

The Concept of *Tawhīd* (Oneness of Allah) as Reflected in the *Risale-i Nur*

Risale-i Nur'da Yansıyan Tevhid (Allah'ın Birliđi) Kavramı

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Md. Abdullah Al MAHMUD

Abstract

During the last phase of Ottoman rule, modern-educated graduates gradually began being proud of their education and started undermining traditional religious education systems as being useless and unproductive. Some intellectuals, litterateurs, medical doctors, military trainers, and college teachers had promulgated agnostic and secular worldviews among the youth in the classrooms and public. Consequently, young Turks who graduated from the public education system became secular-minded, agnostic, and, sometimes, even heretics in their thinking, writings, and practices. Moreover, during the reign (1923-1938) of Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938), secular ideology and worldview were imported from the North (the Soviet Union) and the West (Europe) in the name of progress and modernity. The secular ideology and worldview deceived the young generation in the name of modernization, injecting doubts in their tender minds about the existence of Allah, the Prophet, the Qur'an, and life after death (*Akhirah*). Given this circumstance, *Bediüzzaman Said Nursi's* (1877-1960) (henceforth Nursi) discourses on *Tawhīd* were the endeavors to resist all the propaganda against the fundamental principles embodying the Oneness of Allah that holds profound significance within Islamic theology. Furthermore, Nursi's concept of *Tawhīd* was an antidote to godlessness both in the last phase of the Ottoman Era and in the Republican Era.

Using Nursi's arguments, this study intends to elucidate the topic of the existence of Allah theoretically based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, practically based on the living examples of life and the universe, and philosophically based on the concept of *Tawhīd* as reflected in the *Risale-i Nur* (henceforth the *Risale*). The paper also argues that Nursi's discourse on *Tawhīd* and other faith-related issues like prophethood (*Nubuwwah*) and life after death destabilizes disbelief and doubt from the mind of the *Risale* readers and strengthens firm conviction in the minds of people of Turkey in particular and the world in general. Thus, Nursi's discourse on *Tawhīd* works as a strong shield against disbelief, secular mindset, and atheistic currents in the present world. In this regard, this paper emphasizes the following issues: (1) the concept of the Oneness of God (*Tawhīd*), (2) the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as proofs of God's existence, (3) belief (*imān*) that necessitates Divine Unity (*Tawhīd*), (4) impossibility of God's non-existence, (5) creation and governance of the Universe, (6) proofs of *Tawhīd* in the *Risale* and, finally, (7) Nursi's special contribution to the discourse on *Tawhīd*. Thus, the research endeavors to explore and explicate the multifaceted dimensions of *Tawhīd* as portrayed in the corpus of the *Risale* through employing a qualitative content analysis approach. To do this, this study aims to unravel the intricate theological, philosophical, and spiritual elucidations within Nursi's writings concerning *Tawhīd*.

The methodology of this research involves a meticulous data collection procedure, commencing with identifying and selecting pertinent passages and chapters from the *Risale* that (in)directly address the concept of *Tawhīd*. Employing purposive sampling, these selections encapsulate diverse thematic dimensions, ensuring a comprehensive representation of the manifold facets of *Tawhīd* within the Nursi's thought. Thus, the methodology of this research integrates qualitative content analysis, textual interpretation, and hermeneutic inquiry. Thematic coding of the extracted passages enables the identification of recurring motifs, underlying themes, and nuanced articulations concerning *Tawhīd*. Such an analysis involves a deep exploration of linguistic nuances, historical contexts, and philosophical underpinnings embedded within the texts. Furthermore, the study contextualizes Nursi's perspectives on *Tawhīd* within established Islamic theological frameworks, acknowledging both their alignment with traditional theological discourse and their potential contributions or deviations. Comparative analyses within the *Risale* help discern diverse presentations and interpretations of *Tawhīd*, contributing to a nuanced understanding of Nursi's unique theological insights.

The findings of this research reveal a rich tapestry of insights into the concept of *Tawhīd* within the *Risale*. Nursi's elucidations transcend mere theological delineations, encompassing the implications of *Tawhīd* regarding individual spiritual development, societal harmony, and broader Islamic theological landscapes. Thus, this article contributes to a comprehensive exploration of *Tawhīd* within the *Risale*, augmenting the scholarly discourse on Islamic theology. The insights gleaned from this study serve to deepen our understanding of *Tawhīd's* significance within Islamic thought and spirituality, offering valuable perspectives of *Tawhīd* in the contemporary world.

Keywords: *Tawhīd*, Said Nursi, *Risale-i Nur*, *Imān* (belief), Secularism, Atheism, the Prophethood

Risale-i Nur'da Yansıyan Tevhid (Allah'ın Birliği) Kavramı

Öz

Osmanlı yönetiminin son döneminde, modern eğitim almış mezunlar yavaş yavaş aldıkları eğitimle gurur duymaya başlamış ve geleneksel dini eğitim sistemlerini yararsız ve verimsiz oldukları gerekçesiyle baltalamaya başlamışlardır. Bazı aydınlar, edebiyatçılar, tıp doktorları, askeri eğitimciler ve üniversite öğretmenleri, sınıflarda ve halk arasında gençler arasında agnostik ve seküler dünya görüşlerini yaymışlardır. Sonuç olarak, kamu eğitim sisteminden mezun olan genç Türkler, düşüncelerinde, yazılarında ve uygulamalarında seküler fikirli, agnostik ve hatta bazen sapkın oldular. Dahası, Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938) döneminde (1923-1938) ilerleme ve modernlik adına Kuzey'den (Sovyetler Birliği) ve Batı'dan (Avrupa) seküler ideoloji ve dünya görüşü ithal edilmiştir. Seküler ideoloji ve dünya görüşü, modernleşme adına genç nesli aldatmış ve onların körpe zihinlerine Allah'ın, Peygamberin, Kur'an'ın ve ölümden sonraki hayatın (*Ahiret*) varlığı hakkında şüpheler enjekte etmiştir. Bu durum karşısında, Bediüzzaman Said Nursi'nin (1877-1960) (bundan böyle Nursi olarak anılacaktır) tevhid hakkındaki söylemleri, İslam teolojisinde derin bir öneme sahip olan Allah'ın Birliğini somutlaştıran temel ilkelere karşı yapılan tüm propagandalara direnme çabasıdır. Dahası, Nursi'nin tevhid kavramı hem Osmanlı'nın son döneminde hem de Cumhuriyet döneminde dinsizliğe karşı bir panzehir olmuştur.

