



"Al-Ikhlās - The Unity of the Holy Quran"

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The chapter Al-Ikhlās (The Unity) was revealed at Makkah. It is so named because the belief in the Unity of Allah has been purified of all kinds of shirk (polytheism) and a clear explanation of it has been given. In this chapter, too, a comprehensive elucidation of the Unity of Allah has also been provided.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Say: He, Allah is One.

Allah is He on Whom all depend.

He begets not, nor is He begotten;

And none is like Him.

In this chapter, the Unity of Allah has been perfected from every aspect. We are directed to say: Allah is ONE. The word Huwa (He) points towards the inner nature of man which attests to the existence of Allah. It is possible for this faculty to be suppressed for a time in the gaiety and intoxication of this world's life, but it can never be effaced. Whenever man finds himself in difficulty or pain or feels his own utter helplessness and weakness, his nature involuntarily and visibly reaches out to that Supreme Being in search of protection for it knows that it can obtain help from that Source just as it is the nature of an innocent child to turn spontaneously to his mother when he is suffering pain, difficulty or loneliness. The spirit of man naturally acknowledges the existence of Allah, and here the word Huwa (He), is an indication of that inherent tendency in man.

Some Sufis even consider Huwa (He) as one of the names of Allah and they are constantly engaged in the repetition of this word (Huwa). In other words, Allah commands our Holy Prophet (pbuh) thus:

"O Muhammad! Prophet of Allah, you who are teaching the world true, authentic and deep knowledge of Allah, tell the people that that Being Whom their inner selves acknowledge, that is, Allah, the compendium of all perfect attributes and the perfect One in beauty and goodness, is Allah Who is One and without any partner."

Here the word Ahad (One) is used because it expresses the Unity of Allah to the highest degree of perfection. This means that He is One in His person, One in His

attributes and One in His actions also. In fact, there is not the slightest possibility of duality in Him.

Today, Science, after exhaustive research, has established the fact that the peculiar nature of all things and their inherent powers are all working towards one purpose. This proves beyond doubt that the Power that has overall control of everything, the One Supreme Law-maker and Regulator Who guides each one to its appointed goal of perfection is One.

In spite of all those apparently and mutually contradictory powers in the world, the fact remains that all things are working towards one purpose, and there is only one Almighty Being Who guides them along their diverse paths, so that each one may attain its perfection. In short, all men of Science are agreed upon one point, and that is, there can only be One Being Who regulates the affairs of the world.

A Christian Father proudly presents an outdated style of logic whose stupidity arouses involuntary laughter. He argues that when one uses the number one, the number two must necessarily follow. Therefore, when one says God is One, then two, or a second god, has to come. Perhaps someone should point out to him that if that proposition is correct, that is, when one says one, two must follow, then when one says three, the number four inevitably has to follow.

NOTE: In the Holy Qur'an, two words are used for one: wahid and ahad. Wahid means one or the first of a series, whereas ahad means one, after which nothing is to follow.

In short, this proclamation of the Holy Qur'an leads to the conclusion that God is One – that God Who contains within Himself all the perfect attributes and to Whose existence man's inner nature bears witness. And in using the singular number ahad for Him, the intention is to demonstrate that His unity is so perfect that He has no partner in His Being nor in His attributes nor in His works.

Now, it is evident that shirk (polytheism) is of three kinds. Firstly, that of dependence on means; secondly, that of lineage; and thirdly, that of likeness to oneself. In this chapter, the Holy Qur'an refers to the three kinds of shirk and it proclaims that Allah, Who is One, is above need of and free from these three constraints.

We shall consider the first kind of polytheism - dependence on means. If, like us, as regards His attributes and works, Allah is dependent on other means, then it is clear that for the manifestation of His attributes and the execution of his works, these things must have come into being together with Him or must have pre-dated His existence and this is shirk (polytheism). For example, in order to see, we need eyes and light; in order to hear, ears and air-waves. If we wish to build something,

we must have hands and material. If Allah is like this, too, then of necessity all these things would have to exist together with him or before Him, and without them, neither His attributes nor His God-head could come into operation. Therefore this is the greatest form of shirk (polytheism).

So, in order to function, we, human beings, depend on the laws of nature. Accordingly, when we intend to do something, we resort to the laws of nature for we need them and can do nothing without them. Similarly, if Allah is in need of the laws of nature, and He has no alternative but to turn to them in order to function, then it would be necessary for those laws to be in existence before Him in order for His God-head to operate, and if those laws were non-existent, then, Allah forbid, He could not have done anything. Thus those philosophers who believe that Allah is limited and in need of laws are really preaching polytheism. In order to refute all forms of polytheism, the Holy Qur'an says: Allahus-Samad. Samad means the One Who is Himself above all need, and the One to Whom all turn for the fulfilment of their needs. In fact, He is the Maker and Creator of everything. All depend on Him for their birth, their living, and all other kinds of needs. And He is above need of all things to such an extent that He is totally free of all those laws and means on which we, human beings, depend. Rather, all those laws and means depend on Him, and owe their existence to Him. In fact, laws and means are another name for the Divine works under which the whole of creation operates, and from which they cannot deviate even to the slightest degree. Thus one of the characteristics of Allah is that He is Ghalibu 'ala amrihi, that is, Allah has total command over His laws and means, because He is the Master of the Kingdom and from Him emanate all laws and means to which the whole of creation is intricately bound. The meaning of all this is that Allah is perfect and unlimited in His person, attributes and deeds, and in Him there is no trace of polytheism. In short, dependence on means, which is the root of all polytheism, has been eradicated, and thus the Unity of Allah has been perfected in all respects.

Now, let us examine if there is any family relationship regarding Allah. Family relationship is a kind of dependence, and it is the opposite of the attribute samad, which means self sufficient and on whom others depend.

Family relationship necessitates a person being a father of someone or a son of someone, that is, he gives birth to someone or is born of someone. This is how kinship is perpetuated. But when there is a chain of descendants, the concept of the Unity of Allah is destroyed, for then there will have to be a dynasty of gods. That is why Allah says Lam yalid wa lam yulad (He begets not, nor is He begotten). And in this simple statement, all false doctrines of the Christians and the polytheists have been refuted. Many Arab polytheists had ascribed daughters to Allah and used to worship them as goddesses, whilst sun-worshippers and polytheists believed in deities born of virgin mothers and considered them as sons of God. In this way, when the religion of the sun-worshippers got mixed up with

Christianity, and Christians, too, became immersed in the religion of the sun-worshippers, then the belief in Jesus as the Son of God was adopted, and consequently Mary was believed to be the mother of God – so they started to believe in a God, a son of God and a mother of God.

The Holy Qur'an eradicated all these wrong beliefs in these two statements – Lam yalid wa lam yulad (He begets not, nor is He begotten). In other words, there is no chain of procreation with Allah. In fact, He is Self-subsisting and has no beginning or end.

The following is a conversation between a Christian and the author on the question of the Unity of God:

Christian Father: "Do you know who the Messiah is?"

Author: "Yes, I know who he is."

Christian Father: "Do you believe in him?"

Author: "Yes, I believe in him."

Christian Father: "What is your belief regarding him?"

Author: "I believe him to be a prophet of God."

Christian Father: "Then you believe in nothing."

Author: "What should I believe then?"

Christian Father: "You should accept him as the Son of God."

Author: "O! Does God have a son? Well, if He has a son, then there must be a father and a grandfather, too! For the existence of a son pre-supposes a process of procreation with God, and if that is the case, then it will be evident that God has to be born and He has to die too, for that is how the law of procreation works in our world. For in human beings, there is always the fear of extinction, and so God has instituted the process of procreation so that man can be saved from becoming extinct. As plants, animals, and man too, all have to face death, provision has been made for the perpetuation of their species through the law of procreation. On the other hand, things like the sun and the mountains do not die and so they do not need any father or son. Therefore, if there is a process of procreation in God, then He is bound to die, and so if you believe that Jesus is the son of God, then God, the Father will have to die leaving his son to be His inheritor. That is why the Holy Qur'an states lam yalid, that is, that God has no son. This is then followed by the argument lam yulad, that is, He is not the son of anyone because if there is

a son, there must be a father. On the other hand, if He has no father and He exists from eternity, then He cannot have a son for He exists from the beginning and will remain forever. Thus He does not need a son."

On hearing this line of argument, the Christian Father was dumb-founded and replied: "No, no, God has no father. He does not die. He is Eternal and His son is also Eternal."

Author: "Then why do you say God and son? You should say, God and brothers or God and partners, for you must have a good reason for regarding one as Father and the other as son."

Christian Father: "Hold on, hold on. Let me explain it in another way. Consider the Father as embodying Justice and the son Mercy. For example, let's say that you and I have committed a crime and the Judge has passed a sentence of punishment against us. But if the Supreme ruler of the country desires to remit the sentence through his mercy, he cannot set us free because this will go against the demands of justice. However, if he sends his son to bear the sentence instead of us, then in this way, he will be able to maintain justice and at the same time we shall benefit from his mercy."

Author: "The definition of justice is that the criminal should be punished for his crime, and the definition of mercy is that the criminal is forgiven for his crime. The definition of wrong-doing and injustice is that the real culprit should be set free and an innocent person be punished in his place. Thus according to your proposition, God, the Father neither showed mercy nor justice, but instead committed a great injustice by putting on the Cross His innocent son for the crimes of others."

On hearing this, the Christian Father became speechless.

We now come to the third kind of partnership – that of likeness or equality. The Holy Qur'an says: *Lam yakullahu kufuwan ahad*, that is, none is like Him, and none is equal to Him. In other words, when there is no likeness to Him in attributes and in works, how can there be a partner to Him? Likeness can be of two kinds – either God is dependent on means, in which case He will be in need of someone else, and there will exist the possibility of someone else like Him or an equal to Him. But since He is not in need of anything, but instead everything is dependent on Him, how can there be a likeness to Him?

The second kind of likeness is through procreation. That is, if he is one of a family, then there will be a likeness to Him. But since that is not the case, then the likelihood of one similar to Him does not come about, and there is no possibility of duality in Him. In this way, those who believe that God has a wife have been

refuted as well as those sun-worshippers who believe in the existence of two gods – one the creator of goodness called Yazdan, and the other, the creator of evil called Ahraman.

The Holy Qur'an has told us that all these beliefs are erroneous; for when God is perfect in beauty and goodness, and He is the possessor of all beautiful and perfect attributes, and He is predominant in His attributes and actions and also limitless, and all depend on Him, while He is above everything, and He exists from eternity and will remain forever and is far removed from the law of procreation, then how can there be an equal to Him or one like Him?

In short, in this chapter, the Unity of Allah has been explained in a perfect manner, and any possibility of partnership with Him in His being, in His attributes, and in His actions has been ruled out, and all possible arguments in favour of partnership with Him have been negated by irrefutable reasons and arguments. Furthermore, the all-encompassing knowledge and the Unity of Allah have been portrayed in a pure, perfect and unparalleled manner. That is why the teaching of the Qur'an has been brought to an end in this chapter, for after this there are two more chapters called al-mu'awwazatain, that is, prayers seeking refuge in Allah. In this petition, protection is sought against hidden and manifest evils.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said that this chapter (Al-Ikhlās) is one third of the Holy Qur'an for there is no doubt that one third of the Holy Qur'an deals with the Unity of Allah, the essence of which has been distilled in this chapter.