93197 - He is asking about al-‘Aqeedah al-Tahhaawiyyah?

the question

What is al-‘Aqeedah al-Tahhaawiyyah? What is it about?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

al-‘Aqeedah al-Tahhaawiyyah is a book dealing with ‘aqeedah (basic tenets of faith) which was written by Imam al-Tahhaawi and named after him. Discussing this ‘aqeedah means that we must look at it from a number of angles.

Firstly:

The author is the imam, muhaddith and faqeeh Abu Ja’far Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Salaamah al-Tahhaawi – who is named after a village in Upper Egypt – he studied with many Shaykhs and learned from them and benefited from them, and he listed their number as three hundred Shaykhs.

He was praised by more than one of the scholars:

Ibn Yoonus said: al-Tahhaawi was trustworthy, sincere, a faqeeh and a man of wisdom, and after him there was no one else like him.

Al-Dhahabi said: the faqeeh, muhaddith, haafiz, one of the prominent scholars, and he was trustworthy, sincere, a faqeeh and a man of wisdom.

Ibn Katheer said: He was one of the trustworthy, sincere and a haafiz.

He wrote books which were well-written, comprehensive and of great value, among which was his great book Ma’aani al-Athaar, which contains research on fiqh accompanied by evidence and

discussion of controversial matters, and pointing to which view is more correct. His books also include Mushkil al-Athaar and others.

He died (may Allah have mercy on him) in 321 AH and was buried in Egypt, in al-Quraafah.

See his biography in Siyar A'laam al-Nubala' (15/33-37) and al-Bidaayah wa'l-Nihaayah (11/174).

Secondly:

This 'Aqeedah which was written by al-Tahhaawi mentions a number of the beliefs of the righteous salaf and those who followed them of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah, which was approved by the imams of the Hanafis – as al-Tahhaawi followed the madhhab of Abu Haneefah. He explained in his introduction his aims in doing that, and said:

"This is an explanation of the 'aqeedah of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah according to the view of the fuqaha' of this madhhab: Abu Haneefah al-Nu'maan ibn Thaabit al-Kufi, Abu Yoosuf Ya'qoob ibn Ibraaheem al-Ansaari, and Abu 'Abd-Allah Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybaani, may Allah be pleased with them all, and the beliefs concerning the fundamentals of Islam, on the basis of which they submit to the Lord of the Worlds." End quote.

Then he mentioned these basic beliefs, and the total number of things he mentioned was 105 things believed by Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah in general.

He started by explaining the Oneness of Allah, may He be exalted, and said a little about the attributes of His Lordship (sifaat ruboobiyyatihi), such as His being alive and self-sufficient, and His being the Creator and Provider, and he affirmed the attributes of perfection without discussing how or likening Him to any of His creation, because Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): "There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer" [al-Shoora 42:11]. Then he followed that with a discussion of the obligation to believe in the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and that he was sent to all people. Then he spoke of the Holy Quran, stating that it is the word of Allah and not created, and he affirmed that the believers will see Allah in the Hereafter. Then he mentioned some matters of the unseen in which

Ahl al-Sunnah believe, such as the Cistern (al-hawd), intercession, the Throne and the Footstool (al-Kursiy). Then he mentioned the pillars of belief in al-qada' wa'l-qadar (the Divine will and decree) and what Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah believe about this topic. Then he went on to define faith and its pillars, and explained that faith may increase and decrease, and he explained the view of Ahl al-Sunnah in contrast to the views of the Khawaarij and Murji'ah. He also described what Ahl-al-Sunnah believe with regard to the noble Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them), and that loving them is part of Islam, faith and ihsaan, and that hating them is kufr, hypocrisy and sin. Then he mentioned some of the portents of the Hour and what will happen on the Day of Resurrection, then he ended his essay with an discussion of how this religion is the middle path, between exaggeration and falling short.

Thirdly:

It is a book of 'aqeedah that is easy to read and clear in meaning. It is comprehensive and brief. It sums up the beliefs of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah and, for the most part, includes matters on which there is scholarly consensus and agreement.

Many scholars have written commentaries on this 'Aqeedah and explained its words and meanings. One of the most famous of them is Ibn Abi'l-'Izz al-Hanafi, who wrote a lengthy commentary on it; among later scholars, Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz and Shaykh Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani (may Allah have mercy on them) wrote commentaries on it, as did Shaykh Safar ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Hawaali (may Allah preserve him). The one who wants to understand more of the meanings of al-Tahhaawiyyah can refer to these commentaries.

Fourthly:

'Aqeedah al-Tahhaawi discusses matters in brief and general terms, but what made it very famous and popular among the Salafis in particular is the commentary which was written by Shaykh Ibn Abi'l-'Izz al-Hanafi (may Allah have mercy on him), which is the most important and most detailed of its commentaries. He based his commentary on the books of Ahl al-Sunnah, especially the books of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) and his student Ibn al-

Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him).

Fifthly:

Despite what we have referred to of the good features of this ‘Aqeedah and its commentary by Ibn Abi’l-‘Izz, it also contains a number of issues which were criticized, because they go against what the salaf believed, such as his saying, when defining faith: “Faith is affirming with the tongue and believing in the heart,” because limiting it to that is the view of the Murji’i fuqaha’ who excluded physical actions from the definition of faith. The same applies to what he said after that, “Faith is one and the same, and believers are equal with regard to the foundation of faith.”

It also includes some general phrases that may be understood incorrectly, and are most often used by innovators to mean things that are contrary to the beliefs of the righteous salaf, such as his saying, “exalted be He above limits and boundaries” and “exalted be He above having faculties and parts” and “He is not subject to directions and dimensions which are attributes of created beings.” Such phrases are used by those who misinterpret the attributes of Allah (al-mu’attilah) to deny what is affirmed in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger of the sublime attributes of Allah that befit His perfection, may He be glorified and exalted, such as His Countenance, hands and eyes. They call them faculties and parts, and deny that Allah possesses them.

Another example is His being above His creation, and His rising above His Throne in His heaven. They call this “directions and location” and deny that it applies to Allah, may He be exalted.

Because of that, it is important for the seeker of knowledge to pay attention to learning this ‘Aqeedah from a scholar of Ahl al-Sunnah who can explain it, such as Ibn Abi’l-‘Izz among classical scholars and from contemporary scholars who have written brief commentaries on it, as we have referred to above.

There are many audio commentaries on this book, such as the commentary by Shaykh Saalih Aal al-Shaykh, and the commentary by Shaykh Yoosuf al-Ghufays, and others.

Shaykh Safar al-Hawaali (may Allah preserve him) has commented at length on the commentary of Ibn Abi’l-‘Izz; you may refer to it on his website.

And Allah knows best.