

UNDERSTANDING TAWHEED: THE
UNITY OF THE DIVINE BEING AND ITS
ROLE AS A LIVING FORCE IN ISLAMIC
THOUGHT

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Abstract

Tawheed, or the Unity of the Divine Being, is the foundational principle of Islamic belief, representing the absolute oneness and uniqueness of God. This concept is not just a theological doctrine but a living force that profoundly influences both individual and collective aspects of life in Islamic thought. Tawheed asserts that God is singular, without partners or equals, and that all creation is dependent on Him. It transcends categorization into philosophical classifications like theism, pantheism, or deism, as it encompasses elements of all while remaining uniquely Qur'anic in nature. Prominent thinkers like Allama Iqbal emphasized that Tawheed should not be confined to abstract theology but should serve as a dynamic and transformative force, guiding the moral and spiritual growth of individuals and shaping the unity, dignity, and collective strength of the Muslim ummah. By internalizing the essence of Tawheed, believers cultivate a deep connection with God, which inspires personal responsibility, social justice, and a commitment to live in harmony with divine guidance.

Tawheed i.e 'Unity of the Divine Being' is the *sine qua non*, the most essential article of faith, according to the teachings of Islam. Being entirely indispensable and inviolable it admits of no compromises of any kind. Look at the categorical way the Qur'an asserts:

Ascribing partners to God is indeed a grievous iniquity and a great sin.¹
God has decided that He may forgive anyone He likes but He will not at all forgive those who set up partners with Him.²

Regarding the question as to what is the exact nature of Divine Unity a lot of confusion has been created by the philosophers of religion, in general, and by the neo-mu'tazilite modernist Qur'an scholars, in particular. Due to their characteristic habit of analysis, they have characterized the generic concept of the Unity of God into, for instance, the theistic, pantheistic and the deistic varieties which, in many respects, are recognizable as mutually exclusive though not collectively exhaustive. These various sections of thinkers have further tried to prove that the Qur'anic point of view in this connection belongs — safely and neatly — to the one or the other of these varieties only. They duly offer arguments allegedly supported with reference to the Sacred Text itself in order to logically demonstrate their respective points of view. But the basic confusion still remains unresolved. Given the analytical line of approach, it will in fact continue to be so because the spirit behind this classification and even the very nomenclature employed for the same is alien to the temperament of the Qur'an itself. Qur'anic attitude specially towards the realities of ultimate significance is uncompounded, simple and straightforward and admits of absolutely no categorization and no analysis. If at all we have to use the modern terminology we can affirm that the Qur'anic view of God has the so-called 'theistic, 'pantheistic' as well as 'deistic' **aspects** — all of them at the same time but none of them exclusively.

Qur'anic concept of God is theistic insofar as He is the One Who created the universe out of nothing,³ Who is powerful over every thing,⁴ Who listens to the prayers of men and answers them,⁵ Who is independent of all the worlds,⁶ Who alone continues to help human beings throughout their lives,⁷ and to Whom alone worship is due.⁸ And so on. This aspect of the Qur'anic teachings was specially highlighted by, among others, Sheikh Ahmad

Sirhindi⁹, the celebrated ‘*mujaddid* (religious re-constructionist) of the second millennium’. The relationship of man to God, according to him, is that of a servant carrying out the orders of his Supreme Lord: man is a servile, humble creation and God is beyond all beyond, then beyond all beyond, then beyond all beyond. Among the earliest Muslim theologians Abul Hasan al-Ash’ari and his followers were thorough-going theists. In their ontological moorings they specially emphasized it so exclusively and so thoroughly that in the face of it everything /everyone else, including human beings, become altogether impotent. Every quality being a sort of effectiveness and powerfulness, God has in fact all the qualities; natural objects have no qualities whatsoever inherent in themselves: They do not have even the quality of existence continuing for any measure of time unless perpetually granted to them by God Almighty. This led to their doctrine of Occasionalism¹⁰ as to the apparent relations among natural beings and objects including the causal relations. The renowned Imam Ghazali was too an Occasionalist in this sense.

