

The meaning of

THE TESTIMONY OF FAITH

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Introduction

The testimony of faith is the decisive criterion by which man is judged to be a Muslim or a Kafir. This testimony is the foundation upon which Islam is based. The concept of life, the universe and man is diffused from it, and upon it is based the message of all Messengers beginning with Noah and ending with Muhammad, (peace be upon them all). Allah, the Exalted says:

'We did not send the Messenger before you without revealing to him: "There is no god worthy of being worshipped except I, therefore worship Me." (V. 21:25)

Allah has created men and jinn and the rest of creation on account of the testimony of faith, there is no god worthy of being worshipped except Allah. Consequently everything in this universe submits in worship to Allah, to Whom belong the creation and the authority. He is aware of all things.

The Meaning of the testimony of faith

The testimony (LA ILAHA ILLA ALLAH) comprises two concepts: denial and affirmation.

First: The testimony of faith denies everyone and everything other than Allah, the Exalted, the attribute of divinity. All those other than Allah, such as the angels, the Prophets, and the rest of mankind, let alone the idols and the political regimes in the world, are not god nor do they deserve to be worshipped. Thus denial in this respect is not denial of the existence of the alleged gods, rather the denial of divinity which is attributed to them.

Second: The testimony of faith affirms and restricts divinity to Allah Alone. That is, the slave must believe Allah is the only true God, and dedicate accordingly no act of worship to other than Allah.

Since worship with all its legitimate acts and rites must be dedicated only to the God who deserve it, therefore, the true god to whom worship must be dedicated is the one who enjoys certain attributes, some of which are:

- 1- Divinity, the Oneness of Allah Who is singled out as the only true God having no partner to share His divine attributes, nor His domain. He is the One the as-Samad¹.
- 2- Self-sufficiency. Allah stands in need of no one; He needs neither a helper nor a spouse or a son.
- 3- The capability of doing everything. There is nothing which frustrates His capability. He does anything He wishes without exhaustion or support. If He wills to do a thing, He only says to it, "Be", and it is.
- 4- The absolute life which is unaffected by perishment. Allah is Everlasting, and He is Al-Qayoom².

¹As-Samad is one of Allah's beautiful names. It is mentioned in Surah #112, it signifies the following: The Lord to Whom recourse is had, or to Whom obedience is "rendered", without Whom no affair is "accomplished"; or the One to Whom Lordship is ultimately pertains, or the Creator of everything, of Whom nothing is independent, and every created thing depends on Him for his or its means of subsistence, whose Oneness everything indicates.

- 5- Alertness: Allah never sleeps nor is He heedless, He is neither seized by slumber or sleep.
- 6- Inclusive proprietorship: All existing things belong to Allah alone.
- 7- Knowledge: Allah's knowledge encompasses the whole universe that even an ant weight does not escape His knowledge. He is well aware of the hidden and the apparent, the past, the present, the future, and He knows the inner thoughts of man.
- 8- Pride and grandeur: There is nothing greater that Allah neither in His essence or in his grandeur, nor in his supremacy.
- 9- Merciful beneficence: Allah does not wrong a thing or punish unjustly rather He loves His devotees, and forgive the sins of those who repents to Him.

Hence, the One Who possesses such attributes deserves to be worshipped God. Allah, the Exalted, after all is the only One Who possesses such attributes. He is the King, the Powerful, the Wise, the One Who knows the seen and the unseen, the Merciful, the Beneficent.

Only the One to Whom the divine attributes belong is a true God Who is worthy of being worshipped and to whose greatness all creation submit. It is for this reason the testimony of faith constitutes denial of divinity to all other than Allah and confirming it to Allah Alone, for He is the only true God.

Allah, Who is far removed from every imperfection, exclusively enjoys the attributes of divinity. This divinity entails:

The right of legislating laws. Allah is the One who legislates laws for His creatures, therefore no one may legislate laws for himself or for others that do not confirm with those of Allah, or those given by His Messengers nor may any one design a mode of worship or a transactional regulation for individual or groups. Neither is it the right of anyone to deem things lawful or unlawful on his own accord. Nor is it the right of anyone to legislate a penal law on his own accord, for such rights are exclusively Allah's. Whoever gives himself such rights presumptuously sets up himself as god. Whoever obeys him takes him for a god in lieu of Allah.

Allah the Exalted, has mentioned that Christians, have taken their scholars and monks as lords other than Allah only by obeying their lords who prohibited Allah's lawful things, and legalized his prohibited things without divine sanction.

They did so after knowing that Allah is the true God to Whom worship must be dedicated and after knowing that Allah accepts only those acts of worship legislated by Him, and by His Messenger.

Hence we must know the acts of worship so that we dedicated them to Allah Alone. Once we know this, we know that He has created the creatures only to worship Him. Man as part of His creatures, must dedicate all his life worshipping Allah, he must be aware of Allah's rulings respecting everything he does, thus every lawful thing he does, intending it to be a means of bringing him closer to Allah, turns to be an act of worship. Worship is an inclusive term comprising every utterance and deed, apparent or hidden that Allah loves.

