**Islam and other religions in respect to the concept of deity**

All religion, as stated before, which had been revealed to the Prophets of various nations was the same in essence, but in the course of time its message had been misinterpreted and it had become mixed up with superstitions and had degenerated into magical practices and meaningless rituals. The conception of God, the very core of religion, had become debased by (a) the anthromorphic tendency of turning God into a being with human shape and passions, (b) by deification of the angels, (c) by the association of other personalities with Godhead of the one and only God (as in Hinduism and Christianity), (d) by making the Prophets or some godly persons into incarnations of God (e.g., Jesus Christ in Christianity, the Buddha in Mahayana Buddhism, Krishna and Rama in Hinduism), and (e) by the personification of the attributes of God into separate Divine persons (e.g., the Christian Trinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost and the Hindu Trimutri of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva). The Holy Prophet of Islam Muhammad (God’s peace and blessing be upon him and his household) rejected all such theological trends and restored the conception of God to its pristine purity as the only Creator, Sustainer and Master of all the creation (*Rabbu’l-alamin ve ilahuhum ve malikuhum*). Thus, as John Davenpurt puts it,

among many excellencies of which the Quran may justly boast are two eminently conspicuous: the one being the tone of awe and reverence which it always observes when speaking of, or referring to, the Deity, to Whom it never attributes human frailties and passions; the other the total absence throughout it of all impure, immoral and indecent ideas, expressions, narratives, etc., blemishes, which, it is much to be regretted, of too frequent occurrence in the Jewish scriptures.

***Tawhid* in the universe and as the highest conception of deity**

It is *Tawhid*, that is the Principle of Divine Unity and Oneness, which is clearly observed throughout the universe. Whoever takes a look at himself and his environment can easily discern that everything depends upon this basic principle of  God-revealed Religion.  Parts of the human body, for example, are in close cooperation with one another, and each cell of it is so connected with the whole body that it is impossible not to conclude that He Who has created the single cell is also He Who created the whole body. Likewise, the elements comprising the universe are interrelated and in harmony with each other and the universe as a whole. One cannot help believing that the entire universe from particles to the galaxies has been brought into existence by the same Creator, and  further that the motion of particles observed in an atom is the same as that is observed in the solar system. Everything originates from ‘one’ and eventually will return to ‘one’, as stated in the Qur’an: “*We originated the first creation, so We shall bring it back (to its former state) again.*” ([21](http://www.theholybook.org/TheHolyBook/021.TheProphets.html):104) A tree, for instance, grows out of a seed or a stone to result finally in a seed or stone. These visible evidences explain why an orderliness and harmony are observed in the whole universe because it operates in strict obedience to the One Who has established that order; in other words, it is directly operated by the Creator, the One, the All-omnipotent and the All-knowing. Otherwise, as pointed out in the Qur’an “*each god would have taken off what he created and some of them would have risen up over others; had there been gods in earth and heaven other than God, they both had been in disorder.*” ([21](http://www.theholybook.org/TheHolyBook/021.TheProphets.html):22)

*Tawhid* is the highest conception of deity, the knowledge of which God has sent to mankind in all ages through His Prophets. It was this same knowledge which all the Prophets including Moses, Jesus and the Prophet Muhammad (God’s blessings be upon them all) brought to mankind. Men became guilty of polytheism or idol-worship after the  demise of their Prophets only because they deviated from the pure teachings of the Prophets. They relied upon their own faulty reasoning, false perceptions and biased interpretations in order to satisfy their lusts, which they would be unable to do with a *Tawhid*-based system where they would have to obey the commandments of the One Supreme God.

“The foremost in religion”, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, the Fourth Caliph, is reported to have said, “is God’s knowledge, the perfection of His knowledge is to testify to Him, the perfection of testifying to Him is to believe in His Oneness, the perfection of believing in His Oneness is to regard Him as pure and the perfection of His purity is to deny all kinds of negative attributes about Him.”  He is infinite and eternal; He is self-existent and self-sufficient. As stated in the Qur’an, “He is God, One, needy of nothing and Everlasting Refuge; He begets not, nor is He begotten; and there is none like unto Him. Vision perceives Him not, and He perceives all vision. Nothing whatsoever (is there) like the like of Him; and He (alone) is the All-Hearing and All-Seeing.” In the words of Ali again, “He is Being but not through the phenomenon of coming into being. He exists but not from non-existence. He is with everything but not by physical nearness. He is different from everything but not by physical separation. He acts but without the accompaniment of movements and instruments. He is the One, only such that there is none with whom He keeps company or whom He misses in his absence.”