Bu çalışma, Nursi'nin argümanlarını kullanarak, Allah'ın varlığı konusunu teorik olarak Kur'an ve Sünnet'e, pratik olarak hayatın ve evrenin canlı örneklerine ve felsefi olarak *Risale-i Nur*'da yansıtıldığı şekliyle Tevhid kavramına dayanarak aydınlatmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu makale ayrıca, Nursi'nin tevhid ve nübüvvet ve ölümden sonraki hayat gibi imanla ilgili diğer konulardaki söyleminin, *Risale* okuyucularının zihnindeki inançsızlık ve şüpheyi istikrarsızlaştırdığını ve özelde Türkiye ve genelde dünya insanların zihnindeki kesin inancı güçlendirdiğini savunmaktadır. Dolayısıyla Nursi'nin tevhid söylemi, günümüz dünyasındaki inançsızlığa, seküler zihniyete ve ateist akımlara karşı güçlü bir kalkan işlevi görmektedir. Bu bağlamda, bu makale aşağıdaki hususları vurgulamaktadır: (1) Allah'ın Birliği (Tevhîd) kavramı, (2) Allah'ın varlığının delilleri olarak Kur'an ve Peygamber Muhammed (s.a.v.), (3) İlahi Birliği (Tevhîd) gerektiren inanç (imân), (4) Allah'ın yokluğunun imkânsızlığı, (5) Evrenin yaratılışı ve idaresi, (6) *Risale*'de tevhidin delilleri ve son olarak (7) Nursi'nin tevhid söylemine özel katkısı. Dolayısıyla araştırma, nitel bir içerik analizi yaklaşımı kullanarak *Risale* külliyatında tasvir edildiği şekliyle tevhidin çok yönlü boyutlarını keşfetmeye ve açıklamaya çalışmaktadır. Bunu yapmak için, bu çalışma Nursi'nin tevhide ilişkin yazılarındaki karmaşık teolojik, felsefi ve manevi açıklamaları ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu araştırmanın metodolojisi, *Risale*'den tevhid kavramını (doğrudan) ele alan ilgili pasaj ve bölümlerin tespit edilip seçilmesiyle başlayan titiz bir veri toplama prosedürünü içermektedir. Amaçlı örneklem kullanılarak yapılan bu seçimler, Nursi'nin düşüncesinde tevhidin çok yönlü yönlerinin kapsamlı bir temsilini sağlayarak çeşitli tematik boyutları kapsamaktadır. Dolayısıyla, bu araştırmanın metodolojisi nitel içerik analizi, metinsel yorumlama ve hermeneutik sorgulamayı bütünleştirmektedir. Çıkarılan pasajların tematik kodlaması, tekrar eden motiflerin, alta yatan temaların ve tevhide ilişkin nüanslı ifadelerin tanımlanmasını sağlar. Bu tür bir analiz, metinlerde yer alan dilsel nüansların, tarihsel bağlamların ve felsefi temellerin derinlemesine araştırılmasını içermektedir. Ayrıca çalışma, Nursi'nin tevhide ilişkin bakış açılarını, hem geleneksel kelimelerle söylemlerini hem de potansiyel katkılarını veya sapmalarını kabul ederek, yerleşik İslami kelimeler çerçeveleri içinde bağlamsallaştırmaktadır. *Risale* içindeki karşılaştırmalı analizler, tevhidin farklı sunumlarını ve yorumlarını ayırt etmeye yardımcı olarak Nursi'nin eşsiz teolojik anlayışlarının incelikli bir şekilde anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunur.

Bu araştırmanın bulguları, *Risale*'deki tevhid kavramına ilişkin zengin bir içgörü dokusunu ortaya koymaktadır. Nursi'nin açıklamaları, tevhidin bireysel manevi gelişim, toplumsal uyum ve daha geniş İslami teolojik manzaralarla ilgili çıkarımlarını kapsayarak salt teolojik tanımlamaların ötesine geçmektedir. Dolayısıyla bu makale, *Risale*'de tevhidin kapsamlı bir şekilde incelenmesine katkıda bulunarak İslam kelamına dair bilimsel söylemi zenginleştirmektedir. Bu çalışmadan elde edilen içgörüler, Tevhîd'in İslam düşüncesi ve maneviyatı içindeki önemine dair anlayışımızı derinleştirmeye hizmet etmekte ve çağdaş dünyada Tevhîd'e dair değerli perspektifler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tevhîd, Said Nursi, Risale-i Nur, İmân, Sekülerizm, Ateizm, Nübüvvet

Introduction

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's (henceforth Nursi) contemporary time (1877-1960) was fraught with civil wars, politico-legal and social-transitional factors, and the growing threat from occupying forces to the declining Caliphate. Besides, massive anti-religious propaganda was made

by the ruling powers of the surrounding countries that attacked the Islamic tradition and practices.¹ Nursi faced various struggles, including his joining military activities and undergoing a series of imprisonments and exiles. While he welcomed these challenges for the sake of the Caliphate and the *ummah* at large, Nursi understood that an effective way of liberating Muslims from such decadence is to give them proper education, revive their religious knowledge, and enrich them with spiritual concerns.

Given this objective, Nursi started writing and ultimately produced the *Risale*. Nursi's contribution to humanity by saving *imān* and preserving it as the "worldview"² was admired in Turkey and all around the globe. Thus, his work *Risale* has got much attention from truth-seekers all around the world. *Tawhīd* and faith-related issues with scientific and philosophical explanations are more important for a modern technology-oriented youth in the present globalized world. All questions related to modern science and technology are posed to negate the Creator of the universe and these questions are the foundation for disbelief. These questions are, as Nursi explained: "Causes create this', 'It forms itself; it comes into existence and later ceases to exist' and 'It is natural; Nature necessitates and creates it'".³ The answers to these questions are available in the *Risale* to satisfy modern man's queries. Nursi's position as only a *dā'ī* (a Muslim preacher) and his knowingly avoiding politics⁴ have drawn more attention from his contemporaries up to the present day. His call for the unity of Allah (*Tawhīd*) and the unity of believers are also extremely significant in the present world. Philip K. Hitti authenticates it, "In this uncompromising monotheism, with its simple, enthusiastic faith in the supreme rule of a

¹ Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Staff of Moses*, trans. Students of the Risale-i Nur (Istanbul: Sözlere Publications A. Ş., 2011), 155; Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, trans. Şükran Vahide (Istanbul: Sözlere Neşriyat A. Ş., 2011), 233, 381, and 446.

