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## Cover page

## the concept of *TAWHID* (ONENESS OF aLLAH) as reflected in the *Rislae-i Nur*

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## the concept of *TAWHID* (ONENESS OF aLLAH) as reflected in the *Rislae-i Nur*

**ABSTRACT**

*The main objective of this paper is to investigate the concept of Tawhid and its related discourses reflected in the Risale-i Nur (henceforth Risale) by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1977-1960). During the reign (1923-1938) of Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938), atheistic ideas were imported from the North (Russia) and the West (Europe) by some writers and intellectuals of Turkey in the name of progress and modernity. The Young generation was misguided and deceived by their teachers, politicians and writers by injecting doubt in their immature mind about Allah, the prophet and the Qur’an. However, the Kemalist regime was a champion to prove the role of Allah, the prophet, and the Qur’an in the state affairs and personal life of people were meaningless and anti-progress. This study finds the arguments of Nursi for proving the existence of Allah, its proofs from the universe to scripture and philosophically refuted all doubts against the concept of Tawhid in Risale. The paper concludes that the role of Risale as the strong shield against disbelief, atheistic currents and communism and could enhance the belief of people. Thus, it is drastically eradicated disbelief and doubt in a nutshell. In this regard, this paper emphasizes the following issues: (1) Nursi’s Contribution to the Discourse on Tawhid (2) Oneness of God (Tawhid) (3) Belief (īmaan) Necessitates Divine Unity (Tawid) (4) Proofs of Tawhid in the Risale-i Nur (5) Creation and Governance of the Universe (6) Qur’an and Prophet Muhammad as Proofs of God’s Existence (7) Impossibility of God’s Non-existence.*

***Keywords: Tawhid, Said Nursi, Risale-i Nur, Imaan (belief) Atheism, Prophet.***

## INTRODUCTION

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi’s (henceforth Nursi) time (1877-1960) was filled with civil wars, politico-legal and social-transitional factors and the growing threat from the occupying forces to the dying Caliphate. Besides, there are massive atheistic propaganda made by the ruling power and attacked Islamic tradition and practices.(Nursi, 2011b, p. 155, 2011a, p. 233, 2011a, pp. 381, 446) Nursi faced various struggles, from joining military activities to undergoing a series of imprisonments and exiles. While he rendered these sacrifices for the cause of the Caliphate and the *Ummah* at large, Nursi understood that an effective way of liberating the Muslims from such decadence is to give them proper education, revive their religious knowledge and enrich them with spiritual concerns.

With that in mind, Nursi started writing and ultimately produced the *Risale*. Nursi’s contribution to humanity for saving *Imaan* and preserving it as the world view of the people was admired in Turkey and all around the globe. Thus, his work *Risale* has got much attention from truth-seekers all around the world. *Tawhid* and its related issues are more important for a modern technology-oriented youth with a scientific and philosophical explanation. All questions are posed to negate the creator of the universe and these questions are implied for the foundation of unbelief. These are “‘Causes create this’, ‘It forms itself; it comes into existence and later ceases to exist’ and ‘It is natural; Nature necessitates and creates it’.”(Nursi, 2011b, p. 155.) and their answers are available in the *Risale* that satisfied modern man’s queries. Nursi’s position as the only *dā‘ī* and knowingly avoiding politics(Nursi, 2010, p. 46, 2013c, p. 498, 2013b, p. 394, 2014, pp. 70, 317) had drowned more attention by people from that time to the present day. His call for the unity of Allah (*Tawhid*) and the unity of believers are also very much significant in the present world today. Very interestingly we may quote from Philip K. Hitti, “In this uncompromising monotheism, with its simple, enthusiastic faith in the supreme rule of a 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.”(Hitti, 2002, p. 129)

Allah has created human beings and Jinn for His worship only. For this, their aim and duties should be to know Allah and believe in Him. These are expected attitude to Allah from 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.(Nursi, 2011b, p. 222, 2013c, p. 670, 2014, p. 265) On the other hand, if anybody does not know Allah and believe in Him, he will not get the spiritual experience and materially suffered from misery, pain, and fears in here and hereafter.