The Qur’anic view of God is pantheistic insofar as He is the First and the Last, the Evident as well as the Hidden,¹¹ His throne extends over the heavens and the earth,¹² He is nearer to man than his very life-vein¹³ and He encompasses everything.¹⁴ And so on. This point of view was elaborated and adopted by, for example, Ibn Arabi,¹⁵ the mystic, for whom only God has the real existence; all else is evanescent and ephemeral. The universe, he says, was not created by God *ex nihilo* as a tangible ‘something else’, existing for all practical purposes independently and in its own right; it is for him simply a reflection, an effulgence emanating from Him as rays emanate from the sun or as fragrance emanates from a flower. In fact pantheism appears to be almost the official standpoint of all mysticism. One of the characteristics of a mystic’s gnosis of God is that it is entirely gripping and absorbing so that all other shades of consciousness are held in abeyance: for the gnostic nothing/none exists except God at least as long as the trance of that consciousness continues. This trance has naturally a hangover of its own and that justifies the pantheistic metaphysics. Otherwise also, as mystic experience is regarded as the most authentic source of knowledge in the mundane context what this experience discovers is the truth *par excellence!*

Metaphysical standpoint of the Qur’an is deistic insofar as it has asked its readers to inculcate in themselves the inductive spirit. Time and again they have been called upon to observe the course

of history, the '*ayyam Allah*'¹⁶ in the Qur'anic terminology, the behavior of the physical universe¹⁷ as well as the facts of their own mind, soul and consciousness¹⁸ so as to draw irresistible conclusions and generalizations therefrom. Obliquely, for some thinkers, it is implied in these directives that the phenomena of nature have uniformities inherent in themselves and causal principles independently operative among them which *ex hypothesi* are not supposed to be disturbed by any agent operating from elsewhere. This aspect of the Qur'anic teachings was specially emphasized by, for instance, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan,¹⁹ a nineteenth century religio-philosophical thinker of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan was a thoroughgoing naturalist. His basic thesis was that the Qur'an is the Word of God and nature is the work of God; so there can be no disharmony between the two. The former is His verbal promise; the latter, His practical promise. Both are trusted, inviolable documents in their respective ways. Nature once having been created and its laws once having been put into operation by a Perfect God, they need not, and must not now, be changed by Him in any way. Given that the laws of nature are the practical promises of God and given that God has taken upon Himself not to go against His promises and commitments, He in fact cannot change them. Hence no literal acceptance by Him of petitionary prayers addressed to Him. No occurrence of miraculous happenings in the sense of the violations of the laws of nature, and so on.

Whether a person reads theism, pantheism or deism into the Qur'an with almost the total exclusion of all other views, it can be easily recognized, ultimately depends on the particular temperament or attitude that he has. This attitude works as a sort of coloured glasses through which he looks at the Holy Script. Those, who have a natural affinity with the naive, indigenous and simple way the Qur'an was understood during the earliest times of Muslim history and those who have in Him and His entire scheme of things a robust faith untouched by discursive reason, have a tendency towards theism. Those, who have an infatuation for the Divine and harbor mystic leanings, an inclination to go beyond and behind the verbal garb and claim to have discovered the esoteric layer of meaning of the religious language, become pantheists. Those, who have a this-worldly, matter-of-fact scientific outlook on life, very easily develop a metaphysics of deism. Now, as the Qur'an is a book of guidance for all people and for all times, it has of necessity catered to the requirements of all these temperamental varieties. A person, who sincerely desires to have the truest understanding of

the Qur'anic concept of God *vis a vis* nature including human beings, must, to begin with, try his best to avoid the temptation of prefacing the Qur'an with his own personal preferences, prejudices, likes and dislikes and let the Book speak for itself. It is, no doubt, very difficult to undertake such a dispassionate study of the Book of God. However, once we are — if at all we are — successful in carrying it out, we shall find that the Qur'anic view of the Supreme Oneness of the Divine is simple but comprehensive and that it transcends all attempts at critical analyses and academic classifications.

