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*Makmor Tumin*

# ***Tawhīd* as a Fundamental Element of the Islamic Worldview and Its Implications for Moral Thoughts and Values**

**Akeem Olayinka Kazeem<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract:** This is an analysis of the *Tawhīdī* worldview from the standpoints of moral epistemology and moral psychology. The aim is to explore some of the implications that the names and attributes of Allah could have on the Muslims' moral thoughts and behaviours. In recent times, the names and attributes of Allah have attracted little academic focus, despite their potential to be employed as frameworks to discuss and address many issues. This paper, therefore, seeks to demonstrate that the names and attributes of Allah are veritable reservoirs that could be explored for moral knowledge and paradigms. It indicates how they could serve as guides to moral reasoning, bases for moral consciousness and also sources of moral motivation. This is attempted through a qualitative method of an inductive approach, and it entails a conceptual analysis of selected names and attributes of Allah based on the Quranic contextual usage. The paper, therefore, holds the view that each of the names or attributes of Allah has moral-related concepts that could inform Muslims' moral thoughts and values, and they could also serve as bases for moral conduct and character (re)formation.

**Keywords:** *Tawhīdī* worldview, *Tawhīd al-Asma wa al-Sifat*, Moral Values, Moral Consciousness, Moral Reasoning, Character Reformation.

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## Introduction

The word *Tawhīdī* – a term derived from *al-Tawhīd* (the Oneness of Allah) – began to be formulated, employed and popularised as an epistemological and sociopolitical concept in the last four decades or thereabout (Choudhury, 2019). This was attempted by many of the front-liners who were concerned about the exclusion of the Islamic worldview from educational pursuits in the Muslim world, particularly mundane studies in the fields of humanities, physical, biological and applied sciences. Knowledge in modern times has lost its divine values due to secularisation. The term has, therefore, continued to be used to capture any conscious intellectual efforts that are geared toward a resurgence of Islamic fundamental perspectives and values in various parts of the world (Choudhury, 2019).

The main idea of these efforts is to consciously enroot our thoughts and values in the fundamental principles of *Tawhīd* – the doctrine of the Oneness of God – as the core and most central aspect of the Islamic worldview. This is because human thought and behaviour are largely influenced by their worldview. The aim is to transcend the paradigms, approaches and methodology of knowledge and practice that are based on pure rationalism (the primacy of reason), pure idealism (the primacy of the human mind and consciousness) and pure empiricism (the primacy of the senses). This is proposed to be done through the (re)introduction of the scriptural orientation and revelation that is not “allowed” to inform the processes of knowledge production and transmission, and the practical utilities of the generated knowledge (Malkawi, 2014).

The idea also entails the intellectual and practical steps to overcome naturalism (the view that “laws of nature” without revelation suffices to understand the world), materialism (the theory that holds the view that only “matter” exists), secularism (the agenda to remove religion from public issues) and agnosticism (the perspective that Man does have sufficient knowledge to (dis)prove the existence of God) (Malkawi, 2014).

To achieve this, many efforts are continued to be made through various programmes in order to extend the understanding and practicality of this worthy intellectual agenda across the Muslim world. Institutions and individuals, through books, research studies, seminars and the like, have embarked on academic projects to address the conceptual aspects

and practical dimensions of the agenda. Further, various issues and topics are continued to be raised and discussed respectively.

Against this background, this paper is an attempt to contribute its quota to the *Tawhīdī* agenda with a focus on enrooting our moral thoughts and values in the names and attributes of Allah. It is an analysis of the concept of *Tawhīd* as a major element of the Islamic worldview from the standpoints of moral epistemology (theory of knowledge about the sources and basis of morality) and moral psychology (the study of various mental and behavioural aspects of morality, such as moral will, motivation, conscience, character reformation, etc.). The aim is to explore some of the implications that the names and attributes of Allah could have on Muslims' moral thoughts, value orientation and ethical behaviours. This paper seeks to demonstrate that the names and attributes of Allah are veritable reservoirs for moral knowledge and paradigm (e.g., guides to moral reasoning, bases for moral consciousness and sources of moral motivation). This is attempted through a conceptual analysis of certain names and attributes of Allah based on Quranic contextual usage.

