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Unity of Allah (Tawhid)

Islam falls in the category of monotheistic creeds whose adherents believe in the Oneness of God. This concept is referred to in Islam as Tawhid, and it is so important and so vast that volumes of books have been written about it. `Allama al-Majlisi, for example, dedicates two entire volumes of his encyclopedic work Bihar al-Anwar to this most important tenet of Islam. Tawhid instructs Muslims that: there is only one God, one truth, one straight line between two points: God and His servants, one family, one couple of parents, Adam and Even, one human race, one heaven, and one hell.

Since the space here is limited, we will have to be brief as much as possible. Had we been able to afford the space, we would have refuted the views of dualists and polytheists as well as those who believe in the concept of the Trinity and in God having a son, a daughter, a wife, or any close family relative!

1. Tawhid In The Holy Qur'an

The Holy Qur'an is an inexhaustible source of knowledge for those who seek to discuss this subject. We have preferred here to be very brief in bringing the reader the following aspects relevant to Tawhid as outlined in the Holy Qur'an. Additional interesting and useful information shedding light on Tawhid is included in two chapters to follow.

a. Allah is Unique, Peerless

Qur'anic verses testifying to the fact that Allah, Praise to Him, is One and peerless and can never have a partner in His authority, or a similitude, nor can He have a son, a daughter, an aunt, or any kin, are numerous; here are some of them:

(***He is***) ***the Originator of the heavens and the earth; He made mates for you from among yourselves, and mates of*** (***and for***) ***the cattle, too, multiplying you*** (***humans and animals***) ***thereby; nothing is like Him; and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.*** (***42:11***)

Say: He, Allah, is One. Allah is He on Whom all (***beings and things***) ***depend. He does not beget,***

nor is He begotten. And none is like Him. (***112:1–4***)

He is Allah, the One, the Subduer (***of all***). (***39:4***)

Say: Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth? Say: Allah. Say: Do you then take besides Him guardians who do not control any benefit or harm for themselves? Say: Are the blind and the seeing alike? Or can the darkness and the light be equal? Or have they set up with Allah associates who have created creation like His, so what is created became confused to them? Say: Allah is the Creator of all, and He is the One, the Supreme. (***13:16***)

All these verses, and many others, testify that Allah is the One and Only God, negating the theories of dualists or polytheists.

b. He is the Only Creator

None besides Allah has ever created anything out of nothing. He, and only He, is the Creator, whereas everything besides Him is a creation of His. Everything in the cosmos, the stars and constellations, the earth and its mountains, oceans, rivers, vegetation, small or large beings, and the humans who live on it, are all among His creations. Verses stressing this fact abound in the Holy Qur'an; among them are: (See 13:16 above)

Allah is the Creator of everything and He has authority over everything. His are the treasures of the heavens and the earth; as for those who disbelieve in the communications of Allah, they surely are the losers. (***39:62–63***)

Such is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of everything; there is no God but He; whence are you then turned away? (***40:62***)

Such is Allah, your Lord; there is no god but He, the Creator of all things; so, worship Him (***and Him alone***)***, and He has charge of all things.*** (***6:102***)

He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner; His are the most beautiful names; whatever in the heavens and in the earth declares His glory, and He is the Mighty, the Wise. (***59:24***)

(***Allah is the***) ***Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth! How could He have a son when He has no consort, and He*** (***Himself***) ***created everything? And He knows all things.*** (***6:101***)

O men! Call to mind the favour of Allah on you; is there any creator besides Allah who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth? There is no god but He; whence are you then turned away? (***35:3***)

Surely your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods of time, and He is firm in power; He throws the veil of night over the day, which it incessantly pursues, and (***He***

***created*) *the sun and the moon and the stars* (*and*) *made them subservient* (*to you, serving you*) *by His command; surely His is the creation and the command; blessed is Allah, the Lord of the worlds.* (*7:54*)**

c. The One in Godhead and in Nurturing His Beings

There is only One God for the entire cosmos. He deals with it as He pleases without having anyone to share His authority, or to help Him. He manages the affairs through many agents, the most noteworthy of whom are the angels who outnumber by many, many times, all the residents of earth, and whose duties and ranks vary a great deal. They carry out His orders most efficiently and effectively; He enabled them to do so. Consider the following verses:

***Surely your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, and He is firm in power, regulating the affairs; there is no intercessor except with His permission. Such is Allah, your Lord; so, worship Him; will you not then mind?* (*10:3*)**

***Allah raised the heavens without any pillars that you can see, and He is firm in power, and He made the sun and the moon subservient* (*to you*)*: each pursues its course to an appointed time; He regulates the affairs, making clear the signs so that you may be certain of meeting your Lord.* (*13:2*)**

***He is the Supreme above His servants, and He sends keepers over you until, when death comes to one of you, Our messengers* (*angels of death*) *cause him to die, and they are not remiss.* (*6:61*)**

***Allah takes the souls away at the time of death* (*through His agents, the angels of death*)*, and those that do not die during their sleep, He withholds those on whom He has passed the decree of death and sends the others back till an appointed term; most surely there are signs in this for people who reflect.* (*39:42*)**

***And seek assistance through patience and prayer, and most surely it is hard except for the humble ones.* (*2:45*)**

***Say: Allah's is the intercession all of it; His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, then to Him shall you all be brought back.* (*39:44*)**

***And how many an angel is there in the heavens whose intercession does not avail at all except after Allah has given permission to whom He pleases and chooses* (*to receive His mercy*)*?* (*53:26*)**