² The foundation of the Islamic worldview is on *Tawhīd* (the Oneness of Allah), Risalah (prophethood of Muhammad PBUH), and the Qur'an (as the absolute guide) to get najat (salvation) in the Akhirah (life after death). Sarjuni thus elaborately defines that: "Islam as a worldview is closely related to all human activities as social, intellectual, and religious beings," see Sarjuni Sarjuni, "Islamic Worldview Dan Lahirnya Tradisi Ilmiah Di Institusi Pendidikan Islam", *TA'DIBUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 2/2 (November 15, 2019): 11. In addition, Alparslan Acikgenc defines worldview "as a word, refers to the way one views the world, we can say that if a life structure is able to reflect the person's conception of the universe, such as the meaning of life, the origin of existence, human destiny and so on, it can be termed 'worldview' no matter at what stage of life it emerges as such," see Alparslan Acikgenc, *Scientific Thought and Its Burdens an Eassy in the History and Philosophy of Science* (Istanbul, Turkey: Fatih University Publications, 2000), 66. Furthermore, Abdullah and Junaid define Islamic worldview as "a comprehensive conception of the universe and man's relation to it from the Islamic perspective, thereby serving as a basis for one's philosophy or outlook of life. The vision of reality and truth that appears before our mind's eye revealing what existence is all about; for it is the world of existence in its totality that Islam is projecting," see Muhammad Abdullah - Muhammad Junaid Nadvi, "Understanding the Principles of Islamic World-View", *The Dialogue* VI (6)/3 (September 2011): 271. Regarding the principles of the worldview, Thameem Ushama states that "the worldview of Islam comprises three fundamental principles or doctrines. First, belief in God, who is unique, monotheistic, eternal, transcendent, All-powerful, All-seeing, All-hearing and All-knowing. He is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. He is not only the creator of the universe worthy of being worshipped, obeyed and served but the sustainer and the master of the universe. Neither He begets, nor He is begotten. He is gender-free, and no one is comparable or likened unto Him. He does not incarnate; neither assumes human nor animal form. He is not affected by anthropomorphism. He has His Attributes, and His devotees call Him by His beautiful names." See Thameem Ushama, "The Worldview of Islam: Reflections and Clarifications," University website, *International Islamic University Malaysia* (blog), November 23, 2021.

³ Nursi, *The Staff of Moses*, 155.

⁴ Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Words On the Nature and Purposes on Man, Life and All Things*, trans. Şükran Vahide (Istanbul, Turkey: Sözlere Neşriyat Tic. ve San. A.Ş., 2013), 498; Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Letters-1928-1932*, trans. Şükran Vahide - others (Istanbul, Turkey: Sözlere Neşriyat A. Ş., 2014), 70, 317; Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Rays Collection*, trans. Şükran Vahide (Istanbul, Turkey: Sözlere Neşriyat A. Ş., 2013), 394; and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, trans. Şükran Vahide (Delhi, India: Barla Publications, 2010), 46.

transcendental being, lies the chief strength of Islam. Its adherents enjoy a consciousness of contentment and resignation unknown among followers of most creeds. Suicide is rare in Muslim lands”.⁵

Allah has created human beings and Jinn to worship Him alone. For this, their aim and duties should be to know Allah and believe in Him. These are expected attitudes of Jinn and human beings. Without knowing and believing Allah, nobody can get the experience of happiness, lights, and bounties of Allah in this world and hereafter.⁶ On the other hand, if anybody does not know Allah and believes in Him, he will not get spiritual experience and will materially suffer from misery, pain, and fears here and hereafter.

This paper emphasizes the contribution of Nursi towards eradicating disbelief, atheism, agnosticism, and communism from society. He articulated *Tawhīd-related* argumentation, logic, proofs, and general discussion from the universe to scripture and tried to inscribe firmly it in the minds of people at first, and then changed their worldview as per *Tawhīd*. Although some significant points regarding *Tawhīd* and the *Risale* remain untouched due to space limitations, this paper will answer the following questions:

1. What is the discourse of *Tawhīd* in the *Risale*?
2. What are the contributions of Nursi towards the discourse of *Tawhīd*?
3. What are the proofs of *Tawhīd* in the *Risale*?

1. Research Methodology

The paper is qualitative research in nature and is based on a content analysis method. This analysis covers some books of the *Risale-i Nur* of Said Nursi, including *The Words (1926-1930)*, *The Flashes (1932-1936)*, *The Letters (1929-1934)*, *The Rays (1921)*, *Rational Arguments: A Prescription for the Ulema, the Damascus Sermon (1911)*, and *The Staff of Moses*. Hence, these books are the primary data source for this paper. The English version of the *Risale-i Nur* is used in this study, which has been translated by Şukran Vahide, and published by the *Sözler* Publication, Istanbul, Turkey.

2. Analysis and Findings

2.1. Nursi's Contribution to the Discourse on *Tawhīd*

Tawhīd is a major theme of the *Risale* and its discussion covers the major portion of the *Risale*. Nursi argues for the existence of Allah “who is the ‘Single One of Unity’ (*Dhāt al Wahīd al-Ahād*)”.⁷ Nursi was able to show that “the real relationship among the Creator, the universe, and human beings could only be possible through *Tawhīd* and the beauty and perfection of God could be manifested through it”.⁸ A baby suckling his mother is an expression of compassion (*rahmah*) and likewise, Allah providing food to each of the countless species days and night

⁵ Philip Khuri Hitti, *History of the Arabs: From the Earliest Times to the Present* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 129.

⁶ Nursi, *The Words On the Nature and Purposes on Man, Life and All Things*, 670; Nursi, *The Letters-1928-1932*, 265; and Nursi, *The Staff of Moses*, 222.

⁷ Nursi, *The Words*, 22, 116–117, 209, 305, 312, 392; Nursi, *The Staff of Moses*, 117, 129, 134–135, 147; Nursi, *The Rays Collection*, 14, 24, 32, 34, 38, 48; Nursi, *The Letters-1928-1932*, 35, 109, 272–275, 279, 290; and Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 137, 235, 237–238.

⁸ Nursi, *The Rays Collection*, 15–17, 84.

represents the unparalleled compassion and beauty (*jamāl*) of God.⁹

For Nursi, without the existence of *Tawhīd*, the universe cannot be perfect.¹⁰ The rationale of the universe and the importance of existence could be established only when these would be attached to the One Sole Creator. If the Oneness of God is rejected, and association is made with God, the world would be transformed into a chaotic place.¹¹ Human spiritual perfection also depends on pure *Tawhīd*, as Nursi emphasizes, “Among all creatures, a man may attain to the highest perfections, and become the most valuable fruit of the universe, the most perfect and refined creature, the most fortunate and happy of animate beings, and the addressee and friend of the world's Creator. Indeed, all man's perfections and his lofty aims are tied to the affirmation of Divine Unity and find existence through its meaning”.¹² According to Nursi, without the oneness of God, human beings would be the worst sufferer among all other creatures. There should be only one Supreme Being who can satisfy a human's desires out of his volumes of desires and in despondent situations, who can give him consolation and hope to overcome.¹³

2.1.1. Kinds of *Tawhīd*

According to Nursi, “Divine unity (*Tawhīd*) is of two kinds”.¹⁴ ‘The first one is “the superficial and common affirmation of Divine unity”¹⁵ (*Tawhīd al-‘ammi*) which says, “Almighty God is One, He has no partner or like. This universe is His”.¹⁶ The second one is “the true affirmation of Divine Unity (*Tawhīd al-haqiqi*)” which, through seeing on everything the stamp of His power, the seal of His dominicality, and the inscriptions of His pen, is to open a window directly onto His light from everything and to confirm and believe with almost the certainty of seeing it that everything emerges from the hand of His power and that in no way has He any partner or assistant in His Godhead or His dominicality or His sovereignty, and thus to attain to a sort of perpetual awareness of the Divine presence. In this Word, we shall mention rays demonstrating this pure and elevated true affirmation of Divine unity”.¹⁷

