

Dr Pavel Basharin

Al-Ḥallāj's Reflections on *Tawḥīd*

The aim of this presentation is to analyze *tawḥīd* in the extant texts of al-Ḥallāj and to consider his doctrine of *tawḥīd* in the framework of early Sufism. Like many Sufis, al-Ḥallāj stated that knowledge of *tawḥīd* is singular (*mufrad*) and abstract (*mujarrad*). Two chapters of his *Kitāb al-ṭāwasīn* are devoted to *tawḥīd*. A fundamental characteristic of the al-Ḥallāj's *tawḥīd* is that the process of *tawḥīd* is an attribute of the affirmer of unity (*muwaḥḥid*), not of the One who is declared One (*muwaḥḥad*). Every definition is a limit, but God cannot have any limits. *Tawḥīd* is the highest Divine category that a mystic can accomplish.

In attempting to define *tawḥīd*, many Sufis, including al-Ḥallāj, employ the cataphatic approach. The eternal must be purified from the created nature. Al-Ḥallāj criticizes the Mu'tazilī approach based on a logical connection between God and *tawḥīd*. On the other hand, al-Ḥallāj does not accept a Ḥanbalī viewpoint that denies any connection between God and *tawḥīd*. Finally, al-Ḥallāj criticizes an emanationist understanding of the origin of *tawḥīd*. *Tawḥīd* is not defined by any category, either apophatic or cataphatic. These categories are traps for the true *tawḥīd*.

Some of al-Ḥallāj's sayings claim that *tawḥīd* is one of the veils that hide man from God. However, the *Kitāb al-ṭāwasīn* declares *tawḥīd* to be the highest stage of knowledge of God. Only after the annihilation of the ego, the mystic comprehends authentic *tawḥīd*. Al-Ḥallāj's *tawḥīd* is a process. It has two intentions both on the part of the mystic and on God's part. After al-Ḥallāj's death, his followers called him a true monotheist. The Baghdād Sufis and al-Ḥallāj affirmed the dissimilarity and irreducibility of the two kinds of *tawḥīd*: the common *tawḥīd* and the *tawḥīd* for the mystics. There was a trend to distinguish two kinds of *tawḥīd*, the common and the special (*khaṣṣ*).



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