***Say: None in the heavens and in the earth knows the unseen except Allah, and they do not know when they shall be raised.* (*27:65*)**

On no account will Allah leave the believers in the condition in which you are till He separates the

evil from the good, nor is Allah going to make you acquainted with the unseen, but Allah chooses as His prophets whomsoever He pleases; so, believe in Allah and in His prophets, and if you believe and guard (yourselves against evil), you shall then have a great reward. (***3:179***)

And when I am sick, He restores health to me. (***26:80***)

And We reveal of the Qur'an that wherein there is a healing and a mercy to the believers, and it adds only perdition to the unjust ones. (***17:82***)

Surely Allah bestows sustenance, the Lord of Power, the Strong One. (***51:58***)

… and maintain them out of (the benefits thereof), and clothe them and speak to them words of honest advice. (***4:5***)

Have you considered what you sow? Is it you that cause it to grow, or do We not cause its growth?! (***56:63-64***)

… it delights the one that sows it, so that He may enrage the unbelievers on their account; Allah has promised those who believe and do good from among them forgiveness and a great reward. (***48:29***)

… Allah writes down (through His agents, the angels) what they decide by night; therefore, turn aside from them and trust in Allah, and Allah suffices as the Protector. (***4:81***)

Aye! And Our messengers (angels) are with them writing down (whatever they say and do). (***43:80***)

As for those who do not believe in the hereafter, We have surely made their deeds fair-seeming to them, so they blindly wander on. (***27:4***)

And Satan made their deeds fair-seeming to them and said: No one can overcome you this day, and surely I am your protector. But when the two parties came in sight of each other, he turned upon his heels and said: Surely I am clear of you; surely I see what you do not see; surely I fear Allah. And Allah is severe in requiting (evil). (***8:48***)

And We have appointed form them comrades, so they have made fair-seeming to them what is before them and what is behind them. (***41:25***)

Say: Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth? Or Who controls the hearing and the sight? And Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? And Who regulates the affairs? They will then say: Allah. Say: Will you not then guard (yourselves against evil)? (***20:31***)

Then those that regulate the affair (on behalf of and according to the instructions of Allah)…

(*79:5*) *… and you did not smite them when you smote* (*the, the enemy*)*, but it was Allah Who smote* (*them*)*.* (*8:17*)

Had there been in them any gods other than Allah, they would have both been in a state of disorder; therefore, glory to Allah, the Lord of the dominion, above what they attribute (***to Him***)***.*** (***21:22***)

Neither did Allah take to Himself a son, and never was there with him any (***other***) ***god; in that case, each god would certainly have taken away what he created, and some of them would certainly have overpowered others; glory to Allah above what they describe!*** (***23:91***)

d. Allah is the Only Source of Legislation

For the Muslims, Allah is the only One Who legislates every rule of their lives. Such a code of legislation, i.e. the Shari`a, regulates everyone's relationship with all others as well as with his/her Lord and Maker. The Holy Qur'an clearly indicates that no man–made law or constitution is acceptable, that the only canon is the Holy Qur'an. Verses requiring the believers to obey only Allah are numerous; here are some of them:

You do not worship besides Him except names which you yourselves and your fathers have named; Allah has not sent down any authority for them; judgment is only Allah's; He has commanded that you should worship none but Him; this is the right religion, but most people do not know. (***12:40***)

Is it then the judgment of (***the times of***) ***ignorance*** (***jahiliyya***) ***that they desire? And who is better than Allah to judge for people who are sure?*** (***5:50***)

Surely We revealed the Torah in which there was guidance and light. With it, the prophets who submitted themselves (***to Allah***) ***judged*** (***matters***) ***for those who were Jews, and the masters of Divine knowledge and the doctors, because they were required to guard*** (***part***) ***of the Book of Allah, and they were witnesses thereof; therefore, do not fear the people but fear Me, and do not take a small price for My communications.***

Whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, they are the unbelievers. And We prescribed to them in it that: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and (***that there is***) ***reprisal in wounds; but whoever forgoes it, it shall be an expiation for him, and whoever does not judge by what Allah revealed, those are they that are the unjust.***

And We sent after them in their footsteps Jesus son of Mary testifying to what was before him of the Torah, and We gave him the Gospel wherein there was guidance and light and testifying to what was before it of the Torah, and a guidance, and an admonition for those who guard (***themselves against evil***)***. And the People of the Book should have judged by what Allah revealed***

in it, and whoever does not judge by what Allah revealed, those are they that are the transgressors. (***5:44-47***)

The questions that force themselves on us here are: Are Muslims really following the Islamic Shari`a? Are they deriving their laws from the Holy Qur'an? Do their legal, social, and economical systems adhere to the Holy Qur'an? What about their blind imitation of the anti-Islamic Western way of life? What about their bowing down to the authority of the organization called the "United Nations" which is ruled by the non-Muslim and anti-Islamic permanent members of its Security Council?

