

# PROVING THE EXISTENCE OF ALLAH TO AN EITHIST

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### CONGRATULATING AN ATHEIST

Normally, when I meet an atheist, the first thing I like to do is to congratulate him and say, " My special congratulations to you", because most of the people who believe in God are doing blind belief - he is a Christian, because his father is a Christian; he is a Hindu, because his father is a Hindu; the majority of the people in the world are blindly following the religion of their fathers. An atheist, on the other hand, even though he may belong to a religious family, uses his intellect to deny the existence of God; what ever concept or qualities of God he may have learnt in his religion may not seem to be logical to him.

My Muslim brothers may question me, "Zakir, why are you congratulating an atheist?" The reason that I am congratulating an atheist is because he agrees with the first part of the *Shahada* i.e. the Islamic Creed, '*La ilaaha*' - meaning 'there is no God'. So half my job is already done; now the only part left is '*il lallah*' i.e. 'BUT ALLAH' which I shall do *Insha Allah*. With others (who are not atheists) I have to first remove from their minds the wrong concept of God they may have and then put the correct concept of one true God.

### LOGICAL CONCEPT OF GOD

My first question to the atheist will be: "What is the definition of God?" For a person to say there is no God, he should know what is the meaning of God. If I hold a book and say that 'this is a pen', for the opposite person to say, 'it is not a pen', he should know what is the definition of a pen, even if he does not know nor is able to recognise or identify the object I am holding in my hand. For him to say this is not a pen, he should at least know what a pen means. Similarly for an atheist to say 'there is no God', he should at least know the concept of God. His concept of God would be derived from the surroundings in which he lives. The god that a large number of people worship has got human qualities - therefore he does not believe in such a god. Similarly a Muslim too does not and should not believe in such false gods.

If a non-Muslim believes that Islam is a merciless religion with something to do with terrorism; a religion which does not give rights to women; a religion which contradicts science; in his limited sense that non-Muslim is correct to reject such Islam. The problem is he has a wrong picture of Islam. Even I reject such a false picture of Islam, but at the same time, it becomes my duty as a Muslim to present the correct picture of Islam to that non-Muslim i.e. Islam is a merciful religion, it gives equal rights to the women, it is not incompatible with logic, reason and science; if I present the correct facts about Islam, that non-Muslim may *Inshallah* accept Islam.

Similarly the atheist rejects the false gods and the duty of every Muslim is to present the correct concept of God which he shall *Insha Allah* not refuse.

(You may refer to my article, 'Concept of God in Islam', for more details)

### QUR'AN AND MODERN SCIENCE

The methods of proving the existence of God with usage of the material provided in the 'Concept of God in Islam' to an atheist may satisfy some but not all.

Many atheists demand a scientific proof for the existence of God. I agree that today is the age of science and technology. Let us use scientific knowledge to kill two birds with one stone, i.e. to prove the existence of God and simultaneously prove that the Qur'an is a revelation of God.

If a new object or a machine, which no one in the world has ever seen or heard of before, is shown to an atheist or any person and then a question is asked, " Who is the first person who will be able to provide details of the mechanism of this unknown object? After little bit of thinking, he will reply, 'the creator of that object.' Some may say 'the producer' while others may say 'the manufacturer.' What ever answer the person gives, keep it in your mind, the answer will always be either the creator, the producer, the manufacturer or some what of the same meaning, i.e. the person who has made it or created it. Don't grapple with words, whatever answer he gives, the meaning will be same, therefore accept it.

SCIENTIFIC FACTS MENTIONED IN THE QUR'AN: for details on this subject please refer to my book, 'THE QUR'AN AND MODERN SCIENCE – COMPATIBLE OR INCOMPATIBLE?'

## **THEORY OF PROBABILITY**

In mathematics there is a theory known as 'Theory of Probability'. If you have two options, out of which one is right, and one is wrong, the chances that you will chose the right one is half, i.e. one out of the two will be correct. You have 50% chances of being correct. Similarly if you toss a coin the chances that your guess will be correct is 50% (1 out of 2) i.e. 1/2. If you toss a coin the second time, the chances that you will be correct in the second toss is again 50% i.e. half. But the chances that you will be correct in both the tosses is half multiplied by half ( $1/2 \times 1/2$ ) which is equal to 1/4 i.e. 50% of 50% which is equal to 25%. If you toss a coin the third time, chances that you will be correct all three times is ( $1/2 \times 1/2 \times 1/2$ ) that is 1/8 or 50% of 50% of 50% that is 12½%.