Allama Iqbal, not very unjustifiably, claims — in fact takes an oath imprecating himself — that the views expressed by him on various problems are Qur'anic in essence and spirit. Likewise, the concept of Divine Unity given by him too may not be unequivocally bracketed into only one of the categories enumerated above; and also, positively, elements of all of them can be shown to have been woven into its formulation. There has since long been a heated controversy on the subject whether Iqbal, in his maturest views, was a theist or a pantheist and a lot of relevant textual evidence has been marshalled on both sides. The controversy has never been resolved and continues to be revisited again and again by Iqbal scholars and critics. Some of them strike a conciliatory note and say that Iqbal in fact subscribes to both these doctrines at the same time and his position thus supposed to have taken a distinct shape termed by them 'panentheism', meaning to say that God is transcendent above, as well as immanent in, the world. Iqbal, they point out, describes nature as a human interpretation put on the creative activity of the Absolute Ego²⁰ as the habit of Allah²¹, as 'God's behaviour',²² as 'a fleeting moment in the life of God'.²³ He also says that nature is to the Divine Self as character is to the human self.²⁴ Now, just as man stands revealed through his activities, his character and habits and thus in a sense can be declared identical with them but, at the same time, he transcends them too, so God is very much **in** nature but is not at all entirely exhausted by it. He is **above** and **beside** it also. I have in general no arguments to offer towards the settlement of this theist/pantheist controversy besides the ones that have already been occasionally given by very knowledgeable critics and scholars nor do I have enough space here to mention these arguments all over again. However, I would like to add at least one more dimension to this problem and that dimension is that the thought of Iqbal can be interpreted naturalistically (and so deistically) also. Some years ago, a renowned Iqbal scholar Prof. Abdul Qayyum

delivered the Annual Iqbal Memorial Lecture which was titled 'Naturalism of Iqbal'. The Lecture, as usual, was held under the auspices of the Department of Philosophy, University of the Punjab and hosted by the University itself.²⁵ It was well-documented and was well-received by the learned audience. As a philosopher of religion, the task which Iqbal had set before himself and which he very ably tried to carry out was, as the speaker described in detail in the historical perspective, the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam. Islam being the Universal Religion valid for all times, earlier too Islamic thought had been reconstructed time and again. Farabi and Ibn Sina reconstructed it against the perspective of Greek thought. Iman Ghazali reconstructed it as he wrote *Tabafut al-Falasifah* (Destruction of the Philosophers) and *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* (Revival of Religious Sciences) in reply, respectively, to the 'heretics' and the 'innovators' in his own camp. Shah Waliullah – 'first Muslim to rethink the whole system of Islam' — reconstructed it so as to make it consonant with the dictates of plain rationality. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan reconstructed it in order to show that it fulfilled the requirements of the nineteenth century scientific naturalism and rationalistic determinism. Iqbal's reconstruction of Islamic thought, visibly on the identical pattern, has been called 'scientific reconstruction' because he was of the view that the Qur'anic concept of God, the Ultimate Reality, is of the same character as that which qualifies the truth that is being gradually discovered by researchers in the field of natural sciences dealing with all the three departments of nature, *viz* matter, life and consciousness, the subjects-matter, in that order, of physics, biology and psychology.²⁶

The account of Allama Iqbal's concept of God in the paragraph just ended, I would reiterate, does not go to prove that there is any kind of self-contradiction in his metaphysical views. Rather, this account simply brings home the fact that his concept of God, in consonance with the one that is laid down in the Qur'an, is comprehensive, holistic and basal: different aspects of this concept that have been, or may ever be, identified simply subscribe to this comprehensiveness.²⁷

Despite the entire above account regarding various colours of the 'phenomenological nature of Divine Unity' — which of course does have its own academic importance — Allama Iqbal, once again in consonance with the Qur'anic world-view, holds that this concept has a very vibrant potential of relevance for man-in-the-world. *Tawbeed*, Arabic equivalent of 'commitment to One Supreme

Being', he never tires of emphasizing, is not just numerically one article of faith among others which a person must subscribe to in order to be declared a Muslim for all socially acceptable purposes; nor does it have simply an academic or a theological importance. It is rather to be accepted as a dynamic factor, a living force, that must necessarily have an impact on the moral and spiritual life of the individual as well as of the society at large. Sorrowfully he says:

زندہ قوت تھی جہاں میں یہی توحید کبھی آج کیا ہے فقط اک مسئلہ علم کلام

(there was a time when faith in the Oneness of God was a living, dynamic force whereas to-day it is nothing but just one of the theological problems)

