

Introduction to Tawheed

The greatest thing that Allah (SWT) has enjoined is Tawheed.

What is Tawheed?

· Literally Tawheed means "unification" (making something one) or "asserting oneness", and it comes from the Arabic verb wahhada which itself means to unite, unify or consolidate. Tawheed (Islamic Monotheism) means declaring Allah (SWT) to be the only God who deserves to be worshipped in truth and confirming all attributes with which He has qualified Himself or that are attributed to Him by His Messenger (SAW).

· When the term Tawheed is used in reference to Allah (SWT) (i.e. Tawheedullah), it means the realizing and maintaining of Allah (SWT)'s unity in all of man's actions which directly or indirectly relate to Him.

· It is the belief that Allah (SWT) is:

One, without partner in His dominion and actions (Ruboobeeyah)

One without rival in His divinity and worship (Ulooheeyah/'Ebaadah)

One without similitude in His essence and attributes (Asma wa Sifaat)

The omission of any of the above mentioned aspects of Tawheed is referred to as "Shirk (lit. sharing); the association of partners with Allah (SWT), which, in Islamic terms, is in fact idolatry.

There are three aspects of Tawheed:

1. Tawheed-ar-Ruboobeeyah
2. Tawheed-al-Ulooheeyah/'Ebaadah
3. Tawheed-al-Asma was-Sifaat

What is Tawheed-ar-Ruboobeeyah?

In Arabic the word used to describe this creator-sustainer quality is Ruboobeeyah which is derived from the root "Rabb" (Lord).

· Belief in the Oneness of the Lordship of Allah (SWT)

· Belief in Maintaining the Unity of Lordship

· To believe that there is only one Lord for all the universe, its Creator, Organizer, Planner, Sustainer, and the Giver of security, etc., and that is Allah (SWT)

· It is declaring Allah (SWT) to be One and Unique in His work, like creation, sustenance, bringing to life and causing death, etc.

The basis for the Ruboobeeyah concept can be found in many Qu'ranic verses.

For example, Allah (SWT) says:

"Allah created all things and He is the Trustee on which all things depend." (Az-Zumar 39:62)

"And Allah created you all and whatever you do." (As-Safat 37:96)

"It was not you who threw, when you threw, but it was Allah who threw." (Al-Anfaal 8:17)

"And no calamity strikes except by Allah's permission." (At-Taghabun 64:11)

What is Tawheed-al-Ulooheeyah/'Ebaadah?

This is the most important aspect of Tawheed.

- Belief in the Oneness of the Worship of Allah (SWT)
- Belief in Maintaining the Unity of Worship
- Total Obedience
- To believe that none has the right to be worshipped [i.e. praying, invoking, asking for help (from the unseen), swearing, slaughtering sacrifices, giving charity, fasting, pilgrimage, etc.], but Allah (SWT).
- It is declaring Allah (SWT) as the Only God to whom all acts of worship must be dedicated, such as Salat (prayers), Zakat, Saum (fasting), supplications, vowing, etc.
- It includes emotions like love, trust, and fear all of which have degrees which should only be directed to Allah (SWT).

In the Qu'ran, Allah (SWT) tells the Prophet (SAW) to say to the pagans:

"Say: 'Who is it that gives you all sustenance from the sky and earth, governs sight and hearing, brings forth life from dead (matter) and death from the living, and plans the affairs of man?' They will all say: 'Allah'." (Yunus 10:31)

"If you asked them who created them, they would surely say, 'Allah'." (Az-Zukhruf 43:87)

"If you asked them who brings down water from the sky and with it brings the earth to life after its death? They will most certainly say, 'Allah'." (Al'Ankabut 29:63)

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) confirmed the concept of unity of worship saying:

"If you ask in prayer ask only Allah, and if you seek help, seek it only from Allah." (Reported by Ibn 'Abbaas and collected by at-Tirmidhee)

What is Tawheed-al-Asma was-Sifaat?

