

In the Name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful

Every language has one or more terms that are used in reference to the Creator and sometimes to lesser deities. This is not the case with the word Allah. Allah is the personal name of the One True Creator. Nothing else can be called Allah. The term has no plural or gender. This shows its exclusivity when compared to the word God which can be made plural, i.e. Gods or feminine, i.e. Goddess. It is interesting to note that Allah is the personal name of the Creator in Aramaic, the language of Jesus. The word Allah is a reflection of the unique concept that Islam associates with the Creator. To a Muslim, Allah is the Almighty, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, who is similar to none and nothing is comparable to Him. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was asked by his contemporaries about Allah. The answer came directly from Creator Himself in the form of a short chapter of the Quran that is considered the essence of the Unity of Creator or the motto of monotheism. *“Say: He is Allah, the One; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him.”* [Al-Quran 112:1-4]

Some non-Muslims allege that the concept of the Creator in Islam is that of a stern and cruel Creator who demands to be obeyed fully. He is not loving and kind. Nothing can be farther from the truth than this allegation. It is enough to know that with the exception of one, each of the 114 chapters of the Quran begins with the verse: In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. In one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad we are told: *“Allah is more loving and kinder than a mother to her dear child.”*

Besides being Merciful, Allah is also Just. Hence evildoers and sinners must have their share of punishment and the virtuous their rightful reward. Actually, Allah’s attribute of Mercy has full manifestation in His attribute of Justice. People suffering throughout their lives for His sake and people oppressing and exploiting other people all their lives should not receive similar treatment from

their Lord. Expecting similar treatment for them will

amount to negating the very belief in the accountability in the Hereafter and thereby negating all the incentives for a moral and virtuous life in this world.

The following verses from the Quran are very clear and straightforward:

“Verily, for the righteous are Gardens of delight in the Presence of their Lord. Shall we then treat the people of Faith like the people of Sin? What is the matter with you? How judge you?” [Al-Quran 68:34-36]

Islam rejects characterizing Allah in any human form or depicting him as favoring certain individuals or nations on the basis of wealth, power or race. He created the human beings as equals. They may distinguish themselves and earn His favor through virtue and piety alone.

The concept that the Creator rested on the seventh day of creation, that the Creator wrestled with one of His soldiers, that the Creator is an envious plotter against mankind, or that the Creator is incarnate in any human being are considered blasphemy from the Islamic point of view. The unique usage of Allah as the personal name of the Creator is a reflection of Islam’s emphasis on the purity of the belief in the Creator. This belief in the Unity of Allah, is the essence of the message of all the Prophets of Creator. Because of this, Islam considers associating any deity or personality with Allah as a grave sin that Allah will never forgive if the person dies without repenting.

The Creator must be of a different nature from the things created because if He is of the same nature as they are, He will be temporal and will therefore need a maker. It follows that nothing is like Him. If the maker is not temporal, then He must be eternal. But if he is eternal, He cannot be caused, and if nothing caused Him to come into existence, nothing outside Him causes Him to continue to exist, which means

that He must be self-sufficient. And if He does not depend on anything for the continuance of

His own existence, then this existence can have no end. The Creator is therefore eternal:

“He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Imminent: and He has full knowledge of all things.” [Al-Quran 57:3]

He is self-sufficient or self-subsistent or, to use a Quranic term, He is Al-Qayyum. Allah does not create only in the sense of bringing things into existence. He also preserves them and takes them out of existence and is the ultimate cause of whatever happens to them.

“Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the Guardian and Disposer of all affairs. To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth: and those who reject the Signs of Allah,- it is they who will be in loss.” [Al-Quran 39:62-63]

“There is no moving creature on earth but its sustenance dependeth on Allah: He knoweth the time and place of its definite abode and its temporary deposit: All is in a clear Record.” [Al-Quran 57:3]

ALLAH’S ATTRIBUTES

Allah is Eternal and Everlasting, then His attributes must also be Eternal and Everlasting. He should not lose any of His attributes nor acquire new ones. If this is so, then His attributes are absolute. Can there be more than one Creator with such absolute attributes? Can there be for example, two absolutely powerful Creators? A moments thought shows that this is not feasible. The Quran summarizes this argument in the following verses: *“No son did Allah beget, nor is there any Creator along with Him: (if there were many Creators), behold, each Creator would have taken away what he had created, and some would have lorded it over others! Glory to Allah! (He is free) from the (sort of) things they attribute to Him!”* [Al-Quran 23:91]

THE ONENESS OF ALLAH

The Quran reminds us of the falsity of all alleged Creators. To the worshippers of man-made objects it asks: *“Worship ye that which ye have (yourselves) carved? But Allah has created you and your handwork.”* [Al-Quran 37:95-96]

“Say: Do ye then take (for worship) protectors other than Him, such as have no power either for good or for harm to themselves?” [Al-Quran 13:16]

To the worshippers of heavenly bodies it cites the story of Abraham: *“When the night covered him over, He saw a star: He said: This is my Lord. But when it set, He said: I love not those that set. When he saw the moon rising in splendor, he said: This is my Lord. But when the moon set, He said: unless my Lord guide me, I shall surely be among those who go astray. When he saw the sun rising in splendor, he said: This is my Lord; this is the greatest (of all). But when the sun set, he said: O my people! I am indeed free from your (guilt) of giving partners to Allah. For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to Allah.”* [Al-Quran 6:76-79]

THE BELIEVERS' ATTITUDE

In order to be a Muslim (i.e., to submit oneself to the Creator), it is necessary to believe in the Oneness of Allah, in the sense of His being the only Creator, Preserver, Nourisher, etc. But this belief, later on called Tawhid Ar-Rububiyah, is not enough. Many of the idolaters knew and believed that only the Supreme Creator could do all this. To acquire Tawhid Ar-Rububiyah one must add Tawhid Al-Uluhiyyah, i.e. one acknowledges the fact that it is Allah alone who deserves to be worshipped, and thus abstains from worshipping any other thing or being. Having achieved this knowledge of the OneTrue Creator, man should constantly have faith in Him, and should allow nothing to induce him to deny the truth. When true faith enters a person's

heart, it impacts the persons outlook and behavior. The Prophet said, Faith is that which resides firmly in the heart and which is proved by deeds. One of the striking results of faith is the feeling of gratitude towards Creator, which could be said to be the essence of Ibada (worship). The feeling of gratitude is so important that anyone denying the Truth is called kafir, one who is ungrateful. A believer loves, and is grateful to Allah for the bounties He bestowed upon him. He is aware of the fact that his good deeds are far from being commensurate with Divine favors, and therefore he is always anxious to please Allah. He remembers Allah often. The Quran promotes this feeling of gratitude by repeating the attributes of Creator very frequently.

“O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion: Nor say of Allah aught but the truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) a messenger of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His messengers. Say not Trinity : desist: it will be better for you: for Allah is one Allah: Glory be to Him: (far exalted is He) above having a son. To Him belong all things in the heavens and on earth. And enough is Allah as a Disposer of affairs.” [Al-Quran 4:171]

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WHO IS ALLAH

*Say: He is Allah, the One;
Allah, the Eternal, Absolute;
He begetteth not, nor is He
begotten, and there is none
like unto Him.*

[Al-Quran 112:14]