How to realize *Tawheed* as a dynamic force for man here and now. In this connection it would be suggestive to refer to the three periods of religious life enumerated by Iqbal, namely, the periods of faith, thought and discovery. "In the first period", he says, "religious life appears as a discipline which the individual or a whole people must accept as an unconditional command. This attitude may be of great consequence in the social and political history of a people, but is not of much consequence so far as the individual's inner growth and expansion are concerned. Perfect submission to discipline is followed by a rational understanding of the discipline and the ultimate source of its authority. In this period religious life seeks its foundation in a kind of metaphysics — a logically consistent view of the world with God as a part of that view. In the third period metaphysics is displaced by psychology and religious life develops the ambition to come into direct contact with the Ultimate Reality. It is here that religion becomes a matter of personal assimilation of life and power; and the individual achieves a free personality, not by releasing himself from the fetters of law but by discovering the ultimate source of the law within the depths of his consciousness".²⁸ In the first two periods as described here man has only a dry, calculated 'I-it' relationship with God whose existence becomes, at the most, what Iqbal has termed, the subject-matter of a theological discourse. It is only in the third period when man has an I-thou, a person-to-person encounter with Him and when he consciously participates in His life that it becomes a 'living force'. It is this personal experience amounting to God-consciousness and the perception of His Unique Individuality which positively affects the incumbent in his personal as well as social life. In the Qur'anic dialect this experience is institutionalized in *salat* which Iqbal translates as prayer. Prayer, he further observes, is instinctive in its origin. He approvingly quotes, in this

connection, the great American psychologist William James: “It seem probable that, in spite of all that science may do to the contrary, men will continue to pray to the end of time unless their mental nature changes in a manner nothing we know should lead us to expect.”²⁹

Anyway, it may parenthetically be remarked, prayer, according to Iqbal, has a wider connotation than that which is commonly recognized. It is generally considered to be equivalent to the formal practice of *salat* commonly observed by a Muslim. In that capacity it may ideally be described as a mode of direct, ‘face-to-face’ encounter with God. But there is an indirect such encounter also which would eventualize through the scientist’s observation of ‘nature’ understood as the ‘habit’ or ‘behaviour’ of God. “Knowledge of nature”, says Iqbal, “is the knowledge of God’s behavior, in our observation of nature we are virtually seeking a kind of intimacy with the Absolute Ego”.³⁰ In fact “all search for knowledge is essentially a form of prayer.”³¹

Man-in-the-world, we know, is bound by, what Iqbal describes, ‘forms of perception’ i.e. space and time as well as categories of understanding like possibility/impossibility, existence/non existence, plurality, causality etc. These are the sorts of implements, the mechanics which he has somehow developed for dealing with the universe around him. However, at the same time, they have restricted his knowledge to appearances i.e. the phenomenal world only, holding him back from an acquaintance with the noumena, the Reality as such. When, on the other hand, a person has gnostic awareness of God, Who is beyond space and time and beyond all categories, he himself is freed from all these bounds. The Qur’an has perhaps this contemplated — though difficult to register — achievement of man in view when it says:

O Assembly of jinn and men if you are able to pass through the regions of the heavens and the earth then pass through them. You cannot pass through them but with authority.³²

“Prayer in Islam”, Iqbal very succinctly remarks, “is the ego’s escape from mechanism to freedom”.³³ Equipment with this freedom amounts to the development of the purest, the most unbiased point of view and the capability to look at everything in the true perspective. “Beware of the wisdom of a *mo’min*”, the prophet of Islam (peace be on him) is reported to have said, “because he sees with the light of God”.³⁴ In order to have the clearest idea of the geography of a land we must transcend the ground and undertake its aerial survey. So, in order to have a truly

sympathetic understanding of the problems of life and existence we must psychologically take leave of their spatio-temporal settings and look at them afresh from the highest point of view, the point of view that is guaranteed by one's direct contact with the Ultimate Reality. This paramount equipment also amounts to making the person concerned indifferent to, and independent of, all the false deities and dummy gods that consciously or unconsciously continue to charge the lives of ordinary people, literally, 'the-men-of-the-world'. Says Iqbal:

یہ ایک سجدہ جسے تو گراں سمجھتا ہے ہزار سجدے سے دیتا ہے آدمی کو نجات^{۳۵}

[This one prostration (to God) in prayers which a person does not feel inclined to perform would actually absolve him of thousands of prostrations (to false deities)].

