

Study Notes: Ten Nullifiers of Islam



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(1703–1792 C.E., 1115–1206 A.H.) May Allah have mercy on him.

The Ten Nullifiers of Islam is a short matn. A matn is a short Islamic text that teaches the main points of a subject in an organized way. This matn teaches us about ten very serious matters that can take a person out of Islam. We study these matters so we can protect our Islam, protect our Tawheed and stay far away from anything that goes against the religion of Allah. Tawheed means the oneness of Allah. Allah alone is worthy of worship and we must single out Allah alone in all of our worship. These lessons are taught upon The Qur'aan & Sunnah as Understood by the Salaf (Pious Predecessors) of this Ummah.

Introduction to Tawheed

Tawheed is the most important knowledge we can learn. It is the greatest and noblest subject to study because it teaches us about Allah and how to worship Him correctly. A person who truly believes in Tawheed and lives according to it will be saved from Jahannam by the mercy of Allah. Allah created the jinn and mankind for Tawheed which means that we were created to worship Allah alone. Tawheed is a cause of success in this life and in the Hereafter. The scales were created, the sky was raised and the earth was spread for Tawheed and the worship of Allah alone.

What Is Tawheed?

The Arabic root letters of Tawheed are:

و ح د

The word **وَحَّدَ** means to make something one or to single something out.

Linguistically: Tawheed means to make something one without giving it any equal and to single something out.

Technically: Tawheed means to single out Allah alone in everything that belongs only to Him. This includes His Lordship, worshipping Him alone and His Names and Attributes. So Tawheed means believing that Allah alone is our Lord, Allah alone deserves all worship and Allah has His perfect Names and Attributes.



Three Categories of Tawheed

1. Tawheed of Lordship (تَوْحِيدُ الرَّبُّوبِيَّةِ): This means believing that Allah alone is the Creator, Provider and Controller of everything. For example, Allah alone created the heavens and the earth. Allah alone gives life and death and Allah alone provides for His creation.
2. Tawheed of Worship (تَوْحِيدُ الْإِلَهِيَّةِ): This means singling out Allah alone in all acts of worship. For example, we pray to Allah alone, make Dua to Allah alone, rely upon Allah and worship Him alone. We do not direct acts of worship to anyone besides Allah.
3. Tawheed of Allah's Names and Attributes (تَوْحِيدُ الْأَسْمَاءِ وَالصِّفَاتِ): This means believing in the Names and Attributes of Allah that are mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah in the correct way. For example, Allah is Ar-Rahman (الرَّحْمَنُ), the Most Merciful and Allah is As-Sami (السَّمِيعُ), the All-Hearing. Tawheed was not invented by later scholars. It is the message that Allah sent all the Prophets with. Scholars use these three categories to organize and explain what is already taught in the Quran and Sunnah. Therefore Tawheed and Shirk must be understood from the Quran and Sunnah and not from personal opinions.

Is Tawheed Mentioned in the Quran?

Ibn al-Qayyim explained that every Surah in the Quran contains Tawheed. In fact every verse in the Quran contains Tawheed, gives proof for Tawheed or calls people to Tawheed.

1st Type: Some verses give us information about the Names and Attributes of Allah or the Actions of Allah. This is called Tawheed of knowledge and information. We must believe everything Allah has told us about Himself.

2nd Type: Some verses call us to worship Allah alone without giving Him any partners and to leave everything that is worshipped besides Allah. This is the Tawheed of worshipping Allah and seeking Him alone.

3rd Type: Some verses contain commands and prohibitions. They teach us to obey Allah's commands and stay away from what Allah has prohibited. These are from the rights of Tawheed.

4th Type: Some verses tell us about the people of Tawheed and obedience and the rewards Allah has prepared for them.

5th Type: Some verses tell us about the people of Shirk, what can happen to them in this life and about their punishment in the next life.

