

QUR'ANIC PERCEPTION OF MONOTHEISM AND GOD'S ABSOLUTE IMPARTIALITY (IN THE LIGHT OF MAULANA ABU AL-KALAM AZAD'S WRITINGS)

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Abstract

Abu al-Kalam Azad studied some historical facts that he dealt with in his book (*Interpretation of al-Qur'an*) and (*Umm al-Kitab*) but he did not ignore Darwin's theory of ascension that everything grows slowly from the bottom up, except for the religious belief. Its matter is completely different because it descended from the top to the bottom and retreated from the best to the worst. Azad mentioned that God Almighty created all people as one nation, then people differed into various sects, meaning that the oldest human belief is the doctrine of monotheism. Azad tried to prove that most religions called people to monotheism, and the dispute among them resulted from internal contradictions. He believed that the dispute among the religions centers on depicting divine attributes, and there is no difference among them in the same deity. He did not try to call the people to the unity of religions - as it seems - but he wanted to call them to the unity of faith, which is the monotheism. The best form of monotheism for him is Islam, as stated in the *Qur'an*: (No doubt that the religion of God is Islam), (and any religion will not be accepted (*Āl-'Imrān*: 19-85)). Therefore, Azad called all people to Islam in an indirect way, he emphasized that what was the perception of worshiping God in the sixth century AD in the world was in need for the *Qur'an* to be revealed to correct the crookedness and corruption in the man's religious thought.

Keywords: *Qur'anic perception of God's absolute impartiality - Islam's belief in the unification of divine self and divine attributes - Involvement in the worship of God Almighty - Total obstruction of polytheism in the worship of one God.*

INTRODUCTION

When Azad wanted to explain Surah (Al-Fatihah) in his book (Interpreter of Al-Qur'an) and write a summary of the true religion of God Almighty, he found it limited to four points:

1. Depicting the attributes of God correctly, because the slips that harmed the man in worshiping God were confined to a misconception of human attributes most of the time.
2. Good and bad deeds.
3. Belief in the penalty law for every good or bad deed in this world.
4. Belief in the resurrection, that is, a person's life does not end in this world, but there is another life after the death, in which a person meets the reward of his deeds.

Azad went on to say that the man has believed in worshiping one God since ancient times, due to the emergence of his feeling of his presence on the earth, because his belief in one God who has no partner was and still is closer to the avenue of righteousness and the most correct way to know the Almighty truth, but the doctrine of monotheism began to deviate with the passage of time and was replaced by the doctrine of the involvement of many gods in worship, and that deviation appeared in the manifestations of idolatry that were originally manifestations of the existence of multiple deities.

In this regard, Azad rejected the theories of social scientists that appeared in the nineteenth century AD, which attributed the primitive religious beliefs to the fantasies and fairy tales (myths), although some of them represented the unification of the Creator of the universe before passing through the various stages of gradual development. To support his claim, Azad did not rely on studies not only conducted in the modern era, but also presented some convincing evidence from the heavenly books to invalidate those baseless theories.

After a careful study of the beliefs of ancient nations and peoples in the divinity, and the developments that appeared in them, Azad concluded that the process of evolution in this field is a reverse process and raises all astonishment and confusion in the perception of the existence of a god, because the ascent is the transformation from the worst to the best as we see the law of this historical ascent. It is valid in every corner of the universe, so that the human body and its thinking brain do not deviate from the law of evolution and development. We also see that the human body develops gradually from the lower chains to the upper ones, and the perceptions of his thinking brain also develop and rise from the bottom to the top. However, the issue of imagining the existence of a god is completely different from what we call ascending, because when we try to find the steps of the person who lived in primitive times, we see his effects are regressing rather than advancing, by virtue of the law of backwardness and reaction. Azad cites his claim, saying:

The oldest conception of the human brain, which was bright even in the darkness of antiquity (ancient ignorance), is the conception of monotheism, meaning the conception of the existence of the One Supreme God, who created the man and everything around him from the four directions. It seems that his steps began to retreat from this conception, as the concept of polytheism and multiplicity began to gradually replace monotheism, meaning that other powers began to participate in the perception of God, the One Supreme Deity, so, the man began to kneel and prostrate at the threshold of many deities, instead of kneeling and prostrating to one unseen deity. (1)

1. Qur'anic perception of the absolute impartiality of the divine being.

The Qur'anic conception is complementary to the conception of transcendence of God Almighty, and this complete transcendence from all impurities of anthropomorphism did not exist in this world before the revelation of the Qur'an, so it was the highest rank of transcendence that human thought was able to reach is that the man worships an invisible deity, instead of worshiping idols. As for the divine attributes, the perception of those beliefs was not devoid of the impurities of analogy, embodiment, and representation of human attributes and feelings, such as the body, shape, emotions, and internal feelings, as we see in the Indian and Greek beliefs, and the Jewish belief, which did not allow any form of idolatry, was also not devoid of the impurities of analogy and representation in full, because the power of human perception was not ripe for understanding the divine attributes without example or analogy before the revelation of the Qur'an, so that the man could see the divine manifestations revealed without a veil of analogy and representation. Therefore, we see the basis of every doctrine is based on the representation and analogy, as we see in the Jewish religion that the depiction of divine attributes is also not devoid of analogies to the attributes of human feelings, although the Psalms were not devoid of imagining the virtuous attributes worthy of the divinity of God, likewise, the Christian religion wanted to present a holistic and comprehensive conception of mercy, but it was also forced to use the analogy of God to a father, so the humanity deviated from this analogy, and a misguided doctrine emerged, which is the doctrine of the sonship of Christ (peace be upon him).

When we look at the Qur'an after examining all these perceptions, it seems that the world of thought and consideration has suddenly become enlightened, as all the curtains of analogy and representation are raised, and we do not find in it any trace of analogy with the human attributes and feelings, and we see every corner illuminated by the truth of metaphor, so that not a speck of anthropomorphic impurities remains. Thus, transcendence reaches the degree of perfection in the Almighty's saying in the Qur'an: (There is nothing like Him) and (Sights do not comprehend Him, and He comprehends the sights, and He is Subtle, All-Aware) - (Surah: Al-An'am Ayat 103). (Say that that {Allah is one * Allah

is the Eternal * He did not give birth and He was not born * and there was no one equal to Him}. (2), and {so do not give examples}. (3)

Depending on these Qur'anic verses, Azad wanted to prove his words that the divine attributes that were mentioned in the Holy Qur'an are extremely perfect in transcendence, and it is not intended to be a reason for obstructing the human mind from conceiving the divine attributes, after it differentiated carefully between the concept of transcendence and obstruction, saying: "There is a difference between transcendence and intellectual disruption, and what is meant by the transcendence is that the mental capacities in all their attempts rise from the limits of likening the divine attributes to the attributes of creatures, so that the divine attributes remain behind every attempt of the human mind to liken. The concept of nullification is to elevate transcendence to the level of absurdity and the impossible in terms of comprehension, until the mind feels deprived of thinking about anything. He added, saying: Exaggeration in affirming attributes leads to similes, just as exaggeration in denying attributes leads to denial. There is a possibility of danger due to deviation of the human perception from the correctness in both, because the simile prevents it from reaching the truth of the noun of simile, and likewise the denial makes it deprived of the spirit of belief." A person must avoid the excess and negligence and take the middle path between the analogy and deactivation, and the path chosen by the Qur'an is the most correct path between them, which succeeds in reaching the desired goal safely without colliding with any one of them.

After Azad studied this subject comprehensively and deeply, analyzed it thoroughly, and explained it in detail, he summarized his research as follows:

In the Qur'an's conception of this dangerous subject, there is a receipt of impartiality to the pinnacle of perfection on the one hand, and a preservation of faith from the abysses of the denial obstruction on the other hand. The Qur'an requires unification between divine attributes and divine actions, and yet it does not abandon its focus on categorically denying the analogy to the same God. In addition to His being characterized by all the attributes of goodness and perfection that a person can imagine, such as: Being Hearing, Seeing, Powerful, Merciful, and Lord Knowing, and His use of appropriate expressions denoting ability, choice, will, and action, and His saying: Rather, his hands are spread out. He spends as he wishes. (4) and {His throne extends over the heavens and the earth}. (5) The Qur'an confirms with clear and definitive words that He has no example, has no resemblance, and has no equal. He says: (As there is nothing like Him) and (Sights do not comprehend Him). (6) (So, do not set examples for Allah). (7)

By this brief statement, the life of the living God is not like our life, and his lordship is different to our perception of lordship, and the same applies to hearing, sight, and knowledge. As He is above all that can be imagined of all beings. Likewise, the hand of power and mercy informs us about the meanings of majesty and encompassing, but they are different to those meanings that are formed in our minds when we use these words. (8)

Azad concludes that the Qur'an has chosen the path of moderation in the conception of one God, and in fact it is the only solution for the safety between the two extremes, as the tendency to impartiality and exaggeration in it are among the things that lead the man to fall into the abyss of disruption, as well as exaggeration in proving the attributes leads to the belief in embodiment analogy. (9)

Azad also says: Exaggeration in denying the attributes of the Upanishad thinkers is a well-known matter, but when different doctrines and opinions emerged in theology of Muslims and their efforts to explain the divine attributes, the theory exceeded the limits of all thinking's of Indians in this regard. Here, Azad mentions some of the beliefs of the theological sects, such as: (Bāṭiniyah) and (Jahmiah), who went to deny the divine attributes, and the Mu'tazila, which did not explicitly deny them, as well as the Ash 'Aris, who chose the moderate direction, as it appears from the book of Imam Abi al-Hasan al Ash 'Ari, the author of the book: (Al-Ibānah), but the efforts of his followers exceeded the limit of moderation in the interpretation of the attributes, and a color of extremism appeared in their long debate, but none of them was able to solve this issue, and the only way to solve it is through the Qur'an. It is mentioned that Imam Juwaini departed from this world, recognizing that I am departing from this world with the faith that I learned from my mother. He said: "Here I am, dying on my mother's faith". Azad mentions that Imam Fakhr al-Razi was more than those who were preoccupied with these issues, but he also admitted in his last work of his life the following:

"I pondered the rhetorical methods and philosophical methods, but I did not see that they heal the thirst, nor quench the sick. I saw that the path of the Qur'an is the closest way, so, I read in the affirmation: {The Most Gracious on the Throne. Surah Taha: 5}, (10) and in the negation:

{There is nothing like Him. Surat Al-Shura:11, (11) and "who has experience like my experience knows like my knowledge." (12)

After discussing the excesses and negligence in the doctrines of the theological sects, Azad expressed his opinion saying that the doctrine of Salafis was more in response to the Qur'anic teachings. On the one hand, they expressed the position of the Jahmiah sect on denying the attributes by the negation, just as they smelled the scent of the negation in the interpretation of the attributes of the Mu'tazila and the Ash 'Aris, who were accused by theologians of

anthropomorphism and analogy, but they said that what you called similitude is better than denying. Until we find a way to prove the doctrine of monotheism, as there is nothing left to prove it after the negation and deny. Azad mentioned that Imam Ibn Taimiyah and his student Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah are among the later predecessors, so they understood the depths of this problem, and neither of them was satisfied with deviating from the path of the predecessors.