A dice has got six sides. If you throw a dice and guess any number between 1 to 6, the chances that your guess will be correct is 1/6. If you throw the dice the second time, the chances that your guess will be correct in both the throws is ( $1/6 \times 1/6$ ) which is equal to 1/36. If you throw the dice the third time, the chances that all your three guesses are correct is ( $1/6 \times 1/6 \times 1/6$ ) is equal to 1/216 that is less than 0.5 %.

Let us apply this theory of probability to the Qur'an, and assume that a person has guessed all the information that is mentioned in the Qur'an which was unknown at that time. Let us discuss the probability of all the guesses being simultaneously correct.

At the time when the Qur'an was revealed, people thought the world was flat, there are several other options for the shape of the earth. It could be triangular, it could be quadrangular, pentagonal, hexagonal, heptagonal, octagonal, spherical, etc. Lets assume there are about 30 different options for the shape of the earth. The Qur'an rightly says it is spherical, if it was a guess the chances of the guess being correct is 1/30.

The light of the moon can be its own light or a reflected light. The Qur'an rightly says it is a reflected light. If it is a guess, the chances that it will be correct is 1/2 and the probability that both the guesses i.e the earth is spherical and the light of the moon is reflected light is  $1/30 \times 1/2 = 1/60$ .

Further, the Qur'an also mentions every living thing is made of water. Every living thing can be made up of either wood, stone, copper, aluminum, steel, silver, gold, oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, oil, water, cement, concrete, etc. The options are say about 10,000. The Qur'an rightly says that

everything is made up of water. If it is a guess, the chances that it will be correct is 1/10,000 and the probability of all the three guesses i.e. the earth is spherical, light of moon is reflected light and everything is created from water being correct is  $1/30 \times 1/2 \times 1/10,000 = 1/60,000$  which is equal to about .0017%.

The Qur'an speaks about hundreds of things that were not known to men at the time of its revelation. Only in three options the result is .0017%. I leave it upto you, to work out the probability if all the hundreds of the unknown facts were guesses, the chances of all of them being correct guesses simultaneously and there being not a single wrong guess. It is beyond human capacity to make all correct guesses without a single mistake, which itself is sufficient to prove to a logical person that the origin of the Qur'an is Divine.

### **CREATOR IS THE AUTHOR OF THE QUR'AN**

The only logical answer to the question as to who could have mentioned all these scientific facts 1400 years ago before they were discovered, is exactly the same answer initially given by the atheist or any person, to the question who will be the first person who will be able to tell the mechanism of the unknown object. It is the 'CREATOR', the producer, the Manufacturer of the whole universe and its contents. In the English language He is 'God', or more appropriate in the Arabic language, 'ALLAH'.

### **QUR'AN IS A BOOK OF SIGNS AND NOT SCIENCE**

Let me remind you that the Qur'an is not a book of Science, 'S-C-I-E-N-C-E' but a book of Signs 'S-I-G-N-S' i.e. a book of *ayaats*. The Qur'an contains more than 6,000 *ayaats*, i.e. 'signs', out of which more than a thousand speak about Science. I am not trying to prove that the Qur'an is the word of God using scientific knowledge as a yardstick because any yardstick is supposed to be more superior than what is being checked or verified. For us Muslims the Qur'an is the *Furqan* i.e. criteria to judge right from wrong and the ultimate yardstick which is more superior to scientific knowledge.

But for an educated man who is an atheist, scientific knowledge is the ultimate test which he believes in. We do know that science many a times takes 'U' turns, therefore I have restricted the examples only to scientific facts which have sufficient proof and evidence and not scientific theories based on assumptions. Using the ultimate yardstick of the atheist, I am trying to prove to him that the Qur'an is the word of God and it contains the scientific knowledge which is his yardstick which was discovered recently, while the Qur'an was revealed 1400 year ago. At the end of the discussion, we both come to the same conclusion that God though superior to science, is not incompatible with it.

