

مَعْنَى لَفْظِ التَّوْحِيدِ

The meaning of the word Tawhīd

The meaning of the word Tawhīd in the Book and the *Sunnah* opposite of what the *mushrikūn* intend

Ibn Taymiyyah said while clarifying the wrong understanding of Tawhīd:

فهم يريدون بلفظ التوحيد والواحد في اصطلاحهم: ما لا صفة له ولا يعلم منه شيء دون شيء ولا يرى، والتوحيد الذي جاء به الرسول لم يتضمن شيئاً من هذا النفي، وإنما تضمن إثبات الإلهية لله وحده، بأن يشهد أن لا إله إلا هو، ولا يعبد إلا إياه، ولا يتوكل إلا عليه، ولا يوالي إلا له، ولا يعادي إلا فيه، ولا يعمل إلا لأجله، وذلك يتضمن إثبات ما أثبتته لنفسه من الأسماء والصفات. قال جابر بن عبد الله في حديثه الصحيح في سياق حجة الوداع

“They (i.e. the misguided innovators and *mushrikūn*) mean with the word ‘At-Tawhīd’ and ‘Al-Wāhid’ in their *istilāh* (terms): That which has no description, nor is anything known regarding Him nor is He seen. And the Tawhīd which the Messenger (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*) came with does not contain any of this negation. Verily does it contain the affirmation of divinity for Allāh alone, by him testifying to *Lā ilāha illa Huwa* (no-one is worthy of worship except Him), and he does not worship anyone but him, he does not put his trust in anyone but Him, he does not ally except for His sake, he does not have enmity except for His sake, nor does he make deeds except for His sake. And this contains the affirmation of what He has affirmed for Himself of Names and Attributes.

Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh said in his correct *hadīth* in the context of the farewell pilgrimage:

فَأَهْلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِالتَّوْحِيدِ : لَبَّيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ لَبَّيْكَ ، لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ ، إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ وَالنِّعْمَةَ لَكَ وَالْمُلْكُ ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ

“So the Messenger of Allāh (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*) began with Tawhīd: At Your service O Allāh, at Your service. At Your service, You have no partner, at Your service. Verily the praise and blessing belongs to You, and the dominion. You have no partner.”

وكانوا في الجاهلية يقولون: لبيك لا شريك لك، إلا شريكاً هو لك، تملكه وما ملك فأهل النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بالتوحيد كما تقدم.

And in *jāhiliyyah* they used to say: ‘At Your service, You have no partner except a partner which is for You. You own him and what he owns.’ So the Prophet (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*) began with Tawhīd as it has gone forth.

قال تعالى

He – the Exalted – said:

وَأِلهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

“And your *Ilāh* (God) is One *Ilāh* (God - Allāh), *Lā ilāha illa Huwa* (there is none who has the right to be worshipped but He), the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.”

(Al-Baqarah 2:163)

وقال تعالى

And He – the Exalted – said:

وَقَالَ اللَّهُ لَا تَتَّخِذُوا إِلَهَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَإِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُونَ

“And Allāh said: ‘Do not take two gods in worship. Verily, He (Allāh) is only One *Ilāh* (God), So fear Me.’” (An-Nahl 16:51)

وقال تعالى

And He – the Exalted – said:

وَمَنْ يَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا بُرْهَانَ لَهُ بِهِ فَإِنَّمَا حِسَابُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ

“And whoever invokes (or worships), besides Allāh, any other *ilāh* (god), of whom he has no proof, then verily his account is with his Lord.” (Al-Muminūn 23:117)

وقال تعالى

And He – the Exalted – said:

وَأَسْأَلُ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا أَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ آلِهَةً يُعْبَدُونَ

“And ask (O Muhammad) those of Our messengers whom We sent before you: ‘Did We ever appoint *ālihah* (gods) to be worshipped besides the Most Beneficent?’” (Az-Zukhruf 43:45)

وقال تعالى

And He – the Exalted – said:

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ

“And verily, We have sent among every *ummaḥ* (community, nation) a messenger (proclaiming): ‘Worship Allāh (alone), and avoid (or keep away from) *tāghūt* (all false deities, i.e. do not worship *tāghūt* besides Allāh).’ Then of them were some whom Allāh guided and of them were some upon whom the misguidance was justified.”

