

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

12295 - Conditions of Laa ilaaha illa-Allaah

the question

Can you please explain the conditions of Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah (knowledge, certainty, etc), and tell us the rulings on one who does not attain them and one who is ignorant of the meaning of Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The conditions of Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah. Shaykh Haafiz al-Hukmi said in his poem Sullam al-Wusool :

“Knowledge, certainty, submission and following. So listen to what I say.

Truthfulness, sincerity and love. May Allaah help you to do that which He loves.”

The first condition is knowledge, in the sense of negating what is negated in the Shahaadah and affirming what is affirmed therein – as opposed to being ignorant of that.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meanings):

“So know (O Muhammad) that Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allaah)...” [Muhammad 47:19]

“except for those who bear witness to the truth knowingly” – i.e., that there is no god except Allaah (laa ilaaha ill-Allaah) – “and they know” – in their hearts the meaning of the words that they utter with their lips. [al-Zukhruf 43:86]

It is narrated in al-Saheeh from ‘Uthmaan (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of

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Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever dies knowing that there is no god except Allaah will enter Paradise."

The second condition is certainty, in the sense that the one who says these words is absolutely certain of their meaning. Faith is not sufficient unless it is based on certain knowledge with no element of speculation, let alone doubt. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Only those are the believers who have believed in Allaah and His Messenger, and afterward doubt not but strive with their wealth and their lives for the Cause of Allaah. Those! They are the truthful"[al-Hujuraat 49:15]

The sincerity of their faith in Allaah and His Messenger is conditional upon there being no element of doubt therein, As for the doubter, he is one of the hypocrites. In al-Saheeh it is narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'Bear witness that there is no god except Allaah and that I am the Messenger of Allaah, for no person meets Allaah with these two, not doubting in them, but he will enter Paradise.'" According to another report: "No person meets Allaah with these two, not doubting in them, and is denied Paradise."

And it was also narrated from Abu Hurayrah in a lengthy hadeeth that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) sent him and said, "Whoever you meet behind this wall who bears witness that there is no god except Allaah, believing in it with certainty in his heart, then give him the glad tidings of Paradise."

Thus we see that a person's entering Paradise for saying these words is conditional upon his believing in them with certainty in his heart, with no element of doubt. If this condition is not met the target is not met.

The third condition is acceptance and submission to what these words imply, both in one's heart

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as well as verbally. Allaah has told us the stories of those who came before, who were saved by their acceptance of these words from the punishment of those who had rejected them. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“(It will be said to the angels): ‘Assemble those who did wrong, together with their companions (from the devils) and what they used to worship,

Instead of Allaah, and lead them on to the way of flaming Fire (Hell);

But stop them, verily, they are to be questioned.

What is the matter with you? Why do you not help one another (as you used to do in the world)?’

Nay, but that Day they shall surrender.

And they will turn to one another and question one another.

They will say: ‘It was you who used to come to us from the right side (i.e., from the right side of one of us and beautify for us every evil, enjoin on us polytheism, and stop us from the truth, i.e. Islamic Monotheism and from every good deed).’

They will reply: ‘Nay, you yourselves were not believers.

And we had no authority over you. Nay! But you were Taaghoon (transgressing) people (polytheists, and disbelievers).

So now the Word of our Lord has been justified against us, that we shall certainly (have to) taste (the torment).

So we led you astray because we were ourselves astray.’

Then verily, that Day, they will (all) share in the torment.

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Certainly, that is how We deal with Al-Mujrimoon (polytheists, sinners, disbelievers, criminals, the disobedient to Allaah).

Truly, when it was said to them: Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah (none has the right “to be worshipped but Allaah),” they puffed themselves up with pride (i.e. denied it).

And (they) said: ‘Are we going to abandon our aalihah (gods) for the sake of a mad poet?’”[al-Saffaat 37:22-36]

So Allaah has made the reason and cause of their punishment their arrogant refusal to say Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah, and their disbelief in the one who brought this message, so that they did not negate what this word negates and they did not affirm what it affirms, rather they said, arrogantly denouncing:

“ ‘Has he made the aalihah (gods) (all) into One Ilaah (God — Allaah). Verily, this is a curious thing!’

