

The Early Creed	
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Arabic literature	Arabic written literature was seemingly non-existent before the 7th century <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Illiteracy and isolation meant the Arabs were not committed to any of the existing literate traditions
Familiarity with monotheism	Arab familiarity with the monotheistic idea came from contact with Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism
People of the Book	Seen as divine in origin, but corrupted or misinterpreted by latter-day followers
Message of Islam	Simple message: renounce idolatry and turn instead to the worship of the One God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raised the alarm about God's coming judgment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People are going to be sent to either everlasting bliss or torment, on the basis of their actions during their worldly lives
Early Muslim divide	The earliest Muslim schisms emerged over political matters with little to do with credal matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A minority, including 'Alī RA opposed the appointment of Abu Bakr RA as amīr <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporters of Abu Bakr included most of the Meccans, who favored the continued importance of the tribe of Quraysh - The party of 'Alī enjoyed the loyalty of many Medinans, and claimed to favor a more inclusive policy
Civil War (fitnah)	Upheaval in 656 led to the killing of 'Uthman RA and brought 'Alī RA to power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A civil war was sparked that lasted all of 'Alī's reign <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Alī successively confronted 'Āishah RA, then Mu'āwiyah RA, who championed the Umayyad clan within Quraysh, and then the Khawārij <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The party of 'Alī (Shī'a 'Alī) and the Khawarij considered the assassination of 'Uthman to have been just <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Alī's willingness to negotiate with Mu'āwiyah led to Khārijī rebellion on the grounds that there should be no negotiation over what is right
Kharijites	Insisted that the sins of the caliphs not only destroyed their legitimacy

	<p>but mandated a duty of resistance to them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Held that the committing of major sins negated faith, and thus placed the sinner outside Islam <p>Adopted the slogan 'Lā ḥukma illā li-llāh' (judgment is God's alone)</p> <p>The Shī'ah insisted that a leader must be a descendant of the Prophet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proto-Sunnīs required that the caliphs be of Quraysh - Kharijites elected whomever seemed best for the office and had good moral character <p>Kharijite opponents were considered sinners and apostates, lawful to be robbed and killed</p> <p>Undermining leaders by accusing him of sin rendered the Kharijites politically unstable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incessant violence against fellow Muslims made them unpopular among the general public <p>The Ibāḍiyyah arose as a more moderate Kharijite group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did not require immediate revolution against illicit rulers - Did not regard sinners as apostates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This allowed for peaceful coexistence with other Muslims - The Ibāḍiyyah sect survives to this day in Oman
Qadarīs	<p>The first theological dispute in Islam was between free will and determinism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determinism was seen as a position compatible to the rulers, diminishing concern with the morality of their actions and of one's response to their rule - Pietists were concerned about their own conduct, and eager to conform their lives to God's will <p>Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī denied that a sinner could exculpate himself by claiming that God was the source of all human actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God has foreknowledge of that person's choice, it is not a predetermining knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human beings choose freely whether or not to sin <p>Some Kharijites advanced a doctrine of free will in which God neither knows in advance nor decrees human actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The caliph 'Umar II, himself strongly determinist, attacked the idea for its apparent diminution of divine authority <p>According to the Qadarī idea of free will, the caliph was fully accountable and had to be removed if he fell into grave sin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hardline Qadarīs revolted against the government <p>The pietistic trend of Qadarism, represented by Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī,</p>

	was absorbed by the proto-Sunnī hadith scholars
Shī'ah	<p>Blamed the dissension among the Muslims on their abandonment of the Prophet's family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A divinely chosen, rightly guided imam from the Prophet's family was the remedy <p>The early Shī'ah were heavily subdivided, each group defined by the imam to whom it paid allegiance</p> <p>The Zaydīs, a moderate subgroup, held that an imam could be elected, and that the imamate of an inferior candidate (mafdūll) could be accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This validated the rule of Abu Bakr and 'Umar I <p>Twelvers held that each imam had been designated by his predecessor by a specific appointment (naṣṣ)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All the imams were infallible, and the imamate was confined to the descendants of 'Alī and Fāṭimah <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Every elected imam was a usurper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This brought the Imāmīs into conflict with the Abbasid state
Proto-Sunnis Mālik bin Anas	<p>Adopted a simple understanding of the verses describing God in the Qur'an</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "This establishment is known; but its mode is unknown; belief in it is a duty; but inquiring about it is an innovation" <p>Descendants of the Companions living in Madinah kept alive the memory of the first caliphs as exemplary rulers</p>
Murji'ites	<p>Argued that the hallmark of a believer was interior faith rather than external actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Faith and actions were separate <p>Muslim rulers of the past could not be judged in absentia, and in the absence of certain evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current rulers could be condemned, not as unbelievers, but as misguided believers (mu'minūn ḡullāl) <p>The Murji'ites (Deferers) taught that it was best to withhold (defer) judgment about 'Uthmān RA and 'Alī RA</p> <p>Opposed the injustices of Umayyad rule especially with regard to the rights of the non-Arab Muslims (mawālī)</p>
Jahm ibn Safwān	<p>Called for a return to the Qur'an and the Sunnah</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implied opposition to the worldly Umayyad ruler <p>Jahm taught that faith is merely an internalized knowledge in the</p>