Therefore the whole Quran includes these types of Tawheed. [Madaarij As-Salikeen, Vol. 3, Page 450]

Words That Show Tawheed

Words in the Quran such as **أَحَدٌ** and **وَاحِدٌ** teach us about Allah being One.

First Verse: Allah says:

"Or were you witnesses when death approached Jacob, when he said to his sons, 'What will you worship after me?' They said, 'We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, one God. And we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.'" [Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 133]

Ibn Katheer explained the words **إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا**, "one God", to mean that Allah is made One in worship. In simple words, Allah alone must be worshipped.

Second Verse: Allah says:

"And Allah has said, 'Do not take for yourselves two deities. He is but one God, so fear only Me.'" [Surah An-Nahl, verse 51]

Imam At-Tabari explained the words **إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا**, "one God", to mean that Allah is made One in His worship and His Lordship. This means Allah alone is our Lord and Allah alone deserves our worship. [Jami' al-Bayaan fi Ta'weel Al-Quran]

Third Verse: Allah says:

"They have certainly disbelieved who say, 'Allah is the third of three.' And there is no god except one God. And if they do not desist from what they are saying, there will surely afflict the disbelievers among them a painful punishment." [Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 73]

This verse teaches us that Allah is One. Allah has no partners and no one else deserves to be worshipped with Him.



Is Tawheed in the Sunnah?

Yes. Tawheed is also clearly taught in the Sunnah.

Sunnah means: The statements and actions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, things that happened in front of him that he approved of and his physical and personal qualities.

1. Hadeeth of Ibn Abbas: Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما reported that when the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم sent Muadh ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه to Yemen he told him:

"You will go to the People of the Book. Let the first thing that you call them to be to make Allah One."

يُوحِدُوا اللَّهَ

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

The words "make Allah One" come from the same Arabic root as Tawheed. The Arabic word used here is a present tense verb. This teaches us that making Allah One is not something that has a time limit. A Muslim must always worship Allah alone.

2. Hadeeth of Ibn Abbas: Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما also reported that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم told Muadh ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه:

"You are going to the People of the Book. When you come to them call them to the oneness of Allah."

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

This teaches us that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم told Muadh رضي الله عنه to begin by calling people to Tawheed.

3. Hadeeth of Ibn Umar: Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما reported that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"Islam is built upon five: that Allah is made One, establishing the prayer, paying the Zakah, fasting Ramadan and Hajj."

[Saheeh Muslim]

This narration directly connects Islam with making Allah One.

4. Hadeeth of Ibn Umar: Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما reported that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"Islam is built upon five: testifying that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, establishing the prayer, paying the Zakah, performing Hajj to the House and fasting Ramadan."

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari and Saheeh Muslim]

The first foundation mentioned is لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ, Laa ilaaha illa Allah: There is no one worthy of worship except Allah.

5. Hadeeth of Ibn Umar: Another narration from Ibn Umar رضي الله عنهما mentions that Islam is built upon five and begins with worshipping Allah and rejecting everything worshipped besides Him.

[Saheeh Muslim]

From these narrations we understand that worshipping Allah alone is Tawheed.

Tawheed in the Statements of the Salaf

The Salaf are the Companions and the early generations of Muslims who came after them.

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"The best of you are my generation, then those who follow them, then those who follow them."

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

Their understanding of Tawheed came from the Quran and Sunnah.

Jaabir ibn Abdullah رضي الله عنه: Jaabir described the Hajj of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and explained that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم began his Hajj by declaring Tawheed in the Talbiyah:

لَبَّيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ كَلْبِيَّكَ، لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ كَلْبِيَّكَ، إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ وَالْبُحْمَةَ لَكَ وَالْمُلْكَ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ

"Here I am, O Allah, here I am. Here I am. You have no partner. All praise, blessings and the kingdom belong to You. You have no partner."

[Saheeh Muslim]



Jaabir رضي الله عنه used the word Tawheed to describe what the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was saying and doing. This shows that the Companions understood that declaring that Allah has no partners is Tawheed.

Hadeeth of the Delegation of Abdul Qais: A group from Abdul Qais came to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم commanded them to believe in Allah alone and asked:

"Do you know what is meant by believing in Allah alone?"

They replied:

"Allah and His Messenger know best."

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم explained:

"To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger."

[Saheeh Al-Bukhari]

This teaches us that believing in Allah alone includes believing that only Allah has the right to be worshipped.

Ataa ibn Abi Rabah

Ataa ibn Abi Rabah was from the Tabi'un. The Tabi'un were Muslims who learned from the Companions. He was also a Mufassir which means a scholar who explains the Quran.

Allah says:

"And whoever denies the faith, his work has become worthless, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers." [Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 5]

Ataa ibn Abi Rabah explained that faith or Iman in this verse means Tawheed.

[Tafseer At-Tabarani]



How the Scholars Explained Tawheed

The scholars of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah explained Tawheed through the statement:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

Laa ilaaha illa Allah

There is no one worthy of worship except Allah.

Imam Ad-Darimi said that the explanation of Tawheed in this Ummah is:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

Laa ilaaha illa Allah, Muhammadur Rasulullah. There is no one worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. [Naqd or Ar-Rad ala Bishr al-Mirrisi, Vol. 1, Page 152]

Imam Al-Ajuri said that Tawheed is to say:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

Laa ilaaha illa Allah with certainty in your heart. [Kitaab Ash-Shariah, Vol. 2, Page 553]

Having certainty means you truly believe it in your heart without doubt.

Why Do We Study Tawheed?

1. Allah created us to worship Him alone. We were created to single out Allah alone in our worship. We pray to Allah alone, make Dua to Him alone and direct our worship to Him alone.
2. Allah does not accept worship without Tawheed. Our worship must be sincerely for Allah alone and cannot be mixed with Shirk.
3. Tawheed is a cause of entering Jannah. A person must learn Tawheed, believe in it and live according to it. A person who dies upon true Tawheed will enter Jannah.
4. Tawheed is a cause of increasing the reward of good deeds. The stronger a person's Tawheed and sincerity to Allah are, the greater the blessings and rewards in their good deeds can be.
5. Tawheed is a cause for sins to be forgiven. Allah may forgive sins because of a person's sincere Tawheed and faith in Him.



6. Tawheed is a cause of guidance and security. Those who truly believe in Allah and protect their Tawheed from Shirk are promised guidance and security.

7. Tawheed is a cause of peace in the heart. Allah places peace and calmness in the hearts of the believers. True belief in Allah helps a believer remain firm and turn to Allah during easy and difficult times.

8. Tawheed is a cause of receiving the Prophet's ﷺ intercession. By the mercy and permission of Allah, the people of sincere Tawheed may receive the intercession of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Two Conditions for Correct Worship

Correct worship requires two conditions:

1. Sincerity to Allah (الإخلاص): All worship must be sincerely for Allah alone. The opposite of sincerity is Shirk. For example, when a person makes Dua they must make Dua to Allah alone and not direct their Dua to someone besides Allah.

2. Following the Prophet (المتابعة) ﷺ: We must worship Allah in the way that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught us. The opposite is inventing acts of worship that the Prophet ﷺ did not teach. For example, we pray Salah according to the way the Prophet ﷺ taught us. We do not invent a new type of Salah and call it part of Islam. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever does a deed which has not been ordered by us, then it is rejected." [Saheeh Muslim, Hadeeth 1718]

Sincerity without following the Sunnah is not enough. For example, a person may sincerely want to worship Allah but invent a new act of worship that the Prophet ﷺ never taught. Their good intention does not make the invented worship correct. Following the outward Sunnah while directing worship to someone other than Allah is also not enough. For example, a person may perform an act in the correct outward way but direct that worship to someone besides Allah. Both conditions are required. The worship must be sincerely for Allah alone and it must follow the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ is the only person Muslims must completely follow in the religion.



Why We Must Learn About Shirk

We must learn about Shirk so we can recognize it and stay away from it. Allah did not prohibit Shirk without explaining it. The Quran and Sunnah explain its meaning, types and dangers. Shirk is the opposite of Tawheed. Generally, Shirk means giving someone or something a share in something that belongs only to Allah. In worship it means directing an act of worship to someone or something besides Allah. Shirk is divided into Major Shirk and Minor Shirk.

Major Shirk (الشِّرْكُ الْأَكْبَرُ)

Major Shirk is directing an act of worship to someone or something besides Allah. It takes a person outside of Islam. For example, making Dua to the dead and asking them for something that only Allah can do is Major Shirk. Sacrificing an animal as an act of worship for someone besides Allah is another example. Major Shirk causes misguidance, removes security and destroys a person's deeds. If a person dies upon Major Shirk without repenting from it, Allah will not forgive it. It prevents the person who dies upon it from entering Paradise and leads to the Fire. Major Shirk is also the greatest injustice.

Minor Shirk (الشِّرْكُ الْأَصْغَرُ)

Minor Shirk does not take a person outside of Islam but it is still a serious sin. It makes a person's Tawheed and faith weaker and it can become a path that leads towards Major Shirk. One example is showing off in worship. For example, a person begins praying sincerely for Allah but then makes their prayer look better because they notice other people are watching them. This showing off can destroy the part of the worship in which it happens. Another example of Minor Shirk is swearing by someone or something besides Allah such as saying, "I swear by my father." A Muslim should swear by Allah or remain silent.

Hidden Shirk (الشِّرْكُ الْخَفِيُّ)

Shirk can also be hidden because it may be connected to what is inside a person's heart and may not be clear to other people. Showing off in worship is an example. A person may look like they are worshipping Allah while secretly wanting people to see them, praise them or think they are very religious. A Muslim should never feel completely safe from Shirk. Even Ibrahim عليه السلام asked Allah to protect him from Shirk.



Allah says:

"And [mention, O Muhammad], when Abraham said, 'My Lord, make this city [Makkah] secure and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols.'" [Surah Ibrahim, verse 35] If Ibrahim عليه السلام feared Shirk and asked Allah to protect him from it then we should also fear Shirk, learn about it and ask Allah to protect us from it.

The Prophet ﷺ also taught us to say: "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] This teaches us to ask Allah to protect us from the Shirk we know about and the Shirk we may not recognize.

Final Summary

Tawheed means to single out Allah alone. We believe that Allah alone is our Lord, we worship Allah alone and we believe in Allah's Names and Attributes. Tawheed has three categories: Tawheed of Lordship, Tawheed of Worship and Tawheed of Allah's Names and Attributes. The Quran teaches Tawheed from beginning to end. It teaches us about Allah, calls us to worship Him alone, teaches us to obey His commands, tells us about the rewards for the people of Tawheed and warns us about Shirk. The Sunnah also teaches Tawheed. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم called people to worship Allah alone and taught his Companions to begin their call to others with Tawheed. For worship to be correct it must be sincerely for Allah alone and it must follow the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. We also learn about Shirk so we can recognize it and stay far away from it.

The meaning of Tawheed is clearly shown in:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

There is no one worthy of worship except Allah. upon The Qur'aan & Sunnah as Understood by the Salaf (Pious Predecessors) of this Ummah,



Bismillah

Bismillah means “In the Name of Allah.”

We begin with Bismillah for four reasons:

1. Following the Quran

Allah begins the Quran with Bismillah. This teaches us to begin with the Name of Allah.

2. Following the Prophet ﷺ

When the Prophet ﷺ wrote letters to kings and rulers, he began his letters with Bismillah. We follow his example by beginning with the Name of Allah.

3. Following the scholars

The scholars of Islam followed this practice and began their books and writings with Bismillah. We follow their example when beginning Islamic writings and lessons.

4. Seeking Allah’s blessing

We begin with Bismillah to seek Allah’s blessing in what we are doing. Saying Bismillah reminds us that all blessings come from Allah and that we depend upon Him.

When we say Bismillah before doing something, the action is understood even if we do not say it. For example, if we say Bismillah before drinking, it means, “In the Name of Allah, I drink.” This teaches us to begin good actions with Allah’s Name and seek His blessing.

The Basmalah contains three Names of Allah:

1. Allah: The One who alone deserves to be worshipped.
2. Ar-Rahman: The One whose mercy is vast and reaches all of creation.
3. Ar-Raheem: The One who gives special mercy to His believing servants.

We can see Allah’s mercy through the many blessings He gives us such as rain, food, water and everything we need for life.

Study Notes: Ten Nullifiers of Islam

What Does Nullifier Mean?

Nawaqid means nullifiers. It is the plural of Naaqid, which means one nullifier.

The word can mean:

1. To ruin something.
2. To destroy something.
3. To untie something, like untying a knot.

In Islam, a nullifier means something that can take a person out of Islam.

Four Ways a Person Can Leave Islam

A person can leave Islam through what they say, what they do, what they believe or serious doubts in their heart.

1. Through What a Person Says

A person can say words that are disbelief. Allah tells us about people who said words of disbelief and then denied saying them. Allah says: “They swear by Allah that they did not say it but they really did say words of disbelief.” Surah At-Tawbah, 9:74. This teaches us that some words can be very serious.

2. Through What a Person Does

A person can do an action that is disbelief. For example, sacrificing an animal as an act of worship for someone other than Allah. Sacrifice is an act of worship and worship must be for Allah alone.

3. Through What a Person Believes

A person can have a belief in their heart that is disbelief. Allah tells us about the hypocrites. They said that Muhammad ﷺ was the Messenger of Allah but they did not truly believe what they were saying. Allah says: “When the hypocrites come to you, they say, ‘We testify that you are the Messenger of Allah.’ Allah knows that you are His Messenger and Allah knows that the hypocrites are lying.” Surah Al-Munafiqun, 63:1. This teaches us that Islam is not only about what we say. What we truly believe in our hearts is also important.





4. Through Serious Doubts in the Heart

A person can have serious doubts about the main beliefs of Islam and allow these doubts to settle in their heart.

Examples include:

1. Having serious doubt about whether the Qur'an is complete.
2. Having serious doubt about whether Prophet Muhammad ﷺ came with the truth.
3. Having serious doubt about whether Allah exists.

This does not mean that a child asking a question because they are learning has left Islam. Asking questions to understand something is different from rejecting the main beliefs of Islam.

An Important Rule

These are general rules about the Nullifiers of Islam. There can be special situations involving a particular person. In these cases, qualified scholars must carefully look at what happened before making a ruling about that person. We should not quickly say that a particular Muslim has left Islam.

Bismillahi Ar-Rahmani Ar-Raheem

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy.

The Basmalah is used at the beginning for three reasons:

1. To follow the Book of Allah because the Qur'an begins with the Basmalah.
2. To follow the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. When the Prophet ﷺ wrote letters to rulers, kings and other leaders, he began with the Basmalah.
3. To seek blessings through the name of Allah.
4. Following the scholars who began their writings with Bismillah



Know That the Nullifiers of Islam Are Ten

Nullifier 1: Shirk in the Worship of Allah

The first nullifier is Shirk in the worship of Allah. Shirk means giving something that belongs only to Allah to someone or something else. Allah says: “Allah does not forgive someone who dies while worshipping others with Him but He may forgive sins that are less than this for whoever He wills.” Surah An-Nisa, 4:116. The Shaykh did not say only one type of Shirk. There are two types of Shirk.

Major Shirk

Major Shirk means giving someone or something other than Allah something that belongs only to Allah.

This includes:

Ruboobiyyah: Allah's Lordship. Allah alone is the Creator, Owner and Controller of everything.

Uloohiyyah: Worship. Allah alone deserves all our worship.

Al-Asma wal-Sifaat: Allah's Names and Attributes. Allah has perfect Names and Attributes that belong to Him.

Minor Shirk

Examples of Minor Shirk include:

1. Showing off while doing an act of worship.
2. Swearing an oath by someone other than Allah.
3. Seeking blessings from something in a way that Islam does not allow.

Minor Shirk can lead towards Major Shirk. This is why Muslims should stay far away from every type of Shirk. Allah also says: “Whoever worships others along with Allah, Allah has forbidden Paradise for that person and the Fire will be their home. The wrongdoers will have no helpers.” Surah Al-Maa'idah, 5:72

Shirk Is a Great Wrong

Shirk is Thulm, which means a great wrong. Allah tells us about Luqman's advice to his son: “My son, do not worship anything along with Allah. Shirk is truly a great wrong.” Surah Luqman, 31:13



Sacrificing for Someone Other Than Allah

Another type of Shirk is sacrificing an animal as an act of worship for someone other than Allah. For example, a person must not make a sacrifice as an act of worship for the jinn or for someone in a grave. Sacrificing an animal as food for a guest is different. When a Muslim slaughters an animal, they say Bismillah. If the animal is slaughtered in the name of Allah and not as an act of worship for someone else, this is not Shirk. But sacrificing as an act of worship for someone other than Allah is Shirk.

Nullifier 2: Putting Someone Between Yourself and Allah

The second nullifier is when a person puts someone between themselves and Allah, calls upon that person, asks that person for intercession and depends upon them for something that belongs to Allah alone. For example, someone calls upon another person and says: “O so-and-so, have mercy on me.” Calling upon someone other than Allah for something only Allah can do is Shirk.

Can You Ask Someone to Make Dua for You?

A person might say to another Muslim: “Please ask Allah to have mercy on me.”

There are three conditions:

1. The person must be alive.
2. The person must be present.
3. The person must be able to do what you are asking them to do.

All three conditions need to be present. It is better for a Muslim to make Dua directly to Allah.

Allah says: “Your Lord says, ‘Call upon Me and I will answer you.’” Surah Ghaafir, 40:60

This teaches us that we should call upon Allah and ask Him for what we need.

Nullifier 3: Believing That Shirk Is a Correct Religion

The third nullifier is about someone who does not believe that people who openly worship others besides Allah are upon disbelief, has serious doubt about their disbelief or believes their religion is correct.



What Does Takfeer Mean?

Takfeer means ruling that a particular person is no longer a Muslim. This is a very serious ruling. A Muslim cannot believe that Shirk and Tawheed are both correct ways to worship Allah. A person cannot say: "They have their way of worship and Allah will accept it from them." A person also cannot believe that Judaism, Christianity and Islam are all equally correct religions to follow after Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was sent. Islam teaches that we must follow the message Allah sent with Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Important Conditions

This does not mean that children or ordinary Muslims should start deciding that particular people are disbelievers. There are important conditions that must be checked.

For example:

1. The person must be mentally able to understand.
2. The Islamic proof must have reached the person.
3. The person must understand what is being explained.
4. The person must continue rejecting the truth after the proof has been properly explained.

There can also be other things that prevent a ruling from applying to a particular person. These matters must be handled by qualified scholars.

Tawheed Includes Two Things

Tawheed includes:

1. Believing in Allah.
2. Rejecting Taghoot.

Taghoot includes false things that people worship instead of Allah. We can understand this from Laa Ilaaha IllaAllah, which means there is no one worthy of worship except Allah. Laa Ilaaha means there is no one worthy of worship. This rejects the worship of everything besides Allah. IllaAllah means except Allah. This confirms that Allah alone deserves worship. So Laa Ilaaha IllaAllah teaches us to reject the worship of everything besides Allah and worship Allah alone.



Nullifier 4: Believing Other Guidance Is Better Than the Guidance of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

The fourth nullifier is believing that there is guidance better or more complete than the guidance of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ or believing that another system of ruling is better than the Qur'an and Sunnah. If a person believes that man-made rulings are better than the Sharee'ah, this belief takes the person out of Islam. The same applies if a person believes that man-made laws and the Sharee'ah are equal. There is an important difference between believing something is better than Allah's law and doing something wrong while still believing Allah's law is correct. For example, a person may rule by a man-made law in one matter but still believe that following the Sharee'ah is required, ruling by other than what Allah revealed is wrong and what they are doing is a sin. Their desires or Shaytaan may have caused them to do something they know is wrong. This person has committed a major sin but this is not the same as believing that man-made laws are better than Allah's law.

What Does Istihlal Mean?

Istihlal means believing that something Allah made Haram is actually Halal. Some people misunderstand this matter and quickly make Takfeer of Muslims. This was one of the serious mistakes of the Khawaarij.

Nullifier 5: Hating Something the Prophet ﷺ Brought

The fifth nullifier is hating something that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ brought even if the person still does it. Allah says: "That is because they hated what Allah sent down, so Allah made their deeds worthless." Surah Muhammad, 47:9 A Muslim should accept what Allah revealed and what Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught.



Nullifier 6: Making Fun of the Religion

The sixth nullifier is making fun of any part of the religion of Allah, its rewards or its punishments. Allah says: “Was it Allah, His verses and His Messenger that you were making fun of? Do not make excuses. You have disbelieved after having faith.” Surah At-Tawbah, 9:65–66 These verses were revealed about hypocrites during the time of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. During the Battle of Tabook, some people mocked Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the believers. They made insulting comments about the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions. When the Prophet ﷺ found out what they had said, they tried to excuse themselves. They said they were only joking and talking to pass the time. Allah then revealed these verses. This teaches us that making fun of Allah, His verses, His Messenger ﷺ or His religion is extremely serious. Saying “I was only joking” does not make mocking the religion acceptable.

Why Does the Verse Say They Disbelieved After Having Faith?

Some scholars explained these words in different ways because these people were described as hypocrites and complete hypocrites do not truly have Iman in their hearts. One explanation is that some of them were not complete hypocrites before this happened. They had Nifaq Amali, which means hypocrisy in their actions. After this event, their hypocrisy became complete. Another explanation is that the believers and Companions thought these people were believers. Allah spoke about the faith that appeared to the Muslims before their true condition became known.

Nullifier 7: Magic, Sorcery and Witchcraft

The seventh nullifier is magic, sorcery or witchcraft. This includes Sarf, which is magic used to make a person hate someone and Atf, which is magic used to make a person have an unnatural love or attachment that they did not choose. Practising this type of magic or being pleased with it being done is disbelief. Allah says: “The two would not teach anyone until they first said, ‘We are only a test, so do not disbelieve.’” Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:102 This type of magic involves disbelief and Shirk. A magician may try to work with the jinn and may commit Shirk by calling upon them or making sacrifices for them. The two angels were sent to Babil to test the people concerning magic. Before teaching anyone, they warned the people that they were only a test and told them not to disbelieve. The people who chose to learn the forbidden magic fell into disbelief.



Nullifier 8: Helping the Mushrikeen Against the Believers

The eighth nullifier is helping the Mushrikeen against the Muslims. Allah says: “Whoever among you takes them as allies and protectors is from them. Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.” Surah Al-Maa'idah, 5:51 This refers to helping disbelievers plot against Muslims and choosing their side against the believers. If a disbeliever is helped against another disbeliever, this does not fall under this particular nullifier.

