

Explanation of *Surah al-Ikhlaas* - The Chapter of Purity

by

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The *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah* (i.e. the Sunnis) do not deviate from those things which have been brought by the Messengers, for that is the Straight Path, the path of those whom God has bestowed His favour upon from among the Prophets, the Truthful, the Martyrs and the Righteous. It is in this collection of what has been described about Almighty God by Himself in *Surah al-Ikhlaas* (literally: "The Chapter of Purity") that makes it equal to one third of the Qur'an. In this *surah*, Almighty God has said:

***"Say! He is God, the One!
The Eternally Besought of all!
He does not beget, nor is He begotten.
And there is nothing comparable to Him."***

1. Whatever the Messenger of God, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, brought with him, that alone is real. It is obligatory to obey it and forbidden to deviate from it as this alone is the Straight Path which has no curves.

2. The Straight Path is only one and whoever deviates from it he strays onto the wrong path, innovation and injustice. Almighty God commands (in the Qur'an):

"And this is My Straight Path, so follow it and do not follow the other paths lest they divert you from His way."

3. The Straight Path is that path of the *Ummah* (community of Muslim believers) which lies in between the two extremes. Hence, the supplication in every *rak'ah* (i.e. unit) of the prayer: "*Guide us to the Straight Path*", that He should help, assist, guide, support and lead us in those things which will help us to obey Him and keep us steadfast on His Path. This is the Path of those who were favoured by God: the Prophets, the Truthful, the Martyrs and the Righteous, and these are the best for keeping company.

4. The Concept of *Tawheed* has been explained in *Surah al-Ikhlaas* by separating and purging it from *Shirk* (associating others with Almighty God, polytheism and idolatry).

5. Imam Ahmad's narration of 'Ubayy bin Ka'ab that the *mushrikoon* (i.e. pagan idolaters) asked: "*Oh Muhammed! Tell us the geneology of Your Lord!*", whereupon God revealed this *surah*.

6. From authentic *hadiths*, it is proven that this *surah* is equal to one third of the of the Qur'an. The substance of the statement of Ibn 'Abbaas (a Companion of the Prophet) is as follows: that the Qur'an consists of three fundamental objectives:

a) Those commands and prohibitions which contain the laws and practical ways. These form the subject matter of the science of *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) and Ethics.

b) The tales and narratives which include the stories of the Prophets and Messengers of God and their communities. The punishments and disasters which befell those who resisted and denied the Messengers of God. Also, the promises, rewards, warnings and dooms.

c) The knowledge of *Tawheed* (the Unity of God) and the description of those matters which relate to the Names of Almighty God and His Attributes, which to have faith in is obligatory upon the servant of God (i.e. each Muslim). This has precedence over the first three.

7. *Surah al-Ikhlāas* contains the third objective and a general description of it. Thus, it is correct to say that this *surah* is equal to one third of the Qur'an.

8. The answer to the question that how does this *surah* contain comprehensively the knowledge of *Tawheed* and its principles which form the essence of the belief in Almighty God. God's command "**He is God, the One**" negates partnership with Him in every sense, whether it concerns His Self, Attributes or His Deeds. It also demonstrates the distinctiveness of God in His perfection, magnificence and majesty. The word *Ahad* is not used in affirmation for anyone besides God, since *Ahad* is more emphatic than *Wahid*.

9. The *Tafseer* (commentary, exegesis) of Ibn 'Abbaas for the verse "**God! al-Samad (i.e. the Eternally Besought of all).**": The Chief who is best in His Nobility. The Great one who is best in His greatness. The Tolerant One who is best in His toleration. The Omnipotent who is the best in His omnipotence, the All Knowing who is best in His knowledge. The Self which is perfect in all types of nobility and greatness - that Self is only God - the Most Revered and the Most Powerful. He alone has these qualities for they do not apply to anyone save Him. No one is equal to Him and no one is like Him.

10. The *Tafseer* is also as follows: The Self who has no fear, around whom all creatures turn and Whom they seek after for all their needs and actions.

11. Affirmation in the Oneness negates all forms of polytheism and similitude. Affirmation of all the meanings of *al-Samad* includes all the noble Names and the most exalted Attributes. This is the *Tawheed* of Affirmation.

12. The *Tawheed* of Purity is in the statement: "**He does not beget nor is He begotten. And there is none comparable to Him**". This statement can also be understood from the general statement: "**Say! He is God! The One**". Nothing came out of Him nor did He come out of anything. He has no equal, no likeness and no similarity.

13. Domination of the concept of *Tawheed* in this *surah*. The affirmation of Oneness for the Lord in total and absolute contradiction to all forms of Polytheism. His character of being "***Eternally Besought of all***", which proves all His Attributes, that He cannot suffer from any defect, negation of father and son which is an implication of Him being in no need and that all is in need of Him. All is characterised in the statement of His being besought and His Oneness. Negation of an equal which includes negation of similarity, resemblances and likeness. This *surah* includes all of these matters and is therefore rightly deserving of being called equal to a third of the Qur'an.