So, Azad wanted to clarify his point of view on this issue, he dealt with the meanings of the Qur'anic verses in terms of precise and ambiguous matters, as stated in the Qur'an: It is He who sent down to you the Book, of which are clear verses that are the mother of the Book, and others that are allegorical. So, who follow what is similar in it, seeking sedition and seeking an interpretation of it. Only Allah knows its interpretation, and those who are firmly grounded in the knowledge say, "We believe in it." All are from our Lord, and only those with their understanding will remember (13) He sees that what is meant by clear verses are those concepts that a person understands clearly and easily in connection with his practical life. As for the ambiguities, they are above what a person can comprehend, and he is unable to comprehend it, so, he must stop at a certain limit in his comprehension. Azad puts the attributes of the same God among the ambiguities whose meanings a person is unable to comprehend based on the (perceived) mental powers. So, he concluded that the intellectual schools are not useful in dealing with this problem, rather they open the doors of crookedness and intellectual corruption. There is no path of safety before us except the path of the predecessors who went in the attributes of the doctrine of delegation because the philosophical theories of the theologians do not respond to the persuasive teachings of the Qur'an. (14)

2. Attributes of mercy, beauty, subjugation, and majesty to God Almighty in the Qur'an After studying God's complete self-exaltation, when we look at the attributes of mercy and majesty in the Qur'an, we see in them the importance of complementarity and comprehensiveness with clarity, because the element of oppression and anger was predominant in the perception of the divine attributes of Jews. When the Qur'an was revealed, there were two equal and independent forces to conceive of a God, and they were represented in (good) and (evil), and in (light) and (darkness). Christianity focused on the attribute of mercy, compassion, and love in the perception of divinity without paying attention to the reality of the reward, as the same case was with the followers of Buddhism, and the element of justice was missing in the conception of the divinity of God. The power of oppression and anger prevailed over compassion and mercy, or they were equal to Jews, Christians, and Buddhists, as there was no place left for the divine justice. However, the Qur'an presented a complete picture of the qualities of kindness and compassion that are devoid of the element of oppression and anger on the one hand, and did not ignore the element of reward on the other hand, but the reward will not be on the basis of oppression and anger, but rather the reward for the deeds is based on the justice, as the Qur'an says, declaring the Divine qualities:

{Say: Call upon God or call upon the Most Merciful. Whatever you call on, to Him belongs the most beautiful names}. (15)

Azad deduces from these noble verses that all divine attributes are among the Most Beautiful Names, which means that they are among the attributes of goodness and beauty, and they are mentioned extensively and comprehensively in many places in the Qur'an. Among them are attributes that seem to be attributes of oppression and majesty, such as: Mighty and subjugating, but the Qur'an says: they are also among the best attributes, because they are manifestations of divine power and justice, because it does not present a frightening image of intimidation and fear. As the attributes of mercy, beauty, oppression, and majesty are mentioned side by side in Surat: Al-Hashr, then they are named directly with beautiful names. Azad says: That is why three of them are mentioned clearly in Surat Al-Fatihah, namely: Godliness, mercy, and justice, and not mentioned one of the characteristics of oppression and anger.

3. Conscience is an essential tool for the Islamic faith.

One of the advantages of the Qur'an is also that its conception of the divine being is not a mystery or a complex matter that requires a lot of mental stress, and the secrets of its meanings also do not reach the level of ambiguity, so that it is not possible to discover them for anyone except an elite of intellectuals. Rather, the reality is that its basis is on the common conscience among the human beings in the east and west of the earth, and the human consciousness must understand that the universe with all that is in it is not a product of chance or exists by itself, but rather it is created, and there must be a creator. The Qur'an does not charge a person with more than this, and this assignment is also not included in the fixed religious beliefs, but is related to personal conditions and experiences, and is left to the individuals according to their efforts and energies. Allah says: "And those who strive for Us, we will surely guide them to Our paths. Indeed, Allah is with the doers of good". (16)