Why do they brag about following the so-called "international law" knowing that it is neither the law of the Holy Qur'an, nor does the Islamic Shari`a make room for any man-made code of any kind whatsoever? For how long will they keep closing their eyes to the fact that the United Nations is united only against them? Will they ever wake up? When will they ever tell the United Nations to go to hell? But they have first of all to purge their countries of corrupt rulers who fear nothing more than the Islamic Shari`a and who derive their strength not from public support but from the enemies of the Islamic Shari`a.

e. The Only One to Obey

Only Allah should be obeyed. Obedience of His commandments manifests one's submission to Him. A Muslim is required to do only what pleases Allah and what He has decreed as permissible. Anything besides that is apostasy:

Be careful of (***your duty to***) ***Allah as much as you can, and hear and obey and spend*** (***of what He bestows upon you***)***; it is better for your souls*** (***that you do so***)***, and whoever is saved from the greediness of his soul, these it is that are the successful.*** (***64:16***)

And We did not send any prophet except that he should be obeyed by Allah's permission. (***4:64***)

f. Allah is the Only Judge

Allah is the only Judge, the Judge of Judges, the One Whose authority is above that of anyone else's. His Word is the law, His injunctions are binding on everyone. To accept anyone else's judgment in preference to Allah's is to commit shirk; we seek refuge with Him against doing so. Consider the following verses: (See 12:40 above)

Say: Surely I have a manifest proof from my Lord but you call it a lie; I have not with me (***to bring about***) ***that which you hasten; judgment is only Allah's; He relates the truth and He is the best of those who decide.*** (***6:57***)

Then they are sent back to Allah, their Master, the True One; surely His is the judgment, and He is the swiftest in taking account. (***6:62***)

O David! Surely We have made you a ruler in the land; so judge between men with justice and do

not follow (***your own personal***) ***desire lest it should lead you astray from the path of Allah.*** (***38:26***)

g. Rewards of Testifying that "There is no god except Allah"

To articulate the testimony of La ilaha illa-Allah (There is no god except Allah) is regarded in Islam as an act of worship for which the believer will be richly rewarded. Such rewards are recorded starting from p. 20 of Thawab al-A`mal wa Iqab al-A`mal by the great mentor Abu Ja`fer Muhammad ibn `Ali ibn al-Husain ibn Babawayh al-Saduq al-Qummi (d. 381 A.H./991 A.D.) and published in 1410 A.H./1989 A.D. by al-A`lami Establishment for Publications (Beirut, Lebanon). We would like to quote some of the very interesting and enlightening text on those pages for the benefit of the dear reader:

Abu Sa`eed al-Khudri[1] quotes the Messenger of Allah saying, "Allah, the most Exalted and Sublime, said once to Moses son of `Imran (Amram), `O Moses! Had the heavens and all those who reside therein, as well as those of the seven (layers) of earth, been placed on one scale and La ilha illa-Allah on the other, the scale containing La ilaha illa-Allah would surely have weighed more."

The great sahabi Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari quotes the Messenger of Allah saying, "Two most sure things are: 1) Whoever dies testifying that There is no god except Allah will enter Paradise and, 2) Whoever dies associating anything with Allah will enter the fire (of hell)."

Imam Ja`fer al-Sadiq quotes his great grandfather the Messenger of Allah saying, "Teach your dying persons to say: La ilaha illa-Allah, for it will smash their sins all of them." He was asked, "O Messenger of Allah! What about one who says so while enjoying good health?"

He said, "That is more smashing to them, more so, and still more! Indeed, La ilaha illa-Allah is the best companion of anyone during his lifetime, when he dies, and when he is brought back to life again... Gabriel has said (to me): `O Muhammad! Were you only to see them when they are brought back to life again! Some are raised with white faces calling out: La ilaha illa-Allah! Allahu Akbar! And the faces of others will be black, and they will be crying out: Ya Waylah! Ya Thuburah! (O woe unto me! O what a calamity!)'"

The Messenger of Allah has said, "Whoever says: La ilaha illa-Allah will have a tree planted for him in Paradise of red sapphire; it is planted in white musk, is sweeter than honey and is more white than snow; its fragrance is better than musk, its fruit looks like virgins' breasts, and it opens up for seventy outfits."

Jabir ibn Yazid al-Ju`fi quotes Imam Abu Ja`fer al-Baqir who quotes the Messenger of Allah saying, "For everything there is something else equal to it except Allah, the Exalted, the Sublime, for nothing at all equals Him, and so is La ilaha illa-Allah: nothing equals it. Nothing can weigh heavier than one's tear shed out of fear of Allah. If it trickles down his face, no exhaustion nor humiliation shall ever touch it (his face) thereafter."

The Commander of the Faithful Imam `Ali ibn Abu Talib has said, "Whenever a servant of Allah says: La ilaha illa-Allah, it (the statement) ascends piercing every ceiling, wiping out his sins as it passes by them till it reaches its equivalent in good deeds. It is only there that it will."

Abu Ja`fer, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, has said, "Nothing is more rewardable than testifying that There is no god except Allah, for nothing equates Allah, the most Exalted One, nor is there any partner with him."

Abu Sa`eed al-Khudri quotes the Messenger of Allah saying, "I have not said anything, nor has anyone else before me, like: La ilaha illa-Allah."

Abu Abdullah Imam Ja`fer al-Sadiq has said, "The testimony of la ilaha illa-Allah is the price of Paradise."

The Messenger of Allah is quoted saying, "Repeat la ilaha illa-Allah and Allahu Akbar as often as you can, for Allah loves nothing more than them both."

Of course the more you pronounce this short but very weighty statement, the more rewards you will earn. Imam Ja`fer al-Sadiq has said, "Whoever repeats the testimony of la ilaha illa-Allah a hundred times is better than all other people that day except one who repeats it more often than him."

Imam al-Sadiq has also said, "If one says La ilaha illa-Allah a hundred times prior to going to bed, Allah builds him a mansion in Paradise, and whoever seeks Allah's forgiveness a hundred times before going to bed, his sins will fall down as leaves fall down from the trees."

