

Monotheism: The First Principle of Divine Outlook on Universe

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We all have heard the word "Outlook on Universe" which means a complete enunciation of life. Some people who observe this Universe find it a meaningful creation which has come into existence through purposeful intention with a definite purpose, discipline and order. This is called "Divine Outlook on Universe".

Some people say that neither there is any pre-arranged plan for the existence of the Universe, nor is there any creator of it. Neither it has any aim nor has it any purpose. This school of thought belongs to "Materialistic Outlook on Universe". These are the two schools of thought which we shall discuss below.

. "Hence, our view-point about the Universe and life is the basis of the "Outlook on Universe

Advantage of Discussion about the Outlook on Universe

There is no ambiguity on the benefits and results of the two angles of thought. If we think that this big house, that is the Universe, has someone as its owner or master and it has some aims and purposes, it will become incumbent upon us to mould ourselves with the purpose of receiving favour of the master of this house, the Lord and the Creator, to the path which He has set for us by His revelations through His Prophets. But if this Universe happened to come into existence without any aim and purpose, then obviously there will be no necessity of accepting any discipline or regulatory restrictions.

Nowadays, the term "the duties of a responsible person" is much talked about. We can be dutiful only when we are supposed to be responsible to somebody for our actions and become accountable to him for commission and omission of duties. Under such circumstances we can only be made to feel our responsibility through Divine Outlook on Universe.

But according to materialistic Outlook on Universe, the Universe is supposed to have come into existence without any pre-arranged plan and it has assumed its present form and shape with the passage of time only. All men are mortals. They have to die one day or the other, and death will wipe them out altogether. Therefore, the sole purpose of life is to make the best of it by indulging in luxuries and revelries. That is to say the very purpose of life is "eat, drink and be merry" and thereafter is mortality.

According to this line of thinking we can pose a question to ourselves as to why one should

remain alive and why one should not commit suicide. That is after several years of hardships and difficulties why should one not come out of life's entanglement. Thus, if life has its purpose it can only be viewed through the Divine Outlook on Universe.

We do not open our doors when a person knocks it in the dead hours of night unless we know him fully well.

We cannot decide to take the kind of clothes to a place where we want to go unless we first determine what type of weather is prevailing there. We cannot decide to wear the kind of dress where we have been invited unless we know beforehand the gathering is for a marriage ceremony or it is a condolence meeting. Thus it is necessary that we should first recognize our duties and obligations. In other words, our dependence on the mode of thinking and .recognition of facts becomes the basis of our "Outlook on Universe" or the outlook on life

Selection of Outlook on Universe

We have said it before that there are two view-points with regard to Outlook on Universe and life, namely:

1. Divine Outlook according to which the Universe has its master, aim and purpose.
2. Materialistic Outlook which does not admit any master, aim and purpose for the Universe, that is, the Universe is without its master or controller, aim and purpose, and is retrogressive.

Man however, has to choose any of the two methods of approach as said earlier. The recognition of the best possible view-point is dependent on the following factors:

1. That method of approach which is related to intellect, reasoning and evidence.
2. That view-point and its elaboration which is compatible with our natural disposition.
3. That method of approach which makes man feel his responsibility and obligations, and which fills him with hope and happiness.

.In the light of the foregoing, we ponder over it now

Monotheism the First Principle of Divine Outlook on Universe

Intellect guides us that there is a cause of every effect and this thing is so crystal clear that if a new-born baby is subjected to a slight blow of breath on his body, he opens up his eyes and glances around him as he is conscious of the cause of that blow. In fact, the detection of the cause of an effect has been the major problem of our day-to-day life.

It is only by probing the causes and the indications that in the courts of law the advocates and the judges arrive at a decision of a case. As for example how can it be admitted that a picture

of a cock or a peacock needs a photographer but the very existence of a cock or a peacock came into being without its creator? How can one convince or satisfy the human intellect that, while there is an inventor of the camera, there is no inventor or creator of the human eye, though the photography of the human eye is more intricate than that of the camera for as and when the camera takes a picture, the film is changed, but our eye keeps on taking pictures incessantly without any break?

The camera can take either a black and white or a color picture according to the type of the films loaded in it, but the human eye can take the pictures, plain and colored, as well and at a distance, or at a close range, or in shade or in sunlight.

Similarly, human intelligence admits that somebody constructed an oil refinery but how can it deny that there is also the Creator of the digestive system. Again when it is an admitted fact that the working system of the human body indicates the presence of a conscious mind, how can we say that there is no Supreme Being which controls the entire system of the Universe! How have the various components, which can neither see nor hear and which constitute the Universe, have set for themselves working principles and cycles that a researcher spends his entire life for detecting any of such laws governing it?

In short, if the principle of an "Outlook on Universe" is based on factors which human intellect accepts, then looking at its very delicate and minute system of operation, it confirms the existence of a perfect Being, and through this very intellect we will, by the Grace of Allah, provide answers to doubts and suspicions in this regard.

The study of this life which has such a strict discipline and impeccability leads us towards Divine Approach to Universe. This is the first basic indication of the correctness of the viewpoint and the line of thinking to the Divine Approach. The second indication of this approach is its compatibility with natural disposition. Let us clarify the meaning of natural disposition because when we say that Divine cognition is a natural process then we should be .able to profit by it

What is Natural Disposition?

The term "Natural disposition" is akin to "instinct" and it gives the same meaning. In man any type of feeling which is independent of training, guidance, teacher or patron is inherent and permanent and it is present in all people of all times and places. This feeling is sometimes called a natural disposition or an instinct, though instinct is a broad-based feeling which is present equally in man and animals. A certain natural tendency is a general characteristic or trait as for example the mother's love for her child. It is a kind of feeling or emotion which is

inherent in mother and it is not imparted by any teacher, patron or preacher. It is universal. Wherever one goes, one will find this instinct at every time in every type of social group, though it may be possible that it is of lesser or greater degree in certain mothers. It is also possible that one instinct can overrun another one.

Let us admit that every man loves wealth as well as happiness and security, but this love is not found equally in all men. Some sacrifice wealth on life and some sacrifice life on wealth. Similarly at times for the sake of personal honor and dignity the father withdraws his love and affection from his daughter and buries her live, as daughters in Arabia before the advent of Islam were considered the cause of dishonor and disgrace. Therefore, anything which is inherent in man may not necessarily compel him to act accordingly, because one dominating urge suppresses another dominating feeling.

One of the signs of instinctive behaviors is the sense of pride. Anyone who acts according to his natural tendency feels within himself a sense of calmness. A mother who holds her child in her arms feels proud of it, rather she condemns the mother who ill-treats her child. That sense of pride and that disposition of criticism are instinctive things.

Let us now see whether recognition of Allah is inherent or not. We ask from everyone belonging to every creed or faith at every place and every time as to what are his feelings regarding the Universe? Does he consider himself to be self-contented or does he feel dependent? There is no one who can claim to be self-contented as all of them have a sense of deprivation; and this feeling is satisfied by the following two ways:

1. True sense of feeling with true satisfaction.
2. True sense of feeling with false satisfaction.

Take an example of an infant who is hungry. This feeling of the infant gets satisfied when he is suckled. And sometimes this very feeling is satisfied by means of sucking a false soother. However, in man the sense of deprivation is inherent and a reality but the question is deprivation of what? Of Divine Power or of natural strength? The nature itself is dependent on several conditions and therefore we should depend on that Power which itself is not dependent .and subservient like us to any other power

Prophets' Mission

The function of the Prophets is to prevent man from receiving false satisfaction of his true feelings. In this regard we have before us the example of a mother who does not allow her child to take all types of food. A passing glance over the history tells us how without the .guidance of the Prophets, people had to face untold miseries and hardships

Is Obedience a Negation of Man's Freedom?

Sometimes it is thought that inviting people to the worship of Allah by the Prophets and Divine religions is to deprive man of his freedom. But one has to ponder over the fact that man has been so created that without love and affection, devotion, mutual cooperation and hoping for the best, he cannot continue his life. The feeling or urge of love and devotion is inherent in his nature. If through the intermediary of the Prophets, this tendency of man had not been properly bridled, he would have started worshipping idols, stars, heavenly bodies, heroes and despots. Therefore, man's obedience and devotion to Allah is not against his freedom but it is a means of satiating man's inherent devotion to Allah and consequently preventing him from going .astray

Crux of the Problem

Now we revert to the crux of the problem. The Divine Outlook on the Universe and the implicit faith in Allah have an instinctive base. That is to say the awareness of dependence on the Supreme Being is inherently present in man though at times he thinks whether this Supreme Being is Allah, the Creator or it is Nature itself. However, the main problem is the man's awareness of his dependence. The Divine Approach to the Universe is compatible with man's disposition, for it considers the entire set-up of the Universe under the control of a super-natural power and this goes to prove the correct stand of the Divine Outlook by man. The third important factor which supports the Divine Outlook is that man has been endowed with a feeling of love and hope as well as a sense of responsibility. If a student of a school realizes that his efforts would not go waste and that even the one hundredth part of the marks he has gained would be counted and his reasonable explanation would be considered, he would continue his studies with perfect zeal and enthusiasm. In the Divine Outlook on Universe man believes that he is under the constant surveillance and guidance of Allah, that his explanation for his lapses is acceptable, that not even an iota of his good or bad deeds could be overlooked, that all his noble deeds are to be rewarded by Allah and that he would be compensated in Paradise for the sacrifice of his life and property. Thus on the one hand the invisible great support of Divine Power and on the other the prevention from doubts, suspicions, lapses, acts of commission or omission repose in man's heart an ever-glowing hope.

:The Holy Qur'an has condemned the following forms of faith and inclinations

Doubtful and Temporary Tendency

1. Whenever one finds himself in a grave danger and foresees annihilation, he starts remembering Allah by imploring: "O Allah!", and as soon as that danger is over, he forgets all about it, and starts associating Allah with others and thus falls in the ditch of polytheism. The Holy Qur'an says: When they sail in a boat, they sincerely pray to Allah with pure faith. But

when We bring them safely on land, they start considering things equal to Allah! (29:65)

2. Sometimes their faith which is adopted without any reasoning, or considering the Divine signs, they follow the faith of their ancestors just like idolaters who used to tell the Prophets that they had adopted their faith in obedience to their ancestors. The Holy Qur'an condemns

their blind faith and says:

They said, we found our fathers doing so. (26:74)

3. Sometimes their faith is not true but is meant for outward show. The Holy Qur'an says: The Bedouin Arabs say, 'We are Believers'. Tell them, 'you are not believers, but you should say that

you are Muslims. In fact belief has not entered your hearts '. (49:14)

4. Sometimes their faith is without action and deeds. Although these sort of people believe but they are slack in their actions. The Holy Qur'an has condemned such people at several places.

Which Faith is True?

From the point of view of the Holy Qur'an only that faith which is based on reasoning and correct mode of thinking is true and commendable. The Holy Qur'an says: Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, or resting on their sides, and who think about the creation of the heavens and the earth and say, 'Lord, You have not created all this without

(reason' (3:191

Signs of Faith in Allah

1. Hope and Feeling of Love: Anyone who knows that all his deeds are accounted for, and that his efforts do not go in waste, and also that Allah rewards him for his actions and deeds with Paradise, though He by His benign Mercy sometimes bestows upon him rewards for his good intentions too, he then leads his life with his love for Allah in a state of cheerful hopefulness.

2. Abstains from Corruption: Such a man abstains from treachery, meanness, and hypocrisy. Anyone who considers himself to be ever-present before Allah and considers Allah as

Omniscient, can never practise deceit and hypocrisy.

3. Preserves His Self-respect: He, who has submitted himself to the Will of Allah and truthfully obeys His commands, can never bow down before anyone in authority, status and power. He

considers everybody as he himself is.

4. He is Never in Loss: Since the man of faith benefits by his timely deed and receives an everlasting reward from Allah and pins his hopes only on Allah, he never sustains any loss at all.

5. Tranquility: If we look into the following causes of fear and restlessness, we find that faith in Allah provides a complete peace, satisfaction and a state of tranquility Causes of Fear and Worries (a) Sometimes past lapses and bad deeds are the causes of one's fears and worries but the remembrance of Allah changes this state of mind into that of peace and tranquility

because Allah is Merciful and Benevolent and He forgives sins and accepts one's repentance.

(b) Sometimes loneliness and the very thought of helplessness leads to fears and worries but the faith that Allah is Omnipresent and Omniscient changes this state of mind into that of peace and tranquility. The man believes that Allah is not only our Companion and Compassionate but He hears us, sees our deeds and bestows His blessings on us.

(c) Sometimes the aimless life and the sense of lethargy make one's mind restless but the faith in Allah removes all such fears and worries as Allah has created every thing in this world with a purpose by His Wisdom in a definite quantity and number within a specific sphere.

(d) Sometimes a man gets worried that he has not been able to please everybody, and he broods over the thought that he annoyed or provided the cause of displeasure to a particular person or a group of persons, but the faith in Allah that one should only try to please Allah as honour and disgrace only come from Him removes that state of restlessness. And it is confirmed by the Holy Qur'an which says:

(Remembrance of Allah certainly brings comfort to all hearts. (13:28

Signs of Dishonesty

He who does not have faith in the real cause of the Creation, that is Almighty and All-Wise Allah, is a person, who finds himself shaky, aimless and lonesome and concerns himself like animals and birds with the enjoyment of the comforts of worldly life only; who acts only under the pressure of the society; who considers death the last thing in life, and does not have the belief in the life after death as he does not believe in the immortality of soul; who surrenders his life to be dominated by external powers and his personal desires; who is beset with vague ideas and notions, deprivation, faults and lapses as his article of faith has not been guided by the infallible Prophets and Divine revelations, who is completely unaware of the very purpose of life. He does not know as to why he has come to this world and why he is departing from this world. His only line of thinking is as to how his life should be spent? He does not realize the very purpose of life. He is devoid of the Divine Approach to Universe and Islamic faith.

In short, one can detect faith from the face of those who have belief in Allah and of those who
.have no belief in Allah

Baseless Reasoning against Religion

Now when we have established intellect and instinct as the base of the Belief in Allah, intellect indicates that there must be someone who reveals the vast spectacle of the Universe as wherever we have seen a system of set principles it indicates its controller or regulator. Instinct tells us that every man finds within himself dependence to a being more powerful than himself. But despite this some people have completely ignored both the factors, that is intellect and instinct and have found a weak reason for the belief in Allah. Briefly, we discuss some of these
:false reasonings

Defeat of Communistic Dogmas

As the life under communism passes by, day after day, its one or the other dogma becomes defeated. As for example the Islamic Revolution in Iran revealed upon the people the failure of all communistic dogmas and put it in disgrace. Communism says that religion is a dope for the nations. Religion makes the people lethargic, apathetic, and subservient; but we see that in Iran, religion has enthused the people with action and has not made them lethargic. Communism claims that if anyone is morally degraded it is due to his financial weakness. Hence, if a man commits theft, the reason is that he is forced to do so because of penury. But we have seen that in Iran the dishonest government was not pauper. According to communism the cause of revolution lies in the restlessness of the downtrodden and the hungry people and their revolting against their exploitation by the people in power. But the revolution in Iran was brought about for the restoration of human freedom, stability and for enforcing the sovereignty of Allah and not for bread and butter or for high or low prices. If revolution had been due to the revolt of poverty-stricken people, it would have started from Kurdistan and Sistan, because these areas were more deprived. But the revolution which starts from Qum—the centre of religious learning under the spiritual leadership of Imam Khomeini and with the shouts of "Allah O Akbar" (Allah is Great) reaches its peak on the Day of 'Ashura (the tenth of Muharram) to the fortieth day of the commemoration of the Martyrdom of Imam Husayn indicates the fact that the root cause of the revolution lies in the seat of religious learning and establishing Divine justice and not in the belly. The preference of Divine laws over the laws of secular despots is not the result of deprivation

of the poor and the needy. We do not ignore altogether the poverty factor but we ask as to what was the real cause of the revolution? Revolution for abolishing poverty or establishing Islam? What a great number of people were there who were enjoying all the comforts of life but they decided to give up their comforts for the success of the Islamic revolution.

The fourth disgraceful thing about the materialistic Outlook on Universe, which is the topic of our discussion, is the ineffective and ridiculous allegation of anomalies of religion and faith which Communism has expounded by saying that the capitalists through their vested interest and reactionary agents have lured the people to remain calm under the shield of religion, for they ask the deprived people to remain patient as Allah befriends the patient people. They say: "If some people have usurped your rights, you should keep quiet because the world itself is shortlived. The main thing is the life in the Hereafter".

They ask the people not to rise in revolt but to wait for the Awaited Imam Mahdi because he himself would reform the society; or they ask the people to practise dissimulation (taqiyya) and not narrate what they see with their eyes. In short, the capitalists implants such things in the minds of people through their stooges in the name of religion and thus by such methods prevent the people from trying to struggle for their rights.

From the foregoing you can judge yourself that all such things are ridiculous and far from logical reasoning. We thank Allah that we are in such an age that our younger people have become mature enough in their thinking to disprove the false claims and dogmas of Communism because by quickly pondering over it the Muslim youngsters ask the communists: "If the capitalists have invented religion for calming down the people, why are there certain laws in religion which empty their purse by confiscating their wealth? Islam takes back from the capitalists everything, which they amass from wrongful means, that is exploitation, tyranny, bribery, black-marketing, high pricing, undercutting, usury, hoarding, adulteration etc. and through the sales of under-developed and deserted agricultural land. Would the capitalists invent the religion so that it could deprive them of their assets?"

Theirs is a fallacious argument because it is religion which gives a correct and effective interpretation to the various terms from which wrong conclusions are deduced and which they have changed altogether. As for instance waiting (intizar) for the appearance of the Imam of the Age does not mean that one should become silent. Waiting for the sun to rise does not mean that we should keep sitting in the stark darkness of the night and should not light a lamp. Waiting for the summer does not mean that we should not wear woollen clothes during winter or should not protect ourselves from the inclemency of weather. Similarly waiting for the Awaited Imam does not mean that we should give up our struggles and instead keep mum and

bear hardships and cruelties.

The meaning of patience also does not mean that we should count hardships and cruelties but it means that we should remain steadfast in our struggle against the oppressors for the restoration of our rights, because Islam has ordained that anyone who gets himself killed in his struggle for the protection and restoration of his monetary rights is a martyr. That is to say for the preservation and restoration of one's rights one should be steadfast in attaining martyrdom. It is narrated in a tradition that like the oppressor the oppressed one will also be

pushed into the Hell if he had not resisted the oppressor and instead accepted oppression.

Similarly, taking the world to be insignificant does not mean that we should abandon it altogether, but it means that the value and importance of man, who is the vicegerent of Allah, is more than the world itself and, therefore, the aim and purpose of man's life should not be attaining worldly gains only.

Dr Allama Iqbal has said: "You are not for the earth nor for the heavens; the world is for you, not that you are for the world". In short in Islam patience, perseverance and expectation do not mean that one should remain passive against the exploiters. Apart from snatching the unlawful

wealth of the capitalists Islam asks the deprived as follows:

1. It is forbidden to behave towards capitalists submissively, and anyone who bows down before a wealthy person loses one third of his faith.
2. Imam Ali Riza has said that anyone who gives a warm welcome to a rich person (because of his wealth) will face Allah's wrath on the Day of Resurrection.
3. One should not respect a person because of his wealth.
4. Never partake meals at a table where only the rich and affluent people are eating their food.
5. Imam Ali Riza himself used to sit beside his slaves at the same table-cloth. Prophet Sulayman despite his exalted position used to mix up with the poor people. The Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali used to sit with the poor on the ground, and the Prophets used to tend the cattle and put themselves to hard labour. The prayer and supplication of a jobless and workshirking man is never accepted and the Holy Imam has cursed that person who lives on another person like a parasite. Hence it can be deduced that Islam has neither been sponsored by the rich people nor by those who are lazy and vagrant. This is a brief comment on the .baseless reasoning of communism regarding the birth of religion, and brings disgrace on it

Another Groundless Reasoning

Some materialists, who have no conception of the Divine Approach to the Universe which originates from inherent tendency and intellect, and incidentally consider themselves as

intellectuals, offer another groundless reason for the faith of the believers whose hearts are kindled with the Divine light. They say: "The basis of the belief in Allah is fear. Just as during infancy and childhood man is dependent on his parents in the same way he makes Allah his refuge when he grows up. People of the ancient times who were beset with dangerous happenings like earthquake, thunder-storm, and attacks by wild beasts etc. had invented for their mental satisfaction an imaginative shelter. Whenever they got frightened with such mishaps they used to put their restless soul at rest through such beliefs. Hence the belief in
."Allah was the outcome of fear

Answer to Such a Reasoning

If the reason of the belief in Allah is fear the one who fears most should have more firm belief in Allah; hence those who were the first to have fears should be the first believers. But on occasions where man is not affected by fear he will naturally not be inclined towards Allah, though one can turn to Allah without any fear also. We do revert to Allah because of fear but it does not mean that fear is the only cause of the belief in Allah. Very often man does not have any fear at all but he does believe in Allah. His intellect sees through the signs which are very minute, delicate and immaculate and which lead him to an ultimate belief in Allah. He feels within himself to be attached with a great power and soon he realizes that as he was not created all by himself and if it had been so he would have most certainly made some improvement on himself in being more beautiful or would have made certain innovations and, besides, other beings also, like him, were not created without any set patterns Each and every individual cells and organs, which he is made of, have been fashioned with a set pattern. Therefore, there certainly is an All-Powerful Allah who has created him. On the basis of this line of thinking and method of deducing conclusion, man does not need to harbor any fear or undergo a state of uncertainty and restlessness. His intellect and natural instinct guides him to Allah. Thus, the theory that the belief in Allah rests on fear is baseless. As a matter of fact such baseless reasonings remind us of a person who had found out the reason for the hot climate of Kashan when he said: "Do you want to know why the climate of Kashan is hot? In the word "Kashan" the letters "sh" are present and in the word "Shimr" these very letters are present. And the day when Shimr was in Karbala, its climate was hot and, therefore, the climate of Kashan is hot". The psychological analysis of this reasoning of belief has been done by an expert psychologist. Indeed these so called experts can also commit errors. It is like that the higher a mountain is the deeper its cavern will be. We should, therefore, not be simply overawed by mere knowledge

and if a scholar has some deep convictions in certain matters we should not blindly follow his views.

One among such scholars is Bertrand Russell. He says: "Formerly I had a belief in one God but later on I thought over that when everything was created by God who created God? When I did not arrive at a definite conclusion I gave up my belief in God" To a question as to whom he believed in, he replied, "Now my belief is that the Creator of the Universe is not God but matter". At this point we can ask him to find out for himself, from where did matter come into being? He says that matter exists from the very beginning. Similarly we also say that Allah exists from the very beginning. Then the question arises as to why Russell did not accept the existence of the First Cause and the Omniscient Being who is Allah? Why did he believe in innumerable old and ?unconscious beings contained in matter

Another example

The communists argue that unless something is perceived and comes under observation it cannot be accepted as being present, and as such Allah, angels, revelations and similar other things cannot be believed in because according to them they only recognize senses and observation as identifying media.

Now we ask as to why in historical analysis and explanation they say that several hundred thousand years ago men used to live together, hunt animals together and eat their flesh together when the foundation of government was not yet laid nor was there any sense of individual ownership. Thereafter, an era of slavery came and long afterwards the feudal system came into existence. To our question as to whether they can touch upon or analyse that period of centuries when people led a gregarious life, they say 'no', but by historical remains one can trace those periods.

Similarly we tell them that as they can trace out the history of the past events through relics and ancient monuments in the same way we recognize Allah through His creation and signs. Thus if the principle of accepting a thing on the basis of signs and symbols is correct it will be immaterial if we trace the ancient history through historical ruins or relics or recognize the existence of Allah through signs. The question therefore arises whether our senses and our observations are the only means of confirming a certain thing or problem or can we trace the root of the problem through signs? If we just ponder over it a bit carefully we shall notice that .most of our recognitions and confirmations are based on signs or identifying factors

Another Baseless Argument

Some people who do not admit intellect and instinct as means of the recognition of Allah have given a different meaning to belief and reality. They say that the basis of belief in Allah is ignorance and further that whenever man is unable to trace causes of his problems he has supposed a Supreme Being for himself so that whenever they are unable to give explanation to a certain problem they just attribute it an act of that Being and hence such problems have been associated with Allah. But the time for this is now the thing of the past, and in fact nobody ever gave any credence to it, because:

- (a) If the belief in Allah was based on ignorance then it would become necessary that the one who is more ignorant should have more belief in Allah.
- (b) If the belief in Allah was based on ignorance then Divine Books should have encouraged people towards ignorance.
- (c) If the belief in Allah was based on ignorance then he, whose knowledge exceeds and whose ignorance is reduced, would be the most faithless person, and then as and when man would keep on making discoveries and knowing the causes of incidents would keep on losing his faith gradually. Is it possible that Abu Ali Sina, Galileo and Einstein who were discoverers of many scientific phenomena and who had faith in Allah also, and their scientific expositions and discoveries would distract us from that Being, that is Allah, Who is the Creator of the laws of nature? Suppose you have discovered a certain law governing a natural phenomenon, would it then prevent you from having a belief in the Creator of such law? If you have found a lost coin on the road-side should you not inquire about the owner of that coin? Or would it suffice that you have just found the coin

Why Some People Ignore Allah and Religion?

The answer to this is as follows.

1. When we say that man can recognize Allah through the construction of a cell or an atom it is only meant for those who really want to believe in Allah but not for those who do not have the intention of doing so at all. To illustrate this point the following examples can be cited:
 - (i) Look at a man who roasts and broils meat on a gridiron and who cuts several livers in a day into slices for roasting but does not know the various veins and arteries embedded in it because he had nothing to do with knowing those blood vessels.
 - (ii) Look at a man who is busy from morning to evening in selling mirrors to his customers and who has disheveled hair and who never cares to groom it despite looking at the mirror several times in the day as he is only concerned in selling the mirrors and not grooming his hair.

(iii) When a man is busy cleansing with his handkerchief the glass of his watch and we ask him the time, he sees his watch again, because he was busy cleansing the watch and had not noted the time.

(iv) Look at a carpenter who makes a ladder but never does he himself mount it but for the sake of demonstration he does so several times in order to satisfy his customers.

From the foregoing examples we can conclude only one result that unless man wishes to know a thing or to draw benefit from it, he would not know it nor would he draw any benefit from it. Similarly, people do see the signs of Allah closely and minutely yet they do not have belief in Allah, because just by merely looking at the signs their intention is not to recognize Allah .

2. We all know that when from the very beginning we are favored with a blessing we do not realize its true significance and hence it loses its freshness. Similarly, when we see the signs of Allah everywhere we do not care to think about it or to realize its import because from the very start we had become used to them and as such they seemed to have lost their novelty. Take an example of the thumb of your hand about which you have never been thankful to Allah because it has been there since your birth. But suppose this thumb is bandaged for a while or is completely detached from your body, you will see that without it you cannot even button your shirt! (You can yourself imagine it while reading this instance).

Since the continuity of bounties leads to the forgetfulness of Allah misfortunes come to us as a warning. The Holy Qur'an says that sometime Allah inflicts hardship upon man so that he may return to Allah and ask Him for His forgiveness. The Holy Qur'an repeatedly reminds mankind to remember Allah's blessings and bounties and we often find in the supplications of leaders of religion that they enumerate one by one Allah's bounties and benevolence, for example they say: ' It is You, O Allah Who has elevated us from lower position to a higher status, from ignorance to knowledge, from small quantity to a larger quantity, from poverty and indigence to richness and wealth and from illness to health".

3. People ignore religion because many innovations have been introduced into it by ignorant friends and wise enemies. As for example if we offer a glass of water to a thirsty person and a fly falls down in it, that person instead of drinking water throws it away. Hence, just a man shuns water because of the fly, similarly he shuns religion because of the presence of a few unreasonable and irrational things in religion. Therefore, we should not be unmindful of those whose actions distract the people from religion.

4. Environmental Influence: The cause of man's deviation from religion and religious commands is the problem of the environmental influence. Man by his very nature and instinct dislikes the act of stealing and considers misappropriation as a bad thing, but when he is in an

environment which is dominated by thieves and usurpers, he too adopts their habits.

5. Sometimes indifference to religion is due to shirking responsibility, because accepting religion means binding oneself to accept various religious restrictions and obligations. Hence some people shun religion since they want to be free from all restrictions. They do not realize that to be so free as to abstain from following Divine commands means that they have accepted all other restrictions and all sorts of servitude. He who does not accept to be the servant of Allah is a slave of everybody else, and he who does not obey His commands must obey the commands of everyone else. He who leaves Allah and turns to others is as if it were like one who falls from the sky to the earth. He becomes a prey to the vultures before whom he falls down.

6. Enmity: There is a certain group of people which harbors grudge and indulges in prejudice and selfishness. Such people oppose and criticize things for the sake of opposition and thereby disregard the Divine commands altogether. 7. Lack of Proper Preaching: It is also lack of proper preaching or preaching in a wrong way which makes people indifferent to religion. 8. Necessity of Religion: Man does not live without a code of conduct but the question is how he can achieve his object in life for his success, prosperity and progress? He has, therefore, three following alternatives before him:

(i) To chalk out his line of action according to his own inclination and adaptability.

(ii) To fashion his conduct in accordance with the wishes of the other people.

(iii) To submit himself to the obeisance of Allah and seek only from Him his code of life.

(iv) The first course of action is defective because human intelligence has its own limitations and man himself is well aware of his lapses and failings. The instinctive passion drags man towards disaster and calamity at every moment. Under such a situation will it be possible that man can still be guided by his defective thinking and limited knowledge which can one way or the other lead him to prosperity or misfortunes?