This paper emphasizes the contribution of Nursi towards eradicating disbelief, atheism, agnosticism and communism from society. He articulated *Tawhid* related argumentation, logic, proofs and general discussion from the universe to scripture and tried to inscribe firmly to the mind of people first and later on changed their world view based on *Tawhid*. Some significant points remain untouched due to the space limitations. This paper, therefore, will answer the following questions:

1. What is meant by *Tawhid* in Risale?
2. What are the contributions of Nursi towards the discourse of *Tawhid*?
3. What are the Proofs of *Tawhid in Risale*?

## Research methodology

This paper is qualitative research in nature based on content analysis. This analysis is of the content of some books of *Risale-i Nur* by Said Nursi; *the Word, the Flashes, the Letters, the Rays, Rational Arguments: A Prescription for the Ulema, the Damascus Sermon, and the Staff of Moses.* Therefore, these books are the primary data source for this paper. *Risale-i Nur* used in this study is the English version translated by Şukran Vahide from Sözler publication, Istanbul, Turkey.

## ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

## NURSI’S THOUGHT SYSTEM

Nursi was politically, socially, and religiously conscious. He never shied away from responding to the demand of his age. In the process of his responses to the demands and challenges emerging from within the society and coming from the neighbouring occupying forces, Nursi stepped into the politico-legal and philosophical battlefield with the weapons of *Quran-Sunnatic* wisdom and Islamic intellectual legacy’s experiences. Through demonstrating his thought theologically, politically, philosophically and intellectually, Nursi tried to defend his nation, the *Ummah* and Islam. The Republican government patronized atheism and communism in Turkey.(For details, see Nursi, 2013b, pp. 361, 444) In contrast, Nursi stood firm against the proselytization of atheism. In doing so, he demonstrated courage, uncompromised stand, uncountable sacrifices and tolerance in the face of serious mental and physical humiliation by the government, prosecutors, and other government officers”(Nursi, 2013b, p. 409), and his silent protest through composing the *Risale*. His utmost efforts for achieving his goals were not beyond the boundary of *Shariah*. He boldly confessed to the “Court Martial” in Istanbul, related to “the Thirty First march, 1909 incident” that “if I had a hundred lives, I could sacrifice my life for a single cause of *Shariah*.”(Nursi, 2010, p. 67, Nursi’s statement before the military Court in Istanbul in 1909, “If constitutionalism consists of one party’s despotism, then let all men and jinn witness that I am a reactionary and ready to sacrifice my very soul for a single matter of the *Shari’ah*”. (Nursi, 2013b, pp. 384, 446. See fn. 10)

Nursi was ready to accept anything, but these should be approved by Islam and also within the Islamic frame. In the case of Abdul Hamid’s despotism, he primarily tried to rectify and reform the educational and political ideas of the then Ottoman Empire as the prime duty of a Muslim. But he misunderstood Nursi and sent him to a mental hospital. After that, he primarily joined the Committee of Union and Progress (afterwards, CUP) to restore the values and Islamic principles of the Ottoman Empire. He considered these initiatives as the duty of the believer. However, once the hidden agenda of CUP was disclosed to him(Nursi, 2013b, p. 444), he immediately resigned from the CUP and joined “*Ittihad-i Muhammedi Cemiyeti”* (Muhammadan Union) (hereinafter referred to as MU) and wrote newspaper articles to promote their ideas.(Vahide, 2010, p. 85. Cited from 162. M. Ertuğrul Düzdağ, (ed.), Volkan Gazetesi, (No. 36), Istanbul 1992, 168.) Primarily, MU leaders were respectful of Islam and the Ottoman Empire. The MU leaders wanted to reform the existing political crisis based on “freedom, constitutionalism, and unity” agendas that were compatible with *Shariah* and for this reason, Nursi joined them.(Vahide, 2010, pp. 165–166)