This study's main objective is to demonstrate how Muslims' moral consciousness in both thoughts and actions could be (re)awakened through a moral orientation that is based on an exploration of the imports of *Tawhīd al-Asma wa al-Sifat*. In the final analysis, the paper holds the view that each name and attribute of Allah have moral-related concepts that could inform more about the Muslims' moral paradigms and serve as a basis for their moral conduct and character (re)formation. In other words, the purpose of this study is to generally consider some of the correlations that exist among *Tawhīd*, worldview, moral thoughts and ethical values and behaviours.

However, this study is not an exhaustive discussion on *Tawhīd al-Asma' wa al-Sifat*. It only focuses on an analysis of selected names and attributes of Allah to highlight some of their respective implications for moral thoughts, values and behaviours in order to illustrate its viewpoints vis-à-vis the objective of the paper.

## The Concept of *Tawhīd* and Its Implications: A Background Analysis

The word *tawhīd* is an Arabic term that is syntactically derived from the verb *wahḥada*, which literally means “to assert or establish the oneness of something” (Dastagir & Ramzy, 2018). It has since been technically employed in Islamic thought to denote specifically the concept of and faith in “the Divine Unicity of Allah”, an affirmation of Allah’s Oneness in divinity, absoluteness, transcendence and more (al-Faruqi, 1982). It is sometimes generally used to connote discourse on the doctrinal or creedal aspects of Islam (*al-aqīdah al-Islāmiyah*).

However, in this study, the usage of *Tawhīd* shall be more focused on its denotation as “faith in and the concept of Allah’s Oneness”. This is concisely defined as an understanding that is based on the belief in the Oneness and Supremacy of Allah without rival in His divinity and right to be solely worshipped, His total dominion and sustainability of all that exist, and His divine essence and attributes without similitude and comparison to anyone and anything.

Many great scholars of Islam are known to have extensively discussed *Tawhīd* as the fundamental concept, given its profoundness to the Islamic worldview. It constitutes the central theme of discussion among the classical scholars of Islam, particularly Muslim theologians (Asharites, Mutazilites and Matrudites), Sufi scholars and even several Muslim philosophers.

For example, one of the most influential philosophers, theologians, jurists and mystics of Sunni Islam, Imam al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), through his analysis, has demonstrated the profoundness of the concept of *Tawhīd*. He has provided us with a certain insight about the dynamic dimensions of the concept, particularly regarding a profession of faith and actual belief in the concept vis-à-vis its effects on Muslims’ dispositions.

In his magnum opus, *Ihyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, Imam al-Ghazālī (1993) identifies four manifestations of *Tawhīd* with their corresponding categories based on how people proclaim *Tawhīd* and exhibit the essence of the concept. An exploration of these categories seems to reflect throughout the whole book (four volumes in total). Without going into details, which is not possible within the confines of this study, the four identified categories are as follows: (a) *Tawhīd munāfiq*: this a hypocritical proclamation of *Tawhīd* by some people who do not



in reality have belief in meaning and essence of the concept; (b) *Tawhīd awwam*: this relates to a kind of proclamation of the concept of Tawhīd with a level of sincerity, but its impact on the thought and behaviour of this set of people is not at a profound level, if not a superficial one. It is the most common type of *Tawhīd* and lacks real commitment to its essence; (c) *Tawhīd Siddiqīn*: this entails a deeper level of understanding and commitment with certain profound consciousness about the meaning, essence and implications of *Tawhīd* on everything, and lastly; (d) *Tawhīd Muqarrabūn*: this is the highest level of consciousness about the concept of *Tawhīd*. It involves a deep immersion in the understanding of the essence and implications of Allah's Oneness as the only reality that permeates every existence. The people in this category are almost rare as this dimension of *Tawhīd* requires a display of many extraordinary characters, not only in terms of belief and thought, but also attitude and behaviour.

