

Unity of God

“Say. He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal. Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him”. (Qur’an. Sura 112)

This short Sura of the Holy Qur’an is the most significant of all writings dealing with the one-ness of God. As Allamah Abdullah Yousuf Ali has commented in his translation of the Holy Book, the nature of God has been indicated here in a few words, such as we can understand.

He writes: “Here we are specially taught to avoid the pitfalls into which man and nations have fallen at various times in trying to understand God.

“The first thing we have to note is that His nature is so sublime, so far beyond our limited conceptions, that the best way in which we can realize him is to feel that He is a personality. ‘He’, and not a mere abstract conception of philosophy.

“Secondly, He is the One and Only God, the only one to Whom worship is due, all other things or beings that we can think of are His creatures and in no way comparable to Him.

“Thirdly, He is Eternal, without beginning or end: Absolute, not limited by time or place or circumstance, the reality before which all other things or places are mere shadows or reflections.

“Fourthly, we must not think of Him as having a son or a father, for that would be to import animal qualities into our conception of Him.

“Fifthly, He is not like any other person or thing that we know or can imagine: His qualities and nature are unique”.

In fact this short Sura is a declaration of war against all ideas of paganism, and anthropomorphism. Men from the beginning have had a tendency to imagine God in their own image. Some thought of Him as having body, like animals or human-beings. Others thought that He was incarnated in the forces of nature, like rain, lightning, mountain and river. Still others thought that He was a father and had child or children. But this Sura warns us against this tendency to conceive God after our own pattern.

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