Nursi even took in a sense, a destructive initiative against the ruling of Sultan Mehmet Vahitettin (1861-1926) and the *Shaykh al-Islam* Durezade Abdullah Effendi only for the greater cause of *Islam* and the *Ummah*. He understood that the invaders were Christians and they were about to kill them and that should not be supported by any Muslim but rather, it was the duty of every Muslim to protest and fight against the British forces.(Lewis, 1968, p. 402; Rustow, 1955, p. 71) Nursi considered the British attack on Turkey as against Islam, Muslims and the Caliphate and Sultanate. In addition, because of his writing “The Six Steps*”* (*Hutuvat-i Sitte*) against the invaders British and Greeks army, Nursi realised that he could be killed by the British soldiers.(Nursi, 2013b, p. 445) The discussion below will illustrate Nursi’s thought system, their position in Islamic thoughts, his *Qur’an* and *Sunnah* moulded “mental setup” as “the Foundation of Islamic World View.”

## Nursi’s Contribution to the Discourse on Tawhid

*Tawhid* is a major theme of the *Risale* and its discussion covers the major portion of the *Risale*. Nursi argued for the existence of Allah “who is the ‘Single One of Unity’ (*Dhāt al Wahid al-Ahad*).”(Nursi, 2011b, pp. 117, 129, 134–135, 147, 2011a, pp. 137, 235, 237–238, 2013c, pp. 22, 116–117, 209, 305, 312, 392,, 2013b, pp. 14, 24, 32, 34, 38, 48, 2014, pp. 35, 109, 272–275, 279, 290) Nursi was able to show that “the real relationship among the Creator, the universe and human beings could only be possible through *Tawhid* and the beauty and perfection of God could be manifested through it.”(Nursi, 2013b, pp. 15–17, 84) A baby suckling his mother is an expression of compassion (*rahmah*) and likewise, Allah providing food to each of the countless species day and night represents the unparalleled compassion (*rahmah*) and beauty (*jamal*) of God.(Nursi, 2013b, pp. 86–87) For Nursi, without the existence of *Tawhid*, the universe cannot be perfect.(Nursi, 2013b, pp. 19, 20, 22–23) The rationale of the universe and the importance of existence could only be established when these would be related 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.(Nursi, 2017, p. 133) Human spiritual perfection also depends on pure *Tawhid.* “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.”(Nursi, 2013b, p. 23) Without the oneness of God, human beings would be the worst sufferer of all the 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.(Nursi, 2013b, p. 23)

### *Kinds of Tawhid*

According to Nursi, “Divine unity (*Tawhid*) is of two kinds”(Nursi, 2013c, p. 300) ‘the first one is “the superficial and common affirmation of Divine unity’”(Nursi, 2013c, p. 300) (*tawhid al-‘ami*) which says: “Almighty God is One, He has no partner or like. This universe is His.”(Nursi, 2013c, p. 300) The second one is “‘the true affirmation of Divine Unity (*tawhid 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.”(Nursi, 2013c, p. 300)

### *Oneness of God (Tawhid)*

There is a monotheistic conception of God in many world religions. But the concept of *Tawhid (*Oneness of *Allah)* is so far distinctive because of its strict monotheistic doctrine.  Abu Ameenah Bilaal Philips (1946- ) defines tawhid, “when the term *Tawhïd* is used about Allah (i.e. *Tawhïdulläh*), 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 (*Rubûbïyah*), One without similitude in His essence and attributes (*Asmä ' was-Sifät*), and One without rival in His divinity and worship (*Ulühïyah / 'Ibädah*).”(Philips, 2006, p. 17) Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick hold that “the word ‘tawḥīd’ literally means ‘One’, ‘Oneness’, and ‘unification’. When this term is used for God, it means to proclaim and affirm the Oneness of God.”(Murata & Chittick, 1994, p. 43) According to Ismail Raji al-Faruqi (1921-1986),

“*Al tawhid* 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-tawhid*, 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.”(Al-Faruqi, 1992, p. 199)

So, it is the central theme and basic tenet of Islam and the opposite of “*Shirk*”.(Literally “shirk” refers to take associate or associates besides God. In Islamic theology, believe and worship anyone other than God as His partners, same Divine attributes, and same lordship. (Murata & Chittick, 1994, pp. 49–52) It should be pointed out here that *Shirk* is strictly prohibited in Islam(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 in 75 times. For details, see *Al-Qur’an*, v. 4:116, 6:163) 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 is in no way could be seen by the naked eyes 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 but rather, the state-imposed new laws to suppress the religious sentiments and executed laws related to these issues very strictly. The government at that time had created panic about religious education, teaching and learning, and even secularized the curriculum at school levels.

Given the situation, Nursi understood the importance of writing on believing in Allah and making people acknowledge Allah and the *Tawhidic* world view in all affairs of human life. 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 *Tawhidic* discourse in the Risale, he tried to reinstall faith in Allah in the minds of the people and make their *Imaan* (belief) as the shield against disbelief, atheism, irreligion, and secularism.

We will examine Nursi’s discourse on the oneness of Allah and explain it with different proofs from the theological and scientific point of views. Besides, this part also investigates Nursi’s contribution to the discourse on the existence of Allah.

#### Belief (īmān) Necessitates Divine Unity (tawḥīd)

Nursi argued 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 understand his position in the spiritual life. Anyone may repair his gap in the above stages and be able to achieve a supreme level of spirituality. For example, for anyone who has ‘verified belief’ (*tahqiqi Imaan*), 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 Imaan*) and this belief could be the means of ‘salvation’ (*nazat*) in the afterlife. To him, “belief’ (*Imaan)* necessitates affirmation of the ‘Divine Unity’ (*tawhid*), 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.”(Nursi, 2011a, p. 421, 2013c, pp. 422–423)

#### Pieces Evidence of Tawhid in the Risale

Nursi did not choose the traditional philosophical arguments of proving God’s unity but rather, he preferred to provide evidence from the whole body of nature and attributes of Allah and from 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.”(Nursi, 2013b, p. 200)

According to verse number 21:22 of the Noble Quran, 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”.(Nursi, 2013b, p. 54) “If there were more than one God, there would be something wrong in the harmonious system.”(Nursi, 2011a, p. 587) This harmonious system was not fixed with the global system but rather, there is always someone who is very skilled and handles the universe skillfully.(Nursi, 2013b, p. 54) Likewise outside the planet, the stars, galaxies, and cosmic objects are also in order with one another; without which the whole system might collapse.(Nursi, 2013b, p. 55)

If everything is in order and harmony, why is there evil, suffering and injustice in the world? Nursi responded to this question very intelligently. “Suffering, evil, and injustice are not the routine in the universe. These happened occasionally in the universe and are named *‘adat Allah’*(Nursi, 2013b, p. 40, 2013a, pp. 80, 186; Ozalp, 2016, p. 238)(habits of God). These laws help the universe to be in order and harmony and there are many benefits behind them. For bestowing all the benefits for 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 provides His forgiveness, mercy, blessing and help.”(Nursi, 2013b, p. 57) According to Nursi, suffering, evil, and injustice are not created intentionally to harm humans but rather, 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 destruction and disasters, no one should ask to stop the rain.(Nursi, 2013b, p. 56)

According to Nursi, unity and a single command are easier and plural and multiplicity were difficult. He was giving an example of a group of soldiers. Say there are one hundred armies and everyone 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 commanding officer. Therefore, everywhere in the universe, you will find unity, harmony, and discipline.(Nursi, 2011a, p. 313) 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 *Tawhid*. All of his arguments proved that from an atom to the biggest object of the universe, even the creation of the universe its continuous expanding mode operated 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 well established in the Risale.

#### Creation and Governance of the Universe

Nursi’s discourse on *Tawhid* and its different aspects were discovered in the Risale to 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?(Nursi, 2013c, p. 828) 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 God’s nature.(Nursi, 2011a, p. 158) Besides, human minds were confused about the true appearance and power of God, added with their insufficient knowledge and experience on the nature of God.(Nursi, 2013c, p. 271) Nursi cited the Qur’anic verses to demonstrate God’s power and majesty:(Nursi, 2011a, p. 312) 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.”(al-Qur’an, 31:28, *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Quran in the English Language*, 1984) 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.”(al-Qur’an, 36: 82-83 *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Quran in the English Language*, 1984) And another verse, Allah says, “The advent of the Last Hour will be like the twinkling of an eye, or closer still.”(al-Qur’an, 16:77 *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Quran in the English Language*, 1984)

Besides the Qur’anic proofs, Nursi gave some analogies of the Supreme Authority and His dominance over His creation and how everything is beautifully accomplished. For example, “if a person places a candle in the middle of a circle and other people have mirrors, the light of the candle will reflect on all the people because it is in the centre of the circle.”(Nursi, 2011a, p. 312) Another example is to think of a commander. “A commander can march his soldiers and the entire army with the same, single command and it will work nicely.”(Nursi, 2013b, p. 139) Nursi answered the question of God’s absolute and supreme power and the only sole authority behind the whole of creation. It would be helpful to understand Islamic theology and the concept of *Tawhid*.

#### The Qur’an as the Proof of Allah’s Existence

In the discourse on his proving of God’s Existence, he articulates that “the Qur’an is the proofs of God’s existence.”(Nursi, 2011b, p. 59, 2014, p. 436) Behind this argument, he has taken revealed testimonies and pieces of evidence for his discourse. Besides this, he extracted observations and examples from the universe. He highlighted “the relationship between the universe and the revelation and verification of the existence of God.”(Nursi, 2013b, p. 200)

Nursi collected related verses from the Qur’an in his discourses 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.”(al-Qur’an, 2:164, *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Quran in the English Language*, 1984)Rain is one of the signs of the presence of Allah to the earth how 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.”(al-Qur’an, 42:28, *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Quran in the English Language*, 1984) 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.”(al-Quran, 30:50, *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Quran in the English Language*, 1984) 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.”(Nursi, 2013b, p. 154) Nursi establishes revelation and the universe as interdependent sources to know God and explaining one another. All other related verses proving 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 25 Word of Risale, Nursi analyzed the content analysis of the Qur’anic verses that prove the Qur’an cannot be the work of a human but that it must be from a superior highly intellectual being, that is God. For Nursi, the literary composition of the Qur’an, the composition 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 the whole humanity together or his own. The unique composition of the Qur’an is self-testifying and a declaration that it is only from God and the Qur’an none other but God’s words.(Nursi, 2013c, pp. 488–523) 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.

#### Muhammad (PBUH) as the Proof of God’s Existence

In the discourse on his proving of God’s Existence, he articulates that Prophet Muhammad is the proofs of God’s existence. (Nursi, 2011b, p. 59, 2014, p. 436) In the 19, 22, and 33 Words and 19 Letter, Nursi proved the legitimacy of Muhammad’s declaration to be a true messenger of Allah. He highlighted the character of the Prophet as the most truthful (*al-Amin*) and trustworthy (*al-Sadiq*) among all the people in history.(Nursi, 2013c, p. 321) 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;”(Nursi, 2014, p. 131) as even his arch enemies testified him as ‘*al-Amin’* and ‘*al-Sadiq’* during his lifetime in *Mekka*.(Nursi, 2014, p. 131) He, in an academic sense, and did not know alphabets and yet he broadcasted a rich and revealed book (*al-Qur’an*) that was not possible for any human being in history, and in the 19 Letter, Nursi compiled about 300 miracles of the Prophet from previous scriptures, predictions about his coming, authentic *Hadiths* and his future predictions on the Prophet.(Nursi, 2014, pp. 129–308) With all these proofs and pieces of evidence, Nursi highlighted that Prophet Muhammad is one of the indisputable and legitimate messengers of Allah and the Qur’an beyond doubt is not any human’s composition except a revealed Book from the Almighty through the most reliable and genuine medium, Prophet Muhammad. 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, as it was proven that Prophet Muhammad had been accepted even by his enemies as a trustworthy personality amongst them, and Prophet Muhammad 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 Muslims of Turkey in particular and Muslims from all around the world, in general, were influenced by these arguments and even the modern educated *‘ulema*, preachers, writers frequently cited them in their talks and works.