Another great scholar who has also extensively examined the concept of *Tawhīd* is Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328). As a renowned Islamic jurist, theologian, judge and philosopher, he is known to have discussed *Tawhīd* from various standpoints, which capture an overview of human reality regarding religious and mundane issues. One of his most popular books on the concept of *Tawhīd* is *Kitab al-Īmān*, though further detailed attempts were made in his other great books, such as *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, among others.

Since a detailed discussion of Ibn Taymiyyah's view on *Tawhīd* is primarily not within the objective of this paper, it is sufficed to say that *Tawhīd*, according to him, is the most fundamental concept in Islam. It is at the core of Muslims' understanding and practices. It defines the nature of their life and the essence of their religious commitment and practices (*Kitab al-Īmān*).

Besides Imam al-Ghazālī and Ibn Taymiyyah, there are many other renowned Islamic scholars who have provided us with a deep understanding and implication of *Tawhīd*. However, the last to be referenced in this paper is Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 1350), whose analysis of *Tawhīd* is an encompassing and profound concept. As the most popular student of Ibn Taymiyyah, he has ingeniously expanded and built on many of what his teacher has espoused.

For example, Ibn Qayyim has written extensively on *Tawhīd*, with focus on its practical dimensions. In one of his well-known writings titled *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, he does not only discuss the great dimensions of *Tawhīd*, but also provides some ways to inculcate its direct effects on our ways of life. He painstakingly identifies and examines the steps and stages that could be adopted to attain the level of *Tawhīd* that is very similar to the fourth stage (*Tawhīd muqarrabin*) identified by Imam al-Ghazālī above.

Given the comprehensiveness of the doctrinal categories, theological issues, religious understanding, practical implications and the like that the term *Tawhīd* is used to capture, it has become a tradition to explain and interpret it from three broad interconnected dimensions. This dimensional approach is a later development as it was not known in the early formative periods of Islam (Philips, 2005). Nonetheless, obviously, these are embedded in the general basic understanding of the Islamic belief system. This approach shall therefore be adopted in this paper. It must, however, be noted that each dimension could not be validly and distinctively discussed without implying the others. Thus, in the view of this paper, this three-dimensional approach is only an epistemological or intellectual approach to the whole concept of Islamic doctrinal and theological thought.

Having briefly provided a background analysis on the concept of *al-Tawhīd*, with selected references from renowned scholars of Islam, an attempt is next made to consider some of its dimensions, as now commonly discussed.

### ***The Three Dimensions of Tawhīd as Faith in Allah***

***Tawhīd al-Uluhiyyah.*** *Tawhīd al-Uluhiyyah* is used by Islamic scholars to capture the reality that all divinity belongs solely to Allah, and He is the only One who deserves our worship. Various Islamic scriptural references are alluded to by scholars in the articulation of this dimension of *Tawhīd*. In one instance, Allah says, "... do you worship instead of Allah that which does not benefit you at all or harm you?" (Quran,

21:66).<sup>2</sup> Rational and practical illustrations have been put forth in the books of *al-tawhīd* to demonstrate manifestations of this dimension of *al-Tawhīd*.

***Tawhīd al-Rububiyyah.*** *Tawhīd al-Rububiyyah* implies that everything that exists not only owes its existence and sustainability to Allah, but also entails that the total dominion and control of all things lie ultimately with Him: “Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is, over all things, Disposer of affairs” (Quran, 39:62). Like other dimensions, some justifications based on human rationality and existential experiences are articulated to demonstrate the Lordship of Allah. This dimension of *Tawhīd* is used to address Man’s attempt to falsely attribute dominion of anything or all that exists to other creatures besides Allah, and to also counter Man’s outright denial of Allah’s transcendental control of the realities.