2. How Sunnis View Allah

First of all, the references cited in this part are all written by well known Sunni scholars of hadith. The numbers of their books' volumes and pages reflect those of their original Arabic texts. Many of them are yet to be translated into English. The translated ones, on the other hand, are quite often edited, and the editing includes the elimination of a good deal of the original text. Like Jews and Christians, Sunnis view Allah as having created Adam in His own image. Reference to the Almighty creating Adam in His image exists in the Book of Genesis of the Old Testament, and some ignorant people take it literally.

On p. 1481, Vol. 4, of the English translation of Muslim's Sahih (published in New Delhi, India, in 1977 by Nusrat `Ali Nasri for Kitab Bhavan), Abu Hurayra quotes the Messenger of Allah saying, "Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, created Adam in His own image with His length of sixty cubits..."[2] In Bukhari, we read how Allah is described as having the same physical appearance given to man. Read Bukhari's Sahih, particularly the chapter on seeking permission to enter, p. 122, Vol. 2, where Surat al-Zumar is explained, p. 184, Vol. 6, "Kitab al-Tawhid" (Book of the Unity of Allah), where the verse saying, "... I created in My own hand," p. 192, Vol. 6, where the verse saying, "[Some faces] on that Day shall be pleased," in his explanation of the verse saying, "On the Day when a leg shall be uncovered" which

exists in Surat Noon (i.e. 68:42), in his exegesis of Surat Qaf, in a chapter explaining the verse saying, "The mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good" on p. 191 of Vol. 4, in his "Kitab al-Tahajjud," in a chapter dealing with supplications and prayers at the end of the night, and elsewhere. Other references are indicated in the footnotes below.

Sunnis, as indicated above, claim that Allah created Adam in His image[3] that He has fingers[4], legs[5], and feet[6]. As for Allah having fingers, readers who are not fluent in Arabic are referred to p. 1461, Vol. 4, of the English translation of Muslim's Sahih where they will be reading about Allah's alleged fingers in the following "tradition" narrated by Abdullah ibn Masu`d[7], by Mansur, and by al-A`mash. Both latter narrators narrate it in slightly different variations. Its unedited text is as follows:

A Jew scholar came to Allah's Prophet (may peace be upon him) and said: Muhammad, or Abu al-Qasim, verily, Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, would carry the Heavens on the Day of Judgment upon one finger and earths upon one finger and the mountains and trees upon one finger and the ocean and moist earth upon one finger - in fact the whole of the creation upon one finger, and then He would stir them and say: I am your Lord, I am your Lord. Thereupon Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) smiled testifying what that scholar had said.[8]

The same "tradition" is recorded in both its Arabic text and English translation on p. 113 of The Divine Traditions. In another "tradition" on the following page (p. 1462 of the English translation of Muslim's Sahih), we are told that Allah has hands. It is narrated by none other than Abu Hurayra who quotes the Messenger of Allah saying, "Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, will take in His grip the earth on the Day of Judgment and He would roll up the sky in His right hand and would say: I am the Lord; where are the sovereigns of the world?" With slightly different wording, the same "tradition" is narrated by Abdullh ibn Omer, and it is also reported by Abu Bakr ibn Abu Shaybah and is published in both languages on p. 114 of The Divine Traditions. Reference to Allah's alleged hands exists in the following page (p. 1463 of the English translation of Muslim's Sahih); here is its unedited text:

Abu al-Sai`d Khudri[9] reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying that the earth would turn to be one single bread on the Day of Resurrection and the Almighty would turn it in His hand as one of you turns a loaf while on a journey. It would be a feast arranged in the honour of the people of Paradise. He (the narrator) further narrated that a person from among the Jews came and he said: Abu al-Qasim, may the Compassionate Lord be pleased with you! May I inform you about the feast arranged in honour of the people of Paradise on the Day of Resurrection?

He said: Do it, of course. He said: The earth would become one single bread. Then Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) looked towards us and laughed until his molar teeth became visible[10] . He then again said: May I inform you about that with which they would season it? He said: Do it, of course. He said: Their seasoning would be balam and fish. The Companions of the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him) said: What is this balam? He said: Ox and fish from whose excessive livers seventy thousand people would be able to eat.

Since when did the Prophet of Allah need the Jews to tell him about the hereafter? Could the Jews have told him better than arch-angel Gabriel? This is how Judaica crept into Islamic literature, wreaking havoc in and corrupting it, rendering it un-Islamic. Laughter is not at all dignifying. Whenever a Muslim laughs, he/she is supposed to seek Allah's forgiveness and say, "Allahomma la tamqutni" (O Allah! Do not despise me!" Such is the Islamic code of conduct. Yet there are numerous references to the Prophet laughing in hadith the authenticity of which leaves much to be desired. Whenever you laugh, you ought to remember verse 82 of Surat Bar'a: ***"So they shall laugh a little and weep much as a recompense for what they earned"*** (***Qur'an, 9:82***).

