

## THE REALITY OF TAWHID (Monotheism)

**Tawhid**, the belief in the oneness of Allah, or monotheism is not only the fundamental tenet of Islam, but it is its very essence. Therefore, a Muslim must understand particularly the meaning and implications of this term. It means not only notional belief in the oneness of Allah but more than that it means total submission to Allah and worship of Him with all devotion and solemnity. An act of worship refers to any bowing or prostrating or chanting or any other outward or inner gestures meant to seek closer access to the Almighty. This is the only objective of the creation of all the creatures, as Allah has himself declared:

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴾ [الذاريات: ٥٦]

(Translation of meaning) [“I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me” (Az-Zariyat: 56)].

**Every** believer knows very well that worship is not limited to mere testification of the belief or performance of outward rituals of *salat*, fast, *zakat*, and Hajj but it encompasses all walks of life. Worship can have different forms and expressions. For instance, when a believer invokes Allah, and he can invoke Him alone, he is worshipping Him. The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said: «الدُّعَاءُ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ» “Invocation is a form of worship” (Tirmizi). That is why he does not pray to nor invokes anybody except Allah because he knows well that nobody except Allah is capable of giving benefit or inflicting harm. Allah Himself has enjoined:

﴿ وَلَا تَدْعُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ فَإِنْ فَعَلْتَ فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا مِنْ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴾ [يونس: ١٠٦]

(Translation of meaning) [“And do not invoke any other than Allah, who cannot benefit or harm you and if you do that then you are surely of the transgressors” (Younus:106)].

**The** Messenger of Allah said: « وَإِذَا سَأَلْتَ فَاسْأَلِ اللَّهَ » "When you ask, ask from Allah" (Tirmizi). A believer cannot commit shirk by invoking other than Allah. Allah said in the Holy Quran:

﴿ فَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُعَذَّبِينَ ﴾ [الشعراء: ٢١٣]

(Translation of meaning) [“Therefore invoke not with Allah another god, lest thou be one of the doomed.” (Ash-Shu’araa: 213).

A believer does not believe in any except Allah as the benefactor nor does he take any as His co-partners. Allah has declared:

﴿أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ ۚ قَالَ اللَّهُ هُوَ الْوَلِيُّ وَهُوَ يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٩﴾﴾ الشورى: ٩

(Translation of meaning) [“Or have they chosen protecting friends besides Him? But Allah, He [alone] is the Protecting Friend. He quickeneth the dead, and He is Able to do all things” (Ash-Shura: 9)].

The faith of every believer requires that he should and must strive to avoid indulging in *shirk*. And this he cannot do unless he is aware of all kinds, forms and channels of the invasion of *shirk*. Every Unitarian is enjoined to deny the *Taghut* [forces of evil]. Thus it has been declared in the Quran:

﴿فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِرْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥٦﴾﴾

البقرة: ٢٥٦

(Translation of meaning) [“And he who rejecteth false deities and believeth in Allah hath grasped a firm handhold which will never break. Allah is Hearer, Knower” (Al-Baqarah: 256)].

*Taghut* refers to whosoever is followed, obeyed and worshipped other than Allah. All noble apostles of Allah have prevented people from obeying and worshipping the *Taghut* and to keep away from them. Allah has declared:

﴿وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ ﴿٣٦﴾﴾ النحل: ٣٦

(Translation of meaning) [“And verily We have raised in every nation a messenger, [proclaiming]: serve Allah and shun false gods.” (An-Nahl: 36)].

Arabic term *Taghut* is derived from the Arabic root *Tughiyan*, meaning transgression or exceeding limits. A *Taghut* is a rebel against Allah. A believer, therefore, can never have any link with a defier and rebel. His faith requires him to disown the *Taghut*. The way Hadrat Ibrahim (*Alaihis Salam*) declared his refutation of and enmity towards the false gods of his community has been described in the Quran in these words:

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّنِي بَرَاءٌ مِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾﴾ الزخرف: ٢٦

(Translation of meaning) [“And when Abraham said unto his father and his folks: Lo! I am innocent of what ye worship.” (Az-Zukhruf: 26)].