***Tawhīd al-Asma wa al-Sifat.*** *Tawhīd al-Asma wa al-Sifat* is the dimension that has been employed to discuss the realities of the essence and attributes of Allah. It is aimed to capture some of the basic understanding of the nature and dispositions of Allah in order to have better insight into His standard and mode of operation (*af’āl-Allāh* and *sunnatu*). It entails the belief in and acknowledgement of the divine names and attributes of Allah, which are only for Him without similitude and comparison (Quran, 42:11). As subsequently discussed in this study, these names and attributes, in the view of this paper, are the basic conceptual frames that provide an overview about Allah and related divine issues, though they have not attracted much academic exploration in recent time.

Among the scriptural references on this dimension of *Tawhīd* is the following Quranic verse: “Allah - there is no deity except Him. To Him belong the best names” (Quran, 20: 8). Similarly, Prophet Muhammad is also reported to have said “... to Allah belong (some) ninety-nine names...” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, 2736). This hadith is further clarified later in the study as it has many implications. Nevertheless, it is currently sufficed to state that Allah’s names and attributes are uncountable,

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<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all the English translations of Quranic verses in this study are from *The Qur'an - Saheeh International Translation*, Emily Assami, 2020.

and that the hadith is only referencing 99 of them for reasons that are discussed in the later part of this paper.

What are the existential and conceptual implications of *Tawhīd* as a whole? How does it inform Muslims' worldview? The responses to these questions are succinctly addressed next.

### ***General Implications of al-Tawhīd: A Brief Overview***

The impact of believing in and affirming Allah's Oneness based on the concept of *Tawhīd* could be concisely discussed through the following four implications that seem to capture the concept of *Tawhīd* as an integrated worldview.

In general, worldview implies a system of thought that is adopted by individuals or a group as a way to understand, interpret and approach their existential realities. It basically consists of a certain orientation regarding a belief and value system and their corresponding influence on attitudes and behaviours (Davies, 2022). Although there is no unified articulation on the analysis of the term "worldview" in Islamic academia, there are extensive analyses on many similar or related concepts or ideas, particularly concerning Islamic perspectives and approaches to religious views and mundane issues. At the core of these various views stands the concept of *Tawhīd* as the bedrock from which thoughts and ideas are extrapolated (Berghout, 2010).

Below are a few considerations on the implications of how the concept of *Tawhīd* plays out as a basis of the Islamic perspective and what could be called the Islamic worldview in as much as it forms a system of thought and approach that does not only inform, but also capture Muslims' dispositions to existential realities and issues.

One of these implications is the ritual implication, which involves an engagement in physically observable rites that are clearly defined by the basic sources of Islamic thought. Allah says, "O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous" (Quran, 2:21). These rituals are principally represented in the pillars of *salāt*, *zakāt*, *siyām* and *hajj*, and they are primary indicators of Muslims' affirmation of Allah's divine right to be revered.

Another existential significance is the spiritual implication. This implies the subtle and non-physically observable impacts of *Tawhīd*. These are natively felt and personally perceived by individuals, particularly sincere believers and true adherents to the cannon and intent of *Tawhīd*. This is based on the following hadith of Prophet Muhammad:

There are three *qualities* whoever has them, will *taste* the sweetness of Iman: To love Allah and His Messenger more than anyone else; to love a slave (of Allah) only for (the sake of) Allah, and to abhor returning to infidelity after Allah has saved him from it as he would abhor being thrown into the fire (of Hell). (*Riyadh as-Salihin*; In-book reference Hadith 375)

These are just a few of the spiritual implications, and the Quran also makes a broad allusion to these implications when characterising true believers.

The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord, they rely. (Quran, 8:2)

Hope, tranquility, optimism and other related qualities fall in this category.

In addition to these two implications, *Tawhīd* also has epistemological import as it concerns the paradigmatic implications. It involves the impacts of *Tawhīd* on issues concerning the nature, sources, boundaries, production, transmission and methodology of knowledge. As a typical illustration, in the Quran, Allah raises a rhetorical question on certain astrophysical, paleontological and biological knowledge and issues when He says,

“Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and then We separated them and made from water every living thing? Then will they not believe?” (Quran, 30:21)

In the view of this paper, apart from the issues of faith that are obviously emphasised, this verse implies some axiomatic position (i.e., issues that must be taken for granted) that must inform our

epistemological paradigms and methodology of investigating those related issues in the concerned fields of study. This verse, for instance, plainly debunks theories that attribute the beginning of the world to chances and identifies dynamics and matters that were involved the whole process. This is only an example of how all fields of study could be informed by (or proceed from) the *Tawhīdī* paradigm.

Another particularly important existential impact of *Tawhīd* is its axiological implications. This is to define our value paradigms based on the *Tawhīdī* concept (Zein, 2014). Muslims' values as well as criteria and standards must be informed and determined by Islamic parameters. The discourse on values in general manifests in two ways: as an aesthetical discourse, it deals with the value of physical objects, and; the outward parts of creatures termed as beauty. Basically, Allah's creatures are inbuilt with value (beauty), such as perfect proportion and many others (Quran, 32:7).

Meanwhile, the ethical discourse involves an examination of values that are related to character, actions or behaviours. This seems to have more important implications, which generally means that our definitions of moral concepts, moral standards, moral basis and sources of moral knowledge must be informed by the *Tawhīdī* value paradigm. Prophet Muhammad (SAW), underscoring the importance of morality, is reported to have said, "I have been sent to perfect good character" (*Muwatta'*, Imam Malik, book 47, hadith 8). In order not to digress too far here, an elaborated emphasis on the importance of morality and *Tawhīd* is discussed below.

### ***Tawhīd al-Asma' wa al-Sifat: Its Implications for Moral Thoughts and Values***

The forgoing is a general overview of the concept of *Tawhīd* and its general implications in the Islamic worldview. With focus on the third dimension of *Tawhīd*, the attention shall now be directed on how the names and attributes of Allah could be impactful on our moral thoughts and values.

### *Names and Attributes of Allah: A General Overview*

Before attempting to discuss some of the moral implications of the third dimension of *Tawhīd*, there are certain doctrinal perspectives that have been articulated by great scholars of Islam (e.g., Imam al-Bayhaqī, Imam al-Ghazālī, Imam Ibn al-Qayyim, etc.) on the discourse concerning the names and attributes of Allah. Due to the limited scope of the study, the major ones are summarised as follows: although Allah is One, the Supreme Being, and has numerous peculiar names and attributes that all beautiful, these names and attributes are to be principally based on scriptural references (al-Faruqi, 1982; Philips, 2005).

Commenting on a popular hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih al-Muslim* (mentioned above) stating that Allah has 99 names, according to Imam al-Nawawī, scholars have generally interpreted it to mean that Prophet Muhammad was only being particular about the reward on the attached action (memorisation and mindfulness). In his *Sharh Sahīh Muslim* (hadith 2677), Imam Nawawī states that the hadith does not imply that Allah's names and attributes are limited to a total count of 99. The view that Allah's name and attributes are uncountable is the more correct opinion. This is because there are other hadith (e.g., hadith 3583 in the *Musnad* of Imam Aḥmad) in which the Prophet alluded to the fact that the names and attributes of Allah are limitless. This is also the opinion of Ibn Taymiyyah (n.d.), among many other great scholars.

Allah's names and attributes serve numerous purposes and have many implications. Various scholars have attempted to capture some of their significances and implications. As an extrapolation and synthesis of the different scholarly views, three broad categories could be identified: Descriptive Models, Spiritual Means to Contact and Connect to Allah, and Moral Resources (i.e., moral concepts, source of moral values, bases for moral justification and standard, etc.). Each of these categories shall be briefly discussed. However, it must be noted that this classification is not watertight as each of the names and attributes could not in reality be exclusively placed in one of these categories of purpose (without qualifying for the other categories) due to the unlimited implications and essence of each name and attribute.

