



Core Curriculum

3 Foundations of Islam - Obligatory Acts

3.6 **Tawalla and Tabarra, its Basics and Purpose**

INTRODUCTION

Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahīm, As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh. Peace be upon you brothers and sisters.

Welcome back to the Muslim Converts Channel!

The last two elements of the the furū‘ al-dīn are called tawalla and tabarra. Tawalla is to love and follow Allah, the Prophet Muhammad (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt. Tabarra means to disassociate from people who are against Allah, the Messenger of Allah and his Ahl al-Bayt (as).

Tawalla and tabarra are what ground us in our religious lives. They provide for us the guiding platform and gauging basis of our actions, including Commanding the Good and Forbidding Evil. In this lesson, we will go over what exactly these terms mean, their purpose and connection with the rest of the furū‘ al-dīn.

BODY OF TEXT

It is that of which Allah gives good tidings to His servants who believe and do righteous deeds. Say, [O Muhammad], "I do not ask you for this message any payment [but] only good will through kin [family]." And whoever commits a good deed - We will increase for him good therein. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Appreciative. (Chapter 42, verse 23 of the Holy Qur’an)

Tawalla is conventionally defined as love for the Prophet (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (as). Love of God is obviously a no-brainer here! Similarly, tabarra is generally translated as a command to disassociate oneself from the enemies of the Prophet (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (as).

So, let's start with the first one! What is tawalla? Tawalla comes from the root word walā' in Arabic which means friendship and allegiance. Tawalla is therefore a form of love, friendship and allegiance one has towards the Prophet (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (as). But it doesn't stop there!

Tawalla is an umbrella term, meaning that this love and friendship is also inclusive of people who also love the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt (as). So this means that we should love people who love the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt.

The word tabarra comes from the word barā'a which means to free oneself or disassociate oneself from something. Tabarra thus means to disassociate from people who hate the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt.

So for example, if you meet someone who loves Yazid and this someone is fully aware of what Yazid did to Imam al-Husayn (as), then it would be one's duty to disassociate from such a person. Similarly, anyone who follows in the footsteps of Yazid, embodying his evil (like many modern oppressors), one must also disassociate from him or her. This of course is unless you want to educate them.

So what's the point of dividing the world and people into these two groups? Can't we all just get along? There are a few reasons why we have tawalla and tabarra in Islam:

1. Tawalla and Tabarra are ways of centering our spiritual ourselves, that is, creating an identity. How do we know what is right and what is wrong? What is Islamic and what is not? What is a sin, what is not? We need a gauge, we need a center to guide us. Tawalla shows us who is on the right camp, and who is worthy of our friendship and love. Tabarra does the opposite, it shows us where not to go. By having the Prophet

(s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (as) as our reference point and source of knowledge, we learn what is truth and what is authentically good and bad. In this sense, we find the way to authentic Islamic beliefs and practices.

2. As Commanding the Good and Forbidding Evil are external actions, tawalla and tabarra are the internal dispositions that allow these two actions to happen. Without tawalla and tabarra, there can be no amr bi al-marūf and nahī ‘an al-munkar.
3. Tabarra is the grounds through which we are able to judge the activities of humankind. Its what allows us to call a spade a spade, that is, it allows us to call what is wrong wrong. Tabarra is the guiding light that allows us to recognize and speak out against evil. If we don't protest against evil, it will be allowed to flourish in the Islamic community. Evil grows when good men and women don't do anything about it.
4. Tawalla and tabarra are a means to save our souls from bad influences. The Prophet Muhammad (s) once said that “a person follows the religion of his friends,” meaning that most people will be influenced by the beliefs and behavior of their friends to some degree.
5. Tawalla and tabarra teaches us to chose our friends and surroundings carefully for they can make or break us in the Hereafter.

Until Next Time, Thank you for watching. As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh