

# Exegesis of the Noble Qur'an

Surah al-Ikhlaas (112) (also known as Surah al-Tawheed or *Monotheism*)

Academy for Learning Islam ([www.academyofislam.org](http://www.academyofislam.org))

Shaykh Saleem Bhimji ([saleem@al-mubin.org](mailto:saleem@al-mubin.org))

# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: **Outline of Discussion**

- General details about this chapter
- History of revelation
- Benefits of recitation
- The Islamic Laws in regards to Sūrah al-Ikhlās
- The chapter at a glance
- Verse by verse exegesis of Sūrah al-Ikhlās
- Suggested further readings on the topic

# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: **General Details**

- Revealed in **Mecca**.
- Contains **four verses**.
- In this chapter, the monotheism (*tawheed*) of Allah is presented in for very short yet comprehensive verses.

# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: Reason for Revelation



From 6<sup>th</sup> Imam: A group of Jews asked the Prophet to describe "his" God for them and after three days, this chapter was revealed to the Prophet.



Other traditions note that it was the polytheists of Mecca who asked the Prophet the question about the history and lineage of "his" God and this was the reply.



Yet other traditions mention that it was a group of Christians who asked the Prophet to 'describe' God and this is the response he gave to them.



# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: Benefits of Recitation

1. Prophet ﷺ asked his companions if any of them have the ability to recite 1/3 of the Qur'an every night? When they replied that who has this ability, he replied: **إِقْرُوا قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ**
  - As the Qur'an can be divided into three portions: Tawheed, Nubuwwah and Qiyaamah.
2. Imam as-Sadiq, peace be upon him, has said that the person who performs his five daily prayers and does not recite **قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ** in at least one of them, will be addressed: **يَا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ! لَسْتَ مِنْ "الْمُصَلِّينَ"** - *'O Servant of God! You are not amongst those who establish the prayers!'*

# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: The Islamic Laws

- **Issue 997:** If after **Surah al-Hamd**, somebody begins reciting **Surah al-Ikhlās** or **Surah al-Kafiroon**, one is not permitted to abandon it and recite some other surah. However, if in Friday prayers and in Zuhur prayers on Friday, he recites one of these surahs forgetfully - instead of Surah al-Jumu'ah and Surah al-Munafiqun – then one can abandon it and recite Surah al-Jumu'ah and Surah al-Munafiqun, but the precaution is that he should not abandon Surah al-Ikhlās after having read more than half of it.

# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: The Islamic Laws

- **Issue 998:** If a person intentionally recites Surah al-Ikhlās or Surah al-Kafiroon in Friday prayers or in Zuhr prayers on Friday, he cannot, as an obligatory precaution, abandon it to recite Surah al-Jumu'ah and Surah al-Munafiqun, even if he may not have reached the half way point of it.

# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: **The Islamic Laws**

- **Issue 1028:** It is *makrooh* (discouraged) not to recite Surah al-Ikhlaas in at least one of the daily prayers.



# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: **The Islamic Laws**

- **Issue 1029:** It is discouraged (*makrooh*) to recite the whole of Surah al-Ikhlaas in one breath.

# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: **The Islamic Laws**

- **Issue 1030:** It is discouraged (*makrooh* – less reward) to recite the same surah in the second rak'at which one has recited in the first rak'at; however, if one recites Surah al-Ikhlās in both the rak'ats, it is not discouraged (*makrooh* – less reward).

# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: **Benefits of Recitation**

3. The Prophet ﷺ has said that one who has faith in Allah and the Last Day will not refrain from reciting قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ after each obligatory prayer and whoever does recite it, Allah will give him the goodness of this world and the next and will forgive the person, his parents and children.
4. Reciting قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ when one enters into their house will aide in the increase of one's sustenance and will alleviate poverty.

# Sūrah al-Ikhlās:[The Sincerity]

also known as Surah al-Tawheed [The Monotheism]

In the name of God, the Gracious, the Merciful	بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
1: Say, 'He is God, the One.	قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ
2: God is the All-embracing.	اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ
3: He neither begat, nor was begotten,	لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ
4: nor has He any equal.'	وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ



# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: Commentary of Verse 1

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

1 Say, 'He is God, the One.

- Disbelievers pointed to their idols and said these were their “gods” and for the Prophet to then “point” to his God and describe him.
  - This verse shows that “He” is Allah – the One.

# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: Commentary of Verse 1

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

1 Say, 'He is God, the One.

- "Allāh" is the 'proper name' of God – this is a name reserved for Him alone; while his traits (Al-Rahman, Al-Raheem, Al-Kareem, etc...) can be applied and applicable to people.
- One interpretation is that the name الله comes from the root word وله which means '**that which causes bewilderment and amazement**' and that is why Imam Ali, peace be upon him, has said:

الله معناه المعبود الذي ياله فيه الخلق و يؤله إليه و الله هو المستور عن درك الأبصار المحجوب عن الأوهام و الخطرات

*"The meaning of Allah is that [He] is that thing which is worshipped and whom the creations are bewildered and that they are enamoured [about]; and Allah is [that entity] for whom the vision is covered [from perceiving Him] and the intellect is veiled over [from truly knowing Him]."*

# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: Commentary of Verse 1

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

I Say, 'He is God, the One.

- Second interpretation is that the name الله comes from the root word الاله which means 'that which is worshipped IN TRUTH' as many things are falsely worshipped
  - This name is mentioned over 1,000 times in the Qur'an
- One meaning of "أحد" is that He is ONE or he is, from every point of view, "The One and Only" – in his knowledge, power, mercy, compassion, etc...
- Another meaning of "أحد" is that He is ONE but NOT in the numerical sense – He is ONE such that there can be no TWO or any other number of Him.
- Some traditions allude to the fact that "ONE" is not a number but rather is the building block of all other numbers and as this can lead to deep thought and contemplation on what this means, thus, Allah refers to himself as "ONE".

# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: Commentary of Verse 1

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

1. Say, 'He is God, the One.

- During 'Battle of Jamal', a desert Arab called out and asked O' Commander of the Faithful! You say that Allah is ONE – what does this ONE mean?"
- People around him were about to attack when Imam Ali, peace be upon him, calmed them down and told them that they were fighting for the belief of tawheed of Allah and then began to explain to this desert Arab the meaning of Allah being ONE.



# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: Commentary of Verse 1

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

1. Say, 'He is God, the One.

○ **Imam Ali then went on to say: There are four meanings of "ONE" – two are null and void and two are correct:**

- **INCORRECT:** 1. Oneness in terms of quantity – to say "He is one and not two" is not valid as something for which there is no two cannot enter into the realm of amounts.
- **INCORRECT:** 2. Oneness in terms of 'type' or 'genus' – when we say 'that person is one of the members of the community' – this is not valid for Allah.
- **CORRECT:** 3. Oneness in terms that in the world of creation there is nothing like Him – yes our God is like this.
- **CORRECT:** 4. Oneness in terms that His essence cannot be divided or separated – neither in reality nor in our thoughts.

# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: Commentary of Verse 2

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ

2. God is the All-embracing.

- **Scholars have given numerous definitions for the word الصمد.**
  - 1. One whom all turn to when they need something done.
  - 2. Something which is 'full' and is not devoid of anything and is also not in need of anyone or anything – including food, drink, rest, sleep, etc....
  - Full and complete definition of “الصمد” is: **Everyone who is in need of anything must rely upon him as it is only He who is completely free of need or want.**

# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: Commentary of Verse 2

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ

2. God is the All-embracing.

○ **Imam Husayn ibne Ali, peace be upon him, has given five meanings of الصمد:**

- One who is at the pinnacles of greatness and majesty;
- One who is permanent and will never go away;
- One who does not possess an 'interior';
- One who does not eat or drink;
- One who does not sleep.

# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: Commentary of Verse 3

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ

3. He neither begat, nor was begotten,

- This verse refutes the polytheists Arabs and people of other religions who believe that God was begotten or that he can have a child.
- Many – but not all - Christians believe that Jesus is a part of the trinity – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit; thus, they believe that Jesus is God:
  - Bible – John 3:16 – “**King James Bible** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
- Some Jews – most notably at the time of the Prophet, believed that God had a son named “Uzair”.



# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: Commentary of **Verse 4**

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

4. nor has He any equal.'

- This verse “completes” the description of Allāh as seen in this chapter that there is NOTHING in existence which can be compared to Him in any way.
  - Allāh has NO:
    - Equals in His essence;
    - Peers in His characteristics or traits;
    - Similar entity in His actions;
      - Therefore, He is entirely unique and unequalled and unparalleled.

# Sūrah al-Ikhlās: Further Readings

- One of the best books about the Tawheed of Allah:

<http://www.al-islam.org/tawhid-or-monotheism-muhammad-taqi-misbah-yazdi>

<http://bit.ly/1LM2jhi>

- Another commentary on Surah al-Ikhlaas from various Shia sources:

<http://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-20/surah-ikhlas-chapter-112>

<http://bit.ly/1hV6bCY>