To begin with, on Descriptive Models, when Allah's names and attributes are generally examined, they basically serve as conceptual models that provide certain vital information about Allah. Many in-

depth details about Allah could be known, as emphasised in Verse 225 of Surah al-Baqarah. However, the ones that are needed for our existential purposes and relationship with Allah are necessarily provided. For instance, Allah says, “Say, ‘Call upon Allah or call upon the Most Merciful [ar-Raḥmān]. Whichever [name] you call - to Him belong the best names...” (Quran, 17:110). On Spiritual Means to Contact and Connect to Allah, these names and attributes are a means to relate and connect to our Creator Allah. This is to make Allah readily accessible to all His creatures (Quran, 17:44), irrespective of the time and place (Quran, 55:29). That means that in spite of the fact that Allah – in Whose Hands lie the dominions of all that exist – could not be legitimately and validly summoned nor queried (Quran, 21:23), He still provides us with many veritable channels through which His Majesty could be reached. This is very instructive. In fact, Allah does not only instruct us to call Him (Quran, 40:60), but also explicitly give details and assurance of His response (Quran, 2:186).

Connecting to Allah through His names and attributes normally comes as *adhkār* (glorification and remembrance of His names and attributes) (Quran, 87:1), and as *dua*’ (supplication or requesting assistance from Allah) as we have in the following hadith: “...I seek your help with all the name that You have...” (*Musnad Imam Aḥmad* 1/391).

The last purpose of Allah’s names and attributes to be discussed (in this paper and which will also serve as the main point of departure for the objective of this study) is that they serve as Moral Resources. An excellent instructive reference to this moral implication is highlighted by Prophet Muhammad in one of his sayings (which is even *al-ḥadīth al-Qudsī*). Allah directly spoke to him on the nexus that exists between “ties of Kinship” and “one of Allah’s names and attributes”. The Prophet said,

“The word *al-Raḥm* (womb) derives its name from al-Raḥmān (i.e., one of the names of Allah), and Allah said: ‘I will keep a good relationship with the one who will keep a good relationship with you (i.e., *womb through keeping tie with Kith and Kin*) and sever the relationship with him who will sever the relationship with you (i.e., *womb through the severing of the tie with kith and kin*)’ (*Sahih al-Bukhari* 5988).



This womb is figuratively used to capture the ties that exist between i.e., kith and kin since they do share the womb as the common avenue to their worldly existence.

The above briefly demonstrates how the names and attributes of Allah could actually be examined from a moral perspective, and more similar analysis of this nature is attempted below. This is the central thrust of the paper.

### ***Moral Implications of the Names and Attributes of Allah***

As alluded to previously and in order to give a broader overview as backdrop, there are certain necessary connections between *Tawhīd* and morality based on Islamic viewpoints. Morality and belief in Allah, for instance, are like two sides of a coin, though faith is the foundational aspect.

As an incredibly good reference, Prophet Muhammad is claimed to have said that the perfection of morality is his primary prophetic mission (as collected in *al-Adab al-Mufrad* by Imam al-Bukhari), yet he preached *Tawhīd*, according to history, for a good 13 years before any substantive moral prescription and juristic ruling were revealed. This clearly shows that, in the view of this paper, morality is not only important, but must also be rooted in *Tawhīd*. However, it must also be noted that “a claim to faith” tends to lose its value so easily if faith itself is not corroborated with corresponding good moral expressions and dispositions.