(An-Nahl 16:36)

وأخبر عن كل نبي من الأنبياء أنهم دعوا الناس إلى عبادة الله وحده لا شريك له.

And He informed that every messenger among the messengers invited the people to the worship of Allāh alone without any partner.

وقال تعالى

And He – the Exalted – said:

قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قَالُوا لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَاءُ مِنْكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ

“Indeed there has been an excellent example for you in Ibrāhīm and those with him, when they said to their people: ‘Verily, we are free from you and whatever you worship besides Allāh, we have rejected you, and there has started between us and you, hostility and hatred for ever, until you believe in Allāh Alone.” (Al-Mumtahanah 60:4)

وقال تعالى عن المشركين:

And He – the Exalted – said regarding the *mushrikūn*:

أَجْعَلِ الْآلِهَةَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجَابٌ

“Has he made the *ālihah* (gods) all into One *Ilāh* (God - Allāh). Verily, this is a curious thing.” (Sād 38:5)

وقال تعالى

And He – the Exalted – said:

وَإِذَا ذَكَرْتَ رَبَّكَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ وَحْدَهُ وَلَّوْا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهِمْ نُفُورًا

“And when you mention your Lord (should be worshipped) alone in the Quran, they turn their backs in aversion.” (Al-Isrā 17:46)

وقال تعالى

And He – the Exalted – said:

وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْمَأَزَّتْ قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ

“And when Allāh Alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who do not believe in the hereafter are filled with disgust and when those (whom they worship) besides Him are mentioned then they rejoice.” (Az-Zumar 39:45)

وقال تعالى

And He – the Exalted – said:

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ (35) وَيَقُولُونَ أَئِنَّا لَتَارِكُوا آلِهَتِنَا لِشَاعِرٍ مَجْنُونٍ

“Verily when it was said to them: ‘There is no-on worthy of worship besides Allāh’, then they are arrogant. And they say: ‘Should we forsake our gods for a mad poet?’” (As-Sāffāt 37:35-36)

وهذا في القرآن كثير.

And there is a lot of this in the Qurān.

وليس المراد بالتوحيد مجرد توحيد الربوبية، وهو اعتقاد أن الله وحده خلق العالم، كما يظن ذلك من يظنه من أهل الكلام والتصوف، ويظن هؤلاء أنهم إذا أثبتوا ذلك بالدليل فقد أثبتوا غاية التوحيد. ويظن هؤلاء أنهم إذا شهدوا هذا وفنوا فيه فقد فنوا في غاية التوحيد. وكثير من أهل الكلام يقول: التوحيد له ثلاث معان، وهو: واحد في ذاته لا قسيم له، أو لا جزء له، وواحد في صفاته لا شبيه له، وواحد في أفعاله لا شريك له.

And what is wanted with Tawhīd is not merely Tawhīd *Ar-Rubūbiyyah*, which is the belief that Allāh alone created the world, just as those among the people of *kalām*¹ and *tasawwuf*

¹ Ahl Al-Kalām (the people of *kalām*) are those who leaned upon the intellect and not the evidence when it came to establishing the *‘aqidah*.

(sufism) believe it. And they believe that if they establish this (type of Tawhīd) with evidence, then they verily established the main purpose of Tawhīd. And these people believe that if they testify to this (i.e. Tawhīd *Ar-Rubūbiyyah*) and they become experts in it, then they have verily become experts in the main purpose of Tawhīd. And many from the people of *kalām* say: *'Tawhid has three meanings and they are: (1) He is One in His Being, there is not counterpart to Him or He has no fraction. And (2) He is one in His Attributes, there is nothing similar to Him. And (3) He is one in His actions, there is no partner to Him (in these).'*

وهذا المعنى الذي تتناوله هذه العبارة فيها ما يوافق ما جاء به الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم، وفيها ما يخالف ما جاء به الرسول، وليس الحق الذي فيها هو الغاية التي جاء بها الرسول، بل التوحيد الذي أمر به أمر يتضمن الحق الذي في هذا الكلام وزيادة أخرى، فهذا من الكلام الذي لبس فيه الحق بالباطل وكنتم الحق.