#### Impossibility of God’s Non-existence

Nursi firmly views 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 levels of existence are like extremely pale shadows.”(Nursi, 2014, p. 292) Nursi’s clarification on ‘necessary existence’ (*wujūb al-wujūd*) is not only supporting the existence of God but an argument about “God’s non-existence is impossible and His creation is the best and only explanation for His existence.”(Nursi, 2011a, pp. 232–248)

1. The creation be present and it cannot be denied
2. Every creation has purposes
3. All creations need an explanation

The arguments are logically valid. Nursi was giving an analogy of a pharmacy. 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 the human body would be turn out to be poison and harm the human body rather than curing 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 living beings can only be the creation of “an infinite wisdom and all-pervading knowledge.”(Nursi, 2011a, pp. 293–294)

For Nursi, even a fly cannot be created as a non-professional agency. If it is accepted that the causes created the fly with all its balanced compositions, that is not possible to create by the cause. This is impossible.(Nursi, 2011a, pp. 294–295) For Nursi, there must be an Omniscient, Omnipotent and all-powerful God who creates even a small fly with balance and way. If these are not the attributions of a perfect God, He cannot create anything scientifically. Nursi’s measure is exceptional in his finding that Allah is not only a prerequisite for the balance of creation but also His existence is mandatory and His non-existence is impossible.

## *‘Wahdatul Wahdat Al-Wujūd’ (The Unity of Existence) And ‘Wahdat Al-Shuhūd’ (The Unity of Witnessing)*

The concept of *‘Waḥhdat al-wujūd’* (unity of existence) is introduced by Muhyiddin Ibn al-‘arabī’ (1162-1240) to mystical theology. It describes the human relationship to God and understanding Him. This concept is misunderstood and criticized by both his supporters and opponents. Ibn ‘Arabi’ did not use the term, late on this concept extensively represented by his stepson and student Sadr al-Din Muhammad ibn Ishaq al-Konevi (1207-1274).(Acikgenc, 2014, pp. 8, 10–11; Turner, 2013, p. 72) Ibn ‘Arabi’s term *wujūd* is an Arabic term translated in English as ‘finding’(Chittick, 1998, p. xix) for him, “*wujūd* means God is the only one who truly finds and is found.”(Chittick, 1998, p. xix) Thus, when *wujūd* is used for God, it means Being and for others it means existence.(Chittick, 2005, p. 17)

## *Nursi on Al-‘Arabi*

Nursi recognizes 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*).”(Nursi, 2014, p. 513)

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.”(Nursi, 2011a, pp. 59–60)

## *Nursi’s Critiques*

Nursi looks at Ibn ‘Arabi’s concept critically. Nursi articulates his comprehending of *‘waḥdat al-wujūd’* and ‘*waḥdat al-shuhūd’* both in his *Risale* very clearly.(Nursi, 2014, p. 513) Nursi argues that “some of Ibn ‘Arabī’s writings are misunderstood because of it has taken literally. But, some of the writings of Ibn ‘Arabi are confused and deviation from some clear statements of the Qur’an and *Hadiths*.”(Nursi, 2011a, p. 62) 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.”(Nursi, 2011a, p. 60)