The second course of action like the first one is not less faulty because the wishes of other people are too many and they have a wide range of interests and inclinations. Apart from this, as there is a possibility of their committing errors and of becoming victim of forgetfulness and lapses, it is necessary that man should not give up his line of action and ignore his requirements and personal freedom and individuality and follow those who do not know him properly or appreciate his aspirations for long standing happiness and prosperity, and over and above when he does not know whether they are his well-wishers or not.

The third course of action is the only correct course because just as we hand over our automobile to a mechanic or ourselves to a physician we should submit our ways and means

.of life to Almighty Allah, our Creator Who knows everything better than we know

The Function of Religion

In a nutshell we can define religion according to one of the scholars in the following way: Just as we construct an automobile in the same way religion builds a man. To illustrate it with an example we have to perform the following things for the purpose of manufacturing a motor car:

(i) We find out the availability of iron ores from a mine.

(ii) We extract iron from its ores.

(iii) We make the parts of machine from iron.

(iv) We assemble these parts into a motor car.

(v) Then an expert who knows driving drives this car. These five things are also applicable to religion. Man's Discovery: A man who forgets all about himself loses his aim of life, guidance and ultimate destination, and becomes like an animal as he considers that the sole purpose of his materialistic life is sensual gratification. By this he becomes just like a dead body as truth has no effect on him. He is wild like a wolf, cunning like a fox, thief like a mouse and stonehearted like a tyrant. It is, therefore, necessary that this type of lost man should try to discover his ownself and find out all about himself.

1. One of the functions of religion is to state what man is and what are his characteristics?

When we study the Holy Qur'an we find how Islam defines man. It says: When your Lord said to the angels, 'I am appointing someone as my deputy on earth'. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:30) Haven't you seen that Allah has made all that is in the heavens and the earth, subservient to you? (Surah Luqman, 31:20) We offered Our Trust (Our Deputation) to the heavens, to the earth and the mountains, but they could not bear this burden and were afraid to accept it. Man was able to accept this offer but he was unjust to himself and ignorant of the significance of this Trust. (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:72) . . . and I have infused my spirit into it. (Surah al-Hijr, 15: 29)

We have honored the children of Adam, carried them on the land and the sea, given them pure sustenance and exalted them above most of My creatures. (Surah Bani Israil, 17:70)

The Holy Qur'an warns man lest he should forget himself and be a loser; damage his own interest; lose his profits in his dealings and be bought by false customers at a cheaper price. Then it cites examples of victorious and defeated people and determines their types and specimens, so that man can recognize his personality, capability and disposition. He then ponders over that if he has only been created to lead a material life and to satisfy his animal

instinct by enjoying the comforts and pleasures of life then why has he been endowed with superb intellect and knowledge and an urge to progress and development?

2. The second function of religion is to refine the discovered ores (of human character). Man should be purified of harmful thought of oppression, follies, ignorance and polytheism. The Holy Qur'an says: Allah is the patron and supporter of those who have embraced the belief and He leads them from ignorance and waywardness to the path of guidance. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:25)

3. The third function of religion is to make an individual perfect in character. That is, to create in him the qualities of worship of Allah, and make him abstain from evils, so that he may possess perfect human attributes. The individual guidance and character building of people are the same which the Holy Prophet had done during the troubled days of his stay in Makkah. All those commands which do not have any social bearing come under this preview so as to reform man in all aspects with full attention.

4. The fourth function of religion is to organize the reformed individuals and to knit them into one complete pattern and to establish the universal Sovereignty of Allah in which clear-cut and perfect commands are followed. This was the mission which the Holy Prophet accomplished in Madina and thereafter he deputed learned and capable people to organize various fields of activity, to acquire strength for the defense, and to make budget. Over and above this their aim was to establish a perfect socio-political system and to define the objectives of the Islamic State so as to distinguish it from non-Islamic societies.

5. The fifth function of religion is to hand over the affairs of the Islamic society in the hands of a capable and infallible leader. Strict warnings have been given in religion against encouraging oppression, despotism and ignorance and against patronizing oppressors, despots and tyrants or groups of such people. Therefore, the handing over of leadership and power of the whole nation to a non-infallible person amounts to tyrannizing the mankind.

This is what we call a complete lay-out of religion and a true reflection of its school of thought. If we wish to condense all what is said above into one single sentence, we would then say: "Religion is a social code of life which determines, according to Divine principles of a set .standard, an ideology, efforts and conduct of life

The Reality of Monotheism and its Various Aspects

In Islamic terminology "Oneness of Allah" has very pleasant, exalted and vast meaning. Our scholars have classified it into monotheism i.e. Oneness of Being, Oneness of worship, Oneness of attributes and Oneness of deeds. Leaving aside various terminological

expressions, we first deal with Oneness of Allah. We ask our revered readers to ponder over the matter and find out for themselves at what stage of monotheism they happen to be. Monotheism i.e. Oneness of Allah is the belief that Allah is the Lord of the mankind, He is One, He has no partner and that He is Unique in all respects and everything depends on His Absolute Being.

Monotheism is the belief in Allah which denies all temporal desires. Anyone who is lustful is out of the bounds of monotheism. The Holy Qur'an says: Have you seen the one who has chosen his desires as his Lord? (Surah Jathiya, 45:23) Monotheism is the belief in Allah which rejects despotic tyrants. Imam Ali Riza after accepting Ma'mun's condition of becoming his heir-apparent announced to a public gathering that he had laid down his condition for being an heir-apparent that he would not interfere in all those State affairs which involved appointments to and dismissals from public offices.

Monotheism is the belief in Allah which denounces geographical barriers and the differentiation between the East and the West, and rejects all alien creed, dogmas and systems which originate from the mind of selfish people.

Monotheism is the belief in Allah which severs all affiliations and connections which cause the Muslims to be dominated by others.

Monotheism is the belief in Allah which forbids us to obey that person whose order is contrary to the commands of Allah.

Monotheism is the belief in Allah which directs us to obey those people whose guidance has been approved by Allah.