Imam Ja`fer al-Sadiq quotes his fathers citing the Messenger of Allah saying, "A good deal of jesting is not at all dignifying, while a good deal of laughter wipes out iman (conviction)."[11] Imam al-Sadiq has also quoted his father Imam Muhammad al-Baqir saying, "(Prophet) David said to (his son, later Prophet) Solomon: `O son! Beware of laughing a lot, for a good deal of laughter leaves a servant of Allah very poor on the Day of Judgment.'"[12] Abu Abdullah, Imam Ja`fer al-Sadiq, has also said, "Three things invoke Allah's contempt: one sleeps without having kept a vigil, laughs without having witnessed something extra-ordinary, and one who eats though his stomach is already full."[13]

One of the pieces of advice given by the Messenger of Allah to Abu Tharr al-Ghifari was this one which is recorded in `Uyoon Akhbar al-Rida: "Strange how one who knows that there is the fire (of hell) and who still laughs." He has also said, "Beware of much laughter, for it causes the death of the heart."[14] The Messenger of Allah always smiled but never laughed. As a matter of fact, to smile in the face of your Muslim brother is equivalent to paying charity, according to one hadith. One day the Messenger of Allah passed by a band of young Ansaris who were talking and laughing heartily, so he said to them, "O folks! Anyone among you who is deceived by his hopes and is short of doing good deeds should look at the graves and be admonished about the life to come. And remember death, for it shall put an end to each and every enjoyment."[15]

The readers may tolerate reading about the Prophet laughing, but what is their conclusion when they come across the claim that Allah, too, laughs?! References to Allah laughing exist in lengthy "traditions" narrated by Ma`ath ibn Fulah who quotes Hisham quoting Qatadah quoting Anas ibn Malik and is recorded on pp. 119-120 of The Divine Traditions. It depicts one of the scenes on the Day of Judgment.

A variation of it is narrated by Abd al-`Aziz ibn Abdullah who quotes Ibrahim ibn Sa`d quoting Ibn Shihab quoting `Ata ibn Yazid al-Laythi quoting Abu Hurayra, and it is recorded by al-Bukhari and cited on pp. 121-122 of The Divine Traditions. We do not think it is worth quoting here.

Sunnis also claim that Allah occupies a certain space and travels from one place to another, building their argument not on any Qur'anic verse but on a tradition wherein the Messenger of Allah says, "Our Lord, before creating His creation, did not have anything with Him; underneath Him was air; above Him was air, then He created His throne on water."[16]

They also quote the Messenger of Allah saying, "His `Arsh was over His heavens like this (then he demonstrated with his finger the shape of a dome), and He mounted it as a rider mounts over the saddle of his mount."[17] They also quote him saying, "Allah descends at the last part of the night from the heavens to the lower earth and says, `Who is there to ask Me, so I respond to him, and who is there to ask Me, so I give him?'"[18] They also quote him saying, "Allah descends during the night of the middle of Sha`ban to the lower heavens where He forgives..."[19]

They also quote him saying the following about the Day of Judgment: "It will be said to hell: `Are you filled up?' It will say, `Is there any more?' So the Lord, Blessed and Exalted is He, will put His leg into it, whereupon it will say, `Now I am full!'" In another version of this "tradition," Prophet Muhammad is quoted saying, "As to the fire (of hell), it will not be filled up until He puts His foot in it, whereupon it will say, `Now, only now, am I full!' It is then that it will be full, and each of its parts will close in on the other."[20] Similar variations of this "tradition" are narrated by Qatdah who quotes Anas ibn Malik.

Sunnis claim that Allah will be seen by Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, who will have audience with Him, as well as by everyone else on the Day of Judgment. They quote the Messenger of Allah saying, "The believers will come to Me for intercession after all prophets refuse to intercede on their behalf, so I will set out and seek audience with my Lord, and I will be granted audience with Him. Once I see my Lord, I shall fall down prostrating... Then I shall seek His intercession, and He will draw a line for me, so I shall let them enter Paradise. Then I shall go back to my Lord. Once I see Him, I shall fall prostrating..., etc."[21]

According to this "tradition,"[22] the Almighty is confined to a specific place where He is visited by the Messenger of Allah who recognizes Him upon seeing Him... An entire chapter in The Divine Traditions is dedicated to the believers allegedly seeing their Lord. It starts on p. 157. The narrators who narrate such "traditions" include: Ubaydullah ibn Omer ibn Maysarah, Abd al-Rahman ibn Mahdi, Hammad ibn Salamah, Thabit al-Bunani, Abd al-Rahman ibn Abu Layla, Shuhayb, Jabir ibn Abdullah, Saheeb, and others. They are recorded in the hadith and sunan books of Bukhari, Muslim, Ibn Majah, al-Tirmithi, and al-Nisa'i. Sunnis also quote the Messenger of Allah saying, "Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He, will descend on the Day of Judgment to His servants in order to judge between them."[23]

They claim that he said, "You shall see your God with your own eyes."[24] They claim that Muslims will see their God on the Day of Judgment just as they see the moon without suffering any pain while looking at Him.[25] They go beyond that to cite the Almighty saying, "Whoever worships something, let him follow it." So, they proceed to say, some people will follow the sun while others will follow the moon, while still others will follow the tyrants, and this nation shall stay including its hypocrites.

"Allah will then come to them not in the shape whereby they know Him, and He will say, `I am your God.' They will say, `We seek refuge with Allah against you. We shall stay here till our God comes to us. So once our God comes to us, we shall recognize Him.' It is then that Allah will go to them in the shape whereby they know Him, and He will say, `I am your God.' They will say, `You are our Lord,' and they

shall follow Him... etc."[26] Another "tradition" states the following:

So when nobody remains except the righteous and the libertine who worshipped Allah, the Lord of the Worlds will come to them in the form wherein they saw Him, and He will ask them, "What are you waiting for? Each nation should follow what it used to worship." They will say, "We are waiting for our Lord Whom we worshipped." "I am your Lord," He will say. They will twice or thrice respond by saying, "We do not associate any with Allah..."

