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FOUNDATIONS OF TAWHID

Creation's Greatest Need: Tawhid



Why the Jinn and Mankind Need Tawhid
More Than Every Worldly Necessity

Jinn and mankind need Tawhid above every worldly necessity because it concerns the purpose of their creation, Allah's greatest right, the life and direction of the heart, the foundation of accepted worship, and eternal salvation.

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Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim.

Every created being depends completely upon Allah. The jinn and mankind were additionally created, commanded, and tested concerning the worship of Allah alone.

Their need for Tawhid is greater than their need for food and drink in this precise sense: food and drink preserve the body for a limited worldly life, whereas Tawhid concerns why the servant was created, whom he worships, whether his deeds possess a sound foundation, the condition and direction of his heart, and his eternal destination.

Allah does not need the worship of His servants. They need Him. Every Messenger therefore began with the same foundation: worship Allah alone and reject every object of worship besides Him.

Recognizing that Allah exists or created the universe is not sufficient Tawhid. The polytheists acknowledged Allah as Creator, yet they refused the exclusive worship demanded by *la ilaha illa Allah*. The Tawhid that saves is to worship Allah alone, without associating any partner with Him, while following His Messenger ﷺ.

The principal points

- Jinn and mankind were created to worship Allah.
- Tawhid is Allah's greatest right over His servants.
- Every Messenger called first to the worship of Allah alone.
- The heart possesses no true religious life without knowing and worshipping its Lord.
- Recognition of Allah's Lordship does not suffice without exclusive worship.
- Major shirk destroys the foundation of religion when a person dies upon it.
- The Muslim continues needing Tawhid until death.

I. What Does "Creation's Greatest Need" Mean?

Allah said:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

"O mankind, you are the ones in need of Allah, while Allah is the Self-Sufficient, the Praiseworthy."

Source: Qur'an, Fatir 35:15.

Every created being depends upon Allah for its existence, continuance, provision, protection, and every ability it possesses. Allah alone is free of all need.

This universal dependence must be distinguished from legislated accountability. Animals, plants, the heavens, and the earth are created, owned, and governed by Allah. The Qur'an, however, specifically identifies the **jinn and mankind** as the two creations commanded and tested concerning worship.

The statement that Tawhid is needed "more than food and drink" is not itself a verse or hadith. It is a scholarly explanation drawn from the revealed texts. It does not deny the real need for food, water, shelter, lawful work, medicine, security, or the preservation of life. The Shari'ah recognizes and protects these necessities.

The comparison concerns the extent and consequence of the need:

- Food preserves the body temporarily.
- Tawhid establishes the purpose and direction of the servant's life.
- Food cannot save a person from shirk.
- Wealth cannot make a false object of worship true.
- Health cannot repair worship directed to other than Allah.
- Worldly provision ends at death, while the consequence of Tawhid continues into the Hereafter.

Ibn Abi al-'Izz al-Hanafi رحمه الله said:

وحاجة العباد إليه فوق كل حاجة وضرورتهم إليه فوق كل ضرورة

"The servants' need for it is above every need, and their necessity for it is above every necessity."

Source: Ibn Abi al-'Izz, *Sharh al-'Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah*, ed. Ahmad Muhammad Shakir, Ministry of Islamic Affairs, first edition, 1418 AH, pp. 5–6.

This is the precise sense in which Tawhid is mankind's greatest need. It concerns the servant's relationship with his Creator, the validity of his worship, and the eternal end toward which he is travelling.

2. Jinn and Mankind Were Created to Worship Allah

Allah said:

وما خلقت الجن والإنس إلا ليعبدون

“I did not create the jinn and mankind except that they worship Me.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Dharyat 51:56.

Explanation

The ayah identifies the great legislated purpose for which the jinn and mankind were created: the worship of Allah alone.

It does not mean that every jinn and human actually fulfils that purpose. Many reject, oppose, or neglect it. The ayah states why they were created and what Allah commanded from them.

Worship is not restricted to prayer, fasting, or pilgrimage. It includes every inward and outward statement and action that Allah loves and is pleased with. It includes:

- love of Allah;
- fear of Him;
- hope in Him;
- reliance upon Him;
- repentance;
- supplication;
- remembrance;
- prayer;
- sacrifice;
- vows;
- obedience;
- and submission to His revelation.