### **SCIENCE IS ELIMINATING MODELS OF GOD BUT NOT GOD**

Francis Bacon, the famous philosopher, has rightly said that a little knowledge of science makes man an atheist, but an in-depth study of science makes him a believer in God. Scientists today are eliminating models of God, but they are not eliminating God. If you translate this into Arabic, it is *La illaha illa la*, There is no god, (god with a small 'g' that is fake god) but God (with a capital 'G').

Surah Fussilat: "Soon We will show them our signs in the (farthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that thy Lord doth witness all things?"

[Al-Quran 41:53]

## **The Most Concise Definition of God:**

The most concise definition of God in Islam is given in the four verses of Surah Ikhlas which is Chapter 112 of the Qur'an:

"Say: He is Allah, The One and Only. "Allah, the Eternal, Absolute.  
"He begets not, nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him."  
[Al-Qur'an 112:1-4]

The word '*Assamad*' is difficult to translate. It means 'absolute existence', which can be attributed only to Allah (swt), all other existence being temporal or conditional. It also means that Allah (swt) is not dependant on any person or thing, but all persons and things are dependant on Him.

## **Surah Ikhlas - the touchstone of theology:**

Surah Ikhlas (Chapter 112) of the Glorious Qur'an, is the touchstone of theology. '*Theo*' in Greek means God and '*logy*' means study. Thus Theology means study of God and to Muslims this four line definition of Almighty God serves as the touchstone of the study of God. Any candidate to divinity must be subjected to this 'acid test'. Since the attributes of Allah given in this chapter are unique, false gods and pretenders to divinity can be easily dismissed using these verses.

## **What does Islam say about 'god-men'?**

**India is often called the land of 'god-men'. This is due to the abundance of so-called spiritual masters in India. Many of these 'babas' and 'saints' have a large following in many countries. Islam abhors deification of any human being. To understand the Islamic stand towards such pretenders to divinity, let us analyze one such 'god-man', Osho Rajneesh.**

Let us put this candidate, 'Bhagwan' Rajneesh, to the test of Surah Ikhlas, the touchstone of theology:

1. The first criterion is "Say, He is Allah, one and only". Is Rajneesh one and only? No! Rajneesh was one among the multitude of 'spiritual teachers' produced by India. Some disciples of Rajneesh might still hold that Rajneesh is one and only.
2. The second criterion is, 'Allah is absolute and eternal'. We know from Rajneesh's biography that he was suffering from diabetes, asthma, and chronic backache. He alleged that the U.S. Government gave him slow poison in prison. Imagine Almighty God being poisoned! Rajneesh was thus, neither absolute nor eternal.
3. The third criterion is 'He begets not, nor is He begotten'. We know that Rajneesh was born in Jabalpur in India and had a mother as well as a father who later became his disciples.

**In May 1981 he went to U.S.A. and established a town called 'Rajneeshpuram'. He later fell foul of the West and was finally arrested and asked to leave the country. He came back to India and started a commune in Pune which is now known as the 'Osho' commune. He died in 1990. The followers of Osho Rajneesh believe that he is Almighty God. At the 'Osho commune' in Pune one can find the following epitaph on his tombstone:**

"Osho – never born, never died; only visited the planet Earth between 11th December 1931 to 19th January 1990."

They forget to mention that he was not granted visa for 21 countries of the world. Can a person ever imagine 'God' visiting the earth, and requiring a visa to enter a

country! The Archbishop of Greece said that if Rajneesh had not been deported, they would have burnt his house and those of his disciples.

4. The fourth test, which is the most stringent is, "There is none like unto Him". The moment you can imagine or compare 'God' to anything, then he (the candidate to divinity) is not God. It is not possible to conjure up a mental picture of the One True God. We know that Rajneesh was a human being, having two eyes, two ears, a nose, a mouth and a white flowing beard. Photographs and posters of Rajneesh are available in plenty. The moment you can imagine or draw a mental picture of an entity, then that entity is not God.

Many are tempted to make anthropomorphic comparisons of God. Take for instance, Arnold Schwarzenegger, the famous body builder and Hollywood actor, who won the title of 'Mr. Universe', the strongest man in the world. Let us suppose that someone says that Almighty God is a thousand times stronger than Arnold Schwarzenegger. The moment you can compare any entity to God, whether the comparison is to Schwarzenegger or to King Kong, whether it is a thousand times or a million times stronger, it fails the Qur'anic criterion, "There is none like unto Him".

Thus, the 'acid test' cannot be passed by anyone except the One True God.

The following verse of the Glorious Qur'an conveys a similar message:

"No vision can grasp Him But His grasp is over All vision: He is Above all comprehension,  
Yet is acquainted with all things."  
[Al-Qur'an 6:103]

## **By what name do we call God?**

**The Muslims prefer calling the Supreme Creator, Allah, instead of by the English word 'God'. The Arabic word, 'Allah', is pure and unique, unlike the English word 'God', which can be played around with.**

If you add 's' to the word God, it becomes 'Gods', that is the plural of God. Allah is one and singular, there is no plural of Allah. If you add 'dess' to the word God, it becomes 'Goddess' that is a female God. There is nothing like male Allah or female Allah. Allah has no gender. If you add the word 'father' to 'God' it becomes 'God-father'. God-father means someone who is a guardian. There is no word like '*Allah-Abba*' or '*Allah-father*'. If you add the word 'mother' to 'God', it becomes 'God-mother'. There is nothing like '*Allah-Ammi*', or '*Allah-mother*' in Islam. Allah is a unique word. If you prefix tin before the word God, it becomes tin-God i.e., fake God. Allah is a unique word, which does not conjure up any mental picture nor can it be played around with. Therefore the Muslims prefer using the Arabic word 'Allah' for the Almighty. Sometimes, however, while speaking to the non-Muslims we may have to use the inappropriate word God, for Allah. Since the intended audience of this article is general in nature, consisting of both Muslims as well as non-Muslims, I have used the word God instead of Allah in several places in this article.

## **God does not become a human being:** **God does not take human form:**

Some may argue that God does not become a human being but only takes a human form. If God only takes a human form but does not become a human being, He should not possess any

human qualities. We know that all the 'God-men', have human qualities and failings. They have all the human needs such as the need to eat, sleep, etc.

The worship of God in human form is therefore a logical fallacy and should be abhorred in all its forms and manifestations.

That is the reason why the Qur'an speaks against all forms of anthropomorphism. The Glorious Qur'an says in the following verse:

"There is nothing whatever like unto Him."  
[Al-Qur'an 42:11]

### **God does not perform ungodly acts:**

The attributes of Almighty God preclude any evil since God is the source of justice, mercy and truth. God can never be thought of as doing an ungodly act. Hence we cannot imagine God telling a lie, being unjust, making a mistake, forgetting things, or having any such human failings. Similarly God can do injustice if He chooses to, but He will never do it because being unjust is an ungodly act.

The Qur'an says:

"Allah is never unjust In the least degree."  
[Al-Qur'an 4:40]

God can be unjust if He chooses to be so, but the moment God does injustice, He ceases to be God.

### **God does not make mistakes**

God can make mistakes if He wants to, but He does not make mistakes because making a mistake is an ungodly act. The Qur'an says:

"...my Lord never errs."  
[Holy Qur'an 20:52]

The moment God makes a mistake, he ceases to be God.

### **God does not forget**

God can forget if He wants to. But God does not forget anything because forgetting is an ungodly act, which reeks of human limitations and failings. The Qur'an says:

"...my Lord never errs, nor forgets."  
[Al-Qur'an 20:52]

### **God only performs Godly acts:**

The Islamic concept of God is that God has power over all things. The Qur'an says in several places (Al -Qur'an 2:106; 2:109; 2:284; 3:29; 16:77; and 35:1):

"For verily Allah has power over all things"

Further, the Glorious Qur'an says:

"Allah is the doer of all that He intends."  
[Al-Qur'an 85:16]

We must keep in mind that Allah intends only Godly acts and not ungodly acts.

