

The Comprehensive and Concise Definition of Worshipping Allāh

By Shaykh ul Islām Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahāb

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وعلى آهله وصحبه أجمعين

All praise is due to Allāh, the Lord of All Worlds, and prayers, salutations and blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم), his family and all of his companions.

The Imām Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahāb (رحمه الله تعالى) stated:

If it is asked, “What is the comprehensive definition of worshipping Allāh alone?”

I would say, “(It is) worshipping Him by obeying His commands and refraining from what He has prohibited.”

If it is asked, “What are the forms of worship which are not befitting for anything or anyone other than Allāh?”

I would respond, From these forms of worship is du‘ā’ (supplication).

- al Isti‘ānah – seeking help
- al Istighāthah – seeking relief/deliverance
- ad dhabh -sacrificing a sacrificial animal as a means of seeking to please
- an Nadhr – making a covenant/vow
- al Khawf – reverential Fear
- ar Rajā – hope and longing
- at Tawakul – trust and reliance
- al Inābah – turning to flee towards in repentance and obedience
- al Maḥabah – love

- al Khashya – awe and fear
- ar Raghbah- desire
- ar Raḥbah - dread
- ar Rukū' – bowing
- as Sujūd – prostrating
- al Khusū' – reverent humility/ submissiveness
- at Tadḥulul – humbleness and submission
- As well as t'adhīm (glorification) which is from the distinct qualities of the One deserving of being worshipped.

The proofs of ad Du'ā' (supplication) are:

الجن: ١٨ ﴿وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا﴾

{And the mosques are for Allāh (Alone), so do not invoke (supplicate) anyone/anything with Allāh} [Jinn:18]

And His statement:

الرعد: ١٤ ﴿لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا كَبَاسِطٍ كَفَّيْهِ إِلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُغَ فَاهُ وَمَا هُوَ بِبَالِغِهِ ۚ وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ﴾

{For Him (Alone) is the Word of Truth (i.e. none has the right to be worshipped but He). And those whom they (polytheists and disbelievers) invoke, answer them no more than one who stretches forth his hand (at the edge of a deep well) for water to reach his mouth, but it reaches him not, and the invocation of the disbelievers is nothing but an error (i.e. of no use).} [ar R'ad:14]

The proof for al Isti'āna (seeking help) is His, the Most High, statement:

الْفَاتِحَةِ: ٥ ﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

{You alone we worship and You alone we ask for help} [al Fātiha:5]

The proof for al Istighātha (seeking relief/deliverance) is His, the Most High, statement:

الأنفال: ٩ ﴿إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُمِدُّكُمْ بِالْفِ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُرَدِّينَ﴾

{(Remember) when you sought help of your Lord and He answered you (saying): "I will help you with a thousand of the angels each behind the other (following one another) in succession} [al 'Anfāl:9]

The proof for ad Dhabh (sacrificing) is His, the Most High, statement:

الأنعام: ١٦٢ ﴿قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

{Say, "Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allāh, Lord of the worlds} [al An'am:162]

The proof of an Nadhr (vows/covenants) is His, the Most High, statement:

الإنسان: ٧ ﴿يُوفُونَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهُ مُسْتَطِيرًا﴾

{They (are those who) fulfill (their) vows, and they fear a Day whose evil will be wide-spreading} [al Insān:7]

The proof for al Khawf (fear) is His, the Most High, statement:

آل عمران: ١٧٥ ﴿إِنَّمَا ذَلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُوا مِنِّي إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

{It is only Shayṭān (Satan) that suggests to you the fear of his Auliya' [supporters and friends (polytheists, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allāh and in His Messenger, Muhammad], so fear them not, but fear Me, if you are (true) believers.} [al 'Imrān:175]

The proof for ar Rajā (hope and longing) is His, the Most High, statement:

الكهف: ١١٠ ﴿فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا﴾

{Thus, whoever hopes to meet his Lord, then he is to do righteous deeds and not associate anyone/anything in the worship of his Lord} [al Khaf:110]