Having read this brief message about the meaning of the testimony of faith, and its requirements, you are probably anxious to profess it and apply its requirements of this testimony that are incumbent upon the person who confesses it to apply?

These requirements are:

- 1- The belief that Allah is a true God to Whom worship must be dedicated.

¹Ever-living, Self subsisting, by Whom all things subsist.

He is the One Who possesses all attributes of perfection, and Who is far removed from every imperfection such as taking a spouse or a son.

2- The belief that Allah is the Creator of existing things, the Sustainer, the Giver of life and death, the Proprietor of the universe, the only Ruler and Legislator.

3- The belief that Allah possesses the attributes of perfection, and is far removed from every imperfection as Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, (Peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), informed us in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. The only two sources from which we know the attributes of Allah. Were Muhammad to forge lies against Allah, Allah would have definitely punished Him. On the contrary, Allah supported him with miracles that have proven his veracity and trustworthiness in conveying the Message of his Rubb.

Allah says:

“Were he Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), to forge some statement against Us, We would have seized him by his right hand and We would have cut off his artery.” (V.69: 44,45,46.)

4- Taking the believers for friends, loving and supporting them. Allah says:

“Muhammad, is the Messenger of Allah and those who are with him are harsh against unbelievers, and merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and prostrating (in prayer), seeking bounty from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure. On their faces are marks caused by prostration (during prayers). This is their similitude in the Torah and in the Gospel like a (sown) seed which sends forth its shoot, then makes it strong, it then becomes thick and it stands straight on its stem, delighting the farmers that He (Allah) may enrage the unbelievers with them. Allah has promised those among them who believe (i.e. all those who follow Islamic Monotheism, the religion of the Prophet Muhammad, (PBUH) till the day of Resurrection) and do righteous good deeds, forgiveness and a mighty reward (i.e. Paradise)” (V.48:29).

5- Disavowing the unbelievers and standing aloof from them.

Allah says:

“Indeed there has been an excellent example for you in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people; “Verily, we are free from you and whatever you worship besides Allah, we have rejected you, and there has started between us and you hostility and hatred forever, until you believe in Allah Alone, except the saying of Abraham to his father: “Verily, I will ask for forgiveness (from Allah) for you, but I have no power to do anything for you before Allah. Our Lord! In you (Alone) we put our trust and to You Alone we turn in repentance, and to You (Alone) is (our) final Return,” (V. 60:4)

The above are some of the requirements of the testimony of faith, the testimony which is considered a prelude and access to Islam, rather its base. Whoever confesses it with sincere attestation, and applies its requirements, would ultimately be admitted to the Jannah, the heavenly garden, with the will of Allah. If such a person committed some sins and died before repenting, it is up to Allah, He either forgives him or punishes him by the fire but would the later take him out of it and admits him to Jannah having been purified from his sins. It is mentioned in the prophetic tradition that Musa, the Messenger of Allah, (Peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), asked Allah to assign for him an act of worship and be particularly his to perform. Allah, the Exalted, commanded him: “O Musa, say (لا إله إلا الله) “There is no god who deserves to be worshipped but Allah. “Musa said: “My Rubb! All your slaves confess this testimony.” To indicate the significance of the testimony of faith, Allah then said: “O Musa, were the seven heavens and seven earths, and all what they contain put in one side of the scale and (لا إله إلا الله) was put on the other side of it would have outweighed them.

The Prophet, (Peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

“He who conclude his life with uttering the testimony of faith, that is to be his last words before he dies, he will be admitted to the Janna”.

Confessing the testimony of faith must be coupled with fulfilling its conditions:

- 1- Knowledge: which consists of recognizing Allah as the only true God to whom worship must be dedicated, and denouncing all gods worshipped beside all as false, and that they can neither extend benefit nor cause harm.
- 2- Certainty; that the belief in Allah must be unblemished with any doubt.
- 3- Acceptance; that is to accept all its conditions.
- 4- Submission; that is to fulfill its conditions submissively and willingly being content with Allah as the Rubb, and Muhammad, (Peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), as His Prophet and Messenger.
- 5- Truthfulness; that is to fulfill its requirements truthfully.
- 6- Sincerity; that is to be sincere in worshipping Allah, dedicating all acts of worship to Him alone.
- 7- The Love Of Allah; the Exalted, and the love of His Messenger, Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and the love of Allah's devotees and the people of His obedience.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that Allah must be obeyed by following His commands and refraining from his prohibitions. Obedience to Allah must be associated with loving Him, fearing His punishment, and hoping for His reward, seeking His forgiveness, and adhering to the teachings of His Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), is the last of Allah's Messengers and His Shari'ah (the laws and religious rites) abrogate all the preceding laws and religious rites. His comprises the best of every preceding Shari'ah.

The above is brief explanatory notes on the meaning of (لا إله إلا الله), and its requirements.

I pray to Allah that He may render it beneficial, and may He bless His slave, and Messenger, our Prophet Muhammad, his household and all of his Companions.