In his *Rumuz-e Bekhudi* Iqbal has a section reserved for an account of a healthy influence that *Tawbeed* would exercise on the psychology of an individual.³⁶ He enumerates in this connection three mental states, despair, grief and fear which, according to him are the basic ailments that are likely to afflict the personality of a man and do him immense harm. As to the sentiment of despair, he says, that life, essentially, is almost identical with optimism sanguinity and hope. If, despite all hardships that we come across in life, we are still hopeful for better days to come and accordingly struggle hard for the same, we continue to be really alive. If, on the other hand, we lose hope, we are almost dead. We live as if we are not alive: we barely exist. Grief or sorrow makes a man hollow from within just as termite eats up a wooden structure. It does not simply snatch away his happiness but also weakens his 'will to act'. Similarly, fear has a deadening effect on the excellences of a human being. It is the perpetual enemy of his courage, enthusiasm and valour. Most of the social attitudes like flattery, lying, hypocrisy, cunning and deceit are, in the last analysis, grounded in some kind of fear. Faith in One Omniscient, Omnipotent God, Who is always with us, when properly subscribed to and assimilated, removes all these incongruencies and aberrations, and gives us tranquility and peace of mind. All our hopes and aspirations having been directed to the One Being, all lesser beings and the sentiments attached to them become irrelevant and meaningless.

Morally also, existential consciousness of the Supreme Real is specially relevant to the individual as it determines his status in the scale of values. On the authority of his spiritual mentor Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, Allama Iqbal has prescribed three tests³⁷ which

ought to be applied in order to determine the level of integration or authenticity which the ego of an individual has already acquired or the station of moral-spiritual growth that he happens to actually occupy. The first test requires: **look at yourself with the light of your own consciousnesses**. I have my own moral principle within me in the form of my own conscience which gives me pangs and pricks when I perform an evil action and which makes me feel happy and satisfied when I perform a good one. So, to begin with, my conscience must be satisfied with me in regard to my behavior on the moral plain. Obliquely, my conscience demands that I must be prepared to shoulder the responsibility of what I do. The second test is: **'look at yourself with the light of human egos other than you'**. I must be prepared to take up the responsibility of what others do. If there is evil flourishing in the society around me I am duty-bound to stop it forcefully; if that is not possible, I must verbally prohibit people from doing it; if even that is not possible, I should at least feel, with the maximum of heartfulness and sincerity at my command, that it is evil. The third test demands: **look at yourself with the light of God**. This is the most exacting criterion. It requires that man should recognize and realize the Divine spark within himself and see that his moral will is almost identified with the Divine will. He, of course, continues exercising choices whenever alternatives are available to him but, despite all options open to the contrary, he invariably does choose the way that is good from the highest point of view. His ego becomes disciplined and thoroughly integrated and reaches nearest the Ideal *par excellence*, the Supreme Ego, Who dispenses with all the worlds and Whose I-amness is independent, elemental, absolute. "The act" of such a person, say Iqbal, "is not an intellectual act, but a vital act which deepens the whole being of the ego, and sharpen his will with the creative assurance that the world is not something to be merely seen or known through concepts, but something to be made and re-made by continuous action. It is a moment of supreme bliss and also a moment of the greatest trial for the ego."³⁸

Faith in One God has a healthy effect not only on the personality and character of the individual and his episteme it is also helpful towards the formation and development of a well-knit, thoroughly organized society. Being the essence of nationhood in Islam, *Tawbeed*, says Iqbal, stands for equality solidarity and freedom. Those who share this faith are mutually cemented as a rock. They are one and united in all important respects. They have the same aspirations, same aims and ideals, same patterns of behavior, same criteria of good and evil and same philosophies of

life. Fair play and justice prevails among them. Allama Iqbal further points out that the social order of Islam which “finds the foundation of world-unity in this principle of *Tawbeed*, put forth by Islam as a religion, is only a practical means of making the principle a living factor in the intellectual life of (the entire) mankind: It demands loyalty to God and not to the thrones”.³⁹

It would be interesting and very informative also, to quote here in some detail from the last i.e. the 16th section of *Asrar-o-Rumuz* wherein Allama Iqbal seeks to derive truths about the relevance of the Muslims’ concept of *Tawbeed* to the well-being of their social life from *surah Iklas*. The *surah*, with four *ayat* only, is one of the shortest *surahs* of the Qur’an. It reads as follows:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْ ۝ لَمْ يُولَدْ ۝ وَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ۝