The detailed definition and forms of worship belong to a separate article. The controlling point here is that the purpose of human and jinn existence is not merely worldly survival, entertainment, wealth, status, family continuation, or material achievement. These matters may have lawful places, but they are not the final purpose for which the servant was created.

The next two ayat remove any false thought that Allah benefits from the worship of His servants:

ما أريد منهم من رزق وما أريد أن يطعمون
إن الله هو الرزاق ذو القوة المتين

“I do not desire from them any provision, nor do I desire that they feed Me. Indeed, Allah is the Provider, the Possessor of firm strength.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Dharyat 51:57–58.

In the authentic hadith qudsi, Allah said:

يا عبادي إنكم لن تبلغوا ضري فتضروني ولن تبلغوا نفعي فتنفعوني

“O My servants, you will never attain the ability to harm Me, nor will you attain the ability to benefit Me.”

Source and authenticity: Sahih Muslim, no. 2577. Authentic.

Necessary distinction

Allah commanded worship because He alone deserves it and because His servants need His guidance, mercy, forgiveness, and reward. Their obedience does not increase His dominion, and their disobedience does not diminish it.

The servant therefore worships Allah from a position of complete need. Allah receives no created benefit from the prayer, fasting, sacrifice, supplication, or remembrance of His servants. Rather, the benefit returns to them.

3. Tawhid Is Allah's Greatest Right over His Servants

Mu'adh ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

حق الله على العباد أن يعبدوه ولا يشركوا به شيئاً

“Allah's right over the servants is that they worship Him and do not associate anything with Him.”

Source and authenticity: Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 2856; Sahih Muslim, no. 30. Agreed upon and authentic.

This is the governing Prophetic proof for the subject.

Allah's right is not merely that people acknowledge His existence, discuss religion, inherit Muslim names, or perform outward rituals. His right is that they worship Him and associate nothing with Him.

In its central saving sense, Tawhid means that Allah is singled out with worship. The servant does not direct any act of worship to:

- an angel;
- a prophet;
- a saint;
- a grave;
- a ruler;
- a celestial body;
- an unseen force;
- or any other created being.

Allah said:

قل إن صلاتي ونسكي ومحياي ومماتي لله رب العالمين
لا شريك له وبذلك أمرت وأنا أول المسلمين

“Say: Indeed, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allah, Lord of all creation. He has no partner. With this I have been commanded, and I am the first of those who submit.”

Source: Qur'an, al-An'am 6:162-163.

The ayah gathers the servant's worship, sacrifice, life, and death beneath one direction: Allah alone.

A further distinction

The hadith of Mu'adh also mentions the “right of the servants upon Allah” if they worship Him without shirk. This does not mean that creation imposed an obligation upon its Creator. It is a right Allah granted through His promise, grace, truthfulness, and generosity.

Nor does the hadith permit a person to neglect prayer, persist in major sins, or feel secure from accountability. A Muslim who dies upon Tawhid while carrying sins below shirk remains under Allah's will: He may forgive him, or He may punish him before admitting him into Paradise.

4. Why Worship Belongs to Allah Alone

Allah said:

يا أيها الناس اعبدوا ربكم الذي خلقكم والذين من قبلكم لعلكم تتقون
الذي جعل لكم الأرض فراشا والسماء بناء وأنزل من السماء ماء فأخرج به
من الثمرات رزقا لكم فلا تجعلوا لله أندادا وأنتم تعلمون

“O mankind, worship your Lord who created you and those before you, so that you may attain taqwa—He who made the earth a resting place for you, the sky a structure, and sent water from the sky, bringing forth fruits as provision for you. So do not set up rivals with Allah while you know.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Baqarah 2:21–22.

The Qur'an repeatedly argues from Allah's Lordship to His exclusive right to worship:

- He created; therefore He alone is worshipped.
- He provides; therefore ultimate reliance belongs to Him.
- He owns and governs all affairs; therefore no created being possesses an independent share of divinity.
- His Names and Attributes are perfect; therefore no creature is His equal or rival.

The created means people use are real within the limits Allah gave them. A doctor may treat, a parent may help, a worker may provide a service, and a ruler may exercise created authority. None of them becomes an independent lord or an object of worship.

The servant takes lawful means while knowing:

- the means are created;
- their effectiveness is created;
- their limits are created;
- and the final decree belongs to Allah.

This distinction protects the Muslim from two opposite errors:

1. denying lawful created causes;
2. elevating created causes into objects of ultimate dependence and worship.