## **PHILOSOPHY OF ANTHROPOMORPHISM**

Many religions at some point believe, directly or indirectly, in the philosophy of anthropomorphism i.e. God becoming a human. Their contention is that Almighty God is so pure and holy that He is unaware of the hardships, shortcomings and feelings of human beings. In order to set the rules for human beings, He came down to earth as a human. This deceptive logic has fooled countless millions through the ages. Let us now analyze this argument and see if it stands to reason.

### **The Creator prepares the instruction manual:**

Suppose I manufacture a video cassette recorder (VCR). Do I have to become a VCR to know what is good or what is bad for the VCR? What do I do? I write an instruction manual: "In order to watch a video cassette, insert the cassette and press the play button. In order to stop, press the stop button. If you want to fast forward press the FF button. Do not drop it from a height or it will get damaged. Do not immerse it in water or it will get spoilt". I write an instruction manual that lists the various do's and don'ts for the machine.

### **Holy Qur'an is the instruction manual for the human being:**

Similarly, our Lord and Creator Allah (swt) need not take human form to know what is good or bad for the human being. He chooses to reveal the instruction manual. The last and final instruction manual of the human beings is the Glorious Qur'an. The 'dos' and 'don'ts' for the human beings are mentioned in the Qur'an.

If you allow me to compare human beings with machines, I would say humans are more complicated than the most complex machines in the world. Even the most advanced computers, which are extremely complex, are pale in comparison to the myriad physical, psychological, genetic and social factors that affect individual and collective human life.

The more advanced the machine, greater is the need for its instruction manual. By the same logic, don't human beings require an instruction manual by which to govern their own lives?

### **Allah chooses Messengers:**

Allah (swt) need not come down personally for giving the instruction manual. He chooses a man amongst men to deliver the message and communicates with him at a higher level through the medium of revelations. Such chosen men are called messengers and prophets of God.

### **Some people are 'blind' and 'deaf':**

Despite the absurdity of the philosophy of anthropomorphism, followers of many religions believe in and preach it to others. Is it not an insult to human intelligence and to the Creator who gave us this intelligence? Such people are truly 'deaf' and 'blind' despite the faculty of hearing and sight given to them by Allah. The Qur'an says:

"Deaf, dumb, and blind,  
They will not return (to the path)."  
[Al-Qur'an 2:18]

The Bible gives a similar message in the Gospel of Matthew:

"Seeing they see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."  
[The Bible, Matthew 13:13]

A similar message is also given in the Hindu Scriptures in the Rigveda.

"There maybe someone who sees the words and yet indeed does not see them; may be another  
one who hears these words but indeed does not hear them." 1  
[Rigveda 10:71:4]

All these scriptures are telling their readers that though the things are made so clear yet many people divert away from the truth.

### **Attributes of God:**

#### **To Allah belong the most beautiful names:**

The Qur'an says:

"Say: Call upon Allah, or Call upon Rahman: By whatever name you call  
Upon Him, (it is well): For to Him belong The Most Beautiful Names."  
[Al-Qur'an 17:110]

A similar message regarding the beautiful names of Allah (swt) is repeated in the Qur'an in Surah Al-A'raf (7:180), in Surah Taha (20:8) and in Surah Al-Hashr (59:24).

The Qur'an gives no less than ninety-nine different attributes to Almighty Allah. The Qur'an refers to Allah as *Ar-Rahman* (Most Gracious), *Ar-Raheem* (Most Merciful) and *Al-Hakeem* (All Wise) among many other names. You can call Allah by any name but that name should be beautiful and should not conjure up a mental picture.