Monotheism is the belief in Allah which directs one to worship Allah and obey His commands. In short, monotheism means to discard and crush all types and kinds of idols i.e. the idol of internal and external egotism, the idol of line of thinking, the idol of status, the idol of temperament and the idol of wealth in the sense that all of these will not distract a monotheist from the right path and prevent him from pursuing the Truth. Monotheism is the belief in Allah which means that no attachment and affiliation other than Allah can lay down correct course of conduct for us and that all our actions, rising, sitting etc. are for the sake of Allah.

Economics based on monotheism, the sources of production, method of distribution of produce and wealth, rights of appropriation and all other codes of conduct should be in conformity with the commands of Allah.

The army based on monotheism, that is from the point of the position of learning, skill and a good background, preparation, invasion, war strategy, offensive measures, etc. should be in accordance with the commands of Allah and under Divine obligations and not even the

slightest thought of jealousy, selfishness, revenge, expropriation of territories and usurpation should trouble our mind but it should be done in the true spirit of asserting the Truth and of establishing the Kingdom of Allah as well as enforcing the Divine commands. Our routing the oppressors, delivering the oppressed from the clutches of tyrants and persecutors, and defending their life, property and honour should be according to the commands of Allah. Above all the main objective should be to defend and safeguard the frontiers from outside aggression. Undoubtedly, the commander-in-chief of the Islamic army should be one, who is the follower and deputy of the infallible Imam. His article of faith is the Truth. His soldiers willingly and gladly accept martyrdom. To be one of his (Imam's) soldiers is worship of Allah. These are the characteristics of the army of monotheism. By giving reference to the past services, experience and skill one should not take any wrong advantage of the situation or violate the orders of one's superiors.

The social environment in monotheism is that one where the leader is elected not on the basis of power and strength, tribal or group affiliations, but on the principles of Divine commandments, that is knowledge and learning, piety, spirit of Jihad and martyrdom, accomplishments, trustworthiness, skill and administrative abilities.

The society in monotheism is that institution where the Supreme Ruler is Allah and in which all the people are treated equally according to the commands of Allah, and all are equal in the eyes of law, and where personal prejudices, self-aggrandizement and mutual discord and dissensions are eradicated. Hence, the meaning of monotheism that has been elaborated above is correct in its completeness and vastness. Taking this as a standard, we should now see as to which one amongst us, or which form of society, is truly based on monotheism and in what manner and by what means we can reach our goal.

The Holy Prophet said, "qulu, la ila ha il lal lah tuflihu" (Say, there is no god but Allah, you will attain prosperity and salvation). We should not take this saying lightly, because in this hadith of the Holy Prophet the ultimate result of the belief in monotheism is prosperity and salvation.

The Holy Qur'an tells us that our final objective is prosperity, and we see that according to the Holy Qur'an the essence of our worship of Allah is piety. The Holy Qur'an says:

Men, worship Your Lord who created you and those, who lived before you, so that you may become pious. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:21)

Piety is not the ultimate goal but it is the means to success and prosperity. The Holy Qur'an says:

Men of reason, have fear of Allah so that you may attain eternal happiness. (Surah al-Ma'ida, 5:100)

Please give your good attention to the following wordings: According to Qur'anic words "sakhkhara lakum" and "khalafa lakum" which mean that the entire Universe has been created for us and we have been created for the worship of Allah, so that we tread on the path of Allah. Worship of Allah is meant for piety and piety is the starting point of eternal happiness. And according to Mufradatul Qur'an by Raghīb Isfahani happiness means success and triumph. Therefore, our life is for us and we are for the worship of Allah. Worship is for piety and piety is for eternal happiness. Hence, the subtle meaning of happiness can be well understood. In other words it means victory over restrictions, restraints and overpowering the internal as well as external enemies.

In the days when I was explaining the meaning of La ilaha il lal lah (there is no god but Allah) I made on the black-board a sketch of a seed which after being embedded in the soil germinates and becomes a green seedling. There I had said that in order to get rid of the soil, that seed performs the following three functions in its germination.

- (i) Spreading its root in the soil.
- (ii) Deriving nourishment from the soil.
- (iii) Separating itself from the sand particles.

After illustrating this example, I had said that if man wishes to achieve freedom, he should also adopt the following three functions:

- (i) He should possess such belief and ideology which is based on reason.
- (ii) He should achieve maturity of thought from all possible sources for his betterment.
- (iii) He should eliminate all possible hurdles and obstructions so as to embrace the belief in Allah.

If anyone ignores any of these three functions he will ever remain in a condition of misfortune. If his beliefs are not firm and are not based on knowledge and if he does not take advantage of his abilities, he will not be able to dispel his opponents and ultimately will be perished like that seed which is embedded in the soil and is not capable of performing its three functions and .gets disintegrated in the dust

Factors Which Distract Man from the Belief in Allah

The following are the reasons which distract man from the belief in Allah:

- (i) Despotism and Tyranny: One of the reasons of going astray is the fear of the people who are in power. The Holy Qur'an narrates about Fir'aun thus: Fir'aun said: If you will take a god beside me, I will most certainly make you one of the imprisoned. (Surah ash-Shu'ara 26:29) Therefore, out of sheer fear, people started

worshipping and bowing before him.

(ii) Love and Faith: Sometimes the love of a certain thing causes man to forget Allah and he pins all his hopes on that thing or person. He considers him to be all in all. The Holy Qur'an says:

They obeyed the rabbis and the monks and worshipped the Messiah, son of Maryam, as they should have worshipped Allah. (Surah Tawbah, 9:31) These self-appointed scholars used to declare things permissible by Allah as prohibitive and the prohibitive ones as permissible and because of their faith in them people used to obey them.

(iii) Forlorn Hopes: Sometimes people in the hope of receiving help and honour believed in gods besides Allah. Thus the Holy Qur'an says: They chose idols besides Allah in the hope of receiving help from them. (Surah Ya Sin, 36:74) They have sought honor from other gods instead of Allah! (Surah Maryam, 19:81)

In order to distract the people from the straight path of monotheism they used to lure them with their pleasant and enchanting talks, forlorn hopes and tall promises and sometimes they used to frighten them also. The Holy Qur'an says:

What you worship, instead of Allah, are no more than empty names that you and your fathers have given to certain things. (Surah Yusuf, 12:40) In our time also for the purpose of distracting people from Islam many pleasant and high-sounding political slogans have been coined, for instance, freedom, democracy, peasants, labourers, patrons, international laws, .council etc. as uttering of these names are nothing but a mere pastime

Proofs of Monotheism

Harmony Exists Between All Creations: The best and the most simple proof of monotheism is the system of combination which exists between various creations.