To sum it up, the Quran always conjoins “faith and morality” (see Quran, 18:107, 103:3, 98:7, 4:124, etc.). Sometimes, Allah defines “faith” through moral paradigms, as best illustrated in Chapter 107 of the Quran. The Prophet is also known to have always emphasised connections between faith and morality. As Anas bin Malik has strongly pointed out, God’s messenger seldom addressed us without saying, “He who is not trustworthy has no faith, and he who does not keep his covenant has no religion” (*Mishkat al-Masabih* 35; In-book reference: Book 1, Hadith 31). Another popular hadith (hadith 10 of *40 Hadith of Imam An-Nawawi*) about “a morally bankrupt man that was supplicating to Allah” also proved to be highly instructive on this matter. Therefore,

morality could be validly considered as a logical implication of *Tawhīd* and one of its most important outward indicators.

Among the good questions that could be raised from the foregoing is: How can morality be inculcated and developed? What is the relationship between *Tawhīd al-Asma' wa al-Sifat* and morality? In response to these questions, this study presents an epistemological approach that is based on a psycho-spiritual analysis of the meanings of Allah's names and attributes vis-à-vis their moral implications (based on Quranic contexts). This could be well integrated with other approaches to attain morality since such issues or problems are best addressed in a holistic way. The proposed approach of this study only focuses on how our ethical thoughts and actions could be positively influenced through knowledge, or understanding about and belief in the names and attributes of Allah.

### **A Conceptual Exploration of the Selected Name and Attributes of Allah**

Given the fact that all the known names and attributes of Allah could not be discussed within the limited scope of this study, the following selected ones shall be explored to demonstrate their implications for moral thoughts and values: (a) The Ever-Provider (*al-Razzāq*); (b) The Oft-Hearing (*al-Samī'*); (c) The Oft-Seeing (*al-Baṣīr*) and; (d) The One Who is Swift at Reckoning (*Sarī' al-Ḥisāb*) (al-Ghazali, 1995).

**The Absolute Provider.** In the Quran, Verse 48 of Surah al-Dhāriyat is one of the many verses where the divine name of Allah appears. It generally connotes the totality of Allah's control of provisions for his creatures. The understanding and acknowledgement of Allah as the sole provider, when examined from a moral perspective, should instill in a believer some level of humility. This is because a deeper and expansive meaning of His name would imply that not all those who strive eventually succeed, and wealth is not a function of human efforts simpliciter. This is clearly illustrated by Allah with a moral story "on the parable of the two friends" in the Quran, in which one of the men was arrogantly boastful because of his riches. However, when he refused to heed the advice of his poverty-stricken friend to desist from being arrogant, Allah made him lose all his wealth. This was to make

him acknowledge that his success was only a blessing from Allah (not because he was hardworking) (Quran, 18:34-44).

Other moral dispositions that could be cultivated through this name of Allah are hope, optimism, motivation and being positive. A true believer who understands this should never lose hope as Allah, as the bounty of heaven and earth, lies perpetually within His full control. For example, Allah says that there is no creature except that its provision necessarily lies with Him (Quran, 10:6).

Besides the above, contentedness is another possible moral character that could be cultivated from a deeper moral analysis of this divine name. One is expected to handle his/her envy if he/she genuinely believes and understands that it is only Allah that provides for all. For instance, Allah asks a deep rhetorical question from people who do not seem to be content with what they have and become envious of other people's success and achievement: "...do they envy people for what Allah has given them of His bounty?" (Quran, 4:54).

The highlighted attitudes are just a few of what could be discussed through a conceptual-moral analysis of the Name of Allah, the Absolute Provider. Next is another divine attribute of Allah and a few of its moral implications.

***The Swiftest in Reckoning.*** In various places in the Quran, Allah discusses the fast processes that would be involved in the accountability of the Last Day, and how every human action would be accurately documented without any (un)imaginable error: "...Allah will reward every soul for what it has committed. Surely Allah is swift in reckoning" (Quran, 14:51). With a thoughtful engagement of this divine attribute, a believer should/could be (more) wary of his/her actions, and this would actually indicate his/her belief in and understanding of Allah's accurate accountability process. For instance, in Verse 9 of Surah al-Nisa, Allah calls the attention of those who are likely to be instituted to manage the affairs of any orphan to be careful and fearful about their own posterity. According to Allah, their iniquities could affect their own children as well. This would certainly make someone who knows the implication of this attribute to be cautioned. This also implies that there is nothing that could be hidden from Allah since everything would be accurately captured. Although Man forgets easily, Allah will not forget (Quran, 58:6).