And in this meaning – which is included in these terms – there is that which agrees with that which the Messenger (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*) came with, and there is that which contradicts that which the Messenger (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*) came with. And that truth which exists in it, is not the main purpose which the Messenger came with. Rather the Tawhīd which he (*sallAllāhu alayhi wa sallam*) ordered, is an order that includes the truth which is in these words and also something extra besides it. So this (i.e. what they said) is from the words where the truth has been mixed with the falsehood, and the truth has been concealed.

وذلك أن الرجل لو أقر بما يستحقه الرب تعالي من الصفات، ونزهه عن كل ما ينزه عنه، وأقر بأنه وحده خالق كل شيء. لم يكن موحداً، بل ولا مؤمناً حتى يشهد أن لا إله إلا الله، فيقر بأن الله وحده هو الإله المستحق للعبادة، ويلتزم بعبادة الله وحده لا شريك له. والإله هو المألوه المعبود الذي يستحق العبادة، ليس هو الإله بمعنى القادر علي الخلق، فإذا فسر المفسر الإله بمعنى القادر علي الاختراع، واعتقد أن هذا أخص وصف الإله، وجعل إثبات هذا التوحيد هو الغاية في التوحيد، كما يفعل ذلك من يفعله من المتكلمة الصفائية، وهو الذي ينقلونه عن أبي الحسن وأتباعه، لم يعرفوا حقيقة التوحيد الذي بعث الله به رسوله، فإن مشركي العرب كانوا مقرين بأن الله وحده خالق كل شيء، وكانوا مع هذا مشركين.

And that (mix of the truth with the falsehood) is that a man if he acknowledges that which the Lord deserves of Attributes, and deems Him far above and free from everything which He is free from, and He acknowledges that He alone is the Creator of everything, then he is (still) not a *muwahhid* (one who only worships Allāh). Rather he is not even a believer until he testifies that no-one is worthy of worship besides Allāh alone and that He is the *ilāh* who deserves the worship, and he adheres to only worshipping Him alone who has no partner.

And the *ilāh* means the one who is taken as god and worshipped who deserves the worship. The *ilāh* does not mean: ‘the one who is capable of creating’. So if someone interprets the word *ilāh* as: ‘The one who is capable of creating’, and he believes that this is the most specific description of the *ilāh*, and he makes the establishment of this type of Tawhīd to be the main purpose of Tawhīd – just as those from the people of *kalām* and *tasawwuf* do, and this is what they convey from Abū Al-Hasan and his followers – then they have not known the reality of Tawhīd which Allāh has sent His Messenger with. Because verily did the Arab *mushrikūn* acknowledge that Allāh alone is the Creator of everything, and despite of this they were *mushrikūn*.

وقال تعالى

And He – the Exalted – said:

وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ

"And most of them do not believe in Allāh except while they are mushrikun." (Yūsuf 12:106)

قال طائفة من السلف: تسألهم من خلق السماوات والأرض فيقولون الله، وهم مع هذا يعبدون غيره،

A group from the *salaf* said: You ask them who created the heavens and the earth, then they will say Allāh. And despite of this they worship others than Him.

وقال تعالى

And He – the Exalted – said:

قُلْ لِمَنِ الْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (84) سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ (85) قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ (86) سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ (87) قُلْ مَنْ يَدِينُ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (88) سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ فَأَنَّى تُسْحَرُونَ

"Say: 'To whom does the earth belong and whoever is in it, if you really know?' They will say: 'To Allāh.' Say: 'Will you then not be reminded?' Say: 'Who is the Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Mighty Throne?' They will say: 'Allāh'. Say: 'Will you then not fear (Allāh)?' Say: 'Who has the dominion of everything in His Hand, and He protects while no-one can protect against Him, if you really know?' They will say: 'Allāh'. Say: 'Then how are you deceived?'" (Al-Muminūn 23:84-89)

وقال تعالى

And He – the Exalted – said:

وَلَمَّا سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ

"And if you asked them: 'Who created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon?' They will verily say: 'Allāh.'" (Al-'Ankabūt 29:61)

فليس كل من أقر أن الله رب كل شيء وخالقه يكون عابداً له دون ما سواه، داعياً له دون سواه، راجياً له خائفاً منه دون ما سواه، يوالي فيه، ويعادي فيه، ويطيع رسله، ويأمر بما أمر به، وينهى عما نهى عنه.

