

Dr Zoheir Esmail

Visions of *Tawhīd*: Sayyid Shubbar's reconciliation of Imām al-Sajjād's words in the 28th Supplication of *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādiya*, "You have, my Lord, numerical oneness!" (*laka yā ilāhī waḥdānīyat al-ʿadad!*)

While perhaps the most common conception of the Oneness of God in Islam is numerical oneness as opposed to the many gods of the pagan Arabs, clear statements attributed to the Imams specify that such an understanding of *tawhīd* is mistaken. What then is the correct vision of *tawhīd* and how can we conceive of oneness outside of the realm of numbers? In his investigation of the statement "You have, my Lord, numerical oneness", Sayyid ʿAbdullāh Shubbar attempts to reconcile the statement's outward commitment to a numerical conception of *tawhīd* with an agreement amongst Shīʿī scholars that *tawhīd* is not numerical. In his *Maṣābīḥ al-anwār fī ḥall mushkilāt al-akhbār*, a book dedicated to reconciling difficult *aḥādīth*, Sayyid Shubbar summarises and evaluates different opinions produced by Shīʿī scholars who have attempted to explain this statement. His evaluation gives us a window through which we can observe different conceptions of how numerical oneness can be reconciled with the visions of *tawhīd* held by the *ʿulamāʾ* beyond numerical oneness. In this paper I will examine the various opinions presented by Sayyid Shubbar, showing the importance of rational discussion in forming a coherent picture of Shīʿī scriptural sources on Islam's most fundamental principle and how that process results in a more intricate visions of *tawhīd*



Dr Zoheir Esmail

Independent Researcher

Zoheir Ali Esmail began his Islamic education studying Arabic at the University of Damascus while studying introductory Hawza studies. He then continued his education in London and also gained an M.A. in the Islamic sciences from Middlesex University. He then moved to Iran to pursue further studies where he obtained an M.A. in Islamic Mysticism from the Hawza of Imam al-Khumayni in Qom. He was awarded a doctorate in Islamic philosophy from the University of Exeter in 2016.