He will ask them, "Is there any mark whereby you can recognize Him?" They will say, "Yes, the leg." So He will uncover His leg, whereupon they will fall prostrating. Then they will raise their heads and see Him in the form whereby they saw Him the first time. It is then that He will say, "I am your Lord." They will say, "You are our Lord."[27]

And Allah speaks to His servants on the Day of Judgment and those near and far will hear His voice as we are told in the following "tradition" compiled and published in The Divine Traditions (Al-Ahadith al-Qudsiya); its text here exists on p. 226 and is unedited, hence its broken English:

Jabir (RAA) narrated on the authority of Abdullah bin Unais (RAA) who said, "Allah will gather the people and call them with a Voice which will be heard by those who will be far away and those who will be near, by saying, `I am the King; I am the Daiyan (The one who Judges people on their deeds after calling them to account). Bukhari transmitted it. (The Book [of] Monotheism; chapter: The statement of Allah,

"No intercession avails with Him except for him whom He permits" (***Qur'an, 34:23***).

Sunnis, therefore, believe that Allah will speak to His servants who will be permitted to enter into His Paradise as the above cited quotation implies. There is another lengthy "tradition" on pp. 160-161 of The Divine Traditions transmitted by Sa`eed ibn al-Musayyab who met Abu Hurayra who informed him of it. A portion of it states, as the poorly translated text reads, as follows:

Abu Huraira told that he asked, "O Allah's Messenger, shall we see our Lord?" To which he replied, "Yes, are you in doubt about seeing the sun and the moon on the night when it is full?" On receiving the reply that they were not, he said, "Similarly you will have no doubts about the vision of your Lord, and no man will remain in that assembly without Allah conversing with him, till he says to one of them, `So and so son of so and so, do you remember the day you said such-and-such?' And He will remind him of one of the dishonest things he did in the world. He will say, `O my Lord, hast Thou not forgiven me?' And He will reply, `Yes; by the widness[28] of my forgiveness you have reached this station of yours.'"[29]

This "tradition" is included in al-Tirmithi's Sahih, Vol. 2, pp. 89-90. There are many such "traditions" which the reader can review in Bukhari, Muslim, Ibn Majah, and other "reliable" Sunni recorders of hadith. Had we attempted to quote all of them here, this book would have become much larger than it already is. Probably the most evident of the belief of Sunnis that Allah has the same human physical attributes is what is recorded by the "imam of imams," namely the great hafiz Muhammad ibn Ishaq ibn

Khuzaymah (d. 311 A.H./923 A.D.) who taught hadith to both Bukhari and Muslim.

He wrote a book with a rather lengthy title: Al-Tawhid wa ithbat sifat al-rabb `azza wa jall allati waafa bih nafsah fi tanzeelih wa `ala lisn nabiyyih (The Unity of God and the proof about the characteristics of the Lord, the Unique and the Exalted One, whereby He described Himself in His Book and through His Prophet).

This book was published in 1378 A.H./1958 A.D. by Maktabat al-Kulliyyat al-Azhariyya (Library of al-Azhar's Colleges) at Maydan al-Azhar, Cairo. The titles of some of this book sound like a piece-by-piece list of the Almighty's alleged bodily parts: His face, His form, His eyes, His hearing, His vision, His hands, His leg..., and a chapter on how all the believers will see Allah on the Day of Judgment and will be able to recognize Him.

Another hafiz imam, Othman ibn Sa`eed al-Darmi (d. 280 A.H./893 A.D.), wrote a book as a rebuttal to the views of the Jahmites; among its chapters are: how the Lord seats Himself on the Throne and ascends to heavens, how He is different from His creation, how He descends on the night of the middle of Sha`ban, how He descends on the Day of `Arafat, how He descends on the Day of Judgment for the great trial, how He descends to the residents of Paradise, and how He is seen.

This much should suffice to demonstrate to the discreet reader how our Sunni brethren consider the Almighty as having a physical body quite like ours, how He comes and goes, ascends and descends, walks, talks, laughs and does I do not know what else...!

3. How Shi`as View Allah

The above views adopted and recorded by Sunni Muslims are not at all endorsed by Shi`a Muslims who refute them by quoting verse 103 of Surat al-Ana`m (6:103) that states the following:

Vision does not comprehend Him, while He comprehends all vision, and He knows all the subtleties, (He is) the Aware One.

In their view, the Almighty is not a physical form and, hence, does not occupy a space, nor does He move from one place to another, nor can He be seen by anyone. They contend that their Sunni brethren simply do not have the proper tafsir (exegesis) of certain Qur'anic verses such as the following:

Some faces will on that Day be bright, looking to their Lord. (***75:22***)

"Looking to their Lord" does not mean "looking at their Lord;" it means: they are waiting in optimistic anticipation for His rewards. As regarding the Almighty seating Himself on the `Arsh, the Throne of Authority, Imam Ja`fer al-Sadiq (as), from whose fiqh Ithna-`Asheri Ja`feri Shi`as derive their creed, says the following:

Whoever claims that Allah sits on the `Arsh considers Allah as being conveyed (or mounted on something), implying that what conveys Him has to be stronger than Him (so it could carry His weight). And whoever claims that Allah is present somewhere, or is on top of something, or there is a place where He is not there, or that He occupies a space..., would be attributing to Him characteristics which are strictly relevant to those whom He creates, whereas Allah is the Creator of everything. He cannot be measured or compared by anything; He cannot be like people; He is not absent from anywhere, and He does not occupy a specific space.30

Shi`as also refute this claim by citing Imam `Ali ibn Abu Talib saying,

Allah does not descend, nor does He need to descend. Such is claimed by those who attribute to Him an increase or a decrease. Everything mobile needs what mobilizes it or what means whereby it moves. Beware, then, when you discuss His characteristics lest you should imply any increase or decrease to Him, any movement or mobilization, any departure or descending, any sitting or standing.31

This is the view held by all other Imams from Ahl al-Bayt; none of them contradicts the other; such is the true creed, one wherein there is no contradiction at all.