In the beginning of this section Iqbal relates a dream of his own in which he met *Hazrat* Abu Bakr Siddiq (God be pleased with him), the first Caliph in Muslim history. The former asked the latter to prescribe as to what should be done to alleviate the socio-moral ailments from which his contemporaneous (early 20th century) fellow-Muslims suffered as he himself had been the one who was able to save the *Ummah* from a number of insurgent eruptions that tended to create a lot of social unrest during the earliest times of the spread of Islam. *Hazrat* Abu Bakr advised Allama Iqbal that guidance be sought from the verses of *surah Iklas* which are all full pregnant with meaning in this regard. Every verse connotes one particular *sifat* of God. In compliance with the Holy Prophet’s (peace be on him) reported directive ‘assimilate in your person the *sifat*, the habits, of God’,⁴⁰ the Muslims should inculcate these *sifat* in their own personal as well as social lives. What follows in *Asrar-o-Rumuz* comprises details of the advice as spelled out on the behest of *Hazrat* Abu Bakr himself.

[Say: He, Allah is One.] قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝

Faith in the Oneness of God, provided it is not just a lip-service and a blind conviction but is rather a ‘living assurance’ – as it necessarily ought to be – implies that the Muslim *ummah*, in compliance with this faith, should keep themselves united as a singular impeccable unity. They should give up their mutual skirmishes, animosities, conflicts and unnecessary differences. Oneness among themselves must in fact be put forth by Muslims as a testimony and a visible proof of their commitment to One God.

If the testimony here happens to be defective, every person should feel concerned that there is something wrong somewhere with that which it is required to testify. So the lesson which this verse imparts to its readers is: be united as an *Ummah* in order to put up a clarion demonstration of the fact that they really understand its meaning and significance.

[Allah is He on Whom all depend.] اللَّهُ الصَّادِقُ

From the truth that God is independent, self-determined and absolutely free from all sorts of constraints whatever every Muslim ought to learn the lesson to vouchsafe and maintain his own dignity, self-respect, prestige and honour, to recognize and discover the immense possibilities of his being and also work hard to realize them; and complementarily to avoid unnecessarily begging from others and thus being under the stress of an obligation to them. What is desirable for all Muslims as individuals as well as for them as a social unit is to exploit their own indigenous resources — moral, spiritual, intellectual and material — and take pride in them. Presently (i.e. in the times of Allama Iqbal —although equally true to-day in our own times), on the contrary, they take pride in blindly mimicing the thought fashions, habits and cultural trends of other nations and even the language they would prefer to speak. All these are shamefully unfortunate indicators of a slavish mentality which belie even the minimal level of sincerity and commitment with which we ought to have faith in God Who is Independent and Absolute.

[He begets not, nor is He begotten.] لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ

God does not beget any child nor is He begotten. He has no blood relations. This character of the Divine, incidentally, demonstrates His nature as the Perfect Individual — the One and Only. ‘For the individuality to be perfect’, Bergson very rightly says, “it would be necessary that no detached part of the organism could live separately”.⁴¹ Thus “individuality is a matter of degrees and is not fully realized even in the case of the apparently closed off unity of the human being”.⁴² This Divine *sifat* is obviously inimitable literally by a human individual because to have various kinds of blood relations are, what is known in logic, ‘inseparable accidents’ of man: he cannot even be conceived to exist without at least some of these accidents. However, he has still a lesson to learn from this *ayat* of the Qur’an. Man cannot relinquish and get rid of his blood relations once they stand established but he can, for all

practical purposes, ignore and bypass them and transcend them when the achievement of higher moral-cum-spiritual goals is at stake. When Prophet Abraham (peace be on him) could not bring round his father to stop idol-worshipping, the son had to part his ways from the father, when prophet Noah's (peace be on him) son refused to subscribe to what he preached, he had no option but to leave him alone; when our Holy prophet (peace be on him) was opposed by the people of Mecca – many of whom were his blood relations — as he preached to them his own apostleship and the singular Unity of the Divine Being, he did not hesitate to migrate to Madina where environments for the spread of Islam were far more congenial. So blood relations are alright and they urgently need to be recognized and honoured so long as they do not come into conflict with higher ideals but when they so come into conflict they ought to be relegated by the Muslim *ummah* to the realm of meaninglessness.