	<p>heart, without any outward expression at all</p> <p>Jahm's own teachings are obscure, being mentioned only in later, hostile sources</p> <p>Hanbalites would later use the term Jahmī to denounce anyone they accused of Mu'tazilite tendencies</p> <p>Abū Ḥanīfa's <i>al-Fiqh al-Akbar</i> contains an assertion of deferral of judgment with regard to 'Uthmān and 'Alī, and an equal regard and respect for all the Companions of the Prophet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Showed how close the Murji'a were to later Sunnism <p>The Karrāmiyyah, an extreme branch of the Murji'a, held that God was a body which touches the throne</p> <p>Later Sunnīs, excluding Hanbalites, did not regard the Murji'a as falling outside the Sunnī fold</p> <p>Later Murji'a emphasized faith being separate from works, and an insistence that faith, being an indivisible whole, can neither increase nor decrease</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Later Sunnī majority did include acts in the definition of faith
Later Murji'a	<p>Ḍirār ibn 'Amr</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applied the doctrine of kasb to human actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He held that God creates all human actions, but human beings acquire them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resolving the antinomy between determinism and free will - He held that immaterial "accidents" (a'rāḍ) had to be recreated by God in each moment - Adopted the idea that between the categories of believer and unbeliever there is a state between the two states (manzila bayn al-manzilatayn) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is the place of the unrepentant believer - Rejected the belief in punishment in the grave - Rejected that the believers would see God on the day of judgment in a literal way - God's attributes were only to be understood as denying their opposites <p>Bishr al-Marīsī</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Denied the torment of the tomb - Denied that major sinners among the Muslims would be eternally in hell <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contrary to Ḍirār and the Kharijites - Held that faith consisted only of belief plus its verbal expression, and not other works - Recognised only four essential attributes of God: will,

	<p>knowledge, power, and creativity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All other attributes were figurative - Neither believers nor unbelievers would suffer in hell forever
<p>Mu'tazilism</p> <p>Five Principles (al-uṣūl al-khamsah) of Mu'tazilism</p>	<p>A continuation of Qadarism in the sense of upholding a doctrine of free will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) God's unity and uniqueness (tawḥīd) 2) His justice ('adl) 3) Eternity of Paradise for the righteous and hell for sinners (al-wa'd wa'l-wa'id) 4) Intermediate state of the Muslim sinner, between belief and unbelief 5) Command to enjoin goodness and to forbid iniquity (al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf wa'l-nahy 'an al-munkar) <p>Mu'tazilites called themselves the "People of God's Unity and Justice" (ahl al-tawḥīd wa'l-'adl).</p> <p>God was unique</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anthropomorphic descriptions of God in the Qur'an must be explained as purely metaphorical or allegorical <p>Insisted that the Qur'an was created by God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sunnis held it to be uncreated - The Abbasid caliph, al-Ma'mūn, adopted Mu'tazilism as state doctrine and scholars were required to conform to it, particularly on this issue <p>The Mu'tazilah stated that God, having declared Himself to be just, was constrained to will and do only that which is good</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verses stating that God pardons whom He will and punishes whom He will entails pardoning those deserving pardon and punishing those who deserve punishment - Later Mu'tazilah added that God could grant unmerited grace (tafaḍḍul) to whomever He might <p>Affirmed human free will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A person's fate in eternity lies entirely in their own hands, and their acts are their own creations - Guidance is available to all in equal measure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verses stating that God guides whom He will to the right or the wrong are to be explained as actions God takes after the human concerned has already acted
Sunni Traditionists	<p>God had ultimate power to will every event and act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unlike the Mu'tazilah who said His justice must constrain the divine agency <p>Objected to the Mu'tazilite concept of human free will, which seemed to compromise God's majesty, power and sovereign freedom</p>

<p>Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī</p>	<p>Originally a moderate Mu'tazilite, propounded Ḥanbalī doctrines, but with Mu'tazilite methods of argumentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affirmed that God was all-powerful - His eternal, essential qualities were coeternal with Him, and were neither God Himself nor other than Him - All descriptions of God in the Qur'an and hadith were actual but understood "without specifying how" (bi-lā kayf) - The grave sinner remains a believer but may be punished for a limited period in hellfire - Believers will gain actual sight of their Lord in Paradise - The Qur'an is uncreated - God is the creator of all human acts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creates in humans the ability to perform each act at the time of the act - Faith consists of both belief and acts, increasing and decreasing <p>The Mālikīs and Shāfi'īs adopted Ash'arī's system of belief</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ḥanbalīs continued to reject the methodology of rational argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Claiming to rely entirely on the plain sense of scripture
<p>Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī</p>	<p>Similar to Ash'arī on many points, while more rationalizing on others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accepted that the believers would see God, but not by eyesight - The Qur'an was uncreated, but not the sound of its recitation - The voice of God heard by Moses was created speech - Human works, although decreed by God, were ultimately attributable to their human authors