And the leaders among them went about (saying): ‘Go on, and remain constant to your aalihah (gods)! Verily, this is a thing designed (against you)!’”[Saad 38:5]

So Allaah showed them to be liars and threw their words back at them through the words of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). He said (interpretation of the meaning):

“Nay! he (Muhammad) has come with the truth (i.e. Allaah’s religion — Islamic Monotheism and this Qur’aan) and he confirms the Messengers (before him who brought Allaah’s religion — Islamic Monotheism)”[al-Saffaat 37:37]

Then He said concerning those who accept it (interpretation of the meaning):

“Save the chosen slaves of Allaah (i.e. the true believers of Islamic Monotheism).

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For them there will be a known provision (in Paradise),

Fruits; and they shall be honoured,

In the Gardens of Delight (Paradise)”[al-Saffaat 37:40-43]

In al-Saheeh it is narrated from Abu Moosa (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The guidance and knowledge with which Allaah has sent me is like abundant rain which falls on the land. Some of the land absorbs the water and brings forth much grass and vegetation. And some of (the rain) falls on another part of the land which is like a smooth plain and does not hold the water, so no vegetation grows. That is the likeness of the one who understands the religion of Allaah and benefits from that with which Allaah has sent me, so he learns and acts, and the likeness of the one who pays no heed and does not accept the guidance of Allaah with which I have been sent.

The fourth condition is following that which is indicated, as opposed to not following it. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And whosoever submits his face (himself) to Allaah, while he is a Muhsin (good-doer, i.e. performs good deeds totally for Allaah’s sake), then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold” - i.e., Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah - “And to Allaah return all matters for decision”[Luqmaan 31:22]

What is meant by “submitting one’s face” is following, when one is also a doer of good and a believer in Tawheed. Whoever does not submit his face to Allaah and is not a doer of good has not grasped the most trustworthy handhold. This is what is meant by the following aayah (interpretation of the meaning):

“And whoever disbelieves, let not his disbelief grieve you (O Muhammad). To Us is their return, and We shall inform them what they have done...”[Luqmaan 31:23]

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According to a saheeh hadeeth, the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “none of you truly believes until his desire is in accordance with that which I have brought.” This is the ultimate meaning of following.

The fifth condition is truthfulness, as opposed to lying. This means that one says it (Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah) sincerely from the heart, with harmony between what is in the heart and what is said on the lips. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: ‘We believe,’ and will not be tested.

And We indeed tested those who were before them. And Allaah will certainly make (it) known (the truth of) those who are true, and will certainly make (it) known (the falsehood of) those who are liars, (although Allaah knows all that before putting them to test)”[al-‘Ankaboot 29:2-3]

And He said concerning the hypocrites who spoke these words falsely (interpretation of the meaning):

“And of mankind, there are some (hypocrites) who say: ‘We believe in Allaah and the Last Day,’ while in fact they believe not.

They (think to) deceive Allaah and those who believe, while they only deceive themselves, and perceive (it) not!

In their hearts is a disease (of doubt and hypocrisy) and Allaah has increased their disease. A painful torment is theirs because they used to tell lies” [al-Baqarah 2:8-10]

In al-Saheehayn it is narrated from Mu’aadh ibn Jabal (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, “there is no one who bears witness that there is no god except Allaah and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger, sincerely from the

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heart, but Allaah will make him forbidden for the Fire.”

The sixth condition is sincerity, which means that actions are free from any element of shirk. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Surely, the religion (i.e. the worship and the obedience) is for Allaah only [al-Zumar 39:3]

“Say (O Muhammad): ‘Allaah Alone I worship by doing religious deeds sincerely for His sake only’”[al-Zumar 39:14]

In al-Saheeh it is narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The most deserving of my intercession are those who say Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah sincerely from the heart or from the soul.”

The seventh condition is love for this word and for what it implies and indicates, and love for the people who act upon it and adhere to its conditions and hate whoever or whatever goes against it. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And of mankind are some who take (for worship) others besides Allaah as rivals (to Allaah). They love them as they love Allaah”[al-Baqarah 2:165]

Allaah tells us that those who believe love Allaah more, because they do not associate anything with Him in that love, as is done by those among the mushrikeen who claim to love Him but who also take others as rivals to Him whom they love as they love Him.

In al-Saheehayn it is narrated from Anas that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “No one of you truly believes until I am more beloved to him than his son, his father and all of mankind.”