#### **Each attribute of God is unique and possessed by Him alone:**

Not only does God possess unique attributes, but also each attribute of Almighty God is sufficient to identify Him. I shall clarify this point in detail. Let us take an example of a famous personality, say Neil Armstrong. Neil Armstrong is an astronaut. The attribute of being an astronaut possessed by Neil Armstrong is correct but not unique to Neil Armstrong alone. So when one asks, who is an astronaut? The answer is, there are hundreds of people in the world who are astronauts. Neil Armstrong is an American. The attribute of being American possessed by Neil Armstrong is correct but not sufficient to identify him. So when one asks, who is an American? The answer is, there are millions of people who are American. To identify the person uniquely we must look for a unique attribute possessed by none except that person. For example, Neil



Armstrong was the first human to set foot on the moon. So when one asks, who was the first man to set foot on the moon, the answer is only one, i.e. Neil Armstrong. Similarly the attribute of Almighty God should be unique. If I say God is the constructor of buildings, it is possible and true, but it is not unique. Thousands of people can construct a building. But each attribute of Allah is unique and points to none but Allah. For example, God is the creator of the universe. If someone asks who is the creator of the universe, the answer is only one, i.e. Almighty God is the Ultimate Creator. Similarly, following are some of the many unique attributes possessed by none other than the Creator of the universe, Almighty Allah:

*"Ar-Raheem"*, the Most Merciful  
*"Ar-Rahman"*, the Most Gracious  
*"Al-Hakeem"*, the Most Wise

So when one asks, "Who is '*Ar-Raheem*', (the Most Merciful)?" there can only be one answer: "Almighty Allah".

### **One attribute of God should not contradict with other attributes:**

Besides the attribute being unique, it should not contradict other attributes. To continue with the earlier example, suppose somebody says that Neil Armstrong is an American astronaut who was the first human to set foot on the moon and was an Indian. The attribute possessed by Neil Armstrong of being the first man to set foot on the moon, is correct. But its associated quality of being an Indian, is false. Similarly if someone says that God is the Creator of the Universe and has one head, two hands, two feet, etc., the attribute (Creator of the Universe) is correct but the associated quality (in the form of human being) is wrong and false.

### **All attributes should point to the one and same God:**

Since there is only one God, all the attributes should point to one and the same God. To say that Neil Armstrong was an American astronaut who first set foot on the moon, but he was born in 1971 is wrong. Both these unique qualities belong to one and the same person, i.e. Neil Armstrong. Similarly to say that the Creator of the universe is one God and the Cherisher is another God is absurd because God possesses all these attributes combined together.

### **Unity of God:**

Some polytheists argue by saying that the existence of more than one God is not illogical. Let us point out to them that if there were more than one God, they would dispute with one another, each god trying to fulfill his will against the will of the other gods. This can be seen in the mythology of the polytheistic and pantheistic religions. If a 'God' is defeated or unable to defeat the others, he is surely not the one true God. Also popular among polytheistic religions is the idea of many Gods, each having different responsibilities. Each one would be responsible for a part of man's existence e.g. a Sun-God, a Rain-God, etc. This indicates that one 'God' is incompetent of certain acts and moreover he is also ignorant of the other Gods' powers, duties, functions and responsibilities. There cannot be an ignorant and incapable God. If there were more than one God it would surely lead to confusion, disorder, chaos and destruction in the universe. But the universe is in complete harmony. The Glorious Qur'an says:

"If there were, in the heavens And the earth, other gods Besides Allah, there would Have been confusion in both! But glory to Allah, The Lord of the Throne: (High is He) above What they attribute to Him!"

[Al-Qur'an 21:22]

If there were more than one God, they would have taken away what they created. The Qur'an says:

"No son did Allah beget, Nor is there any god Along with Him: (if there were  
Many gods), behold, each god 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-Qur'an 23:91]

Thus the existence of one True, Unique, Supreme, Almighty God, is the only logical concept of God.

## **TAWHEED:**

### **Definition and Categories:**

Islam believes in '*Tawheed*' which is not merely monotheism i.e. belief in one God, but much more. *Tawheed* literally means 'unification' i.e. 'asserting oneness' and is derived from the Arabic verb '*Wahhada*' which means to unite, unify or consolidate.

*Tawheed* can be divided into three categories.

1. *Tawheed ar-Ruboobeeyah*
  2. *Tawheed al-Asmaa-was-Sifaat*
  3. *Tawheed al-Ibaadah.*
1. **Tawheed ar-Ruboobeeyah (maintaining the unity of Lordship)**

The first category is '*Tawheed ar-Ruboobeeyah*'. '*Ruboobeeyah*' is derived from the root verb "*Rabb*" meaning Lord, Sustainer and Cherisher.