These statements that Azad mentioned above are applicable to all people, and despite the existence of differences in ranks among them, they help to adopt a specific idea according to what Islam accepts for everyone, whether it is from the common people or from the elite. There is no doubt that the position of Islam differs from the position of the wise and Hindu thinkers, meaning that Islam did not formulate some separate templates for the beliefs and worship for the common people and the elite, although all people are not equal in the ranks of faith. To clarify the multiple approaches to the divine knowledge and its various means that Islam looks at with consideration, Azad relied on the Hadith of Gabriel, and said that the three degrees that are mentioned in the noble Hadith of the Prophet, namely: Islam, faith, and benevolence, are the three degrees of divine knowledge. The first degree is related to the general framework of Islam for

belief and action, and it guides that it is Islam, so whoever takes it in the faith and action becomes a Muslim. The second - meaning faith - is intended for practical and doctrinal certainty, and the possessor of this degree is considered one of the elite groups. As for the third, it is the degree of benevolence, and it is not possible to reach it except through personal experiences and efforts, and it is not related to religious beliefs, and it cannot be acquired through education and indoctrination. Azad has dealt with these three degrees and their modalities as follows:

“In Islam, there is a cure for the problem according to effort and demand. In the first degree, it is sufficient for the common people, and what is required by the elite is to strive to reach the faith, while the problems of the elite cannot be solved except after they drink the nectar of knowledge from the chalices of benevolence. So, Islam has only one belief, and one divine conception. From this pure spring each one draws according to his success and has an ecstasy according to his demand and effort.” (17)

4. Total blockage of false associative beliefs

As for the doctrine of monotheism and polytheism, the perception of the Qur'an is characterized by perfection and convincing reasoning, which is unparalleled in the perceptions of other religions of the divinity.

If Allah is unique in His divine self, then He must also be unique in His attributes, because the greatness of His uniqueness does not remain correctly if it is assumed that there is a partner in His qualities. Monotheism has two aspects: Positive and negative. All religions emphasized the positive aspect of monotheism before the revelation of the Qur'an, but its negative side did not find a share in the clarity. Its positive side is proving that Allah is one by Himself, and its negative side is that He is Unmatched. This means that the monotheism is related to the existence of Divine Self, and the negative side requires that the attributes that characterize the Divine Self of One God must not be characterized by the others, i.e., no one else shares His attributes. So, we must care about the positive and negative both sides together and say: “He alone has no partner”. Hence, “He has no equal in the existence of His Divine Self”, and He also has no partner in His attributes that He characterizes. The first is the aspect of self-unification, and the second is the aspect of monotheism in the attributes, but the nations and peoples before the revelation of the Qur'an were not able to bear the subtle matters of monotheism in the attributes. Therefore, the religions were concerned with the self-unification only, and left the monotheism in the attributes in its primitive natural state.

Therefore, we see those religions, before the revelation of the Qur'an, taught the doctrine of monotheism, but they were not ambiguous, and manifestations of deification of personalities and reverence for their greatness, and idolatry were present in some form, as the men of those religions could not block this door. From the beginning, the worship of the gods and the reverence for the greatness of man in India were among the things that were necessary to convince the public. Monotheism was specific to the elite, as was the case with the philosophers of ancient Greece, except that none of them wanted to interfere with the belief of the public in worshipping idols. They believed that we could not preserve people's religious life except by worshipping idols.

It should be noted in this regard that the matter was related to the status of the guide or teacher, because his teachings would not be accepted if his personality was devoid of greatness in the eyes of the common people. However, the teachers or guides fail to define precisely what are the parameters of greatness for their personalities. The result was that the people seated the guide himself on the sofa of the angels, and the others considered him the son of God, and a partner in his divinity, and some of them exaggerated his sanctification, and understood that he was worthy of being worshiped.

In this regard, Azad indicated that Jews built temples over the graves of their prophets, and they considered them temples for their worship. Azad also referred to the last commandment of Gotama Buddha, who ordered his followers not to worship the ashes of his body after his death, if you worshiped Me, you would have found the way to salvation blocked in front of you, but the Buddhists erected temples on all his monuments, and filled the whole world with his carved statues, and considered it the best way to spread Buddhism, until the statues of (Gautama Buddha) reached in their large number to what did not reach the statue of any idol in the world. The same applies to Christianity, which used to teach the doctrine of monotheism, but the doctrine of the divinity of Christ arose in it before a century passed from its emergence into the existence, but the Qur'an presented a complete picture of monotheism in attributes with all its characteristics and aspects, and closed all the doors of misguidance, and it was not enough to affirm the doctrine of monotheism, not only that, but it closed all the doors of polytheism, and this is the distinguishing feature that distinguishes the Noble Qur'an from other holy books (18).