2.1.2. Oneness of God (*Tawhīd*)

There is a monotheistic conception of God in many world religions. But the concept of *Tawhīd* (Oneness of Allah) is so far distinctive because of its strict monotheistic doctrine. Abu Ameenah Bilaal Philips (1946-) states, “when the term *Tawhīd* is used about Allah (i.e. *Tawhīdullāh*), it means realizing and maintaining of Allah's unity in all of man's actions which directly or indirectly relate to Him. It is the belief that Allah is One, without a partner in His dominion (*Rubūbiyah*), One without similitude in His essence and attributes (*Asmā’ was-Sifāt*), and One without rival in His divinity and worship (*Ulūhiyah/ ‘Ibādah*)”.¹⁸ Sachiko Murata and

⁹ Ibid., 86–87.

¹⁰ Ibid., 19, 20, 22–23.

¹¹ Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *Rational Arguments: A Prescription for the Ulema*, trans. Şükran Vahide (Istanbul, Turkey: Sozler Nesriyat Tic. ve San. A. Ş., 2017), 133.

¹² Nursi, *The Rays Collection*, 23.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Nursi, *The Words On the Nature and Purposes on Man, Life and All Things*, 300.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Abu Ameenah Bilaal Philips, *The Fundamentals of Tawhīd: Islamic Monotheism = Şarh Mabādi’ at-Tawhīd* (Riyadh: International Islamic Publ. House, 2006), 17.

William C. Chittick holds, “The word ‘*Tawhīd*’ literally means ‘One’, ‘Oneness’, and ‘unification’. When this term is used for God, it means to proclaim and affirm the Oneness of God”.¹⁹ According to Ismail Raji al-Faruqi (1921-1986),

“*Al Tawhīd* means the ontological separation of the godhead from the whole realm of nature. Everything that is in or of creation is a creature, non-transcendent, subject to the laws of space and time. Nothing of it can be God or godly in any sense, especially the ontological which *al-Tawhīd*, as the essence of monotheism, denies. God is the totally-other than-creation, totally-other-than-nature, and hence, transcendent. He is the only transcendent being”.²⁰

So, it is the central theme and basic tenet of Islam and the opposite of *shirk*. Literally, *shirk* refers to taking an associate or associates besides God. In Islamic theology, it means believing and worshipping anyone other than God as His partner, same Divine attributes, and the same lordship.²¹ It should be pointed out here that *Shirk* is strictly prohibited in Islam²² and Muslims take this issue seriously to reinforce the importance of saving other Muslims from this distorted monotheism. However, the theological God or Allah is unseen and can in no way be seen by the naked eye in this world. Sometimes people may be confused through their personal experiences, from their company, curriculums, or different electronics and print media. When the Kemalist regime abolished religious education including the teaching and learning of the Qur’an and religion, students complained to their parents and their guardians about their atheist teachers and the curriculum. But there were no solutions. Rather, the state-imposed new laws suppressed religious sentiments and executed laws concerning these issues very strictly. Moreover, the government created panic about religious education and its teaching and learning and even secularized the curriculum at school levels.

Given the situation, Nursi understood the importance of writing about the existence of Allah to make people acknowledge Allah and adopt the *Tawhīdī* worldview in all affairs of their lives. For this, he expounded traditional theological proofs of Allah along with the most accepted philosophical and scientific proofs of the existence of Allah. Through his *Tawhīdī* discourse in the *Risale*, he tried to reinstall faith in Allah in the minds of people and make their *imān* the shield against disbelief, atheism, irreligion, and secularism.

2.1.3. Belief (*imān*) Necessitates Divine Unity (*Tawhīd*)

Nursi elucidates the benefits of belief and its outcome in the spiritual life and betterment in this world and the next. There were inter-dependent relationships among the four stages of the belief system where Nursi set up a standard by which anyone can easily measure his position in the spiritual life. Anyone may repair his weakness in the above stages and be able to achieve a supreme level of spirituality. For example, for anyone who has ‘verified belief’ (*tahqiqi imān*), this belief will lead to making reliance on God which is the supreme stage of belief. If not, it could be proved that his belief was ‘imitating belief’ (*taqlidi imān*) and this belief could be a means of

¹⁹ Sachiko Murata - William C. Chittick, *The Vision of Islam* (St. Paul, Minnesota, New York, USA: Paragon House, 1994), 43.

²⁰ Isma’il R. Al-Faruqi, *Al Tawhīd: Its Implications for Thought and Life* (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1992), 199.

²¹ Murata - Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, 49-52.

²² *Shirk* is considered a grievous sin in Islam that cannot be forgiven. It is given importance in the Qur’an and the word *shirk* repeated there for 75 times. For details, see Al-Qur’an, Sūrat al-Nisā’ 4/116, Sūrat al-An’ām 6/163.

‘salvation’ (*najāt*) in the afterlife. For him,

“Belief (*imān*) necessitates affirmation of the ‘Divine Unity’ (*Tawhīd*), an affirmation of ‘Divine Unity’ necessitates submission to God (*taslim*), submission to God necessitates reliance on God (*tawakkul*), and reliance on God necessarily leads to happiness in this world and the next. It should not be misunderstood that reliance on God is to reject causes altogether; it is rather to know that causes are a veil to the hand of power and have recourse to them. It is to seek the effects only from Almighty God, to recognize that the results are from Him alone, and to be thankful to Him”.²³

2.2. Evidences of *Tawhīd* in the *Risale*

Nursi did not choose traditional philosophical arguments to prove God’s unity; rather, he preferred to provide evidence from the attributes of Allah and the natural phenomena which are related to the universe. For him,

“The *Risale-i Nur* is not only repairing some minor damage or some small house; it is repairing a vast (vast) damage and the all-embracing citadel which contains Islam, the stones of which are the size of mountains. And it is not striving to reform only a private heart and an individual conscience; it is striving to cure with the medicines of the Qur’an and belief and the Qur’an’s miraculousness the collective heart and generally-held ideas, which have been breached in awesome fashion by the tools of corruption prepared and stored up over a thousand years, and the general conscience, which is facing corruption through the destruction of the foundations, currents, and marks of Islam which are the refuge of all and particularly the mass of believers”.²⁴