- It is belief in the Oneness of the Names and the Qualifications of Allah (SWT)
 - It is an affirmation of all the Divine Names and Attributes of Allah (SWT) in a manner that suits His Majesty, as mentioned in the Qu'ran and the Sunnah.
- It is belief in five aspects of Tawheed-al-Asma was-Sifaat:

1. Allah (SWT) must be referred to according to how He and His Prophet (SAW) have described Him without explaining away His names and attributes by giving them meanings other than their obvious meanings.

Allah (SWT) in the Qu'ran says:

"That He may punish the hypocrites, men and women, and the pagans men and women, who have an evil opinion of Allah. A circle of evil is around them; Allah is angry with them, curses them and has prepared for them an evil end." (Al-Fat-h 48:6)

Anger is one of Allah (SWT)'s attributes. It is incorrect to say that His anger must mean His punishment, since anger is a sign of weakness in man and, as such, not befitting of Allah (SWT). What Allah (SWT) has stated should be accepted with the qualification that His anger is not like human anger, based on Allah (SWT)'s statement:

"There is nothing like him" (Ash-Shura 42:11)

2. Referring to Allah (SWT) as He has referred to Himself without giving Him any new names or attributes. Allah (SWT) may not be given the name al-Ghaadib (the Angry one), in spite of the fact that He has said that He gets angry, because neither Allah (SWT) nor His Messenger (SAW) has used this name.

3. Allah (SWT) is referred to without giving Him the attributes of His creation.

It is claimed in the Bible and Torah that Allah (SWT) spent the first six days creating the universe then slept on the seventh:

"And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done." (Holy Bible, Genesis 2:2)

Such a claim assigns to Allah (SWT) the attributes of His creation. It is man who tires after heavy work and needs sleep to recuperate. In contrast Allah (SWT) says:

"No tiredness overcomes Him nor sleep..." (Al-Baqarah 2:255)

4. Man may not be given the attributes of Allah (SWT).

Most Shi'ite sects have given their Imams divine attributes of absolute infallibility, knowledge of the past, the future and the unseen, the ability to change destiny and control over the atoms of creation. In doing so they set up rivals who share Allah (SWT)'s unique attributes and who, in fact, become gods besides Allah (SWT).

5. Allah (SWT)'s names in the definite form cannot be given to His creation unless preceded by the prefix 'Abd meaning "slave of" or "servant of."

Many of the Divine names in their indefinite form like Ra'oof and Raheem are allowable names for men because Allah (SWT) has used some of them in their indefinite forms to refer to the Prophet (SAW):

"A messenger has come to you from among yourselves to whom anything which burdens you is grievous. He is full of concern for you and is full of pity (Ra'oof) and full of mercy (Raheem)." (At-Tawbah 9:128)

Names like ar-Ra'oof (the One Most Full of Pity) and ar'Raheem (the Most Merciful) can only be used to refer to men if they are preceded by 'Abd as in 'Abdur'Ra'oof or 'Abdur -Raheem, since in the definite form they represent a level of perfection which only belongs to Allah (SWT).

· This is the faith of all true believers and was the Faith of all the Prophets of Allah from Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus till the last of the Prophets, Muhammad (SAW). It is not like as some people think that Allah (SWT) is present everywhere, here, there, and even inside the breasts of men.

· Those who have not fulfilled the requirements of Tawheed are such as they have not worshipped Allah (SWT), and in this sense is the meaning of the verse:

"Nor will you worship that which I worship" (AL-Kafirun 109:3)

Allah (SWT) Talk About Tawheed in the Following Ayats

"There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer." (Ash-Shura 42:11)

"When My servants ask you [O Muhammad (SAW)] about Me (tell them), 'Verily I am close (to them), I listen to the prayer of every one who calls on Me. So let them respond to Me and believe in Me in order that they may be guided aright.'" (Al-Baqarah 2:186)

"Do not worship besides Allah that which can not help or harm you." (Al-Anbiya 21:66)

"If Allah allows harm to befall you none can remove it except Him." (Al-An'am 6:17)

"Put your trust in Allah if you are truly believers." (Al-Ma'idah 5:23)