Research results

1. Those who thought that Maulana Azad called the people to the unity of religions, and those who accused him that what he presented to us from a comparative study among the different religions supported the theory of (Divine Religion) that the Mughal Emperor Jalal-Din Muhammad Akbar wanted to implement, in order to preserve the national unity of spreading his authority over all parts of unified India, they really wronged him, and it seems that they did not carefully study what Maulana Azad wrote to us on this subject, and they did not understand the goal and purpose of it, because in fact he calls man to the Islamic religion as the religion of pure monotheism and the religion of all humanity, he did not deal with the doctrine of the Islamic religion as the religion of Arabs and Muslims, but he

focused his speech on it due to its advantages that distinguish it from the other three Semiticmonotheistic religions, and due to it presented the best picture of impartiality in the divineattributes, and did not ignore this historical fact that Islam is his religion and the religion of all Muslims in India, which welcomed it since the dawn of Islam, although there is a discrepancy between Semitic and Aryan religions. This fact does not deny that the relations took place between Muslims and the people of India long before the Muslims opened Sindh, as it is mentioned that Muhammad the Prophet sent a group of his companions to one of the kings of India, who is (Raja Sarhank), and they carry with them his call to enterinto the religion of God, so he embraced Islam and became a good Muslim, and that was from the sixth year of migration. Azad was keen to prove the genius of Islamic religion tothe other religions that were and still live with it in India side by side that were in dire needof intellectual development in his view. Then he wanted to present the theory of the Qur'an, and he did not intend to present the theory of the unity of religions in his interpretation as some thought, because for the first time he raised the degrees of (divinity), (mercy) and (justice) among the attributes of God Almighty, and he contradicted the idea of the unity ofreligions as he violated Doctrinal partisanship, and he wanted to teach all peoples and nations the Qur'anic lessons of brotherhood and equality in a wonderful way. Undoubtedly,many things as being reasonable do not need to be clarified, as the sane person must understand that the matter, after proving the genius of Islam, does not need a statement thathe did not intend to call the people to the idea of (the unity of religions).

2. Those who claimed that Azad tended to believe in God's unity is sufficient for salvation, ignored the prophethood and the message. Their claim was based on the wrong conclusionfrom what Azad wrote for us, until Azad replied to them that he explains the goals of the Muhammadan prophecy and the basic message, as we see it in the interpretation of the word of Shahada: (I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah), so, how it can be imagined that he denies it, which prompted them toremorse. There were those who thought that he called for the theory of (the unity of religions), as Sheikh Abu al-Hasan Ali Hasani Nadwi said that this theory is a misguidanceand seduction. Azad wrote in response to him: "Because religion is one and its results are one, therefore it was said that the origin is to belief in Allah and good deeds". In view of this issue, Sir. Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Sayyid Jamal Al-Din Afghani believed that the belief in the Messengers was not a condition for the salvation... and I found that MaulanaObaidullah Sindhi also went in the same direction as a protest with the phrase about the Shah Wali Allah from Delhi. (19)

When the flames of dissent did not subside, Maulana Azad was finally forced to close the doors of salvation for non-Muslims. He writes in response to an objection:

"Can you be so kind to tell us about the phrase in "Interpreter of the Qur'an" in which it was stated that belief in the messengers is not obligatory for the salvation in the Qur'an? Indeed, in Surat Al-Fatihah, it was specifically made clear that distinguishing between the messengers is blasphemy, as stated in the Qur'an, meaning that denying any link in the chain of prophecy is like denying it, which exactly closes the doors of salvation,not only the faith in the messengers, but also the faith in angels and books is one of the duties of salvation, and whoever denies this fact is not on the path of salvation. (20)

