

Purification of Tawhid in Islam through the Quran and Hadith

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ABSTRACT

This article introduces the concept of tawhid's purification as the methodology of prophets in calling to Allah, embedded in the revelation. In order to define Islamic epistemology through the study of Qur'anic and Hadith texts as well as to glorify both as the sacred source of thought, an analytical study of selected 24 Qur'anic verses and 48 authentic hadiths has been used. Through the combination of traditional and digital method, the number of selected Qur'anic verses and authentic hadiths is considered adequate to prove the existence of tawhid purification in revealed texts as the core foundation of Islamic epistemology. From the 72 texts on tawhid purification analyzed, 7 Qur'anic verses and 19 hadiths focussed on tawhid purification in belief; 16 Qur'anic verses and 18 hadiths focused on physical acts of worship, while the rest consisting one Qur'anic verse with 11 hadiths highlighted the verbal acts of worship. This study has verified that the concept of tawhid purification is not a new ideology created by certain groups. On the contrary, the revealed texts of Qur'an and hadith has manifested the concept of tawhid purification since the earliest days of Islam through the call of many prophets to Allah. Therefore concerted efforts should be taken to educate the Islamic society in understanding tawhid purification as the key methodology of prophets in calling to Allah and as confirmed by the revelation. Thus, negative perceptions viewing it as the ideology of extremists should be properly regulated.

Keywords: Purification; tawhid; Islam; Qur'an; hadith

INTRODUCTION

Pure means clean, clear and serene, while purification denotes the act of cleaning, clearing, filtering, draining, straining and liquidating. (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 1995; Elias A. Elias 1962). In the bible (Isaiah, 42:16), purification is explained as the expansion of light and the blessings of light. (Redstone n.d). As in Buddhism, purification means the effort of cleansing oneself from three major negative character namely greed, anger and ignorance (Espada n.d). Pure is synonymous with safiyy and zakiyy in the Arabic language. Thus purification is understood using the connotations of tasfiyah and tazkiyah. Both terms is frequently used in the Qur'an to represent purification. (al-Qur'an, 47:15 & 87:14).

Definition of Tawhid

In Arabic, tawhid originates from the meaning of 'to make one or united' (al-Fairuz Abadi 1987). This semantic foundation divides tawhid into two meaning: firstly, to unite something which is numerous and scattered into one, such as uniting all ingredients into one single dish. The first meaning will not be achieved unless the various unite as one single entity. Secondly, is to dispose all various items until everything becomes united, like filtering all impurities so that all is left will only be the purest. In this second meaning, the realization will be achieved

only through discarding and cleansing. Thus linguistically, tawhid can be understood by the meaning of unity as well as singling. Tawhid with the meaning of unity can be compared with polytheism in Greek's Neo-Platonism, Christian's trinity, Hindu's trimurthi and Pantheism. Whereas tawhid with meaning of singling can be witnessed in Islamic monotheism. The phrase of *an Islamic monotheism* carries the meaning of believing in Allah as a single, all-powerful entity in His Knowledge, with assertion of divine attributes, demands and purpose (Abd al-Rahman Ibn Hasan 1957). This is also the meaning of tawhid as the main message of the prophets in calling to Allah. (al-Qur'an, 16: 36).

The Problem of Purification

The term purification is usually used in the study of tasawwuf to refer to the cleansing of the heart. (Abdul Manam 2009). Focusing to this aspect will not distinguish Islam from Buddhism. As purification of Buddhism reflects the similar meaning, purification in Islam is far broader and more comprehensive. Many who misunderstood purification of tawhid in Islam due to its underexposure, went to the extreme of questioning its relevancy and perceived it as awkward (Mochammad Moealliem 2008). Purification of tawhid is furthermore labelled as an innovation of the extremists, confronting local traditions, the source of disunity, the hardliner's view as well as disturbing peace and harmony of the society (Muhammad Syamil 2008; Raja Ahmad Mukhlis 2006; Putra Aiman 2007). On second thought, will it be rational to blame tawhid purification, if this concept is being implemented in accordance with the methodology of prophets in calling to Allah and as confirmed by the revelation of Allah in the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah?

Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani (2002) is very prominent in rejuvenating this concept as one of most essential panacea needed to be taken to heal the problems in living the religion. Then Mubarak Mahfudh (2003) and Amru Abd al-Mun'im Salim (n.d) had further elaborated the concept of tawhid purification according to al-Albani. Next, the writings of Abd al-Malik bin Ahmad Ramadani (2004) discussed purification as one of the principles of Salafi methodology in calling to Allah. Meanwhile Yazid Abd al-Qadir Jawas (2004) stressed the duties of Ahl al-Sunnah Wa al-Jama'ah in implementing this concept to revive the glory of Islam. Mahmud Abd al-Samad al-Asqalani (2004) also explained the meaning of purification of hadith, Qur'anic exegesis, Islamic creed and Islamic morals without elaborating the relevant examples. Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani (2004) had once more written on tawhid purification in his book *Tawheed First!* specifically answer questions posed to him on the matter. The works of Ali Hasan al-Halabi (2005) re-elaborated tawhid purification in its theoretical aspect namely the meaning, relevancy and discipline. Muhammad Ahmad Luh (2006), Salim ibn Sa'ad al-Tawil (2007), Lafi' Syatrat (2007) and Abu Ubaidah Masyhur ibn Hasan Ali Salman had also taken the earlier approach of Amru Abd al-Mun'im Salim and al-Halabi, only to reduce their commentary into shorter articles. Muhammad Sa'id Raslan (2009) briefly explained the concept of purification by giving examples stressed in a number of prophetic hadiths. To date, specific writings which gather evidences from the Qur'an and Sunnah while carrying specific title of tawhid purification, is considerably hard to find.

Purification in The Qur'an

The Qur'an utilizes *purification* in a broad and comprehensive scope. Al-Damighani listed seven meanings of purification which occurred in the holy book, namely: reciting the declaration of faith or *syahadah*, paying *zakah*, *islah* (Islamic reform), paying *Zakah al-Fitr*,

cleansing, *halal* and *sadaqah* (giving alms) (al-Damighani 1970). Apart from that al-Asfahani divided the meaning of purification into two – to denote cleansing oneself with actions and secondly, to cleanse through praising oneself while denying justice and kindness of other persons. The first meaning is commendable, while the second is cursed as the behaviour of self-glorification is rationally and religiously detrimental to mankind (al-Asfahani 1997). According to scholars of Qur’anic exegesis, *purification* of the Qur’an means cleansing oneself from bad character, impurities of ungodly desires, unislamic practices or *Jahiliyah* and *shirk* or taking partners to Allah which negates one’s tawhid (Ibn Kathir 1998; al-Mahalli & al-Suyuti 1999; al-Zuhaili 1998). The concept of *purification* in the Qur’an was never limited to discarding bad character such as greed, arrogance and showing-off. However, the Qur’an’s biggest concern regarding purification is to cleanse all elements of polytheism or *associationism* (*shirk*) which nullify the principle of tawhid (Islamic monotheism) (al-Qur’an, 2:151, 3: 164, 35:18 & 20:76). Tawhid purification should be focused more compared to other matters, as the issue of tawhid is ever-prominent than other topics of calling to Allah. (al-Bukhari, No: 6824). Purification of tawhid should be viewed as the most important aspect in the teachings of Islam, thus it is the main focus of all prophets in calling to the path of Allah. (al-Qur’an, 21:25; 16:36; 7:59, 65, 73, 85; 12:37-40; 19:41-44).

METHODOLOGY

This study has examined 24 Qur’anic verses and 48 hadiths related to tawhid purification. Through the combination of traditional and digital method, the number of selected Qur’anic verses and authentic hadiths is considered adequate to prove the existence of tawhid purification in revealed texts as the core foundation of Islamic epistemology.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Table 1 displays 7 Qur’anic verses and 19 hadiths focusing on tawhid purification in belief. Sixteen more Qur’anic verses and 18 hadiths stressed tawhid purification in physical act of worship, while the Qur’anic verses and 11 hadiths explained tawhid purification in verbal act of worship. Hence a total of 72 textual evidences are specifically elaborated tawhid purification.