5. Every Messenger Began with Tawhid

Allah said:

ولقد بعثنا في كل أمة رسولا أن اعبدوا الله واجتنبوا الطاغوت

“We certainly sent into every nation a Messenger: ‘Worship Allah and avoid the taghut.’”

Source: Qur'an, al-Nahl 16:36.

Allah also said:

وما أرسلنا من قبلك من رسول إلا نوحي إليه أنه لا إله إلا أنا فاعبدون

“We did not send any Messenger before you except that We revealed to him: None has the right to be worshipped but Me, so worship Me.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Anbiya' 21:25.

The Qur'an repeatedly records the same foundation in the calls of Nuh, Hud, Salih, and Shu'ayb عليهم السلام:

اعبدوا الله ما لكم من إله غيره

“Worship Allah; you have no deity worthy of worship besides Him.”

Sources: Qur'an, al-A'raf 7:59, 65, 73, and 85.

The subsidiary laws revealed to different Messengers varied according to Allah's wisdom. Their foundation did not vary. They called to:

1. knowing the true Lord;
2. worshipping Him alone;
3. rejecting worship of everything besides Him;
4. obeying the Messenger whom Allah sent.

For this reason, Tawhid is not a later theological specialization. It is the first message of all the Messengers and the foundation beneath the entire religion.

Tawhid first does not mean Tawhid only

The Messengers taught prayer, charity, justice, family duties, lawful and unlawful conduct, character, and the complete obedience Allah required. Yet these were built upon the first foundation: worship Allah alone.

The foundation is given priority because no branch can stand correctly when the root is destroyed. Once established, however, the foundation requires the servant to accept and practise the entire religion.

6. The Heart Cannot Live Correctly without Knowing Its Lord

Ibn Abi al-'Izz رحمه الله said:

علم أصول الدين أشرف العلوم إذ شرف العلم بشرف المعلوم

“Knowledge of the foundations of the religion is the noblest of the sciences, because the nobility of knowledge corresponds to the nobility of what is known.”

He also said:

لا حياة للقلوب ولا نعيم ولا طمأنينة إلا بأن تعرف ربها ومعبودها وفاطرها

“There is no true life, delight, or tranquility for the hearts except through knowing their Lord, the One they worship, and their Originator.”

Source: Ibn Abi al-'Izz, *Sharh al-'Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah*, ed. Ahmad Muhammad Shakir, first edition, 1418 AH, pp. 5–6.

Explanation

The most noble knowledge concerns Allah: His existence, Lordship, right to worship, beautiful Names, perfect Attributes, actions, commands, promises, and warnings.

This knowledge is not sought merely to accumulate terminology. Correct knowledge of Allah produces worship:

- Knowledge that He is the Creator produces humility.
- Knowledge that He is the Provider produces reliance.
- Knowledge that He hears and sees produces watchfulness.
- Knowledge that He is severe in punishment produces fear.

- Knowledge that He is Forgiving and Merciful produces hope and repentance.
- Knowledge that He alone possesses perfect Lordship directs supplication and worship to Him alone.

Allah said:

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا

“To Allah belong the most beautiful Names, so call upon Him by them.”

Source: Qur'an, al-A'raf 7:180.

Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah رحمه الله said:

أَفْضَلُ الْعِلْمِ الْعِلْمُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْعِلْمُ بِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ، فَإِذَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ عَالِمًا بِاللَّهِ وَعَالِمًا بِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ بَلَغَ

“The best knowledge is knowledge of Allah and knowledge of Allah's command. When the servant knows Allah and knows Allah's command, he has attained the intended rank.”

Source: Abu Nu'aym al-Isbahani, *Hilyat al-Awliya' wa-Tabaqat al-Asfiya'*, vol. 7, p. 281.

The servant needs both:

- knowledge of the One he worships;
- and knowledge of how He commanded that worship to be performed.

Knowledge of Allah without obedience is not the intended knowledge. Action without revealed guidance is not accepted worship.

The role and limit of reason

Ibn Abi al-'Izz also said:

وَمِنْ الْمَحَالِ أَنْ تَسْتَقِلَّ الْعُقُولُ بِمَعْرِفَةِ ذَلِكَ وَإِدْرَاكَهُ عَلَى التَّفْصِيلِ

“It is impossible for the intellects to know and comprehend that independently in detail.”