So not everyone who acknowledges that Allāh is the Lord of everything and its creator is a person who worships only Him and not anything besides Him, a caller to Him and not anything besides Him, longing for Him, fearing only Him and not anything besides Him, allying for His sake, having enmity for His sake, obeying His messengers, ordering what He has ordered and forbidding what He has forbidden.

وقد قال تعالى

And verily did He – the Exalted – say:

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ

"And fight them until there is no more *fitnah* (i.e. shirk) and all of the religion is (exclusively) for Allāh." (Al-Anfāl 8:39)

وعامة المشركين أقروا بأن الله خالق كل شيء وأثبتوا الشفعاء الذين يشركونهم به وجعلوا له أنداداً،

And the majority of the *mushrikūn* acknowledged that Allāh is the Creator of everything while they affirmed the intercession of those whom they took as partners besides Him and they ascribed rivals to Him.

قال تعالى

He – the Exalted – said:

أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاءَ قُلْ أُولَئِكَ كَانُوا لَا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْئاً وَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ (43) قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ جَمِيعاً

"Or did they take intercessors besides Him? Say: 'Even if they do not possess anything (of benefit and harm) and they have no intellect?' Say: 'All intercession belongs to Allāh.'" (Az-Zumar 39:43-44)

وقال تعالى

And He – the Exalted – said:

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شُفَعَاؤُنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ قُلْ أَتُنَبِّئُونَ اللَّهَ
بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

"And they worship other than Allāh that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say: 'These are our intercessors with Allāh'. Say: 'Do you inform Allāh of something He does not know in the heavens or on the earth?' Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him." (Yūnus 10:18)

وقال تعالى

And He – the Exalted – said:

وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا فُرَادَى كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَتَرَكْتُمْ مَا خَوَّلْنَاكُمْ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ وَمَا نَرَى مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَاءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَاءُ لَقَدْ تَقَطَّعَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْكُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ

"And you have verily come to us alone just as We have created you the first time. And you have left behind that which We have bestowed upon you. And We do not see with you your intercessors which you claimed, that they were partners (with Allāh) among you. Verily (everything) between you has been severed, and that which you used to claim (i.e. your so-called partners) has deviated from you." (Al-An'ām 6:94)

وقال تعالى

And He – the Exalted – said:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

"And of mankind are some who take others besides Allāh as rivals (to Allāh). They love them as they love Allāh. But those who believe love Allāh more (than anything else)." (Al-Baqarah 2:165)

ولهذا كان من أتباع هؤلاء من يسجد للشمس والقمر والكواكب، ويدعوها كما يدعو الله تعالى، ويصوم لها، وينسك لها، ويتقرب إليها، ثم يقول: إن هذا ليس بشرك: وإنما الشرك إذا اعتقدت أنها هي المدبرة لي، فإذا جعلتها سبباً وواسطة لم أكن مشركاً. ومن المعلوم بالاضطرار من دين الإسلام أن هذا شرك، فهذا ونحوه من التوحيد الذي بعث الله به رسله، وهم لا يدخلونه في مسمى التوحيد الذي اصطالحوا عليه

And due to this some of their (i.e. the people of *kalām* and *tasawwuf*) followers prostrate to the sun and the moon and the stars, and they invoke these just like they invoke Allāh the Exalted, they fast for them, they sacrifice for them and seek nearness to them. And then this person says: *'This is not shirk. Verily the shirk is if I believe that it arranges my affairs for me, but if I (only) make it a reason and an intermediary I will not become a mushrik.'* And from that which is known with necessity from the religion of Islām is that this is *shirk*. So this (i.e. those deeds) and what is similar to it, is from the Tawhīd which Allāh has sent His messengers with, while they do not include it in that which is called Tawhīd according to their terms."

(Dar At-Ta'ārud Al-'Aql wan-Naql 1/223-228)