The proof for at Tawakul (trust and reliance) is His, the Most High, statement:

المائدة: ٢٣ ﴿وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

{and put your trust in Allāh if you are believers indeed} [al Mā'idah:23]

The proof for al Inābah (turning to flee towards in repentance and obedience) is His, the Most High, statement:

﴿٥٤﴾ وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوا لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ

{And turn in repentance and in obedience with true Faith (Islamic Monotheism) to your Lord and submit to Him, (in Islam), before the torment comes upon you, then you will not be helped} [az Zumar:54]

The proof for al Maḥabah (love) is His, the Most High, statement:

﴿١٦٥﴾ وَمَنْ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَادًا يُحِبُّوهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ

{And of mankind are some who take (for worship) others besides Allāh as rivals (to Allāh). They love them as they love Allāh. But those who believe, love Allāh more (than anything else). If only, those who do wrong could see, when they will see the torment, that all power belongs to Allāh and that Allāh is Severe in punishment} [al Baqarah:165]

The proof for al Khashyah (awe and fear) is His, the Most High, statement:

المائدة: ٤٤ ﴿فَلَا تَخْشَوُا النَّاسَ وَخَشَوُا اللَّهَ﴾

{Therefore fear not men but fear Me} [al Mā'idah:44]

The proof for ar Ragbah (desire) and ar Raḥbah (dread) is His, the Most High, statement:

﴿٩٠﴾ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَاشِعِينَ

{Verily, they used to hasten on to do good deeds, and they used to call on Us with hope and fear, and used to humble themselves before Us.} [al Anbiyā:90]

The proof for directing worship to only Him is His, the Most High, statement:

﴿١٦٣﴾ وَإِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

{And your ‘Ilāh (God) is One ‘Ilāh (God - Allah), Lā ilāha illa Huwa (there is none who has the right to be worshipped but He), the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.} [al Baqarah:163]

The proof for ar Rukū’ (bowing) and as sujūd (prostrating) is His, the Most High, statement:

﴿٧٧﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَافْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

{O you who believe, bow and prostrate and worship your Lord and do good so that you may succeed.} [al Hajj:77]

The proof for Khushū’ (reverent humility/ submissiveness) is His, the Most High, statement:

﴿١٩٩﴾ وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ خَاشِعِينَ لِلَّهِ لَا يَشْتَرُونَ بآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

{And indeed, from the People of the Scripture are those who believe in Allāh and what was revealed to you and what was revealed to them, [being] humbly submissive to Allāh. They do not exchange the verses of Allāh for a small price. Those will have their reward with their Lord. Indeed, Allāh is swift in account.} [āl ‘Imrān:199]

and similar forms of worship. Therefore, whoever directs any of these forms of worship to other than Allāh, the Most High, has associated partners in worship with Allāh.

Thus, if it is asked, “What is the greatest command that Allāh has commanded (us) with?”

It is said, “His oneness in worship (i.e. directing all forms of worship to Allāh alone) and the explanation of this has preceded. Likewise, the most severe prohibition that He has prohibited, is associating partners with Him and this is supplicating to other than Him or directing any other type of worship to other than Allāh along with Allāh.

Subsequently, whoever directs any form of worship to other than Allāh, the Most High, has taken that object/person, etc. as a lord and deity, and has associated partners with Allāh; or (if an individual) directs any form of worship to other than Allāh.

The preceding verses are proof that doing such is as Shirk (associating partners with Allah) which Allāh has prohibited and rebuked the polytheists for doing so. Indeed, Allāh, the Most High, states:

﴿٧٢﴾ إِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ

{Verily, whosoever sets up partners in worship with Allāh, then Allāh has forbidden Paradise for him, and the Fire will be his abode. And for the zālimūn (polytheists and wrong-doers) there are no helpers.} [al Mā'idah:72]

Allah knows best. May the prayers and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad

(صلى الله عليه وسلم), his family and all of his companions.

وصلى الله على نبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم