

Tawḥīd and Širk

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The Arabic, Tawḥīd, sometimes rendered as monotheism, literally translates as making one or unifying. In accepting it, one affirms the absolute Unity or Oneness of God.

Functionally, the antonym of Tawḥīd is the Arabic word, širk (similar to the Hebrew, šutfut, for partnership). Although shirk is frequently rendered into English as either polytheism or idolatry, it is literally derived from the Arabic, šarika (to share or to participate). Helpful translations might be theological associationism and partnership with God.

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tant Muslims to seek the Prophet's prayers for them; they are not seeking the Prophet's forgiveness.

39 This word is often simply translated as 'monotheist', but it means much more than this, or at least, it takes the theological notion of 'monotheism' to its deepest connotation. *Tawḥīd* is the verbal noun of *wahḥada*, to declare, affirm, and ultimately to realise, oneness; a *muwahḥid* is, in esoteric terms, not simply one who as a 'monotheist' declares that there is but one God, but also and essentially, he is one who has *realised* that oneness as such, a realisation predicated upon knowledge of God's all-inclusive oneness (*wāḥidiyya*) and His all-exclusive oneness (*aḥadiyya*). For discussion of this distinction, see Shah-Kazemi, *The Other in the Light of the One*, pp. 76-95.

40 Necessary but not sufficient conditions; they attract but cannot produce that grace by which, alone, salvation is attained, according to basic Islamic theology.

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