

By Shaykh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab رحمه الله | A matn is a short Islamic text that teaches the main points of a subject. The Four Foundations help us understand Tawheed and Shirk upon The Qur'aan & Sunnah as Understood by the Salaf (Pious Predecessors) of this Ummah.

Bismillah and the Opening

Bismillah Bismillah means “In the Name of Allah.” Begin with Allah's Name by following the Quran and Prophets, following the scholars and seeking Allah's blessing. Allah = the One who alone deserves worship. Ar-Rahman = His wide mercy reaches all creation. Ar-Raheem = His special mercy reaches His believing servants.	Opening Dua The dua asks Allah to protect the student in this life and the Hereafter, make them blessed wherever they are and give them the three signs of happiness. Proof: “And when My servants ask you concerning Me, indeed I am near. I respond to the call of the caller when he calls upon Me.” [Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 186]	Dua Is Worship Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: “If you ask, ask Allah and if you seek help, seek help from Allah.” [Jami at-Tirmidhi, 2516] He ﷺ also said: “Supplication is worship.” [Jami at-Tirmidhi, 2969]
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The Three Signs of Happiness

1. Thankful When Given Thank Allah with the heart by knowing the blessing came from Him, with the tongue by praising Him and with actions by using His blessings in obedience.	2. Patient When Tested Tests are part of faith. Proof: “Do people think that they will be left to say, ‘We believe’ and they will not be tested?” [Surah Al-Ankabut, verse 2] Patience does not mean you cannot feel sad. It means controlling yourself, trusting Allah and continuing to obey Him.	3. Repent After Sin Everyone sins so repent and ask Allah for forgiveness. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught that the best of those who sin are those who repent. [Jami at-Tirmidhi, 2499] Proof: “Do not despair of the Mercy of Allah.” [Surah Az-Zumar, verse 53]
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Haneefiyyah, Tawheed and Worship

Haneefiyyah The religion of Prophet Ibrahim عليه السلام. It means turning away from Shirk toward Tawheed and sincerely worshipping Allah alone. Proof: “I created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me.” [Surah Adh-Dhariyat, verse 56]	Tawheed Tawheed means singling out Allah alone in what belongs to Him: Lordship, Worship and His Names and Attributes. Worship needs Tawheed just as Salah needs purification. Shirk corrupts worship.	Two Conditions of Worship 1. Sincerity: worship Allah alone. 2. Following Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Proof: “Whoever does a deed which has not been ordered by us, then it is rejected.” [Sahih Muslim, 1718] A good intention does not make invented worship correct.	Protection From Shirk Prophet Ibrahim عليه السلام asked: “And keep me and my children away from worshipping idols.” [Surah Ibrahim, verse 35] Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught: “O Allah, I seek refuge in You from associating partners with You knowingly and I seek Your forgiveness for what I do not know.” [Musnad Ahmad]
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The First and Second Foundations

1. Lordship Alone Is Not Enough The Mushrikeen admitted that Allah created, provided and controlled everything but they still worshipped others. Proof: "Say: Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Who controls hearing and sight? Who brings the living from the dead and the dead from the living? Who controls the affairs? They will say: Allah." [Surah Yunus, verse 31] Allah alone creates so Allah alone deserves worship.	2. First Excuse: Nearness They directed worship to righteous people believing they would bring them nearer to Allah. Proof: "We only worship them so that they may bring us nearer to Allah." [Surah Az-Zumar, verse 3] A good intention does not make worship of other than Allah correct.	2. Second Excuse: Intercession They wanted others to speak for them before Allah. Proof: "These are our intercessors with Allah." [Surah Yunus, verse 18] They knew their Awliya could not independently create or provide but still directed acts of worship such as vows and sacrifices to them.
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Shafa'ah – Intercession

Negated Intercession Intercession Allah does not allow. It includes believing someone can intercede without Allah's permission or asking someone besides Allah for what only Allah can do. Proof: "So now we have no intercessors." [Surah Ash-Shu'ara, verse 100]	Affirmed Intercession Allah must give permission. Proof: "Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission?" [Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 255] Allah must also be pleased with the person receiving it: "And they cannot intercede except for whom He is pleased with." [Surah Al-Anbiya, verse 28]	All Intercession Belongs to Allah Proof: "Say: To Allah belongs all intercession." [Surah Az-Zumar, verse 44] Even Prophet Muhammad ﷺ does not intercede independently. His special intercession includes the great intercession, concerning Abu Talib and opening the gates of Paradise.
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Waseelah

