

Part 2: Oneness of God

18) Meaning of "One"

Now that our talk is going to be centered on the theme “God is One,” let us clarify what we mean by “One” in this sentence.

The word “one” in our daily conversation conveys any of the following meanings:

1. “Man” and “Horse” are one (because both are mammals). Here ‘one’ describes that both man and horse belong to the same genus.
2. “Bakr” and “Smith” are one. ‘One’ here shows that both are of the same species.
3. You say pointing to two carpenters that they are one. Here ‘one’ means that both have the same profession, or the same adjective can be used for both.
4. Churchill was an orator, writer, soldier and statesman. You may say that his oratory, penmanship, soldiership and statesmanship were one, because they were combined in one person.
5. One pint milk and one pint water are ‘one’, because both have the same quantity.
6. Hot milk and hot water are ‘one’, because both are in the same condition.
7. John and Smith are standing. You may say ‘They are one’, because both are in the same position.
8. Khalid has two sons, Bakr and ‘Umar. Bakr and ‘Umar are one, because they have the same relation with Khalid.
9. A human-body or a chair is one because its components or parts are joined together. (But if the parts are disjoined or disintegrated, this ‘one’ will become millions.)
10. The beginning of counting is called ‘one’, as the beginning of theoretical line is called point. This ‘one’ is followed by countless numbers.

11. A matchless or unique person or thing is called one, as, for example, we may say that the sun within our solar system is 'one' because it has no equal within this system.

But all these meanings of 'Unity' carry the idea of 'duality' or 'plurality', because meanings nos. 1 to 9 show that 'two' or 'more' things are 'one' in some respect. So 'two' or 'more' are always present in these meanings. 'One' as beginning of number or count presupposes more than one thing.

A unique thing may be called one, but it is just a metaphorical use which has no relation with reality, because that unique thing, being made of matter, has millions of parts – is not one. When we say 'God is One', we take none of these meanings in consideration. Unity of God means that He has no parts, no body; He is not divisible even in imagination.

19) God cannot be more than One

God cannot be more than one. Why this bold assertion? There are various reasons. In addition to some of the proofs given earlier, here are two more: –

First Proof: It has been proved earlier that God is Eternal. And also it has been proved that Eternal cannot be a compound, mixture or mixed thing.

Now suppose there are two identical pens. They are similar in shape, size, colour and all qualities. Still, they are two, each having a separate identity. So, each pen has two kinds of qualities: first, the common qualities which make one pen similar to the other; second, the distinguishing qualities which give each pen its separate entity and identity. In other words, each pen of the set is a compound of mixed lot of two separate properties. This happens in all examples where two similar things exist side by side. It would surely happen if two Eternals were to exist side by side.

It means that if there were two Eternals they would both be compound. Each would have a common quality, that is, Eternity; and a distinguishing quality which would give it a separate personality. This would mean that Eternal would be a compound, which we already have proved to be impossible.

Therefore, God being Eternal cannot be more than one.

Second Proof: Suppose there were two gods. Could one of them over-ride the decision of the other? If yes, then the second one is weaker than the first, and therefore is not omnipotent, not a god at all. If 'No', then the first one is weaker than the second, and therefore not omnipotent, not a god at all. And if both think and act exactly on similar lines, then what is the need to suppose two gods at all? One god is enough to run this universe!

20) Meaning of 'Shirk'

'Shirk' literally means 'partnership'. In Islamic terminology, it is used for the belief of 'polytheism' (believing in more than one god) and 'pantheism', (believing that everything in the world is a part of god).

Polytheism is found in a variety of disguises. Some details are given here mostly from the Urdu book *Tawhid awr `adl* (Unity and Justice of God) of Mawlana Muhammad Mustafa Jawhar of Karachi: “There is some difference of opinion about ‘oneness’ of God. For example:

“1. Some say that God is not alone in Eternity. He has some colleagues in His Eternity. As, for instance, Christians believe that Jesus Christ and Holy Ghost are partners of God in godship – and it is evident that they could not be said to be partners in godship unless they themselves were believed to be eternal. “And the believers in –transmigration of soul believe that matter and soul both were eternal like God. If they discard the belief of the eternity of matter and soul, they will have to discard the belief of the transmigration of soul also.

“2. Resulting from the above belief, is the belief that there are partners in the attributes and qualities of God, as Christians believe about Jesus Christ. Because if Jesus Christ was not sharing the attributes and qualities of godhead, he could not be called a god.

“3. Some groups believe that there were partners in the actions of God, i.e., they were his helpers or partners in creation and control of the universe, as the Greek philosophers believed in ‘ten intellects’ who created the whole universe.

“4. Some people believe and say that God has no partner in his eternity, qualities and actions, but he has partners in worship. Such people are mainly called “mushrik ” in the Qur’anic terminology. “Such mushriks were the idol–worshippers of Arabia and their ideology is shared by the idol–worshippers in India and other places.

“5. The last group is of those people who thought that God has no partner in his Eternity, attributes, actions and worship; but they believed themselves to be independent of Allah in their actions. Such was the case of ‘al-Qadiriyyah’ (Qadirites) in Islam, who said that Allah had no power over man’s actions. Such belief means that man is not dependent upon Allah; rather he shares in the authority of Allah concerning his own activities. ”

Thus there are five types of shirk:

- (1) shirk in the person and Eternity of God,
- (2) shirk in the Attributes of God,
- (3) shirk in the Action of God,
- (4) shirk in the worship of God, and
- (5) shirk in the Authority of God.

All such beliefs are vehemently and clearly rejected and refuted in the Qur’an.

21) The Holy Prophet on “at-Tawhid”

Chapter 7 and 9 contain a discussion of the Holy Prophet with atheists. It was a part of a great discussion in which thirty-five representatives of five religions (Jews, Christians, Atheists, Dualists that is Parsecs, and Polytheists that is mushrikin) came to him and held discussions with him. In the end all accepted the truth of Islam and became Muslims. It is the beauty of the arguments put forward by the Holy Prophet that he explained highly philosophical subjects in such a simple language that even a layman could easily understand it. It is a master-piece of “Wisdom and good preaching.”

By the way, there are people who assert day in day out that the Holy Prophet learned from Judaism and Christianity. This discussion is a challenge to them. Let them produce such irrefutable argument from Jewish and Christian literature of early centuries before Islam. It will not be out of place to mention that these apparently simple arguments hold their ground even today and they are as much valid today as they were 1,400 years ago.

The discussion is narrated by Imam al-Hasan ibn `Ali al` Askari (p.b.u.h.) in his tafsir, (commentary), and al-`Allamah at-Tabarsi has copied it in his famous al-Ihtijaj (vol.I); it has been translated (with short comments) into Urdu by Mawlana Muhammad Mustafa `Jawhar' of Karachi and published twice. All three books are in my library.

The Holy Prophet had started his talks with Jews, then went on conversing with Christians, atheists, dualists and lastly_ with idolworshippers. Because of the arrangement of this booklet the arguments against atheists were given in the first part. Now the remaining four discussions are given here.

22) Islam versus Judaism

Jews of Arabia in the days of Holy Prophet had lost their original beliefs. Being in touch with idol-worshippers and Christians, they also had started the dogma of God having a son. As `Uzayr¹ had re-written Torah after it had been 1.

The Holy Prophet: “Why `Uzayr was son of God and Moses was not, as Moses brought Torah from God for the first time and bringing it first time is far more important than rewriting it?”

“Moreover, Moses showed many miracles which `Uzayr did not show. Therefore, if `Uzayr was son of God because God gave him the honour of re-writing Torah, Moses is far more deserving to be the son of God.

“Also, I take it that by sonship you do not mean that relationship which is established when a child is born from the womb of his mother after his parents establish sexual intercourse.”

Jews confirmed it, saying that when they said that `Uzayr was son of God, they did not mean sonship by birth, but because of his honour with God. It has the same meaning as many teachers call their favourite pupil “my son ”.

The Holy Prophet said that he already had answered that argument when he said that by that standard Moses was more deserving to be called the son of God.

And so far as the example of an elder calling some unrelated youth as “my son” is concerned, let us look at such uses a bit further.

You must have seen that the same elder, while showing respect to some great scholar, calls him “my brother” or “my elder” or “my chief” or even “my father”.

Basing on such usage, will you say that Moses (who was more honoured than `Uzayr before God) should be called “Brother of God” or “Elder of God” or “Chief of God?” The Jews could not answer it and after some deliberation accepted Islam.

23) Unity versus Trinity

Christians had expressed their belief that God is one with Jesus and that Jesus was son of God.

The Holy Prophet asked them what they meant by saying that eternal God is one with his son Jesus?

“Do you mean that the eternal (that is, God) became mortal as Jesus was?”

“If you say so, it is impossible that eternal which has neither beginning nor end should become mortal, which has both beginning and end. Or do you mean that mortal (Jesus) became eternal as God is ?

“But this also is impossible, because how can a thing which was created after non-existence be eternal ?

“Or do you mean by this sentence (God is one with Jesus) that God gave Jesus honour which was not given to anyone else?”

“If so, then you will have to accept that Jesus was not eternal, as he was created; and that his quality of getting honour from God is also not eternal, because he got it after his being created. And in that case, Jesus cannot be one with God because eternal and transient cannot combine together.”

Christians: “When God showed many wonderful miracles on the hand of Jesus, He made him His son as an honour.”

The Holy Prophet drew their attention to what he had already told Jews on the subject of `Uzayr and sonship of God, and repeated that argument. The Christians could not answer the arguments.

Then after some deliberation one of them said that the scriptures have reported Jesus as saying, “I am going to my father.” (This argument is based on the understanding that Jesus himself claimed that God was his father, and as the Holy Prophet accepted Jesus as a true prophet, his claim could not be wrong).

24) Unity versus Duality

The Holy Prophet said that the wording They said: “We find two kinds of things in this world – good and evil. These are opposites and we believe that the creator of good cannot be the creator of evil, and vice versa. These two opposites cannot be found together. “Don't you see that snow cannot give warmth and fire cannot make cool? That is why we believe two separate creators for good and evil and they are represented by light and darkness and both are eternal.”

The Holy Prophet said: “Pray tell me, have not you found in this world different colours–black, white, red, yellow, green and blue? Is it not a fact that none of these colours can be found with another colour in same place at same time?”

Dualists: “Yes. No two of these colours can be found in one place at same time.” The Holy Prophet said: Then, according to your thinking, you must believe that there is a separate creator for each one of these colours.” The Dualists could not give any answer to that argument.

Then the Holy Prophet asked them that light and darkness being opposites, how did it happen that both joined hands in creation and their creatures (good and evil) are together in this world? Doesn't it mean that there is a Superior power who has brought these opposites together?

They took time pondering upon these points and finally accepted Islam.

25) Unity versus Idol-Worship

Then the Holy Prophet asked the idol worshippers why they worshipped the idols instead of the one Almighty God.

They said: “We seek to be nearer to God through these idols.”

The Holy Prophet: “Do these idols hear? Are they pious and obedient servants of God? How can you seek nearness to God through them ? ”

Idol-worshippers: “No. They do not hear.” Holy Prophet: “And the fact is that you have carved these idols by your own hands. So, if these had ability to worship, it was incumbent upon them to worship you (because you are their creator) not that you should worship them. “Moreover, God has never allowed you to worship idols (so how can you be nearer to God through these idols, without any authority from God?).”

On hearing this argument, the idol-worshippers split into three groups:–

One group said: “These are the images of those persons in whom God was incarnated. Thus we worship God by worshipping the im ages of those persons who were incarnation of God. ”

The Holy Prophet said:

1. ” Your belief that God was incarnated in anybody is absolutely wrong because you have made the

Creator like His creatures. Don't you see that God cannot be incarnated in anything unless that thing surrounds God. (But how can anything surround God?)

2. "Also what will be the difference between God and other things which are found in a body (like colour, taste, smell, hardness or softness, heaviness or lightness). All these things are found in other things, and have no independent existence. Is God also like this?"

3. "Lastly, when you attribute to God a quality (incarnation) which is the quality of a transient (of a thing which was created after non-existence), then why not believe that all qualities of a transient are found in Him. I mean, you must also believe that God changes and deteriorates and dies, because the body of His supposed incarnation changes and deteriorates and dies. It is impossible for the content not to change with the changes of the receptacle!"

"All these considerations prove that it is impossible for God to be incarnated in any body. "And when incarnation is wrong, there remains no basis for your belief that God was incarnated in some of His creatures and that these idols are the image of such persons." The second group said that those idols were the images of those of past generations who were very obedient to God. "He carved their images and worship them with a view to glorify God through their worship."

The Holy Prophet asked them: "Pray tell me what kind of worship have you saved for Almighty God, when you are worshipping these images by prostrating before them, praying to them, and putting your head before them? "Don't you know that it is the right of God that He should not be thought equal to His servant? If you honour a King in the same way as you honour his servant, will not it be an insult to the King? "

Idol-worshippers: "Yes. It is true."

The Holy Prophet: "Then, don't you realize that by worshipping the images of the creatures, you are insulting the Creator ? " the last group said: "God created Adam and ordered the angels to prostrate before him. We are more deserving to prostrate before Adam (because we are his children). As Adam is not alive today, we have carved his image to prostrate before it and to seek nearness to God through that worship."

the Holy Prophet told them: "Accepted that God ordered the angels to prostrate before Adam. But has He ordered you to prostrate before the image of Adam? Adam and his image are not one and same thing. How are you sure that God is riot displeased with your prostration before Adam's image?"

"Look at it in this way. If a man allows you to enter his house one day, do you have any right to enter that house next day? Or to enter his other house the same day ? "If a man gives you a gift of one of his clothes, or one of his horses, arc you justified in taking it?"

Idol-worshippers: "Yes, we will take it." The Holy Prophet: "If you don't accept that cloth or horse, do you halve any right to take his other cloth or horse without his permission ? "

Idol-worshippers: "No. Because he had gifted the first cloth or horse, but not the other."

The Holy Prophet: “Who has more right that his property should not be used without his permission: God or His creatures?” Idol-worshippers: “God has more right that His property should not be infringed upon.”

The Holy Prophet: “Then why are you contravening this principle? When and where has God allowed you to worship the idols?” After some consideration, all of them became Muslim.

1. ` Uzayr = `Esdras or Ezra in English. lost for centuries, Jews revered him very much and started the claim that `Uzayr was son of God. The Holy Prophet asked them what was the reason of their belief. They said that 'Uzayr re-wrote Torah for the children of Israel when it was lost to them and it shows that he was son of God.

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