

49025 - The real meaning of Tawheed al-Ruboobiyyah (Oneness of Divine Lordship), and those who reject it

the question

What is the real meaning of Tawheed al-Ruboobiyyah?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

, and blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allaah.

Tawheed al-ruboobiyyah means affirming that Allaah is One and Unique in His actions, such as creation, sovereignty, controlling affairs, provision, giving life and death, sending down the rain, and so on. A person's Tawheed is not complete unless he affirms that Allaah is the Lord, Sovereign, Creator and Provider of all things, that He is the Giver of life and death, the One Who brings benefit and causes harm, the only One Who answers prayers, the One Who is in control of all things, in Whose hand is all goodness, the One Who is able to do whatever He wills - which also includes believing in the divine will and decree (al-qadar), both good and bad.

The mushrikeen among whom the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was sent did not disagree with this aspect of Tawheed, rather they affirmed it in general terms, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And indeed if you ask them: ‘Who has created the heavens and the earth?’ They will surely say: ‘The All-Mighty, the All-Knower created them’”

[al-Zukhruf 43:9]

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And they affirmed that Allaah is in control of all things and that in His hand is sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. Thus it is known that affirming the Lordship of Allaah is not sufficient for a person to be a true Muslim, rather he must also affirm that which is implied by that, namely the oneness of the divinity of Allaah and he must devote his worship to Allaah alone.

This Tawheed - i.e., Tawheed al-Ruboobiyyah - is not denied by anyone of the sons of Adam. No one says that the world has two creators who are equal. No one argued with the idea of Tawheed al-Ruboobiyyah except Pharaoh, who denied it out of arrogance and stubbornness and even claimed - may Allaah curse him - to be the Lord. Allaah says of him (interpretation of the meaning):

“Saying: ‘I am your lord, most high”

[al-Naazi'aat 79:24]

“ ‘I know not that you have an ilaah (a god) other than me”

[al-Qasas 28:38]

This was arrogance on his part because he knew that the Lord was someone other than him. As Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And they belied them (those signs) wrongfully and arrogantly, though their ownselves were convinced thereof”

[al-Naml 27:14]

And Allaah tells us of Moosa when he was debating with him:

“[Moosa (Moses)] said: Verily, you know that these signs have been sent down by none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth”

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[al-Isra' 17:102]

So he himself recognized that the only Lord is Allaah.

Similarly the Magians (Zoroastrians) rejected the idea of Tawheed al-ruboobiyyah when they said that the world has two creators, darkness and light. However they did not regard these two creators as equal, rather they said that the light is better than the darkness, because it creates good, and darkness creates evil, and that which creates good is better than that which creates evil. Moreover darkness is non-existent and does not shine, whereas light exists and shines so it is more perfect in and of itself.

The fact that the mushrikeen affirmed Tawheed al-ruboobiyyah does not mean that they did so in a complete sense. Rather they used to affirm it in a general sense, as Allaah tells us in the verses quoted above. But they had some faults in their beliefs that undermined this concept, such as attributing rain to the stars, and their belief that soothsayers and fortunetellers had knowledge of the unseen, and other forms of shirk concerning the divine Lordship. But these faults are limited compared to their incorrect beliefs with regard to the oneness of the divine nature (Tawheed al-uloohiyyah) and worshipping Allaah alone (Tawheed al-'ibaadah).

We ask Allaah to make us steadfast in adhering to His religion until we meet Him. And Allaah knows best.

See Tayseer al-'Azeez al-Hameed, 33; al-Qawl al-Mufeed, 1/14.