Correct Waseelah Seek nearness to Allah through what He allowed: His Names and Attributes, sincere good deeds, obedience such as Salah, fasting, Dua and charity and asking a living Muslim to make Dua to Allah for you. The person is not worshipped. Allah is the One being asked.	Incorrect Waseelah Using a way Allah did not allow such as placing created beings between yourself and Allah then directing worship to them. Example: making Dua to a dead righteous person because you think they will bring you closer to Allah. This is the same excuse rejected in [Surah Az-Zumar, verse 3].	Ordinary Help You may ask a living person who is able and present or reachable for normal help such as carrying something. They are only a means and Allah controls the result. This is different from asking creation for something only Allah can do.
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The Third Foundation

Main Rule Prophet Muhammad ﷺ met people who worshipped angels, Prophets, righteous people, Jinn, stones, trees, the sun and moon. Their different status did not change the ruling. Proof: “And fight them until there is no more Fitnah and the religion is entirely for Allah.” [Surah Al-Anfal, verse 39] Here Fitnah means Shirk.	Sun and Moon Proof: “Do not prostrate to the sun or the moon but prostrate to Allah who created them.” [Surah Fussilat, verse 37] Worship the Creator, not creation.	Angels Proof: “Nor would he order you to take angels and Prophets as lords.” [Surah Ali Imran, verse 80] Angels are honoured servants but do not deserve worship.
Prophets Allah asked Prophet Isa عليه السلام whether he told people to worship him and his mother besides Allah. [Surah Al-Maidah, verse 116] Prophets called people to worship Allah, not themselves.	Righteous People They themselves seek nearness to Allah, hope for His mercy and fear His punishment. [Surah Al-Isra, verses 56-57] They need Allah and do not deserve worship.	Stones and Trees Al-Lat, Al-Uzza and Manat were famous things worshipped by the Arabs. Proof: “So have you considered Al-Lat and Al-Uzza? And Manat, the third, the other one?” [Surah An-Najm, verses 19-20] They could not create, provide or save themselves.

The Story of Dhat Anwat

What Happened Some new Muslims travelled with Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to Hunayn. The Mushrikeen had a lote tree called Dhat Anwat where they hung weapons seeking blessing. Some new Muslims asked for a Dhat Anwat too. The Prophet ﷺ strongly rejected it and compared their request to the people of Prophet Musa عليه السلام saying: “Make for us a god as they have gods.” [Surah Al-A'raf, verse 138]	Hadith Reference Abu Waqid Al-Laythi رضي الله عنه reported the incident of Dhat Anwat. [Jami at-Tirmidhi, 2180] Imam At-Tirmidhi graded it Hasan Sahih.	Lessons Learn Tawheed because knowledge protects us. Do not copy practices connected to Shirk. Do not seek special blessing from stones, trees or objects without Islamic proof. When corrected with the truth, accept the correction and stop.
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The Fourth Foundation

Earlier Mushrikeen They committed Shirk during ease but in severe danger they called sincerely upon Allah alone. Proof: “And when they board a ship, they supplicate Allah, sincere to Him in religion. But when He delivers them to the land, at once they associate others with Him.” [Surah Al-Ankabut, verse 65]	Later Mushrikeen Described by the Author According to the author, the Mushrikeen of his time continued Shirk during ease and severe hardship. In this particular matter they were worse because they continued calling upon others even when facing serious danger.	Another Proof “And who is more astray than he who invokes besides Allah those who will not respond to him until the Day of Resurrection and they, of their invocation, are unaware.” [Surah Al-Ahqaf, verse 5]
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The Four Foundations at a Glance

1 Believing Allah is Creator, Provider and Controller is not enough. Allah alone must also be worshipped. [Surah Yunus, verse 31]	2 Seeking nearness or intercession does not make worship of others correct. [Surah Az-Zumar, verse 3; Surah Yunus, verse 18]	3 Angels, Prophets, righteous people, Jinn, stones, trees, the sun and moon do not deserve worship. Allah alone deserves worship. [Surah Al-Anfal, verse 39]	4 Earlier Mushrikeen called upon Allah alone in severe hardship while the later Mushrikeen described by the author continued Shirk in ease and hardship. [Surah Al-Ankabut, verse 65]
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Final lesson: Tawheed and Shirk are learned from the Quran and Sunnah. Correct worship is sincerely for Allah alone and follows Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.