Allah as Viewed by the Commander of the Faithful Imam `Ali

Two narrators, Muhammad ibn Abi Abdillah and Muhammad ibn Yahya, narrate a tradition related by Abu Abdullah Imam Ja`fer al-Sadiq citing the Commander of the Faithful Imam `Ali ibn Abu Talib delivering a sermon once in order to solicit people's support in his second war against Mua`wiyah ibn Abu Sufyan. In it, the Commander of the Faithful says,

All praise is due to Allah, the One and Only God Who is sought by all, the Unique One Who is neither created out of anything pre-existing, nor has He created anything out of something. Through His Might does He manifest Himself, and it is through His Might that anything manifests itself. None of His attributes can be fully comprehended, nor does He have any measure whereby He is compared.

The tongue in any language is too crippled to describe His attributes, and the circumlocution of His attributes leads into nowhere but a blind alley. The sharpest of intellects are too puzzled to comprehend His kingdom; all comprehensive explanations are rendered short of delving into His kingdom. Unknown curtains obstruct the understanding of the lowest levels of His hidden knowledge, and the keenest insights are totally lost in comprehending the most (seemingly) superficial of His subtleties.

So Glorified is Allah Who cannot be reached by the most ambitious of wills, nor can He be grasped by the deepest of insights. Exalted is He for Whom there is no measure of time, nor any fixed duration, nor any limited description. Praised is He Who has no beginning at all nor any end, nor any extinction. Glorified is He as He has described Himself. Those who attempt to describe Him can never do so. He delineated the boundaries of all things when He created them without having modelled them after any pre-existing models, thus distinguishing Himself from their similitude.

Never has He resided in them, so it could be said that He is contained therein, nor has He been apart from them, so a place outside them could be sought for Him. Rather, He, all Praise is due to Him, encompassed them in His knowledge and perfected their design and computed them.

Even things beyond the curtains of the atmosphere are never hidden from His knowledge, nor are those obscurities within the depth of the dark, nor are those in the high heavens, nor are those in the lowest layers of the earth: for each and every thing in them there is a custodian and a keeper, each one of them surrounds the others, while His knowledge encompasses them all. He is the One and Only God upon Whom all depend for their existence and subsistence, the One Whom the passage of time never alters, nor does the creation of things tire Him. Whatever He wills, He says to it, "Be!" and it is.

He created everything without following a pre-existing model or a precedent, and without encountering any fatigue or a prior planning. Whoever makes something makes it out of something else, whereas Allah created everything out of nothing. Every scholar acquires knowledge after being ignorant, while Allah is never ignorant, nor has He ever acquired knowledge out of what He creates. He encompasses all things in His knowledge before creating them.

Nothing is added to His knowledge because of their coming into existence: His knowledge is the same before and after He brought them into existence. He never created what He created in order to enhance His control, nor out of fear of its decay or loss, nor to seek help out of it against His adversary, nor to seek the upper hand over a progressive competitor, nor seeking to be the equal of a dominating partner; all creation is nurtured by Him; everyone and everything are humbled slaves before Him.

Glorified is He Who never feels weary on account of creating what He creates, nor in nurturing whatever He creates, nor does He, out of inability or slackness, terminate what He creates. He knows what He creates and creates what He knows.

Whatever He creates He creates neither out of deliberating on any new knowledge, nor does any doubt entertain Him on account of what He creates. Rather, He creates out of His inviolable decision, firm knowledge, and exact command. He made Himself unique in His Mastership, peerless in unity, grandeur, and sublimity. He remains peerless in praise and exalted in glory. He is far above parenthood, purified from and sanctified against any cohabitation.

He is too Great and too Mighty to seek any partners. Thus, none among what He creates opposes Him, nor is there any equal peer like Him from among His possessions, nor is there any partner in His Kingdom. He is the One, the Unique, the One sought by all, the Eternal, the Everlasting, the Lord of the cosmos Who has always been and shall always be, the eternally all alone before the beginning of time and after the end of all affairs. He will never terminate nor expire. Thus do I describe my Lord; there is no god except Allah; Great is He and how Great! Glorified is He and how Glorified! Almighty is He and how Almighty! He is far above what the unjust ones say about Him, far, far above that!

1. His name is Sa`d ibn Malik ibn Sinan al-Khudri al-Ansari al-Khazraji, Abu Sai`d. He was a sahabi who for many years

kept the Prophet company and participated in twelve of his military campaigns. He died in 74 A.H./693 A.D.

2. The maximum length of a cubit is 21 inches; hence, they claim that Adam and the Almighty is each 15 feet tall... Astaghfirullah...

3. al-Bukhari, Sahih, "Kitab al-Isti'than" (Book of seeking permission to enter), in a chapter titled "Bab Bid' al-Salam" (a chapter dealing with initiating a greeting). Muslim, Sahih, "Kitab al-Jannah wa sifat na`eemiha" (Book of Paradise and the description of its bliss), in a chapter titled "Bab yadkhul al-jannah aqwam af'idatuhum mithl af'idat al-tayr" (a chapter about Paradise being entered by people whose hearts are like those of birds'), Vol. 28; see also Vol. 115, "Kitab al-birr: Bab al-nahi `an arb al-wajh" (Book of kindness: a chapter dealing with the prohibition of striking the face." Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Musnad, Vol. 2, pp. 244, 251, 323, 365, 424, and 569.

