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**PRESENTATION NOTES FROM IMAM HAFIZ ABDUL HANNAN**

It is a known fact that every language has one or more terms that are used in reference to God and sometimes to lesser deities. This is not the case with Allah. Allah is the personal name of the One true God. Nothing else can be called Allah. The term has no plural or gender. This shows its uniqueness when compared with the word "god," which can be made plural, as in "gods," or made feminine, as in "goddess." It is interesting to notice that Allah is the personal name of God in Aramaic, the language of Jesus and a sister language of Arabic.

The One true God is a reflection of the unique concept that Islam associates with God. To a Muslim, Allah is the Almighty Creator and Sustainer of the universe, Who is similar to nothing, and nothing is comparable to Him. The Prophet Muhammad was asked by his contemporaries about Allah; the answer came directly from God Himself in the form of a short chapter of the Qur'an, which is considered to be the essence of the unity or the motto of monotheism. This is chapter 112, which reads: ***“ In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Say (O Muhammad), He is God, the One God, the Everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten, nor has been begotten, and equal to Him is not anyone”***.

Some people allege that God in Islam is a stern and cruel God who demands to be obeyed fully and is not loving and kind. Nothing could be farther from the truth than this allegation. It is enough to know that, with the exception of one, each of the 114 chapters of the Qur'an begins with the verse " In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate". In one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), we are told that ***“ God is more loving and kind than a mother to her dear child”***.

On the other hand, God is also Just. Hence, evildoers and sinners must have their share of punishment, and the virtuous must have God's bounties and favors. Actually, God's attribute of Mercy has full manifestation in His attribute of Justice. People suffering throughout their lives for His sake should not receive similar treatment from their Lord as people who oppress and exploit others their whole lives. Expecting similar treatment for them would amount to negating the very belief in the accountability of man in the Hereafter and thereby negate all the incentives for a moral and virtuous life in this world. The following Qur'anic verses are very clear and straightforward in this respect.

Verily, for the Righteous are gardens of Delight, in the Presence of their Lord. Shall we then treat the people of Faith like the people of Sin? What is the matter with you? How judge you?

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

The concepts that God rested on the seventh day of creation, that God wrestled with one of His soldiers, that God is an envious plotter against mankind, and that God is incarnate in any human being are considered blasphemy from the Islamic point of view.

The unique usage of Allah as a personal name of God is a reflection of Islam's emphasis on the purity of the belief in God that is the essence of the message of all God's messengers. Because of this, Islam considers associating any deity or personality with God as a deadly sin that God will never forgive, despite the fact that He may forgive all other sins.

The Creator must be of a different nature from the things created because if He is of the same nature as they are, He will be temporal and will therefore need a maker. It follows that nothing is like Him. If the maker is not temporal, then he must be eternal. But if he is eternal, he cannot be caused, and if nothing caused Him to come into existence, nothing outside Him causes Him to continue to exist, which means that he must be self-sufficient. And if He does not depend on anything for the continuance of His own existence, then this existence can have no end. The Creator is therefore eternal and everlasting: "He is the First and the Last".

He is Self-sufficient or Self-subsistent, or, to use a Qur'anic term, Al-Qayyum The Creator does not create only in the sense of bringing things into being, He. also preserves them and takes them out of existence and is the ultimate cause of whatever happens to them.

***“ God is the Creator of everything. He is the guardian over everything. Unto Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth” (39:62-63).***

***“ No creature is there crawling on the earth, but its provision rests on God. He knows its lodging place and its repository” (11:16).***

## **God's Attributes**

If the Creator is Eternal and Everlasting, then His attributes must also be eternal and everlasting. He should not lose any of His attributes nor acquire new ones. If this is so, then his attributes are absolute. Can there be more than one Creator with such absolute attributes? Can there be, for example, two absolutely powerful Creators? A moment's thought shows that this is not feasible.

The Qur'an summarizes this argument in the following verses: ***“ God has not taken to Himself any son, nor is there any god with Him: for then each god would have taken of that which he created and some of them would have risen up over others” (23:91).***

***“ And if, were there gods in earth and heaven other than God, they (heaven and earth) would surely go to ruin” (21:22).***

## The Oneness of God

The Qur'an reminds us of the falsity of all alleged gods. To the worshippers of man-made objects, it asks: "***Do you worship what you have carved yourself***" (37:95). "***Or have you taken unto yourself others beside Him to be your protectors, even such as have no power either for good or for harm to themselves***" (13:16).

To the worshippers of heavenly bodies it cites the story of Abraham: "***When night outspread over him, he saw a star and said: This is my Lord. But when it set, he said: I love not the setters. When he saw the moon rising, he said: This is my Lord. But when it set, he said: If my Lord does not guide me, I shall surely be of the people gone astray. When he saw the sun rising, he said: This is my Lord; this is greater. But when it set, he said: O my people, surely I quit that which you associate, I have turned my face to Him who originated the heavens and the earth; a man of pure faith, I am not one of the idolators***" (6:76-79).