God’s Attributes cannot be transferred nor could they be present in another since they are infinite. A being who is incapable of remaining alive by himself cannot give life to others. The one who cannot protect his own power is definitely unsuited to govern the vast universe. The more one reflects upon the matter, the firmer would be one’s conviction that all the divine powers and attributes must exist in one and the same being alone.

**The implications of *Tawhid* in individual and social lives of people**

One who believes in *Tawhid* can never be narrow-minded in his outlook. His belief in One God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Master of the east and the west and Sustainer of the entire universe, leads him to look upon everything as belonging to the same Lord, to Whom he himself belongs, so that he does not regard anything in the universe as an alien. His sympathy, love, and service do not remain confined to any particular race, color or group, and he comes to comprehend the significance of the Prophetic saying: “O servants of God, be brethren!”

Belief in *Tawhid* produces highest degree of self-respect and self-esteem in man. The believer knows that God alone is the Possessor of all power, and that none besides Him can benefit or harm a person, or provide for his needs, or give or take away life or wield authority and influence. This conviction makes him indifferent to, and independent and fearless of, all powers other than those of God. He never bows his head in homage to any of God’s creatures, nor does he hold out his hand to anyone else.

The follower of polytheism is one who, even though he be a despotic king or president, will abase himself and bow his head before whomsoever he finds it of advantage to do so. The follower of *Tawhid*, however, is one who never debases himself to worship any created being no matter how powerful and rich he might be, and never would take anything, even if it were Paradise, other than by God’s pleasure and approval. The follower of polytheism is one, who, even though he is harsh and unyielding, prostrates himself before him from whom he expects an atom of benefit, while the follower of *Tawhid*, although humble and mild, never bows down to anyone without the approval of his Creator. The follower of polytheism is proud of himself but, in essence, he is absolutely impotent since he has nothing to rely upon other than himself, whereas the follower of *Tawhid*, although he is naturally weak and powerless as a human being, is  powerful enough to resist the whole world by the power of his Lord. While the follower of polytheism is selfish and arrogant since his purpose in life is to satisfy his worldly desires, the follower of *Tawhid* is virtuous and altruistic because his  purpose is to gain God’s approval by working for His pleasure. The boisterous pride of power and wealth can have no room in the heart of one who believes in *Tawhid*, because he knows that whatever he possesses has been bestowed upon him by God, and that God can take away just as easily as He can give.

The follower of *Tawhid* has the conviction that there is no other means of success and salvation for him except purity of soul and righteousness of behavior. He has perfect faith in God, Who is above all need, is related to none, is absolutely just, and none has any hand or influence on the exercise of His Divine power. This belief creates in him the consciousness that, unless he lives rightly and acts justly, he cannot succeed. No influence or underhand activity can save him from ruin. As against this, the followers of polytheism always live on false hopes. Some of them believe that Jesus, whom they regard as the son of God, has atoned for their sins; some think that they are God’s favorites, and accordingly will not be punished; others believe that their ‘idols or saints’ will intercede with God on their behalf; while others make offerings to their deities and believe that by so bribing them they have acquired a license for all frivolities and ill-deeds and can do whatever they like. Such false beliefs keep them always entangled in the meshes of sin and evil deeds, and depending on their deities they neglect to purify their souls and live pure and good lives.



**Aqoolo qawli hadha wastaghfirullaha li wa lakum**

Böylece birinci hutbe bitmiş olur ve hatip oturur. Otururken için den şöyle duâ eder:

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**Second Khutbah**

The believer in the Divine Unity does not become hopeless and disappointed under any circumstances. His firm faith in God, Who is the Master of all the treasures of the earth and the heavens, and Whose grace and bounty have no limit and powers are infinite, imparts to his heart extraordinary consolation, fills it with satisfaction and keeps it filled with hope. In this world he might meet with rejection at all doors, nothing herein might serve his ends, all means might, one after another, desert him; but faith in, and dependence on, God never leave him, and upon their strength he goes on struggling. Such a profound confidence can result from no other belief than belief in One God. This belief produces in man a very strong degree of determination, patient perseverance, and trust in God. When he makes up his mind and devotes his resources to fulfill the Divine Commands in order to secure God’s pleasure, he is sure that he has the support and backing of the Lord of the Universe. As to polytheists and atheists, they have small hearts; they depend on limited powers; therefore in hours of trouble they are soon overwhelmed by despair and, frequently, they commit suicide. The testimony of Professor Joad is very explicit on this point. He wrote about the West in 1950s.