[And none is like Him.] **وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ**

Description of the Divine Being in this verse as 'the Unique' and 'the Unparalleled' is an indicator of a directive to every Muslim, who has faith in that Being, to be a candidate for the realization of the ideal of the highest position in regard to the integration of his ego insofar as it is humanly possible. Howsoever he endeavours to occupy that position and howsoever he has actually gone in that direction, there is always a space available for him at a still higher pedestal. So his endeavours must never suffer from any dissipation: they should ever continue. Needless to say once again that what is true here of every individual Muslim is equally true of the entire Muslim *ummah*. The *Ummah* should prove to be a role model for the whole world. Just as God is the One in his Divinity, so is Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) the one and only in respect of the humanistic perspective. He is the ideal of perfect manhood in Islam whom we all should emulate. The Qur'an says:

Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar.⁴³

The manhood that the Holy prophet (peace be on him) raised around him is too a beacon light for others to be guided by. He is reported to have said:

My Companions are like the (guiding) stars. Whomsoever of them you follow you will be treading the right path.⁴⁴

Let me enclose in the end a few scattered verses from *Rumuz-e-Bekbudi* which very forcefully bring out the importance of *Tawheed*

as a living force for human beings, *in general*.⁴⁵ I shall quote verbatim without giving their translation in, order to communicate to my readers 'beauty of the original', pure and simple:

اینکه در صد سینہ پیچید یک نفس سرے از اسرارِ توحید اس و بس^{۴۶}
یک شود توحید را مشہود کن غائبش را از عمل موجود کن^{۴۷}
دین ازو حکمت ازو آئین ازو زور ازو قوت ازو تمکین ازو^{۴۸}
قدرت او برگزیند بنده را نوع دیگر آفریند بنده را^{۴۹}
بیم و شک میرد عمل رگرد حیات چشم می بیند ضمیر کائنات^{۵۰}
لا اله سرمایہ اسرار ما رشته اش شیراز افکار ما^{۵۱}

Notes and References

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- 1 Qur'an, 3:150
 - 2 *Ibid*, 4:48
 - 3 *Ibid*, 29:20
 - 4 *Ibid*, 2:20
 - 5 *Ibid*, 2:186
 - 6 *Ibid*, 3:97
 - 7 *Ibid*, 3:150
 - 8 *Ibid*, 1:4
 - 9 For a more elaborate description of the position of Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi see my book: *Problems of Muslim Mysticism*, pp.143-49
 - 10 For a detailed critical study of Occasionalism, see Majid Fakhry, *Islamic Occasionalism and its Critique by Averroes and Aquinas*, *passim*
 - 11 Qur'an, 57:3
 - 12 *Ibid*, 2:255
 - 13 *Ibid*, 50:16
 - 14 *Ibid*, 41:54
 - 15 For a more elaborate description of the position of Ibn Arabi, see my book, *op.cit.*, pp.137 -143
 - 16 Qur'an, 14:5
 - 17 *Ibid*, 2:164 etc
 - 18 *Ibid*, 51:21 etc
 - 19 For a more elaborate description of the position of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, see my book, *op.cit.*, pp. 150-157
 - 20 Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 45
 - 21 *Ibid*.
 - 22 *Ibid*.
 - 23 *Ibid*.
 - 24 *Ibid*.
 - 25 This lecture was later included in a book published by the Research Society of Pakistan, University of the Punjab, Lahore: *Khutbat Ba Yad-i- Iqbal*, pp. 46 -61

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- 26 Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op.cit.*, Chapter II
27 Zarb-e Kaleem, *Kulliyat-e Iqbal* (Urdu), p.537/37
28 Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p.143
29 *The Principles of Psychology* I, p.316
30 Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op.cit.*, 87
31 *Ibid*, p.73
32 Qur'an, 55:33
33 Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op.cit.*, p.87
34 اتقوا فراسة المؤمن انه ينظر بنور الله
35 Zarb-e Kaleem, *Kulliyat –e Iqbal* (Urdu), p. 550/50
36 *Khulliyat-e Iqbal* (Farsi) p.107/91
37 *Ibid*, pp 56 – 62/40 – 46
38 Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam*, P.
39 *Ibid*, p.117
40 تخلقوا باخلاق الله
41 *Creative Evolution*, p. 13
42 *Ibid*, p.14
43 Qur'an, 33:21
44 اصحابى كالنجوم بايهم اقتديهم اهتديتم
45 *Kulliyat-e Iqbal* (Farsi) p. 163/147
46 *Ibid*,
47 *Ibid*, p. 105/89
48 *Ibid*,
49 *Ibid*,
50 *Ibid*,
51 *Ibid*, p. 92