

Concept of God in Islam

Monotheism, the belief in one and only one God is the most foundational concept in Islam. Muslims believe in the one God who created the universe and has power over everything within it. The Quran says, “And argue not with the people of the Scripture, unless it be in (a way) that is better (with good words and in a good manner), except with such of them as do wrong, and say (to them): “We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you; our God and your God is One (i.e. Allah), and to Him, we (Muslims) have submitted.” [Quran 29: 46]

Muslims believe God is unique and exalted above everything He creates, and His greatness cannot be compared to His creation. Furthermore, He is the only one deserving of any worship and the ultimate purpose of all creation is to submit to Him. His power is limitless, His blessings are limitless, and in general, He is limitless and cannot be confined by any of his creatures including the universe and the existence itself. This Islamic understanding of God is based on a pure and clear understanding of monotheism. This essentially captures the concept of God in Islam.

Allah is God’s name in Arabic. This is a uni-

versal name for God and does not refer to an exclusively ‘Islamic’ God. Interestingly, this name is related to the Aramaic and Hebrew names for God, Allaha, and Elohim. Therefore, Allah is simply the Arabic name for God which affirms that He is One singular God with no partners or equals. The name Allah cannot be pluralized (neither in Arabic nor in any other language) or limited to a specific gender, which establishes that God is One and that He is unique from everything He creates. Muslims continue to use this original Arabic name for God (Allah) since it perfectly expresses His unique qualities. Allah is also used by Arabic-speaking Christians as the name of God.

God is the Creator and the Sustainer of the universe who created everything for a reason. Muslims believe that He created humankind with a simple purpose — to worship Him. He sent messengers to guide people in fulfilling this purpose. Some of these messengers include Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, peace be upon all of them. They all taught a consistent message about God by affirming His greatness as the Creator guiding people to



Guest Column

HATIM HEGAB

worship Him alone. This basic concept has always resonated with people’s natural understanding of God.

When the final prophet, Muhammad, peace be upon him (pbuh), was asked about God, the answer came directly from God in the holy book of Muslims, the Quran (also spelled ‘Koran’): “Say, ‘He is God the One, God the eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten. And no one is comparable to Him.” [Quran 112: 1–4] This is a clear statement by God describing Himself to humanity without any room for confusion. God is One and is exalted above everything He creates and He is capable of all things.

Fully accepting the oneness of God is to accept that He is distinct from everything else. It would not suit God’s majesty and glory to associate the limited attributes of His creation with Him because He is not restricted, limited, or confined, in any way, while His creation is. He is the

First with no beginning and the Last with no end. Everything in the universe was created by His will. He is not confined by space or time, because He is the creator of space and time, and He is the only One who is in control and the One who provides for His creation. Quran says, “He is God: there is no god other than Him. It is He who knows what is hidden as well as what is in the open, He is the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy. He is God: there is no god other than Him, the Controller, the Holy One, Source of Peace, Granter of Security, Guardian over all, the Almighty, the Compeller, the Truly Great; God is far above anything they consider to be His partner. He is God: the Creator, the Originator, the Shaper. The best names belong to Him. Everything in the heavens and earth glorifies Him: He is the Almighty, the Wise.” [Quran, 59: 22–24]

Pure Monotheism is also clear in the following verse, “God: there is no god but Him, the Ever Living, the Ever Watchful. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. All that is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him. Who is there that can intercede with Him except by His leave? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, but

they do not comprehend any of His knowledge except what He wills. His throne extends over the heavens and the earth; it does not weary Him to preserve them both. He is the Most High, the Tremendous.” [Quran, 2: 255]

The primary pillar of Islamic belief clearly states that there is nothing worthy of worship except God. Associating partners with God or attributing qualities of lesser beings to Him is considered to be the greatest sin in Islam.

In the past, this often took the form of idol worship or praying to multiple lesser gods. Although this is less common now, the current era has replaced many of the physical ‘idols’ of the past with other contemporary ‘gods.’ Many people today allow passions like entertainment, drugs, relationships, professions, jobs, status, or material objects to become the center of their lives. They devote themselves to such goals and work only for them. They become so consumed with these things that they submit to whatever will allow them to fulfill their desires. For example, if a drug addict allows their addiction to control their actions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors, causing them to risk their safety

and the safety of others, that drug has essentially become their god. Likewise, if another person puts a loved one before God by obeying that person even if that causes them to transgress against God’s commands, or others in any way, their loved one has taken precedence over God.

Islam teaches that people should completely submit only to God as He is the only One worthy of their worship. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and everything in it belongs to Him. The Quran points out the faulty thinking of those who worship other than God, the Quran says, “How can you worship things you carve with your own hands when it is God who has created you and all your handiwork?” [Quran 37: 95–96]

In Islam, the believer has to surrender to God. To be a true believer, one must believe in the absolute oneness of God, as the only Creator, Preserver, and Nourisher of everything. One must also acknowledge that God is the only one who deserves to be worshiped.

To contact the author: hatim@gmx.us
For more information, please visit: www.icstillwater.org/about/ramadan

Southern Baptists pick a California seminary president to lead administrative body

By Peter Smith
Associated Press

A top Southern Baptist administrative body has selected its first permanent leader in nearly two-and-a-half years, a time when it has navigated a tumult of controversies ranging from a sexual abuse scandal to financial struggles — to its own stumbling efforts to find a new president.

Jeff Iorg, the longtime president of the Southern Baptist Convention’s only seminary

outside of the denomination’s historic Bible Belt heartland, is the incoming president and CEO of the denomination’s Executive Committee.

He was elected unanimously Thursday by committee members meeting near Dallas.

Iorg has been president of Gateway Seminary since 2004. He oversaw a change in name and location for the school in 2016, when the former Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary relocated its main campus from the San Francisco area to

Ontario, California, near Los Angeles. It now has multiple campuses in the West and online.

Total full- and part-time enrollment is 1,499, according to data from the Association of Theological Schools.

Iorg had recently announced plans to retire from the seminary but agreed to be considered for the Executive Committee post, which he will start on May 13.

Iorg said he is grateful for the denomination he is serv-

ing. In a Thursday news conference, he said he “came to faith in Jesus Christ because of the witness of a Southern Baptist church” and has degrees from a denominational college and seminaries.

He and his wife are “the product of Southern Baptists, and we’re grateful at this juncture in life to serve Southern Baptists,” Iorg said.

“Leadership matters, and Dr. Iorg is a leader among leaders,” said Philip Robertson, chairman of the committee, which

handles day-to-day business for the nation’s largest Protestant denomination.

Iorg succeeds Ronnie Floyd, who resigned in October 2021 as president amid internal rifts over how to handle an investigation into the SBC’s response to sexual abuse.

Floyd and other committee members resigned after a majority on the committee agreed to waive attorney-client privilege for an independent review of its handling of clergy sexual abuse in the denomination.

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Leviticus 20:8

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