Therefore '*Tawheed-ar-Ruboobeeyah*' means maintaining the unity of Lordship. This category is based on the fundamental concept that Allah (swt) alone caused all things to exist when there was nothing. He created or originated all that exists out of nothing. He alone is the sole Creator, Cherisher, and Sustainer of the complete universe and all between it, without any need from it or for it.

2. **Tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat (maintaining the unity of Allah's name and attributes):**

The second category is '*Tawheed al Asmaa was Sifaat*' which means maintaining the unity of Allah's name and attributes. This category is divided into five aspects:

- a. **Allah should be referred to as described by Him and His Prophet:** Allah must be referred to according to the manner in which He and His prophet have described Him without explaining His names and attributes by giving them meanings other than their obvious meanings.
- b. **Allah must be referred to as He has referred to Himself:** Allah must be referred to without giving Him any new names or attributes. For example Allah may not be given the name *Al-Ghaadib* (the Angry One), despite the fact that He has said that He gets angry, because neither Allah nor His messenger have used this name.

- c. **Allah is referred to without giving Him the attributes of His creation:** In a reference to God, we should strictly abstain from giving Him the attributes of those whom He has created. For instance in the Bible, God is portrayed as repenting for His bad thoughts in the same way as humans do when they realise their errors. This is completely against the principle of Tawheed. God does not commit any mistakes or errors and therefore never needs to repent.

The key principle when dealing with Allah's attributes is given in the Qur'an in Surah Ash-Shura:

"There is nothing Whatever like unto Him, And He is the One That hears and sees (all things)."  
[Al-Qur'an 42:11]

Hearing and seeing are human faculties. However, when attributed to the Divine Being they are without comparison, in their perfection, unlike when associated with humans who require ears, eyes, etc. and who are limited in their sight and hearing in terms of space, time, capacity, etc.

- d. **God's creation should not be given any of His attributes:** To refer to a human with the attribute of God is also against the principle of *Tawheed*. For example, referring to a person as one who has no beginning or end (eternal).
- e. **Allah's name cannot be given to His creatures:** Some Divine names in the indefinite form, like '*Raooof*' or '*Raheem*' are permissible names for men as Allah has used them for Prophets; but '*Ar-Raooof*' (the Most Pious) and *Ar-Raheem* (the most Merciful) can only be used if prefixed by '*Abd*' meaning 'slave of' or 'servant of' i.e. '*Abdur-Raooof*' or '*Abdur-Raheem*'. Similarly '*Abdur-Rasool*' (slave of the Messenger) or '*Abdun-Nabee*' (slave of the Prophet) are forbidden.

### 3. **Tawheed al-Ibaadah (maintaining the unity of worship):**

- a. **Definition and meaning of 'Ibaadah':** '*Tawheed al-Ibaadah*' means maintaining the unity of worship or '*Ibaadah*'. *Ibaadah* is derived from Arabic word '*Abd*' meaning slave or servant. Thus *Ibaadah* means servitude and worship.
- b. **All three categories to be followed simultaneously:** Only believing in the first two categories of *Tawheed* without implementing *Tawheed-al-Ibaadah* is useless. The Qur'an gives the examples of '*Mushrikeens*' (idolaters) of the Prophet's time who confirmed the first two aspects of *Tawheed*. It is mentioned in the Qur'an:

"Say: 'Who is it that Sustains you (in life) From the sky and from the earth?  
Or who is it that Has power over hearing And sight? And who  
Is it that brings out The living from the dead And the dead from the living?  
And who is it that Rules and regulates all affairs?' They will soon say, 'Allah'.  
Say, 'Will you not then Show piety (to Him)?' "  
[Al-Qur'an 10:31]

A similar example is repeated in Surah Zukhruf of the Glorious Qur'an:

"If thou ask them, Who Created them, they will Certainly say, 'Allah': how  
Then are they deluded Away (from the Truth)?"  
[Al-Qur'an 43:87]

The pagan Meccans knew that Allah (swt) was their Creator, Sustainer, Lord and Master. Yet they were not Muslims because they also worshipped other gods besides Allah. Allah (swt) categorised them as '*Kuffaar*' (disbelievers) and '*Mushrikeen*' (idol worshippers and those who associate partners with God).