This is what I know and still Allah knows the best. I seek His refuge for myself and for all the mankind.

## THE BENEFITS OF MONOTHEISM

When pure tawheed (monotheism) is actualized in the life of an individual or the society it produces the best of results. From its results are the following:

1) Liberation of mankind from worship and submission to other than Allah. The creation cannot create anything, rather they themselves are created. They are not capable of causing death or giving life nor are they able to resurrect the dead. So tawheed (monotheism) liberates man from everyone's worship, except to his Lord, the One Who created him and then proportioned him. It liberates his intelligence from deviation and delusion.

It liberates his mind from obedience, humility and submission to other than Allah. It liberates his life from the mastery of other rulers, the soothsayers and those who deem themselves divinely appointed over the slaves of Allah. Due to this, the leaders of shirk (polytheism) and oppression in the times of ignorance rose up against the call of the prophets in general and particularly against the call of the Messenger, because of the fact that they understood the meaning of "La ilaha lila Allah"(there is none worthy of worship except Allah) to be a universal pronouncement for the liberation of mankind, the overthrowing of the tyrants from their false thrones, and the elevation of the faces of believers, those who do not prostrate in front of anyone except Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

2) The personality remains balanced. Tawheed (monotheism) aids the formation of a balanced personality, the preferred aim and direction of this life is to unify and consolidate its purpose, which is to prepare for the success of the life hereafter. So the personality does not turn except to the only One worthy of worship, and it turns to Him in private and in open and it calls upon Him only in ease and adversity. As opposed to the Mushrik (pagan) who shares his heart between those who are worshipped besides Allah; at times he turns to the living and at times he turns to the dead, which leads his soul

towards dissatisfaction. That's why the individual stays surrounded of seeking more of the same. Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) (peace be upon him) said:

"Oh my two companions of the prison, are many different lords better, or Allah the One, the Irresistible?" [12:39]

So, the believer worships One Lord, he knows what is pleasing to Him and what is displeasing to Him, he only does whatever pleases his Lord and his heart becomes calm and satisfied.

As for the Mushrik (pagan, polytheist), he worships numerous deities, one he takes from here and another he takes from there and he is divided between them and he has no comfort, calmness or satisfaction.

3) Tawheed (monotheism) is the source of security for the people, because it fills the soul of the individual with utmost satisfaction. He does not fear anyone except Allah and tawheed (monotheism) blocks the ways to fear of loss in provisions, the soul and the family, fear from mankind, Spirits, death and other things which are feared. The believer who worships Allah alone does not fear anyone except Him and because of this he feels secured. This is the meaning that is indicated in the Qur'an in His saying:

"Those who believe and do not mix their beliefs with dhulm (polytheism), they are those upon whom is security and they are the rightly guided." [6:28]

This security emerges from the innermost depth of the soul and not from and police guard, which is the security of this world. As for the security of the hereafter, then it is greater and long-lasting for those who are sincere to Allah and do no mix their tawheed (monotheism) with shirk, because shirk is a great dhulm (polytheism).

4) Tawheed is the source of strengthening of the soul, because it gives an individual a strong and formidable mental attitude, by which he fills his soul with hope, confidence in Allah, and reliance upon Allah, pleasure with His Decree, gives him patience upon His tests and freedom from reliance upon the creation. This individual is firmly established, like the mountains, and when a calamity befalls him he asks his Lord to remove it and not the dead. The Prophet (SAW) indicated this in his saying: "When you ask, then ask Allah and when you seek help, then seek help from Allah alone." [Hasan Sahin Tirmidhi]  
"And if He intends any good for you, then there is none who can repel His favor. If Allah touches you with harm, none can remove it except Him." [6:17]

5) Tawheed is the foundation of brotherhood and equality, because it does not permit following those who take others as lords besides Allah, since worships is for Allah alone and worship to Allah alone must be from all of mankind that creates equality and brotherhood, which is the beauty of any society.

Quran in its chapter YOUNAS( JONAH) clearly states, Verily, those who believe and do deeds of righteousness, their Lord will guide them through their faith; under them will flow rivers in the Gardens of delight (Paradise). Their way of request therein will be: "Glory to You, O Allah!" and "Salam" (peace, safety from evil) will be their greetings therein! And the close of their request will be: "All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all that exists.").

Consequently, they do not worry at the time of their departure from this life to the next!

Hafiz Abdul Hannan (Imam)  
Religious Director  
Islamic Society of Greater Lowell  
131 Stedman st Unit # 9,10  
Chelmsford, Ma 01824  
978-726-3594