Nullifier 9: Believing That Someone Does Not Have to Follow the Sharee'ah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

The ninth nullifier is believing that some people do not have to follow the Sharee'ah brought by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ just as Al-Khidr did not have to follow the Sharee'ah of Prophet Moosa عليه السلام. Some people believe they can reach such a high spiritual level that they no longer have to pray, fast or pay Zakah. Some may even believe they are allowed to commit sins because only their body is doing the sin while their soul remains pure. Others may believe they have not reached this special level yet but once they reach it, they will no longer have to follow these commands. This belief is false. No Muslim reaches a special level where Allah's commands no longer apply to them.

What About Al-Khidr and Prophet Moosa عليه السلام?

The Sharee'ah of Prophet Moosa عليه السلام was not sent to every human being. It was for Banu Israel and Al-Khidr was not from those people. The Sharee'ah brought by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is different. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was sent to all humanity and his message continues until the end of this world. Nobody can claim that they have reached a special level where the Sharee'ah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ no longer applies to them.



Nullifier 10: Completely Turning Away From Islam

The tenth nullifier is completely turning away from Islam by neither learning it nor following it. Allah says: “Who does more wrong than someone who is reminded of the verses of their Lord but then turns away from them? We will certainly punish the criminals.” Surah As-Sajdah, 32:22 A Muslim should learn about Islam and try to follow what they learn.

Joking, Being Serious and Fear

There is no difference concerning these nullifiers between someone who does them while joking, someone who is serious or someone who does them because of fear when there is no real immediate danger. For example, a person may think they could be harmed if they refuse to commit an act of Shirk even though there is no real danger happening at that time. This type of fear is not the same as truly being forced.

What If Someone Is Forced?

If someone is truly forced to say or do something and there is real danger while their heart still firmly believes in Islam, the person is excused. All ten nullifiers are very serious and they are among the most common nullifiers. Muslims should learn about them, stay away from them and ask Allah to protect them. We ask Allah to protect us from everything that causes His anger and His painful punishment. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

An Important Rule About Takfeer

Takfeer means ruling that a particular person is no longer a Muslim. This is a very serious matter and this ruling belongs to qualified people of knowledge and scholars. We can say that a certain action is an action of Kufr or a certain statement is a statement of Kufr when there is clear proof from the Qur'an and Sunnah. The person should be warned about the seriousness of what they said or did. However, ruling that a particular Muslim has actually left Islam requires qualified scholars to establish the proof and carefully examine the person's situation.



Principles of Takfeer

Before Takfeer can be made on a particular person, important matters must be checked:

1. It must be confirmed from the Qur'an and Sunnah that the statement or action really is disbelief.
2. It must be confirmed that the person actually said those words or did that action.
3. The proper Islamic proof must be established and explained to the person.
4. It must be checked that there is nothing preventing the ruling from applying, such as being forced, extreme anger or not properly understanding the proof.

The Danger of Wrongly Making Takfeer

Making Takfeer without knowledge is extremely dangerous. Wrongly making Takfeer can be a form of speaking about Allah without knowledge and this is a serious sin. Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both, reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person calls his Muslim brother a disbeliever, the statement will apply to one of them. If the person really is as he said, then it applies to him. If it is not true, then it returns to the person who said it." Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. This teaches us not to carelessly accuse Muslims of disbelief. Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him, taught an important rule: A person who entered Islam with certainty cannot be removed from Islam except with certainty.

Final Summary

The Ten Nullifiers of Islam teach us about very serious beliefs, words and actions that can take a person out of Islam. We study them so we can protect our Islam and stay far away from Shirk, Kufr and anything that goes against Tawheed. These lessons are not taught so children or ordinary Muslims can go around deciding who is Muslim and who is not. There can be important conditions and situations that must be checked before a ruling is made about a particular person. These serious rulings belong to qualified scholars. We ask Allah to protect us from Shirk, Kufr and everything that brings His anger. We ask Allah to keep us firm upon Tawheed, the oneness of Allah. Allah alone is worthy of worship and we must single out Allah alone in all of our worship.

May peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.