"And most of them Believe not in Allah Without associating (others  
As partners) with Him!"  
[Al-Qur'an 12:106]

Thus '*Tawheed al-Ibaadah*' i.e. maintaining the unity of worship is the most important aspect of *Tawheed*. Allah (swt) alone deserves worship and He alone can grant benefit to man for his worship.

### **SHIRK:**

1. **Definition:**The omission of any of the above mentioned categories of *tawheed* or deficiency in the fulfillment of any criteria of *Tawheed* is referred to as 'shirk'.(Please note that the Arabic word 'Shirk' has the same sound as in the English word 'ship' and not as in the English word 'shirk', which means 'to evade'. 'Shirk' literally means sharing or associating partners. In Islamic terms it means associating partners with Allah and is equivalent to idolatry.
2. **Shirk is the greatest sin that Allah will never forgive:** The Qur'an describes the greatest sin in Surah Al-Nisa':

"Allah forgives not That partners should be set up With Him; but He forgives  
Anything else, to whom He pleases; to set up Partners with Allah Is to devise a sin  
Most heinous indeed."  
[Al-Qur'an 4:48]

The same message is repeated in Surah Al-Nisa':

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"Allah forgives not (The sin of) joining other gods With Him; but He forgives  
Whom He pleases other sins Than this: one who joins Other gods with Allah,  
Has strayed far, far away (From the Right)."  
[Al-Qur'an 4:116]

3. **Shirk leads to hell fire:**

The Qur'an says in Surah Ma'idah:

"They do blaspheme who say: 'Allah is Christ the son Of Mary.' But said Christ:  
'O Children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord And your Lord'. Whoever joins other gods with Allah  
– Allah will forbid him the Garden, and the Fire Will be his abode. There will for the wrongdoers  
Be no one to help."  
[Al-Qur'an 5:72]

4. **Worship and Obedience to none but Allah:**

The Qur'an mentions in Surah Ali-'Imran:

Say: "O people of the Book! Come To common terms As between us and you: That we worship  
none but Allah; That we associate no partners with Him; That we erect not, from among  
ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah." If then they turn back, Say ye: "Bear witness that  
we (at least) Are Muslims (bowing to Allah's Will)."  
[Al-Qur'an 3:64]

The Glorious Qur'an says:

"And if all the trees on earth were pens And the Ocean (were ink), with seven Oceans behind it  
To add to its (supply), yet would not the Words Of Allah be exhausted (In the writing): for Allah

Is Exalted in power, Full of Wisdom."  
[Al-Qur'an 31:27]

Our analysis of Concept of God in various Religion shows that monotheism is an integral part of every major religion of the world. However, it is unfortunate that some adherents of these religions violate the teachings of their own scriptures and have set up partners to Almighty God.

An analysis of the scriptures of various religions, reveals that all scriptures exhort mankind to believe in, and submit to One God. All these scriptures condemn the association of partners to God, or the worship of God in the form of images. The Glorious Qur'an says:

"O men! Here is A parable set forth! Listen to it! Those On whom, besides Allah,  
You call, cannot create (Even) a fly, if they all Met together for the purpose!  
And if the fly should snatch Away anything from them, They would have no power  
To release it from the fly. Feeble are those who petition And those whom they petition!"  
[Al-Qur'an 22:73]

The basis of religion is the acceptance of Divine guidance. A rejection of this guidance has serious implications for society. While we have made great strides in science and technology, true peace still eludes us. All 'isms' have failed to provide the much vaunted deliverance.

The scriptures of all major religions exhort mankind to follow that which is good and eschew that which is evil. All scriptures remind mankind that good will not go unrewarded and evil will not go unpunished!

The question we need to address is, which of these scriptures provides us with the correct 'instruction manual' that we need to regulate our individual and collective lives?

I hope and pray that Allah guides all of us towards the Truth (Aameen).

Reference: <http://www.irf.net/irf/comparativereligion/index.htm>

#### **NOTE on abbreviations used in the article:**

swt = "Subhanahu Wa T'ala" is an Arabic phrase used with Allah and means "the Glorious and High"