Table 1. Number of Qur’anic Verses and Hadiths on Tawhid Purification

Tawhid Purification	Qur’anic Verses	Hadiths
Belief	7	19
Physical Acts	16	18
Verbal Acts	1	11
Total	24	48
Total Sum	72	

Examples of tawhid purification in belief are the textual evidence of Qur’an and hadith on the prohibition of sorcery (al-Qur’an, 2:102; al-Bukhari, No. 2615 & 6465; Muslim, No. 272; Sunan Abi Daud, No. 3868), amulets (al-Qur’an, 6:17; Sunan Abi Daud, No. 3883; Sunan Ibn Majah, No. 3530; Musnad Ahmad, No. 3615), *at-tiyarah* or attributing goodness or bad luck to something other than Allah (al-Qur’an, 7:131; 27:47; Sunan Abi Daud, No. 3910; Sunan Tirmizi, No. 1614; Sunan Ibn Majah, No. 3538) and *at-tanjim* or astrology (Sunan Abi Daud,

No. 3905; Sunan Ibn Majah, No. 3729). Next will be the examples of tawhid purification in physical act of worship which include the religious ban of the Qur'an and hadith on *at-tawassul* or taking intercessor in praying to Allah (al-Qur'an, 5:35), *al-istighathah* or requesting for help from other than Allah or utilizing incorrect ways in doing so (al-Qur'an 27:62), and performing slaughter or taking vows in other than Allah's name (al-Qur'an, 108:2; 2:270; Sahih Muslim, No. 5239 & 5240; Sunan Nasai, No. 3845). Lastly the examples of tawhid purification in verbal acts of belief will be the disapproval of hadiths in making *al-muwazanah* or prohibiting verbal equating of Allah with His creatures (Sunan Abi Daud, No. 4982; Sunan Nasai, No. 3773; Musnad Ahmad, No. 1839, 1964, 2561 & 3247) and making oath in other than Allah's name (Sunan Abi Daud, No. 3251; Sunan Tirmizi, No. 1535).

CONCLUSION

The above statistics do not constitute the whole Qur'an and hadith on tawhid purification. However, it will suffice to prove its existence and relevancy in the sacred and sound revelation of Islamic epistemology. Tawhid purification is also the core methodology of prophets, revealed by Allah, to be implemented in their calling of the masses to Him. Hence, it is inappropriate to attack certain figures or movements just because they applied this concept in practice. Tawhid purification is not an innovated ideology or theory founded by any parties in supporting their course, but it is the methodology of the prophets which deserved to be sincerely emulated. Allah, through the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad via his hadiths has already manifested the concept of tawhid purification since the beginning to educate mankind on the correct path. With tawhid purification, Islamic teachings can fully function to unify Islamic societies, just as proven by the history of Prophet Muhammad.

Tawhid purification also equally functions as an 'anti-virus' to preserve Islamic teachings. Sadly, the importance of this concept is given less prominence by the society due to the various misconceptions. As a result, the misinformed society holds very negative views to any efforts of purification. To the most extreme view, tawhid purification is no less than a heresy which nullify one's Islam. Therefore, this study has proven that tawhid purification is not the extremist ideology but it is the prophetic methodology in their call to Allah. Tawhid purification never aspires to poison religious practices of the society, but it is an initiative to cure the syncretization of religion with non-religious elements. It is also a major endeavour striving to clarify non-religious practices and thoughts as they are, preventing the masses to view them as components of this sacred religion. Therefore, tawhid purification should be viewed with a more positive perspective, without labelling it as extreme or deviated. The clarification of tawhid purification must be intensified so that the mentality of the society can be transformed to receive adequate exposure coupled with the correct understanding. In doing so, various media can be employed to educate the society on this prophetic methodology in calling to Allah. Claims saying that tawhid purification is a theory and ideology of extremists are baseless and incorrect. Further quantitative and qualitative studies should be done in order to encourage a more positive perception and wider acceptance of tawhid purification in Islamic society.

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