

Belief in Allaah (part 1 of 2): The Categories of Tawheed

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Belief in Allaah, the proper name in Arabic of the one and only God worthy of worship, consists of four matters:

- (1) Belief in Allaah's existence.
- (2) Allaah is the Lord.
- (3) Allaah is entitled to worship.
- (4) Allaah is known by His Most Beautiful Names and Attributes.

1- Belief in Allaah's Existence

It is not required that Allaah's existence be proven by scientific, mathematical, or philosophical arguments. His existence is not a 'discovery' to be made by the scientific method or a mathematical theorem to be proven. Every human being has an innate belief in a Creator. This belief is not a result of learning or personal deductive thinking. It is outside influences that effect this innate belief and confuse a person as the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) said:

"There is no child who is not born with a natural belief in Allaah, but his parents make him a Jew, a Christian or a Magian."¹

Also, mere common sense bears witness to Allaah's existence. From a ship one learns of the ship-builder, from the cosmos one learns of its Creator. Allaah's existence is also known by answers to prayers, the miracles of prophets, and the teachings of all revealed scriptures.

2- Allaah is the Lord

Allaah is the only Lord of heaven and earth. He is the Lord of the physical universe and the Lawgiver for human life. He is the Master of the physical world and Ruler of the affairs of men. Allaah is the Lord of every man, woman, and child.

¹ Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim

Belief in Allaah (part 1 of 2): The Categories of Tawheed

(a) Allaah is the sole Lord and Ruler of the physical world. The term ‘Lord’ here specifically means that He is the Creator, Controller; the Kingdom of the heaven and the earth belongs exclusively to Him, and He owns them. He alone brought existence out of non-existence and all depend on Him for their conservation and continuance. He did not create the universe and leave it to pursue its own course according to fixed laws and cease to take any further interest in it. His power is required at every moment to sustain all creatures. The Creation has no Lord besides Him.

["Say (O Muhammad): 'Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who disposes the affairs?' They will say: 'Allaah.' Say: 'Will you not then be afraid of Allaah's punishment (for setting up rivals with Allaah)?'"]²

He is the ever-ruling King and the Saviour, the Living God, full of wisdom. No one can change His decisions. Angels, prophets, human beings, and the animal and plant kingdoms are under His control. Historically, few people have denied the existence of the Lord; throughout ages people for most part have believed in One God, a Supreme Being, a supernatural Creator.

(b) Allaah is the only Ruler of the affairs of men. Allaah is the supreme Lawgiver³, the Absolute Judge, the Legislator, He distinguishes right from wrong. Just like the physical world submits to its Lord, human beings must submit to the moral and religious teaching of their Lord, the Lord who sets apart right from wrong for them. In other words, Allaah alone has the authority to make laws, determine acts of worship, decide morals, and set standards of human interaction and behaviour. His is the command:

["His is the Creation and Command."]⁴

3- Allaah is Entitled to Worship

Allaah has the exclusive right to be worshipped inwardly and outwardly, by one's actions and by one's heart. Not only can no one be worshipped apart from Him, absolutely no one else can be worshipped along with Him. He has no partners or associates in worship. Worship, in its comprehensive sense and in all its aspects, is for Him alone.

["There is no true god worthy of worship but He, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate."]⁵

² Qur'aan [10:31]

³ God's existence proven by the existence of a supreme Lawgiver is called the 'ethical' argument by Western theologians.

⁴ Qur'aan [7:54]

Belief in Allaah (part 1 of 2): The Categories of Tawheed

Allaah's right to be worshipped cannot be over emphasised. It is the essential meaning of *Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah*. A non-Muslim enters Islaam by testifying to Allaah's sole right to be worshipped. It is the crux of Islaamic belief in Allaah, even all of Islaam. It was the central message of all prophets and messengers sent by Allaah. They all declared clearly:

[“Worship Allaah! You have no other god but Him]

It was the central message of Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Moses, the Hebrew prophets, Jesus, and Muhammad, may Allaah send His praises upon them all. If Allaah alone creates, gives life and death, provides food and security, gives hearing and sight, then He alone must be worshipped.

Worship in Islaam consists of every act, belief, statement, or sentiment of the heart Allaah approves and loves, everything that brings a person closer to His Creator. It includes everything Allaah has legislated in the Qur'aan or through His Prophet's (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) Sunnah. It includes 'external' worship like the daily ritual prayers, fasting, charity, and pilgrimage as well as 'internal' worship such as faith in the six articles of faith, reverence, adoration, love, gratitude, and reliance. An act of worship is not accepted unless it conforms to the following:

(1) It is done exclusively for Allaah and none should have any share in it, including one's own self. Worship is not to be done even to satisfy the soul's base desires, such as receiving praise or showing-off. This is the meaning of *Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah*.

(2) It must conform with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*). It must be performed in the exact manner performed by him, without any addition or omission. This is the implication of Muhammad Rasool-Allaah.

Allaah is entitled to all types of worship, the worship of the body, soul, and heart. It remains incomplete unless it is done out of reverence and fear of Allaah, divine love and adoration, hope in divine reward, and extreme humility. Giving anyone else - prophets, angels, Jesus, Mary, idols, or nature - a portion of worship due to Allaah is called Shirk and is the most enormous sin in Islaam.

4- Allaah is Known by His Most Beautiful Names and Attributes

Allaah is known by His Most Beautiful Names and Attributes as they appear in the Qur'aan and Sunnah, without corrupting or denying the obvious meaning, imagining their "how," or thinking of them in human terms.

[“And the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allaah, so call on Him by them.”]⁶

⁵ Qur'aan [2:163]

⁶ Qur'aan [7:180]

Belief in Allaah (part 1 of 2): The Categories of Tawheed

Therefore, it is inappropriate to use First Cause, Author, Substance, Pure Ego, Absolute, Pure Idea, Logical Concept, Unknown, Unconscious, Ego, Idea, or Big Guy as divine names. Any name which one seeks to affirm for Allaah must have been revealed in the Qur'aan or Sunnah.

The Names of Allaah indicate His perfection and freedom from deficiencies. Allaah does not forget, sleep or get tired. His seeing, like all other attributes, is not like human sight. He is not unjust, and has no son, mother, father, brother, associate, or helper. He was not begotten and He begets none. He stands in need of none as He is perfect. He does not become or resemble humans and has no need to do so to "understand" human suffering. Allaah is the Almighty (al-Qawee), the One Incomparable (al-'Ahad), the Acceptor of Repentance (al-Tawwab), the Most Compassionate (al-Raheem), Ever-Living (al-Hayy), All-Sustaining (al-Qayyoom), all-Knowing (al-'Aleem), All-Hearing (al-Samee'), All-Seeing (al-Baseer), the Pardoner (al-'Afuww), the Helper (al-Naseer), and the Healer of the Sick (al-Shaafi'). There are many other names mentioned in the Qur'aan and Sunnah.

All praise and glory is due to Him for His absolute perfection and majesty.