As per Sūrah al-Anbiyā’ (Q. 21:22), Nursi put forward an argument about the universal system running very harmoniously: “Everywhere in the universe there exist the “most perfect order”, “beautiful harmony”, and “wonderful balance”.²⁵ “If there were more than one God, there would be something wrong in the harmonious system”.²⁶ This harmonious system was not fixed with the global system; rather, there is always someone who is very skilled and handles the universe skilfully.²⁷ Likewise, outside the planet, the stars, galaxies, and cosmic objects are also in order with one another; without this, the whole system might collapse.²⁸

If everything is in order and harmony, why is there evil, suffering, and injustice exist in the world? Nursi responded to this question very intelligently as he said, “Suffering, evil, and injustice are not the routine functions in the universe. These happened occasionally in the universe and are named ‘*adāt Allah*’ (habits of God). These laws help the universe be in order and harmony and there are many benefits behind them. For bestowing all the benefits of humanity, God allows the occasional but limited evil, suffering, and injustice to occur. After the calamities and suffering, if the sufferer could take lessons from it, immediately God would provide His forgiveness, mercy, blessing, and help”.²⁹ According to Nursi, suffering, evil, and injustice are not created intentionally to harm human beings; rather, these are to maintain universal order, harmony, and lessons out of it. He gave an example of rain that sometimes may create a flood, overflowing and destroying the earth, but without rain, life could not survive and work smoothly. So, to avoid rain-related

²³ Nursi, *The Words On the Nature and Purposes on Man, Life and All Things*, 422–423; Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 421.

²⁴ Nursi, *The Rays Collection*, 200.

²⁵ Ibid., 54.

²⁶ Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 587.

²⁷ Nursi, *The Rays Collection*, 54.

²⁸ Ibid., 55.

²⁹ Ibid., 57.

destruction and disasters, no one should ask to stop the rain.³⁰

According to Nursi, unity and a single command are easier while plural and multiplicities were difficult. He gave an example of a group of soldiers. Suppose there are one hundred armies and everyone is following different commanding officers. So, it is obvious that there will be differences in practices. For a unified and same type of drill, they need a command from a single commander. Therefore, everywhere in the universe, you will find unity, harmony, and discipline.³¹ It proves that there should be a single commanding power who commands and handles everything with a single hand.

Nursi's pieces of evidence for the unity of God encompass all aspects of the topic. It covers from A-Z of the discussion on *Tawhīd*. All of his arguments proved that everything from an atom to the biggest object of the universe, even the creation of the universe with its continuous expanding mode must be handled by a single all-powerful supreme one and that is God. Through Nursi's discourse, a pure and strict monotheistic philosophy was perfectly established in the *Risale*.

2.2.1. The Creation and Governance of the Universe

Nursi's discourse on *Tawhīd* and its different aspects as reflected in the *Risale* prove the Supremacy of God and His dominicality. Nursi argued, the creatures depend on God's will and power as He is the ultimate power. The human mind had many questions, and there were polytheistic ideas among many religions and gods that had different jobs and responsibilities. But in Islam, God is monotheistic, and nobody stands equal to Him. How wonderfully does He handle all activities of the World continuously?³² Regarding this issue, the human mind cannot comprehend God and His activities. So, some confused minds may reject God as they do not understand God and His nature.³³ Besides, human minds were confused about the true appearance and power of God due to their insufficient knowledge and experience on the nature of God.³⁴

Nursi cited the Qur'anic verses to demonstrate God's power and majesty.³⁵ Allah says, "The creation of you all and the resurrection of you all are only as (the creation and resurrection of) a single person. Verily, Allah is All-Hearer, All-Seer".³⁶ In another verse, Allah says, "Verily, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, "Be!" and it is! So Glorified is He and Exalted above all that they associate with Him, and in Whose Hands is the dominion of all things, and to Him, you shall be returned".³⁷ In another verse, Allah says, "The advent of the Last Hour will be like the twinkling of an eye, or closer still".³⁸

Besides the Qur'anic proofs, Nursi gave some analogies between the Supreme Authority and His dominance over His creation and illustrated how everything is beautifully accomplished. For example, he emphasized, "if a person places a candle in the middle of a circle and other people

³⁰ Ibid., 56.

³¹ Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 313.

³² Nursi, *The Words On the Nature and Purposes on Man, Life and All Things*, 828.

³³ Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 158.

³⁴ Nursi, *The Words On the Nature and Purposes on Man, Life and All Things*, 271.

³⁵ Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 312.

³⁶ Q. *Luqmān* 31: 28.

³⁷ Q. *Yā Sīn* 36: 82-83.

³⁸ Q. *al-Nahl* 16: 17.

have mirrors, the light of the candle will reflect on all the people because it is in the centre of the circle”.³⁹ Another example is to think of a commander, as he said, “A commander can march his soldiers and the entire army with the same, single command and it will work nicely”.⁴⁰ Nursi answered the question of God’s absolute and supreme power and the sole authority behind the whole creation. It would be helpful to understand Islamic theology’s stance on the concept of *Tawhīd*.

2.2.2. The Qur’an as a Proof of Allah’s Existence

While proving God’s existence, Nursi claims that “the Qur’an is the proofs of God’s existence”.⁴¹ Behind this argument, he used evidences from the revealed testimonies. Besides this, he extracted observations and examples from the universe as he highlighted, “the relationship between the universe and the revelation and verification of the existence of God”.⁴²

Nursi collected related verses from the Qur’an in his discourse to establish the existence of God. Through the Qur’anic verses, he articulated the existence of God. Winds and clouds are completely governed by ‘God’s governance’ (*rububiyah*). He quotes,

“Verily! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, and the ships which sail through the sea with that which is of use to mankind, and the water (rain) which Allah sends down from the sky and makes the earth alive therewith after its death, and the moving (living) creatures of all kinds that He has scattered therein, and in the veering of winds and clouds which are held between the sky and the earth, are indeed *Ayat* (proofs, pieces of evidence, signs, etc.) for people of understanding”.⁴³

Rain is one of the signs of the presence of Allah to the earth and by it He revives the dried earth like death to life. Nursi quotes, “And He is Who sends down the rain after they have despaired, and spreads abroad His Mercy. And He is the *Wali* (Helper, Supporter, Protector, etc.), Worthy of all Praise”.⁴⁴ Likewise, Nursi quotes from the Qur’an, “Look then at the effects (results) of Allah’s Mercy, how He revives the earth after its death. Verily! That (Allah) Who revived the earth after its death shall indeed raise the dead (on the Day of Resurrection), and He is can do all things”.⁴⁵ Nursi elaborates, “Just as the page of spring makes an exegesis of this verse, this verse also miraculously expresses the meanings of the page of spring”.⁴⁶ Nursi establishes the revelation and universe as interdependent sources to know God and to explain one another. All other related verses also prove the existence of God who always takes care of humanity by allotting them every requirement like wind, rain, and everyday sustenance for the living creatures.