Now, two types of contradictions have appeared before us in what Maulana Azad went to. If the distinction among the messengers is blasphemy, and it is God's justice to send a messenger to every nation, then it follows from that that the rest of Muslims are infidels who believed in the prophets of the family of Abraham only and did not believe in the prophecy of the messengers from Buddhism and genetics in India, it is answered that this was not mentioned in the Qur'an, but in view of the proposed principles, this answer remains unconvincing, but what is known from it is that it is not the duty of Muslims to believe in all the messengers from other peoples at all, as it is known from it that there is no necessity for the people to follow the other religions, except to believe in the Islamic religion, and after that there is no need for the theory of the unity of religions at all.

It was possible that there would arise another contradiction in his political life if hedid not turn a blind eye to that, as he took refuge for the Muslims to what happened in thebeginning of Islam of an incident, when the Prophet migrated to Medina and took there a covenant from Arabs and Jews that they were individuals of one religion, and whatever the outcome of this pact later, it was possible for Azad to make this pact a fundamental basis for the construction of national and political architecture between Muslims and Hindus inIndia.

3. Maulana Azad dealt with the issue of anthropomorphism and impartiality with great precision, to indicate the deviation of the other religions from the path of righteousness, asthe monotheism to him is a pure monotheism, and the involvement of multiple gods in theworship of one god is polytheism. He believed that the permissibility of embodying the divine attributes caused the worship of idols, polytheism, and the worship of multiple deities among the people of the other religions.
4. Azad was keen to work to bring the nations and peoples of the world closer together, and to connect them to each other since the doctrine of pure monotheism.
5. He wanted to point out that India is the cradle of the religions of nations and peoples sincethe dawn of history for the human thought, and that what emerged from the history of the religions of nations and peoples in the world is not new to the people of India. Rather, its thought and philosophy had a profound impact on the development of the religions of other nations and peoples, especially the religions of the Chinese, Greeks and Iranians influenced by

Buddhism.

6. He has been proven that India has the advantage in explaining and clarifying the religious thought represented in the doctrine of monotheism among the ancient Indians.
7. Azad mentioned in this regard that the man, in his primitive era, was not qualified to distinguish between God's essence and His attributes. Rather, this distinction between God's essence and attributes did not exist at that mentally immature stage. He mentioned three points for the advancement of religions, so that people can be guided by them in knowing the beginning and end of religions, and they are as follows:
 - A. From anthropomorphism and analogy to transcendence
 - B. From Pluralism to Monotheism
 - C. From the attributes of subjugation and majesty to the attributes of mercy and beauty
8. Before we conclude our speech on the interpretations of Abu al-Kalam Azad, we must point out that he did his best to prove that all religions and beliefs were originally one, but they have deviated, except for Islam as an eternal heavenly message, which was brought by all the messengers and prophets in different times, and to support this idea he mentioned many verses from the Qur'an that shed light on this bright truth, and from those verses it was concluded that good deeds with faith in God and the Last Day are the basis of the Islamic religion. From this standpoint, people of the other religions deserve to receive a good reward from their Lord, as we clearly see in the following verse:

{Indeed, those who believe, and those who are Jews, Christians, and Sabians. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does a righteous deed, they will have their reward at their Lord and there is no fear upon them, nor do they grieve}. (21) Likewise, we see in this verse, God Almighty says: {Yes, whoever earns an evil deed, and his sin surrounds him, those are the inmates of the Fire. They shall abide therein.} (22). and in God Almighty's saying: {And those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the companions of Paradise. They shall abide therein.} (23).

Whatever the case may be, Azad made some serious attempts to prove that Islam is the true religion of all the prophets and messengers, and that this religion is the religion of truth, and it has still existed since the descent of Adam (peace be upon him) to earth, so, no one should deny the brilliant reality of Islam and choose another religion other than this one, because Islam alone guides man to the worship of one God, while we see that the other religions call for the worship of idols. In fact, Islam was revealed by the descent of Adam (peace be upon him), as evidenced by this verse: We have revealed to you what We enjoined upon Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, that you establish the religion and do not become divided therein. (24) Likewise, from this verse: And We have revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him, and We revealed to Abraham, Ismael, Isaac, and Jacob. And the tribes, Jesus, Job, Yunus, Aaron, and Solomon, and We gave David the Psalms and messengers, whom We have narrated to you before, and messengers, whom We have not narrated to you, and God spoke to Moses directly (25).