The enforcement of the divine ordinances is also one of the essentials of the doctrine of *Tawhid*. To a Muslim, that which has been proclaimed as *halal* is *halal* and that which has been declared as *haram* is *haram*. He cannot

countenance any compromises on this score. The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said:

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَدَّ حُدُودًا فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا وَفَرَضَ لَكُمْ فَرَائِضَ فَلَا تُضَيِّعُوهَا وَحَرَّمَ أَشْيَاءَ فَلَا تَنْتَهِكُوهَا وَتَرَكَ أَشْيَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ نَسْيَانٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَلَكِنْ رَحْمَةً مِنْهُ لَكُمْ فَاقْبَلُوهَا وَلَا تَبْحَثُوا فِيهَا» (الحاكم)

Verily God Almighty has set limits for you so don't transgress them; and He has put upon you certain obligations so don't waste them; and He has omitted certain things not due to oversight of your Lord but as mercy for you, so you must accept them as His beneficence and never probe into them" (Al-Hakim)].

Thus, a believer's adherence to what has been enjoined and desistance from what has been proscribed is meant for nothing but seeking the pleasure of Allah.

*Tawakkol on Allah* [absolute dependence on Allah] is also an essential part of *Tawhid* and a complement of his belief in Allah. Allah has declared:

﴿وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ المائدة: ٢٣

(Translation of meaning) [“. . . So put your trust [in Allah] if ye are indeed believers" (Al-Maedah: 23)].

In another place in the Quran it is reiterated that:

﴿وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا﴾ الأحزاب: ٣

(Translation of meaning) [“And put thy trust in Allah, for Allah is sufficient as Trustee” (Al-Ahzab: 3)].

**A** believer knows well that absolute trust in Allah is the surest means for obtaining one's livelihood. The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said:

«لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَوَكَّلُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ حَقَّ تَوَكُّلِهِ لَرُزِقْتُمْ كَمَا يُرْزَقُ الطَّيْرُ تَغْدُو خِمَاصًا وَتَرُوحُ بِطَانًا» (ترمزي،

حاكم، ابن ماجه ، أحمد)

If you trust Allah as you ought to, then he will feed you like He feeds the birds which go out in the morning empty-bellied and come back in the evening with full bellies.

**The** fear of Allah is yet another part of *Tawhid*. Thus a Muslim is never afraid of anybody except Allah for he knows that nobody else can give him any benefit or cause him any harm. All benefits and harms emanate from the will of Allah. The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said:

« وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ الْأُمَّةَ لَوِ اجْتَمَعَتْ عَلَى أَنْ يَضْرُوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ يَضْرُوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ » “If all the people together intend to inflict any harm upon you they cannot except when Allah wills” (Tirmizi). Allah Almighty has proclaimed:

﴿ إِنَّمَا ذَلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ ۚ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُوا مِنِّي إِن كُنتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾ آل عمران: ١٧٥  
(Translation of meaning) [“It is only the devil who would make [men] fear his partisans. Fear them not; fear Me, if ye are true believers” (Al Imran: 175)].

A believer seeks succour only from Allah and never from anybody else. In each cycle of each of his *salats* he recites this verse of Surah Fatiha:

﴿ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴾ الفاتحة: ٥  
(Translation of meaning) [“Thee [alone] we worship; Thee [alone] we ask for help” (Al-Fatiha: 5)].

The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said admonishing Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*): «وَأِذَا اسْتَعْنَيْتَ بِاللهِ» If you seek help, then seek help from Allah [alone]. (Tirmizi)

Remembrance of Allah is another part of *Tawhid*. A believer makes it his habit to remember Allah all the time and never be oblivious to his remembrance. He knows that Allah is observing all his actions and one day He will reckon with him. The Quran declares:

﴿ وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴾ الحديد: ٤  
(Translation of meaning) [“And He is with you wherever you are; and Allah is seeing what you are doing” (Al-Hadid: 4)].

Thus every Muslim keeps remembering Allah. Even if he is praying he does so with the consciousness that Allah is seeing him. All the time he is busy in seeking the nearness and pleasure of Allah and strives to perform all such acts which lead to the pleasure of Allah. Conversely, he keeps away assiduously from all such actions and thought which have the slightest possibility of causing Allah's displeasure. This is the monotheism i.e. complete love and submissiveness.

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