In the *Risale*, Nursi accordingly analyzed the content of the Qur’anic verses that authenticate that the Qur’an cannot be the work of a human being; rather, it must be from a superior highly intellectual being, that is God. For Nursi, the literary composition of the Qur’an, the construction of words, rich sound, consistency of subject matter, Qur’anic future predictions and its scientific indications were impossible to have been composed by not only one person, but

³⁹ Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 312.

⁴⁰ Nursi, *The Rays Collection*, 139.

⁴¹ Nursi, *The Letters-1928-1932*, 436; and Nursi, *The Staff of Moses*, 59.

⁴² Nursi, *The Rays Collection*, 200.

⁴³ Q. *al-Baqara* 2: 164.

⁴⁴ Q. *al-Shūrā* 42: 28.

⁴⁵ Q. *al-Rūm* 30: 50.

⁴⁶ Nursi, *The Rays Collection*, 154.

the whole humanity together. The unique composition of the Qur'an is self-testifying of a declaration that it is only from God and it is none other than God's words.⁴⁷ Nursi illustrated all the arguments with sufficient examples and proofs. Through this effort, Nursi expounded proofs for the existence of God and articulated theology through Qur'anic explanation and proved the basic creed of Islam.

2.2.3. Muhammad (PBUH) as the Proof of God's Existence

In his discourse to prove God's existence, Nursi claims that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the proof of God's existence.⁴⁸ In the 19th, 22nd, and 33rd *Words* and 19th *Letter*, Nursi proved the legitimacy of Muhammad's (PBUH) declaration to be a true messenger of Allah. He highlighted the character of the Prophet (PBUH) as the most truthful (*al-Amin*) and trustworthy (*al-Sadiq*) among all the people in history.⁴⁹ So, there was an argument posed by Nursi that "if he never lied about insignificant things, why would he lie about the significant claim to receive revelation from God;"⁵⁰ as even his arch enemies testified him as '*al-Amin*' and '*al-Sadiq*' during his lifetime in Makkah.⁵¹ He, in an academic sense, did not know alphabets and yet he broadcasted a rich and revealed book (*al-Qur'an*) that was not possible for any human being to compose in history. Accordingly, in the 19th *Letter*, Nursi compiled about 300 miracles of the Prophet (PBUH) from previous scriptures, predictions about his coming, authentic hadiths and his future predictions.⁵²

With all these proofs and pieces of evidence, Nursi highlighted that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is one of the indisputable and legitimate messengers of Allah and the Qur'an is not any human's composition undoubtedly. Rather, it is a revealed Book from the Almighty through the most reliable and genuine medium, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Therefore, the Qur'an itself is a miracle of the Words of God and stands strong as true and authentic guidance for humanity in terms of the existence of God and the oneness of God. Likewise, it was proven that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had been accepted even by his enemies as a trustworthy personality amongst them, and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) professed that there always exists only One Single God and he had spoken to that God. By proving this argument, Nursi established three important tenets of Islam: the 'existence of Allah', belief in the revealed texts, and the prophets of God. Most of the Turkish Muslims in particular and all Muslims in general, were influenced by these arguments and even the modern educated '*ulema*', preachers, and writers frequently cited them in their talks and works.

2.3. Impossibility of God's Non-existence

Nursi firmly established his argument of 'necessary existence' regarding the existence of God. Nursi articulates, "God's is the highest similitude, the Glorious Maker of the universe is Necessarily Existent. That is, His existence is essential, it is pre-eternal, it is post-eternal, its non-existence is impossible, its cessation is impossible; it is the most firmly rooted, the most sound, the strongest, and the most perfect of the levels of existence. Concerning His existence, the other

⁴⁷ Nursi, *The Words On the Nature and Purposes on Man, Life and All Things*, 488–523.

⁴⁸ Nursi, *The Letters-1928-1932*, 436; Nursi, *The Staff of Moses*, 59.

⁴⁹ Nursi, *The Words On the Nature and Purposes on Man, Life and All Things*, 321.

⁵⁰ Nursi, *The Letters-1928-1932*, 131.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 129–308.

levels of existence are like extremely pale shadows”.⁵³ Nursi’s clarification on ‘necessary existence’ (*wujūb al-wujūd*) is supporting not only the existence of God but also an argument that “God’s non-existence is impossible, and His creation is the best and only explanation for His existence”.⁵⁴

2.4. All Creations Need an Explanation

The arguments are logically valid. Nursi was giving an analogy of a pharmacy to certify the existence of God. For example, there is a pharmacy whose shelves are filled with different types of medicines. Each medicine indeed has specific purposes and is manufactured with exact ingredients in very accurate amounts according to a systematic procedure. If the specific formula is not followed, the medicine which was prepared to cure human body would be turned into poison and, accordingly, would harm human body rather than cure it. Likewise, it is impossible and illogical to claim that a ‘living organism or being’ is created of “multiple parts and many different materials”. So only living beings can be the creation of “an infinite wisdom and all-pervading knowledge”.⁵⁵

For Nursi, even a fly cannot be created by a non-professional agency. If it is accepted that the causes created the fly with all its balanced compositions, that is not possible for the cause to create it. This is an impossible fact.⁵⁶ As Nursi confirms, there must be an Omniscient, Omnipotent and All-Powerful God who creates even a small fly with well-balance. If these were not the attributes of a perfect God, He could not create anything scientifically. Nursi’s measure is exceptional in his finding that Allah is a prerequisite for the balance of creation. Accordingly, His existence is mandatory, and His non-existence is impossible.

2.5. ‘Wahdat Al-Wujūd’ (The Unity of Existence) and ‘Wahdat Al-Shuhūd’ (The Unity of Witnessing)

The concept of ‘*wahdat al-wujūd*’ (unity of existence) was introduced by Muhyiddin Ibn al-‘Arabī’ (1162-1240) to a mystical theology. It describes the human understanding of God and such an understanding develops a relationship to God. This concept is misunderstood and criticized by both his supporters and opponents. Although Ibn ‘Arabi’ did not use the term, this concept was extensively represented by his stepson and student Sadr al-Din Muhammad ibn Ishaq al-Konevi (1207-1274).⁵⁷ Ibn ‘Arabi’s term *wujūd* is an Arabic term translated in English as ‘finding’⁵⁸ for him; “*wujūd* means God is the only one who truly finds and is found”.⁵⁹ Thus, when *wujūd* is used for God, it means Being and for others it means existence.⁶⁰

⁵³ Ibid., 292.

⁵⁴ Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 232–248.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 293–294.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 294–295.

⁵⁷ Alparslan Acikgenc, “The Konya School of Philosophy as a Historical Framework of Ottoman Thought”, *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC)* 17/1 (2014): 8, 10–11; Colin Turner, *The Qur’an Revealed: A Critical Analysis of Said Nursi’s Epistles of Light*, ed. Dale Eickelman (Berlin: Gerlach, 2013), 72.

⁵⁸ William C. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Cosmology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), xix.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ William C. Chittick, *Ibn Arabi: Heir to the Prophets* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 17.

2.5.1. Nursi on Ibn Al-‘Arabi

Nursi recognizes that the *wujūdi* school bears an important truth about the highest position of a man: “If a person spiritually rises with the strength of *imān* (belief) and attains a high level of sainthood (closeness to God) by exudation of certainty of feeling (*haqq al-yaqīn*), the highest form of belief, then existence other than God appears as a shadow and imaginary relative to the powerful experience of God’s Existence (*wujūd*)”.⁶¹

Nursi’s comment is on al-‘Arabi’s methods, his position among the *ulema*, and his discourses,

“Hadhrat Muhyiddin thought of it only from the point of view of its essential nature. The way of the Unity of Existence considers the existence of things to be imagination. Together with his wondrous illuminations and observations, since he had chosen an important and independent way, he was compelled to apply certain Qur’anic verses to his way and observations, artificially and with forced interpretations, thus marring the clarity of the verses. In others of his treatises, he expounds on the straight highway of the Qur’an and of the Sunnis. That holy one holds a position all his own, and he is among those who are acceptable. But he exceeded the limits in his unbalanced illuminations, and in many matters opposed the majority of the learned authorities”.⁶²

2.5.1.1. Nursi’s Critique of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*

Nursi looks at Ibn ‘Arabi’s concept critically. He articulates his comprehension of both ‘*waḥdat al-wujūd*’ and ‘*waḥdat al-shuhūd*’ in his *Risale* very clearly.⁶³ Nursi argues that “some of Ibn ‘Arabi’s writings are misunderstood because it has been taken literally. But some of the writings of Ibn ‘Arabi are confusing and deviation from some clear statements of the Qur’an and hadiths”.⁶⁴

Nursi continues,

“Hadhrat Muhyiddin would not deceive, but he could be deceived. spiritual pole, a unique one of ages, it is as though his particular way was very short and restricted to Sadruddin al-Qunawi, and that his works are only rarely benefited from by those on the straight path. Some of the authoritative scholars does (do) not show any inclination to study those valuable works, and some of them even prevent it”.⁶⁵

Nursi criticizes *waḥdat al-wujūd* from two points of view. Firstly, “*waḥdat al-wujūd* is associated with the idea that the universe do (does) not have real existence; rather, it is an illusion”.⁶⁶ But it is the fact that God is the Creator of the universe and He exists in reality. Thus, Haci Tanis suggests that “Nursi extended his criticism to Ibn Al-‘Arabī and particularly the idea of *waḥdat al-wujūd* which implied, for Nursi, that the material world did not exist. For Nursi, such an idea distracted the minds of the believers from the realities of this world and caused them not to take the affairs of the world seriously”.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Nursi, *The Letters-1928-1932*, 513.

⁶² Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 59–60.

⁶³ Nursi, *The Letters-1928-1932*, 513.

⁶⁴ Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 62.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 60.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 59–62.

⁶⁷ Haci Tanis, *The Sufi Influence in Said Nursi’s Life and Thought* (United States of America: The Temple University, 2016), 95.

Nursi continues, “since God transcends space and time, His association with the universe is a creator–creation relationship. Claiming ‘everything is Him’ is wrong and the more correct statement should be ‘everything is from Him’”.⁶⁸

Secondly, *Waḥdat al-wujūd* gives priority to “a few names of God, such as *Mawjūd* (Existent), *Waḥid* (One) and *Aḥad* (Unique) over other names of God and intends all other names are unreal or dependent (*itibari*)”.⁶⁹ But, in fact, “all names are equally real and direct manifestations, and they are not secondary or dependent on another name. If the names *Mawjūd*, *Waḥid* and *Aḥad* are taken seriously out of other names of God, these names would devalue many other names of God”.⁷⁰

2.5.1.2. Nursi’s Stand for ‘*Waḥdat Al-Shuhūd*’

Waḥdat al-shuhūd “the oneness of witnessing”⁷¹ is a doctrine established by Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1624). Sometimes, *waḥdat al-shuhūd* has been translated as “Unity of Being in vision”,⁷² “Unity in witness”,⁷³ or “the Unity of Witnessing”.⁷⁴ According to Ahmad Sirhindi, “the world is not one with God (*hama ‘ūst*), it proceeds from God (*hama az ‘ūst*). Secondly, the existence of the world is not comparable to Divine existence: God’s existence is real whereas the existence of the world is imaginary (*khāyalī*) and unreal (*mawhūm*). Hence, as existing in the real sense there is only one Being there: God; the world does not exist.”⁷⁵ Therefore, the right doctrine is not that “All is He” (*hama ‘ūst*), but “All is from Him” (*hamah az ‘ūst*).⁷⁶ In addition, “God exists uniquely (*yagana*): no created being can be a part of Him. So, it will be wrong if we describe God in the pantheistic way”.⁷⁷ Tantray and Khan argues, “*Waḥdat ul shuhūd* means in this context the consciousness both of the oneness and difference that is the consciousness that things are one in one sense and multiple in another. This stage is higher and more perfect than the former”.⁷⁸ According to Friedmann, “Unity of Appearance means ‘to see One, namely nothing but One is seen by the Sufi’”.⁷⁹ According to this doctrine, “any experience of unity between God and the world he has created is purely subjective and occurs only in the mind of the believer; it has no objective counterpart in the real world”.⁸⁰ According to Sirhindi, *Wadat al-Wujūd* led to pantheism, which was contrary to the tenets of Sunnite Islam.⁸¹ Faruqi

⁶⁸ Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 61.

⁶⁹ Nursi, *The Letters-1928-1932*, 108–109.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ W.C. Chittick, “*Waḥdat Al-Shuhūd*,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. P. J. Bearman et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2002) (DS37 .E523), XI (11) V-Z/37.

⁷² Muhammad A. Ansari, *Sufism and Sharī‘ah: A Study of Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī’s Effort to Reform Sufism* (London, UK: The Islamic Foundation, 1986), 110.

⁷³ Md. Sirajul Islam, *Sufism and Bhakti: A Comparative Study* (Washington D. C, America: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2004), 164.

⁷⁴ Nursi, *The Words On the Nature and Purposes on Man, Life and All Things*, 494.

⁷⁵ Ansari, *Sufism and Sharī‘ah*, 111.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 268.

⁷⁷ Muhammad Enamul Haq, *A History of Sufism in Bengal* (Dhaka, Bangladesh: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1975), 53.

⁷⁸ Mudasir Ahmad Tantray - Tariq Rafeeq Khan, *Concepts in Muslim Philosophy* (Chhattisgarh, India: Rudra Publications, 2021), 101.

⁷⁹ Yohanan Friedmann, *Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī: An Outline of His Thought and a Study of His Image in the Eyes of Posterity* (Montreal: McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, 1971), 59.

⁸⁰ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī Indian Mystic and Theologian,” *The Encyclopedia Britannica* (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., January 1, 2023).