4. al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 2, p. 122, where Surat al-Zumar is explained. It is also stated in Vol. 4, p. 186, where the verse "What stopped you (O Eblis) from prostrating to what I created with My own hand?" is explained. It is also stated in Vol. 4, p. 192, where the verse saying, "Some faces will on that Day be pleased" is discussed. Muslim, Sahih, Vol. 19, pp. 21-22, where a description of the Day of Judgment, of Paradise, and of Hell, is given.

5. al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 4, p. 189, where verse 43 of Surat Noon is explained in "Kitab al-Tawhid" (Book of the Unity of God).

6. al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 4, p. 191, where Surat Qaf is explained. Al-Tirmithi, Sahih, Vols. 35-38, where a discussion of Hell being entered by the tyrants and Paradise by the weaklings exists. 20.

7. His name is Abdullah ibn Masu`d ibn Khafil ibn Habib al-Hathli, Abu Abd al-Rahman, one of the foremost sahaba in Islamic history. He was the very first person in Mecca to openly recite the Holy Qura'n. He spent years serving and accompanying the Messenger of Allah, being one of his confidants. Ibn Masu`d died in 32 A.H./652 A.D.

8. This quotation is cited without any editing at all, hence its broken English! We wonder, since Allah, according to this "tradition," has fingers, whether He also has toes!

9. The correct spelling is: Abu Sa`eed al-Khudri.

10. The Messenger of Allah was never reported laughing; instead, he always smiled. He never audibly laughed.

11. al-Saduq, Amali, p. 324.

12. al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 73, p. 58, citing Qurb al-Isnad.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., p. 59.

15. al-Tusi, Al-amali, Vol. 2, p. 136.

16. Ibn Majah, Sunan, Introduction. al-Tirmithi, Sunan, where Surat Hud is explained. Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Musnad, Vol. 4, pp. 11-12.

17. Abu Dawud, Sunan, "Kitab al-Sunnah". Ibn Majah, Sunan, Introduction. Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Kitab al-Tawhid. Ibn Taymiyyah, Minhaj al-Sunnah.

18. al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 2, pp. 233-235. Ibn Majah, Sunan, "Kitb al-Salah." Ibn Malik, Mawta', "Kitab al-Qura'n," Chapter 30. Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Musnad, Vol. 2, pp. 264, 267, 282, 419, 433, 487, 504, and 521.

19. al-Tirmithi, Sunan, where he discusses the fast and the night of the middle of Sha`ban. Ibn Majah, Sunan, in a volume dealing with the prayers and with the night of the middle of Sha`ban. Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Musnad, Vol. 2, p. 433.

20. Both "traditions" are narrated on the authority of the "sahabi" Abu Hurayra when al-Bukhari, in Vol. 3, p. 128, of his Sahih, explains Surat Qaf. They are repeated in Vol. 4, p. 191 of the same book in "Kitab al-Tawhid." The "tradition" referring to Allah's foot is narrated by Anas and is detailed in Vol. 4, p. 129, of the same Sahih. To review more of such "traditions," refer to "Kitab al-Jannah" in al-Tirmithi's Sunan, Vol. 10, p. 29, where the eternity of the residents of Paradise and those of hell is discussed. See also Ahmed ibn Hanbal's Musnad, Vol. 2, p. 396. Readers who are not well versed in Arabic may read their texts together with their English translation in The Divine Traditions, especially on p. 149 where the verbatim and unedited text reads as follows: "As for Paradise, (it will be filled with good people) because Allah does not wrong any of His created beings, and He created for Hell whomever He will, and they will be thrown into it, and it will say thrice, `Is there any more?' Till Allah will put His Foot over it, and it will become full and its sides will come close to each other and it will say, `Enough! Enough! Enough!' Bukhari transmitted it."

21. al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 4, p. 185, "Kitab al-Tawhid." See also Vol. 4, p. 190 of the same reference.

22. This "tradition" is cited on pp. 115-116 of The Divine Traditions.

23. al-Tirmithi, Sunan, Vol. 9, p. 229, "Kitab al-Zuhd."

24. al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 4, p. 188, "Kitab al-Tawhid."

25. al-Bukhari, Sahih, Vol. 10, pp. 18 and 20.

26. Muslim, Sahih, Vol. 4, p. 188, "Kitab al-Iman."

27. Ibid., p. 229, "Kitab al-Iman," in a chapter about how to see. Al-Bukhari words this "tradition" slightly differently in Vol. 4, p. 189 in his "Kitab al-Tawhid." We wish those who saw their Lord and His leg would tell us all about it! They will then be doing us a great favor, indeed! Astaghfirullah...

28. This is how the text reads... The translator should have used "expanse," "spaciousness," "extent," "breadth," or the like.

29. The Divine Traditions, Tr. Dr. Ibrahim al-Selek, Dar el-Fiker (Beirut, Lebanon, 1994), p. 160.

30. al-Kulayni, Usool al-Kafi, Vol. 1, pp. 3, 7, and 9, "Kitab al-Tawhid." Shaikh al-Saduq, Al-Tawhid, pp. 9-10, p. 12. al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 3, p. 311, "Kitab al-Tawhid."

31. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 18. al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 3, p. 311.

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