Source: *Sharh al-'Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah*, p. 6.

Sound reason and the fitrah recognize general truths concerning the Creator. They do not independently determine the details of Allah's Names and Attributes, the unseen, the worship He loves, or the path leading to His pleasure. These details require revelation.

The Messengers were therefore not sent merely to confirm whatever people independently preferred. They conveyed knowledge that human beings could not obtain in detail without Allah's guidance.

7. Recognizing the Creator Is Not Sufficient

Allah said concerning the polytheists:

وَلئن سألهم من خلق السماوات والأرض ليقولن الله

“If you ask them who created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say: Allah.”

Source: Qur'an, Luqman 31:25.

Allah also said:

قل من يرزقكم من السماء والأرض أمن يملك السمع والأبصار ومن يخرج الحي من الميت ويخرج الميت من الحي ومن يدبر الأمر فسيقولون الله فقل أفلا تتقون

“Say: Who provides for you from the heaven and earth? Who controls hearing and sight? Who brings the living from the dead and the dead from the living? Who governs every affair? They will say: Allah. Then say: Will you not have taqwa?”

Source: Qur'an, Yunus 10:31.

They recognized that Allah created, provided, and governed. Yet Allah also said:

إنهم كانوا إذا قيل لهم لا إله إلا الله يستكبرون ويقولون أئنا لتاركوا آلہتنا لشاعر مجنون

“When it was said to them, ‘None has the right to be worshipped except Allah,’ they became arrogant and said: ‘Are we to abandon our gods for a mad poet?’”

Source: Qur'an, al-Saffat 37:35–36.

Their dispute with the Messenger ﷺ was not principally over whether Allah existed. It concerned whether all worship must be directed to Allah alone.

They understood that *la ilaha illa Allah* required them to abandon their gods, intermediaries, invocations, sacrifices, and devotional attachments besides Allah. That is why they resisted it.

Necessary distinction

It should not be said that the polytheists perfectly realized Tawhid al-Rububiyyah. They acknowledged major aspects of Allah's Lordship while retaining contradictions. The point established by the Qur'an is narrower and decisive:

Acknowledging Allah as Creator does not enter a person into Islam while he directs worship to others besides Him.

The Tawhid brought by the Messengers includes exclusive worship. Recognition without submission is insufficient.

8. Tawhid Is the Foundation of Islam and Every Accepted Deed

The Prophet ﷺ said:

بني الإسلام على خمس: شهادة أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمدا رسول الله، وإقام الصلاة، وإيتاء الزكاة، والحج، وصوم رمضان

“Islam is built upon five: the testimony that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, establishing prayer, giving zakah, pilgrimage, and fasting Ramadan.”

Source and authenticity: Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 8; Sahih Muslim, no. 16. Agreed upon and authentic.

The two testimonies form the first foundation:

- Allah alone is worshipped.
- Muhammad ﷺ alone is followed as Allah's final Messenger.

This does not make prayer, zakah, fasting, pilgrimage, character, family rights, or the remaining religion optional. A foundation exists to carry the structure built upon it.

Allah said:

فمن كان يرجو لقاء ربه فليعمل عملا صالحا ولا يشرك بعبادة ربه أحدا

“Whoever hopes to meet his Lord must perform righteous action and not associate anyone in the worship of his Lord.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Kahf 18:110.

The ayah joins righteous action to freedom from shirk. It also points to the two governing conditions of accepted worship:

1. the act must be righteous according to revelation;
2. it must be directed sincerely to Allah alone.

An outwardly impressive act does not repair the destruction of its foundation when it is performed through major shirk.

Allah said:

ولقد أوحى إليك وإلى الذين من قبلك لئن أشركت ليحبطن عملك ولتكونن من الخاسرين

“It was revealed to you and to those before you: If you were to commit shirk, your deeds would surely become void and you would surely be among the losers.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Zumar 39:65.

Necessary distinction

The Prophet ﷺ was protected by Allah from shirk. The conditional address demonstrates its gravity.

The verse establishes the general ruling concerning major shirk. It must not be used by unqualified people to pronounce apostasy upon particular Muslims without knowledge of the act, its meaning, the evidence, the conditions, the impediments, and the judgments of qualified scholars.

9. The Textually Established Fruits of Tawhid

Tawhid has immense fruits, but they must be described according to revelation rather than rhetorical exaggeration.