For the first time in history there is coming to maturity a generation of men and women who have no religion, and feel no need for one. They are content to ignore it. Also they are very unhappy, the suicide rate is abnormally high. (The Present and Future of the Religion)

As opposed to this, what a non-Muslim historian, not in any way sympathetic to the creed of Islam, writes about the Islamic conception of *Tawhid* is worth mentioning:

In this uncompromising monotheism, with its simple, enthusiastic faith in the supreme rule of a transcendental being, lies the chief strength of Islam. Its adherents enjoy a consciousness of contentment and resignation unknown among followers of most creeds. Suicide is rare in Muslim lands. (Phillip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, 1951, p:129)

Belief in *Tawhid*  inspires bravery in man. There are two things which make a man cowardly: (i) fear of death and love of safety, and (ii) the idea that there is someone else besides God who can take away life, and that man, by adopting certain devices, can ward off death. Belief in there is no deity but God purges the mind of both these ideas. The first idea goes from his mind because he knows that his life, and his property, and everything else really belong to God, and he becomes ready to sacrifice his all for God’s approval. He gets rid of the second idea since he knows that no weapon, no man or no power can take away his  life; God alone has the power to do so. A time has been ordained for him, and all the forces of the world combined cannot take away anyone’s life a moment before the appointed time, nor can they delay his death an instant. It is because of this firm belief in one God and dependence upon Him only that no one is braver than a believer.

Belief in the Oneness of God  creates an attitude of peace and contentment, purges the mind of subtle passions and jealousy, envy and greed, and keeps away the ideas of resorting to base and unfair means for achieving success. The believer understands that wealth is in God’s hands, that honor, power, reputation and authority are subjected to His Will, and that He bestows them as He wishes; and that man’s duty is only to endeavor and struggle fairly. He knows that success and failure depend upon God’s grace; if He wills to give, no power in the world can prevent Him from doing so; and if He does not will it, no power can force Him but the believer never forgets that it is incumbent upon him to try his  hardest to deserve God’s grace. On the other hand, the polytheists and atheists consider success and failure to come solely from their own efforts or by the help of earthly powers without taking God’s grace and Will into consideration. Therefore they always remain slaves to cupidity and envy. To achieve success, they never hesitate to have recourse to bribery, flattery, conspiracy, and other kinds of base and unfair means.

The belief in the Divine Unity makes man obey and observe the Divine Law.  One who has belief in it is certain that God knows everything hidden or open, and is nearer to him than his own jugular vein. If he commits a sin in a secluded corner and in the darkness of night, God knows it; He even knows our unformed thoughts and intentions, bad or good, of which we may not ourselves be aware. We can hide things from everyone, but we cannot hide anything from God; we can evade everyone, but it is impossible to evade God’s grasp. The firmer a man’s belief is in this respect, the more observant will he be of God’s commands. It is for this reason that the first and the most important condition for being a Muslim is to have firm and sincere faith in the Oneness of God.

Faith in One God is the most important and fundamental principle in the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and God’s blessings be upon him). It is the bedrock of Islam and the mainspring of its power. All other beliefs, commands and laws of Islam stand firm on this foundation.

Lastly, it is of much significance to quote the remarks of a famous Italian orientalist, Dr. Laura Veccia Vaglieri, concerning the universal spirit of the Islamic *Tawhid* (Apologia dell Islamismo, translated into English as ‘An Interpretation of Islam’ by Dr. Caselli, pp. 30-33):

The Prophet, with a voice which was inspired by a deep communion with his Maker, preached the purest monotheism to the worshippers of fetish and the followers of a corrupted Christianity and Judaism. He put himself in open conflict with those regressive tendencies of mankind which lead to the association of other beings with the Creator.

In order to lead men to a belief in one God, he did not delude them with happenings which deviate from the normal course of nature. Rather, he simply invited them, without asking them to leave the realm of reality, to consider the Universe and its laws. Being confident of the resultant belief in the one and indispensable God, he simply let men read in the book of life.

Thanks to Islam, paganism in its various forms was defeated. The concept of the Universe, the practices of religion, and the customs of social life were each liberated from all the monstrosities which had degraded them, and human minds were made free of prejudice. Man finally realized his dignity.

Ibadallah; Ittekullaha ve atiu,