⁸¹ Britannica, “Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī Indian Mystic and Theologian.”

tries, however, to present Sirhindi as a thinker who controverted Ibn al-‘Arabi’s un-Islamic *wahdat al-wujūd* and replaced it with *wahdat al-shuhūd* which is the true expression of Islam.⁸²

Among ‘*wahdat al-wujūd*’ and ‘*wahdat al-shuhūd*’, Nursi, to some extent, inclines to ‘*wahdat al-shuhūd*’, the “Unity of Witnessing”. Nursi criticizes the concept of *wahdat al-wujūd* (the Unity of Existence) because this way is not for moderate people. In this way, there are dangers and chances for people to fall into holes of misguide by grasping lucrative attraction of the material world and many other worldly business and causes. Furthermore, Nursi considers the Unity of Existence as the fallacious way of some ancient philosophers.⁸³ Rather, when a believer believes the Unity of Witnessing, there are very less possibilities for him/her to worship other deity except Allah (SWT). Nursi observes, “The specification of Say, He is an allusion to unity of witnessing: In the view of reality, there is nothing observed except Him. God, The One is an explicit statement of Divine Unity: There is no true object of worship save Him”.⁸⁴ Likewise, there is no harm and risk in believing the Unity of Witnessing that is the straightway for the pious and sober people. Nursi claims, “This path is much safer as he considers them from the point of view of signifying something other than themselves; and being saved from absolute heedlessness, he enters the Divine presence permanently; he finds a way leading to the Almighty God in everything”.⁸⁵ In addition, Nursi labels the way of the Unity of Witnessing as “certain attainment and a spiritual station”.⁸⁶

Nursi narrates the danger of ‘*wujūdi* school’. He argues,

“In the same way, when the strange love of one who takes the huge world and the universe in its totality as his beloved is transformed into true love through the constant blows of death and separation, he seeks refuge in the way of the Unity of Existence, in order to save that great beloved of his from death and separation. However, there is the possibility of falling into abysses, entering materiality, and becoming submerged in causes. As for the Unity of Witnessing, it is harmless; it is an exalted way of the people of sobriety”.⁸⁷

Conclusion

In theology, providing proofs for the existence of God is the prime concern. Muslim philosophers and theologians contributed a lot to provide proofs for the existence of God in the classical era with Cosmological, Teleological, and Ontological arguments. The theology highlighted only the attributes of God. Nursi was persuaded and influenced by those classical proofs. Then he made his original contributions to the necessity of his time when secularism and atheistic currents were patronized by the state. He was influenced categorically by ‘affirmative attributes’ from Ash’arī theology and ‘the wisdom of God reflected in the universe’ from Māturīdī theology. Besides the classical era’s influence, Nursi articulated the Divine names of Allah and their detailed elaboration to understand God. For this, Nursi’s contributions in this field of *Tawhīdī* discourse are to some extent similar to Ash’arī and Māturīdī theology but in terms of the proofs

⁸² Burhan Ahmad Faruqi, *The Mujaddid’s Concept of Tawhīd; Study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi’s Doctrine of Unity (Wahdat Al-Wujuud)* (Lahore, Pakistan: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1989), 186–187.

⁸³ Nursi, *Rational Arguments: A Prescription for the Ulema*, 123.

⁸⁴ Nursi, *The Damascus Sermon*, 115.

⁸⁵ Nursi, *The Words On the Nature and Purposes on Man, Life and All Things*, 494–494.

⁸⁶ Nursi, *The Letters-1928-1932*, 104.

⁸⁷ Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 67–68; Nursi, *The Letters-1928-1932*, 110; and Nursi, *The Flashes Collection*, 69.

of the existence of Allah and the Divine names related Nursi's discourse are mostly new to the previous existing knowledge world.

As the representative of the crucial time, Nursi aspired to initiate the theological and Qur'anic faith-based revival with a clear and deeper understanding of *Tawhīd*. Nursi categorizes *Tawhīd* into two: 'the superficial and common affirmation of Divine unity' (*Tawhīd al-'ammi*), and 'the true affirmation of Divine unity' (*Tawhīd al-haqiqi*). Nursi's argument regarding dominicality (*rubūbiyyah*) is the most influential of all proofs and called it as the greatest proof (*ayah al-Kubra*) consisting of direct witness of God's supremacy and domicinality on everything. His default proof highlights the explanations for the existence of God in the universe and concludes, 'God's existence is must' and 'His non-existence is no possible'. His next proofs of 'the existence of God' are 'the Qur'an and Muhammad' (PBUH). With these proofs for the existence of God, Nursi aspires to transform readers of the *Risale* from an 'imitative faith' to 'investigative faith'.

Nursi criticizes Ibn 'Arabi's concept of '*waḥdat al-wujūd*' not for the sake of critique; rather, he projected the real discourse of the Qur'an and hadiths. Refuting Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine, Nursi explains that not only the universe but also all things reflect God's name and attributes visible across the universe and all things; these are the main Qur'anic indications while these are denied by the doctrine of Ibn 'Arabi. Furthermore, God is the Creator of everything, especially this universe and He has real existence that was also denied by the doctrine. These notions were the basis of Nursi's criticism of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. Critiquing Ibn 'Arabi, pure *Tawhīd* was articulated and disseminated not only in his *Risale* but also in his numerous books. Finally, the true character of *Tawhīd* emerged and accordingly, it defeated modern criticism from the West, North and philosophic sides. Thus, the supremacy of *Tawhīd* related discourse was established. We may quote Laura Veccia Vaglieri (1893–1989), an Italian Orientalist's statement, "Thanks to Islam, paganism in its various forms was defeated. The concept of the universe, the practices of religion, and the customs of social life were each liberated from all the monstrosities which had degraded them, and human minds were made free of prejudice. (the) Man finally realized his dignity. He humbled himself before the Creator, the Master of all mankind".⁸⁸

Tawhīd is the foundation of Islam, and all other principles of Islam are founded on it. It forms the worldview of a Muslim, in a nutshell, the foundation of Islamic civilization. It is also the medium by which individual and social transformation take place. It obliges human society to obey prophetic missions of the last prophet, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). *Tawhīd* dictates to obey and satisfy none but Him. This attitude generates human dignity in the mind and helps him to concentrate on Him. It also reminds human beings of His presence and existence everywhere. It also means the unity of humanity irrespective of caste, colour, race, and languages and makes them integral parts of the homogeneous globe. This is the strong aspect of Islamic civilization. The future research could be attempted as a comparative study on the concept of *Tawhīd* between Nursi and Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi (1921-1986), Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), Abu Ameenah Bilaal Philips (1946-) and other Muslim theologians.

⁸⁸ Laura Veccia Vaglieri, *An Interpretation of Islam*, trans. Aldo Caselli (Washington 8, D. C., USA: The American Fazl Mosque, 1958), 33.

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