A. Security and guidance

Allah said:

الذين آمنوا ولم يلبسوا إيمانهم بظلم أولئك لهم الأمن وهم مهتدون

“Those who believe and do not mix their faith with wrongdoing—for them is security, and they are guided.”

Source: Qur'an, al-An'am 6:82.

When this ayah became difficult for the Companions, the Prophet ﷺ explained that the “wrongdoing” intended here was shirk.

Source and authenticity: Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 3360; Sahih Muslim, no. 124. Authentic.

Security and guidance correspond to the servant's realization of Tawhid. The more complete his Tawhid, the more complete his share of its promised fruits.

This does not mean that every monotheist is free from bodily illness, grief, ordinary fear, trauma, or every psychological difficulty. The promise concerns guidance and security in their revealed meanings, culminating in complete security in the Hereafter.

B. Tranquility through remembrance and knowledge of Allah

Allah said:

ألا بذكر الله تطمئن القلوب

“Unquestionably, through the remembrance of Allah hearts find tranquility.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Ra'd 13:28.

The heart that knows its Lord has a true direction during ease and trial. It knows whom to invoke, upon whom to rely, to whom it repents, and for whose sake it worships.

Again, this is spiritual tranquility and orientation. It should not be misrepresented as a denial of lawful treatment or ordinary human distress.

C. Reliance upon the One who possesses every affair

Allah said:

وعلى الله فتوكلوا إن كنتم مؤمنين

“Upon Allah place your reliance, if you are believers.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Ma'idah 5:23.

The person of Tawhid does not abandon lawful causes. He places the heart's reliance upon Allah while taking the means Allah permitted. The cause is used; it is not worshipped.

D. Freedom from worship of creation

The servant of Tawhid uses lawful created means but does not turn them into gods. He may ask a present, capable person for ordinary assistance, but his supplication, ultimate reliance, sacrifice, vows, repentance, and worship remain for Allah alone.

This frees the heart from devotional servitude to graves, saints, rulers, wealth, reputation, superstition, created intermediaries, and the changing approval of people.

E. Entry into Paradise

The Prophet ﷺ said:

من مات لا يشرك بالله شيئا دخل الجنة، ومن مات يشرك بالله شيئا دخل النار

“Whoever dies without associating anything with Allah enters Paradise, and whoever dies associating something with Allah enters the Fire.”

Source and authenticity: Sahih Muslim, no. 93. Authentic.

For a sinful person of Tawhid, entry into Paradise may be immediate through Allah's forgiveness or eventual after punishment. The hadith does not promise every sinner freedom from all accountability.

Nor does a bare verbal claim benefit the hypocrite whose heart rejects the testimony.

10. Shirk Is Mankind's Greatest Loss

Shirk is to assign to other than Allah something belonging exclusively to Allah. It is not one single level.

- **Major shirk** destroys the foundation of Islam and expels a person from it when its ruling is established.

- **Minor shirk** is a grave sin and a means leading toward major shirk, but it does not automatically carry every ruling of major shirk.

The texts concerning eternal exclusion from Paradise and non-forgiveness for the one who dies upon it concern **major shirk**.

Allah said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ

“Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is below that for whomever He wills.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Nisa' 4:48.

Allah also said:

إِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ

“Whoever associates partners with Allah, Allah has forbidden Paradise to him, and his refuge is the Fire.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Ma'idah 5:72.

These texts establish two decisive distinctions:

1. Major shirk is not like sins below it.
2. The threat concerns the person who dies upon major shirk without repentance.

Allah accepts sincere repentance before death. He said after mentioning shirk and other major sins:

إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُولَئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ

“Except those who repent, believe, and perform righteous deeds; Allah will replace their evil deeds with good.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Furqan 25:70.

No one should therefore despair of Allah's mercy while the door of repentance remains open. At the same time, no one should treat shirk lightly or postpone repentance.

General ruling and particular person

The revealed texts establish the ruling upon major shirk and the one who dies upon it. Judging that a particular named person committed major shirk knowingly and died upon it is a separate matter requiring verified facts, knowledge, justice, and the application of the relevant conditions and impediments by those qualified to judge.

Condemning shirk does not authorize injustice, false attribution, or careless judgment upon individuals.

II. The Qur'an Revolves around Tawhid

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله said:

القرآن كله في التوحيد وحقوقه وجزائه، وفي شأن الشرك وأهله وجزائهم

“The whole Qur'an concerns Tawhid, its rights and its recompense, and the affair of shirk, its people and their recompense.”

