

**PART I: THE FOUNDATIONS OF *DEEN* AND ITS
FUNDAMENTAL MAXIMS**

Kitāb at-Tawḥeed

(book of monotheism)

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6. The Meaning of – ‘*there is no god/deity except Allah*’

The meaning of ‘there is no deity except Allah’ is that there is nothing whatsoever that has the attributes of divinity (*al-Uluhiyah*). It relates to him having the ability by his divine self for action; acting independently in an absolute way, without need or recourse to others. In particular, this can be said of acts such as the initiation of creation from nothing, with its resultant follow-on of fashioning, imaging, configuring, managing, not least to say compelling this into existence through divine will. He alone has the prerogative of command, in origin to command and prohibit. Such action is by way of complete freedom, without any condition. There is nothing by necessity or by the necessity of reason compelling him to act, for in truth he is the only deity in truth. He is the self-subsistent, or stated alternatively, the necessarily existent; acting by his express will and self, rich without any dependence. His knowledge is complete, all-encompassing; whatever he desires to be, that is what will be. Whatever he doesn’t wish to be, will not therefore come to pass, for there is nothing that is characterized by such qualities except Allah. Even if anyone attributes any of these qualities to other than Allah, it will be a manifest lie, slander, false imagination, or an illusion that has nothing to do with the actual reality.

Allah the exalted and majestic states:

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ هُوَ الْبَاطِلُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ

***That is because Allah is the truth and that what they call upon besides him, that is falsehood;
because Allah is the high, the great.¹***

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الْبَاطِلُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ

***This is because Allah is the truth, and that which they call upon besides him is the falsehood, and
that Allah is the high, the great.²***

فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَثْوَاكُمْ

***So know that there is no god but Allah and ask protection for your fault and for the believing men
and women. Allah knows the place of your abiding.³***

Moreover, the meaning behind ‘there is no deity/god except Allah’ is illustrated by his words where he states:

أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

...surely his is the creation and the command; blessed is Allah, lord of all creation.⁴

There is also the statement which Allah informs us that in relation to the Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him), conveying the meaning behind ‘there is no deity/god except Allah’ in the following verse:

¹ Qur’ān 22: 62

² Qur’ān 31: 30

³ Qur’ān 47: 19

⁴ Qur’ān 7: 54

مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءَ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَأَبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

You do not worship besides him but names which you have named, you and your fathers; Allah has not sent down any authority for them; the ḥukm belongs to none but Allah. He has commanded that you shall not serve any but him; this is the right Deen but most people don't know.⁵

Pillars underpinning the testimony of faith (Shahāda)

Firstly, to completely reject the notion that any particle, substance, be that referred to as nature or the universe, holds any of the characteristics of divinity, except Allah the exalted. Specifically relating to the acts of creation, configuring, fashioning; apportioning the correct measure and benefit and harm and the like. Coupled together with the complete free will and ability of choice in determining these matters, as well as the knowledge of its proportionality. The proof of all these attributes, in totality, to the utmost beauty and perfection belongs to Allah the exalted. At the apex of this together with *ḥākimiyyah*: the ultimate, final supreme sovereignty. In other words, only he – the exalted and magnificent, has prerogative of command, the ultimate choice in determining what is to be commanded or prohibited. He alone retains this by his very self or essence, with no partner.

Secondly, is the absolute, complete rejection and denial that anything from divinity can be given to other than Allah. That rejection is for all perceived gods/deities (*illah*) besides Allah, or for that matter, every lord (*rabb*) beside Allah. There must be complete disbelief in all that, because that disbelief here also encompasses disavowal and rejection. Allah the exalted and majestic has expressly stated:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

⁵ Qur'ān 12: 40

There is no compulsion in Deen; truth stands clear from error. Therefore whoever disbelieves in Ṭāghut and believes in Allah has grasped the firmest handle that doesn't break and Allah is hearing, knowing.⁶

And he has said of Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) while praising him specifically that:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّنِي بَرَاءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ ، إِلَّا الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي فَإِنَّهُ سَيَهْدِينِ

And when Ibrāhim said to his father and his people, surely I am clear of what you worship. Save him who created me for surely he will guide me.⁷

There is also what has been authentically reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), where he said:

من قال لا إله إلا الله، وكفر بما يُعبد من دون الله، حَرَّمَ مَالَهُ وَدَمُهُ، وَحِسَابُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

Whoever testifies that there is no deity except Allah, and he disbelieves in everything which the people worship besides Allah, his property and blood become inviolable, and it is for Allah the exalted and majestic to call him to account.

Consequently, the testimony of faith, *ash-Shahāda*, has two aspects: an affirmation that all qualities and characteristics which pertain to divinity belong solely to Allah, the almighty. The negation is to categorically deny that any of these divine qualities and characteristics reside anywhere else. There is no being in existence other than Allah to whom these apply. Furthermore, it is to disbelieve in every *ṭawāgheet* – in every false deity, evil, and exorbitant tyranny. Without this specific affirmation and rejection, there is no Islam and no salvation in the hereafter.

⁶ Qur'ān 2: 256

⁷ Qur'ān 43: 26/27