These verses indicate that the Islamic religion was the one that was sent with all the prophets and messengers, and the Prophet Muhammad was sent to renew this religion and the Hanafi faith of Abraham and other prophets, so, we see that God Almighty addresses our Prophet and says: {Say: We believe in God and what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the Prophet We are from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we believe it.} (26).

There is no doubt that this Qur'anic verse in the imperative form requires us to believe in all the prophets and messengers who came before the mission of the Prophet Muhammad, and not to make any distinction among them or to believe in anyone to the exclusion of others. On the basis of this undeniable fact, Azad sets these verses before his eyes to confirm that the doctrine of monotheism is the spirit of Islam, and it is the one that applies to all the monotheistic religions. Ahmad Hasan al-Baqūri dealt with this subject in his article that he wrote on the religious thoughts of Abu al-Kalam Azad with a special interest, he said: "The religion of Islam, which Azad believes is a human religion that elevates the humanity above the lineages, colors and races, in which a person is born devoid of every characteristic that raises him above the others and gives him precedence over the others, freed from every shortcoming that degrades his destiny or lowers his status, so, there is nothing in the Islamic law that elevates or degrades a person, but only his work subjugates him, and this work is characterized by the attributes of good and evil.

9. Considering that the dimensions of this idea are accurate and not everyone can realize it at first sight, and therefore, we see when the idea of "unity of religions" appeared in India, many Islamic clerics raised the thick dust in front of the bright face of this idea, which is the essence of every religion, even many people could not see this truth that remained behind this thick dust of time, and on its face was the obscuration of ignorance of religious sciences and knowledge, and the lack of broad culture in the field of studying the other religions.
10. India presents the largest variation among the Indian sects in terms of religion, as all the religions of nations and peoples in the world are found in it. According to the old statistics in the life of Abu al-Kalam Azad, Hinduism alone was the religion of 290 million people of India, so the popularity of this religion was so great that this religion was inclusive and comprehensive, so that millions of people embraced it. Hinduism, due to its organized expansion and inclusive style, has become the religion of the public in India, despite the existence of differences among them in terms of race, language, traditions, environment, social values, and political interests. While the number of Muslims in India at that time was about 90 million people, who were spread throughout the Indian states in different

proportions, many of them were in the northern western border states, Punjab, Sindh and Bengal, while in the other states the number of Muslims was a minority in the face of the Hindu majority. While the number of Buddhists was about 12 million, the number of Christians about more than 6 million, the number of Sikhs more than 4 million, the number of Jains more than one million, and the number of Magi about 100 thousand.

India presents a clear picture of human progress in all its dimensions and roles from the lowest to the highest. Indeed, India can be described as a museum of different religious rituals, various sects, customs, diverse cultures, different beliefs, many languages, and multiple types of strains, each with its own social methods, but it is not a museum of dead things or Material objects, but it is a museum of a living nation, with its spiritual ways of life, each has its spiritual lifestyles, each of them developed in its own way, and from which united India (Bharat Varsh) was formed. When Azad wanted to address this topic, he could not ignore this fact that Muslims in India are a minority in the face of the majority, and then he did not ignore these main principles of God's true religion that Islam is a religion of reconciliation of hearts and intimacy of souls. He dealt with the basic common aspect, which is the aspect of beliefs among the different religions in India, in order to be able to bring the rival religious sects closer together with their different beliefs, so, he called them to the doctrine of monotheism, which is the origin of the beliefs of all religions and all heavenly messages, whether Semitic or Aryan, so he studied the belief of each of those religions that were and still are in India.

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