books are the scrolls of Ibrahim, the Torah of Moses, the Psalms (*Zaboor*) of David and the Gospel (*Injil*) of Jesus (p. 68). It can be said that Muslims believe that the earlier Revealed Books have become corrupt and the original texts difficult to identify (Hakimi, 2015). The author went further to mention references from the Qur'an to buttress this point (e.g. Q87:14-19, Q21:105, Q3:3-4).

The author dedicated a subsection to discuss the Qur'an as the Last of the Divine Books sent down by God. The Qur'an is, according to the author, "the everlasting Miracle of Al-Islam; the only Godly Book which is still guarded against corruption; and the only Book which still exists as it was revealed" (p. 70).

The differences between the Qur'an and the other previous Books were stated by the author as the original texts of Most of the former Divine Books were lost altogether, and only their translations exist today; the previous Books mixed their words with Allah's; the previous Books have no authentic historical evidence that they belong to the prophets to whom they are attributed; the previous Books were sent down in languages majority of which are no longer in existence or spoken and no one knows nor understand them today; the previous Books were meant for a particular nation or people at a particular place and to be acted upon at a particular period; the Qur'an is not only enshrined with good and virtue as taught by the

previous Books but also it is a perfect eternal code for human life on all sides; many things have been inserted in the previous Books which are against reality or reason. The author, therefore, concludes that the Qur'an came to correct the errors introduced into the previous Divine Books and to further confirm, fulfil, complete, and explain the one true revelation sent by the One True God (p. 73).

Hereafter: This is based on the Islamic creed of life after death. The author writes extensively on this issue by addressing essential aspects of it. For instance, he mentions more than fifteen names used for the Last Day. The author also has subsections on why Muslims believe in life after death as well as the signs and indications of the Last Day (p. 74).

In his discussion about the Last Day, the author notes that Muslims are not only to believe in the Last Day but also in the essential ingredients and incidents preceding it. These include the life of *Barzakh*, everything in this world will come to an end, restoring the dead to life, Allah will make the final judgement of the entire records of doings, passing along al-Sirat (the Bridge), the *Howd* (The Basin) an honour to Prophet Muhammad to provide his followers to drink, the Mizan (Scale), the intercession and compensation of Prophet Muhammad, leading the successful to paradise and losers to Hell, and all faithful inhabiting Paradise seeing Allah (p. 74-76).

According to the author, the names and terms for the Last Day as mentioned in the Qur'an are the Day of Standing up (Q75:1), the Day of Separation (Q44:40), the Day of Reckoning (Q38:16), the Day of Awakening (Q23:32), the Day of Judgement (Q1:4), the Day of Assembly (Q42), the Encompassing Day, the Hour, the Day of Distress, the Day of Eternal life, The Day of Warning, The Day of Resurrection, the Last Home, the Enduring Home, the Eternal Home, the Sure Reality, the Event Inevitable, and the Overwhelming Event (p. 77). Muslims believe in life after death because all Messengers of God have called their people to believe in it, therefore, forms an integral part of all Divine Teachings. Also, nations built based on this belief tend towards peace and free of social and moral evils. Besides, history shows that whenever this is rejected by the people despite repeated warnings, the group gets punished by Allah in this world. In addition, rational faculties of man support the need for this belief. Moreover, God's attributes of Justice and Mercy are of little value without life after death (Ünal, 2014).

As regards the signs and indications of the Last Day, the author mentions the lesser signs and the greater signs and concludes that the notion of Akhirah is to make humankind understand that all are answerable to Allah. Besides, the present order of existence will someday come to an end. Hence, the real approach to success or failure is not the extent of his prosperity in the present life but his success in the Next (p. 81-82).

Destiny: According to the author of *Our Own*, Divine Destiny (*al-Qadar*) is also known as Divine Decree, Predestination, Fatalism, and Acts of Allah. This forms the sixth article of the Islamic Creed. The author buttresses the point with references from the Qur'an and Hadith. He notes that, *Qadar* and *Taqdir* are Arabic expressions for "measuring out" and "preordering" (p. 83). He observes further that, from the Qur'an and Sunnah's perspective,

this universe and everything in it can be said to be “the outcome of a Planning Will of the Creator Who has created and fashioned it with His infinite Wisdom and with a definite destined end” (p. 84). Muslims are expected to have faith concerning al-Qadar because of the Omnipotence and Omniscience power of the Creator. The author lists ten points to show why Muslims should believe in *al-Qadar*, this includes knowledge of the past, present, and future belongs to God; Divine knowledge is registered in a Guarded Tablet; nothing exists except by the Will of Allah; Allah is the Sole Creator of the universe; both good and evil are destined for human beings; people’s actions are created by Allah but earned by themselves; ability to do something is of two kinds (*tawfiq* [Grace from Allah], and human capabilities) (Abbara, 2008); Allah created man as a free agent; Allah created people to worship Him and to obey Him; the volition of Man is dependent on Allah’s Will. All these points were supported with various verses from the Qur’an such as Q9:115, Q36:12, Q36:82, Q39:62, Q2:286, and also hadith reported by Al-Dailami, Al-Hakim and Tirmidhi.

Conclusion

Our Own, according to the author is written to give a broad view of the essentials of the Islamic Creed with evidence that is a concise and authentic exposition from Qur’an and *Sunna*. Indeed, the value of this work is immense. To a Muslim and a student of Islam, *Our Own* is a guiding light in that it is a resource material for understanding Islamic Faith and belief systems. For a non-Muslim who does not know the nitty-gritty of Islamic Faith but wishes to know about it especially about the justifications the adherents of Islam have for their Creeds, *Our Own* provides adequate information for such. In addition, for one who is not interested in Islam but only wishes to be enlightened about doctrinal issues in the religion, *Our Own* is a guide book. Truly, the importance of *Our Own* cannot be overemphasised. However, this paper wishes to note that the present production of the work requires revision and expansion because the current volume belittles its worth. It should rather be expanded with more elaborations and concrete examples from contemporary experience in faith-related issues. This, in the present study view, will allow for better clarifications and accessibility.

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