Nursi criticizes *waḥdat al-wujūd* from two points of view:**The first:** for Nursi, “*waḥdat al-wujūd is* associated with the idea that the universe do (does) not have real existence, rather it is an illusion.”(Nursi, 2011a, pp. 59–62) But the fact, God is the Creator of the universe and it exists in reality. Haci Tanis continues, “Nursi extended his criticism to Ibn Al-ʿArabī and particularly the idea of *wahdat 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.”(Haci Tanis, 2016, p. 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’.”(Nursi, 2011a, p. 61)

**The second:** W*aḥdat al-wujūd* gives priority “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*).”(Nursi, 2014, pp. 108–109) But in fact, “all names are equally real and direct manifestations and they are not shadows, secondary or dependent on another name. If the names *Mawjūd*, *Waḥid* and *Aḥad* are taking seriously out of other names of God, then this would devalue many other names of God.”(Nursi, 2014, pp. 108–109)

## *Nursi’s Stands for ‘Wahdat Al-Shuhūd’*

Among ‘*Waḥdat al-wujūd’* and ‘*waḥdat al-shuhūd’*), Nursi to some extent inclines to the Unity of Witnessing. He narrates the danger of *wujudi* school. Nursi argues, “For the Unity of Existence, there is the possibility of falling into abysses, embracing 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.”(Nursi, 2014, pp. 109–110)

## Conclusion

In theology, provide 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 and made his original contributions in need of his time when atheism and atheistic currents were patronages by the state. He was influenced categorically ‘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 God and their detailed elaboration to understand and relate to God. For this, Nursi’s contributions in this field are similar to previous discourses and mostly new.

Nursi as the representative of his crucial time aspires to theological and Qur’anic faith-based revival with a clear and deeper understanding of tawhid. Nursi categories tawhid as ‘the superficial and common affirmation of Divine unity’ (*tawhid al-‘ami*) and ‘the true affirmation of Divine unity’ (*tawhid al-haqiqi*). Nursi’s argument dominicality (*rubūbiyyah)* is the most influential of all proofs and called it asthe greatest proof (*‘ayah al-Kubra’)* consisting direct witness of God’s supremacy and domicinality on everything*.* His *default proof* highlights the explanations for the existence of God and the universe that concludes ‘God’s existence is must’ and ‘His non-existence is no possible’. His next proofs are also very distinctive that ‘the Qur’an and Muhammad’ (PBUH) as the proofs of ‘the existence of God’. With these proofs for the existence of God, Nursi aspires to transform readers of *Risale* from an ‘imitative faith’ to ‘investigative faith’.

Nursi criticizes Ibn ‘Arabi’s concept of ‘*waḥdat al-wujūd’* as not just for a 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 reflecting God’s name and attributes visible across the universe and on all thing are the main Qur’anic indications that are denied by the doctrine. Furthermore, God is the Creator of everything, especially this universe and it has real existence that was also denied by the doctrine. These notions were the basis of Nursi’s criticism of *waḥdat al-wujūd.* By the critique of Ibn ‘Arabi, pure *tawhid* was articulated, educated and disseminated not only in his *Risale* but also in numerous books. Finally, the true character of *tawhid* emerged that defeated modern attacks from the West, North and philosophic sides and declared the supremacy of *tawhid* related discourse again. We may quote from an Orientalist, *“*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;”(Vaglieri, 1958, p. 33)

The belief in *Tawhid* is the foundation of Islam and other beliefs of Islam are the stand 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, likewise prophetic chain, and the last of the prophet, prophet Muhammad (PBUH). *Tawhid* 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 of the unity of the humanity irrespective of caste, colour, race, and languages and makes the integral part of the same body and globally homogeneous. This is the strong aspect of Islamic civilization. The future research could be attempted as a comparative basis on the concept of *Tawhid* of Nursi with Isma’il Raji al-Faruqi (1921-1986), Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), Abu Ameenah Bilaal Philips (1946- ) and other theologians of Islam.

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