Source: Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madarij al-Salikin bayna Manazil Iyyaka Na'budu wa-Iyyaka Nasta'in*, ed. Muhammad Hamid al-Fiqi, Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi, Beirut, second edition, 1393 AH/1973, vol. 3, pp. 449–450.

This scholarly synthesis can be seen throughout the Qur'an:

- Passages informing us about Allah establish knowledge of Him, His Lordship, Names, Attributes, and actions.
- Passages commanding worship establish His exclusive right to be worshipped.
- Commands and prohibitions establish the rights and completion of Tawhid.
- Accounts of the Messengers show the struggle between Tawhid and shirk.
- Promises describe the reward of faith and obedience.
- Warnings describe the end of shirk, disbelief, and disobedience.

Ayat al-Kursi teaches Allah's life, self-sufficiency, knowledge, sovereignty, and preservation. Surat al-Ikhlās declares His absolute oneness and incomparability. Surat al-Kafirun separates the worship of Allah from false worship.

Tawhid is therefore not a small chapter placed beside unrelated chapters. It is the foundation that gives the entire religion its direction.

12. The Muslim Never Outgrows Tawhid

Allah said:

واعبد ربك حتى يأتيك اليقين

“Worship your Lord until certainty comes to you.”

Source: Qur'an, al-Hijr 15:99.

“Certainty” here means death.

The Muslim begins with Tawhid and continues upon it until he meets Allah. His need does not end after learning a definition or completing an introductory text.

He continues to:

- learn what Tawhid requires;
- know Allah through His revealed Names and Attributes;
- direct every worship to Him alone;
- examine hidden reliance, fear, love, and hope;
- reject major and minor forms of shirk;
- correct ostentation and self-admiration;
- renew sincerity;
- follow the Messenger ﷺ;
- teach his family;
- call others to Allah;
- repent from every deficiency.

This does not mean studying “Tawhid only” while neglecting the rest of Islam. Prayer, fasting, zakah, Hajj, Qur'an, Sunnah, fiqh, character, family rights, transactions, da'wah, and every obligation are built upon Tawhid and must be learned and practised.

The foundation is never discarded when the structure rises. It is protected, strengthened, and carried through every part of the structure.

Conclusion

Every created being is dependent upon Allah. Jinn and mankind bear an additional responsibility: they were created to worship Him alone.

Their need for Tawhid is greater than every worldly necessity because Tawhid concerns:

- the purpose of their creation;
- Allah's greatest right over them;
- the direction and life of the heart;
- the foundation of accepted worship;
- security and guidance;
- and their eternal destination.

Allah does not need their worship. They need Him.

Every Messenger therefore began with the same call:

اعبدوا الله ما لكم من إله غيره

“Worship Allah; you have no deity worthy of worship besides Him.”

Recognition of a Creator is not enough while worship is directed elsewhere. Tawhid is not merely a slogan, inherited identity, or intellectual category. It is to know Allah, worship Him alone, reject every partner, and follow His Messenger ﷺ.

The Muslim does not graduate beyond it. He learns it, lives it, protects it, perfects it, calls to it, and remains upon it until death.

Remember

1. Jinn and mankind were created to worship Allah alone.
2. Allah does not need their worship; they need His guidance and mercy.
3. Acknowledging Allah as Creator is insufficient while worship is directed to others.
4. Major shirk destroys the foundation when a person dies upon it.
5. The Muslim's need for Tawhid continues until death.

Test Yourself

1. What is Allah's right over His servants according to the hadith of Mu'adh?
2. Why did acknowledging Allah as Creator not make the Makkan polytheists Muslims?
3. What is the difference between universal dependence upon Allah and the legislated accountability of jinn and mankind?
4. How does the Qur'an establish both the danger of major shirk and the possibility of repentance before death?
5. Why should a Muslim continue studying Tawhid after learning its basic definition?

Apply

Read the hadith of Mu'adh again and list the inward and outward acts of worship in your own life. Ask whether each one is being directed sincerely to Allah and performed according to the guidance of the Messenger ﷺ.

Continue

Next foundational study: What Is Tawhid?

That article defines Tawhid precisely, explains its Qur'anic categories, and distinguishes Tawhid al-Rububiyah, Tawhid al-Uluhiyyah, and Tawhid al-Asma' wa-l-Sifat.