This attribute would also induce and elicit diligence from someone who has this understanding and deeply ruminates on its moral implications. This is because both good and evil are going to be accounted for and both will be rewarded accordingly, as Allah clearly states that all human beings shall be rightly placed and rewarded based on their good or bad actions (Quran, 6:132, 99:7-8).

***The Often-Seeing.*** This is another important divine name of Allah. In various verses of the Quran, Allah exhorts everyone to be pious as nothing is hidden from Him. For instance, He says, "...fear Allah (i.e., *Be mindful of Allah*) and know that Allah is (*All-*)Seeing of what you do" (Quran, 2:233). The divine name basically means that nothing could keep us out of Allah's sight – even the darkness or brightness of the day has nothing whatsoever to do with Allah's unlimited capacity to see. This understanding could make a true believer not only be mindful of Allah, but also exhibit sincerity and consistency. These two spiritual and moral concepts are important and could only be more entrenched in our psyche if we understand that this divine attribute entails Allah's direct access to our heart and what we harbor within. Next is the last name of Allah to be considered in this paper.

***The Often-Hearing.*** Similar to the attribute of sight, Allah's power to hear is without any hindrance or limitation (Quran, 31:28). The "volume" of our discussion is not relevant as Allah states in the Quran (58:7):

...There are not three in a private conversation but that He is the fourth of them, nor are there five but that He is the sixth of them - and no less than that and no more except that He is with them [in knowledge] wherever they are. Then He will inform them of what they did, on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed, Allah is, of all things, Knowing.

Similarly, in Surah al-Ra'd, Allah says, "It is the same [to Him] concerning you whether one conceals [his] speech or publicises it and whether one is hidden by night or conspicuous [among others] by day" (Quran, 13:10).

An understanding and sincere acknowledgment of this reality, as encapsulated in this name of Allah, would elicit some level of transparency in the believer's dealing with Allah and his fellow human

beings. It would make people be wary of animosity as it also would foster altruism. Each of these is an exceedingly rare moral disposition that is important for our ethical dealings and relationships.

The forgoing is just a brief demonstration of the moral implications of Allah's names and attributes through an epistemological exploration and moral psychological standpoint; it is in no way an exhaustive consideration.

## Conclusion

The concept of *Tawhīd* is the foundational principle of Islamic thought and practice. As such, *Tawhīd* is the main element of Islamic morality in that the Islamic worldview is sourced from *Tawhīd* and the concept of morality is one of the elements of this worldview. One of the major dimensions of *al-Tawhīd* is *al-Asma wa al-Sifat* (Names and Attributes of Allah). Unfortunately, this dimension, in recent times, seems to attract little academic attention. It is rarely explored or articulated as a framework even though it could be variously employed as an integral part of the Islamic worldview as a way to discuss and address certain issues affecting Muslims.

For instance, the concept of morals in Islam (known as *akhlāq*) has fixed, established and unchanging characteristics due to the fact that it comes from revelation, which captures the concept of *Tawhīd* and the manifestation of its values and implications.

Considering this, the paper concisely demonstrates several ways on how an exploration of *Tawhīd al-Asma wa al-Sifat* could necessarily inform the moral views of Muslims and shape their moral dispositions and behaviours. This is attempted through a conceptual analysis of selected names and attributes of Allah based on their contextual usage in the Quran. The analysis highlights that these divine names and attributes transcend symbolism or chanting (*dhikr*) alone. It also indicates that believing in them, with a thoughtful understanding, has moral implications that should reflect in our ethical paradigm and impact our behaviour.

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