The arrangement of various portions of a building or of the articles of a book or of the lines of a letter is a proof of the fact that their creator is one single person. If three artists sit separately in a corner and get busy in making a sketch of a bird and each one of them makes the sketch of different parts of the body i.e. the first one sketches the head, the second one the body and the third one the feet and if all the three sketches are joined together there will not be any harmony between them.

Thus harmony, moderation and proportional balance between all creations is the best evidence of the Oneness of Allah. Weakness with strength, offence with defense and rudeness with gentleness are so inter-related that man is simply wonder-struck. All of them are so closely harmonized that they have established a well-knit system. Just see how the strength of the

parents helps the newborn baby to overcome his weakness, how the vast expanse of heavenly bodies in the various layers of the space have held the earth so firmly; how the carbon-dioxide gas which is exhaled by man during respiration is balanced by the liberation of oxygen by plants which absorb carbon-dioxide and expel oxygen; how the structure of a camera is identical with that of a human eye and how the pupil of an eye accommodates itself to admit light inside it; how it contracts in bright light and expands in insufficient light; and how when it is necessary the eye-brows help in making light proportionate; how the saline water in the eye and the saliva in the mouth are closely related with each other and the two different tastes are so compatible with the structure of the mouth and the eye; how the aggressive nature of man is balanced by the docile nature of the woman in order to bring about a harmony between them.

If one ponders over the natural and temperamental harmony that exists between creatures, one will notice a complete compatibility . The Creator of a newborn baby and of the breast milk is one and the same Being, because as a consequence of the birth of a newborn baby, the mother's breast starts lactating.

Similarly the sun passes its rays down to the earth, the oceans and seas send off the water vapours up in the atmosphere, the gravitational force of the earth brings back these vapours down to earth and the roots of the plants absorb nourishment from the earth and push them upward. Are these compatibilities not indicating the presence of an infinitely Superb and Supreme Power?

The organs of every animal and its morphological structure are in accordance with its individual needs and environmental conditions . In all animals the severance of physical attachment of the offspring from its mother is a natural consequence of its (offspring's) needs. The difference between our knowledge and ignorance is like the difference between a drop of water and the ocean because there are innumerable minute secrets of nature and their mutual relationships that human mind has not yet been able to trace out.

An Incident: One day a young man, who after learning a few words of his lesson had become proud, asked me a question: "Why are there two rak'ats (units) in the morning prayers?" I replied, "I don't know but I am quite sure there must be some reason for it, though it may not be necessary that the reasons or explanation of all the Divine commandments are made evident to us and that too on one single day. Since sometimes the Divine commandments have a basic importance of worship and obedience to Allah, it becomes necessary for us to obey Allah.

The Holy Qur'an says:
Would that you really knew what Hell is! It leaves and spares no one and nothing. It scorches

men's skin and it has nineteen angelic keepers ...Our informing you of the numbers of these angels is a trial for the disbelievers ... (Surah Mudaththir, 74:27–31) At another place the Holy Qur'an says:

The qibla— the direction which you had been facing during your prayers was only made in order that we would know who would follow the Messenger and who would turn away. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:143) Besides, has it not been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an that Prophet Ibrahim was ordered by Allah to sacrifice his son, Ismail so that Allah might know how steadfast he was on the path of Allah. The Holy Qur'an says: We called to him, 'Ibrahim, you have fulfilled what you were commanded to do in your dream '. Thus do We reward the righteous ones. (Surah Saffat, 37:105)

During the conversation I told this young friend that just as in this temporal world there are certain set rules and principles and without understanding them no tangible result can be achieved, similarly in the spiritual world also there are commandments of which we should take proper notice, otherwise we cannot attain intellectual maturity and ever-lasting happiness. An Example. Suppose somebody says to you that at a distance of hundred steps there is a treasure. If you walk a distance of one hundred and ten steps and start digging the ground, you will not be able to find it. Therefore we have to keep in view the exact quantity or number which has been told us. This minute point is established by a telephone set in the sense that even if one digit is wrongly dialed one cannot have the desired person on the telephone line to talk with.

Let me give one more example to illustrate this point. If we want to open a door with a key or to switch on a machine we cannot do so if anyone of the grooves or notches on the key do not coincide with those in the lock or machine.

Despite furnishing him with several examples I found that he had become so arrogant after reading books and acquiring education that in the matter of worship he refused to accept this principle. Besides he also did not believe that one cannot reach perfection without the guidance of Divine revelation nor did he understand that with our limited knowledge and .intelligence we have no alternative but to fall a prey to superstition and uncertainty

Is There any Deity Besides Allah?

One thing about which the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali has drawn our attention is that if there existed any other deity other than Allah, he too must have sent his prophets, or he must have revealed some signs in proof of his divinity. Apart from that if there exists two gods and both have divine power both of them will be having limitations and if any god exists at all with

limitations then he cannot be a true god, because limited power is that which at one stage reached its ultimate end and we know it quite well that limited power cannot be god itself. Or alternatively both powers can be limitless. But if both powers happen to be limitless, both of them cannot be termed as limitless powers. In this regard I can cite an example quoted by a scholar. "If you ask an architect to construct a building which has an unlimited area, he cannot obviously make more than one building with unlimited area because for the other one there will remain no space at all

Polytheism

Polytheism, that is to depend upon some one other than Allah and to consider Allah's creature as god and to believe in another power in contrast to Allah.

Polytheism, that is to obey any god other than Allah unconditionally . Polytheism, that is to say any type and manner of worship which is not meant for Allah.

In the narrations made in the Holy Qur'an the following two things have been generally mentioned:

- (i) Strengthening one's faith with the firm belief in Allah's Power, believing in Divine help and blessings and fearing Allah's Wrath.
- (ii) To shake off one's belief in receiving help from any power other than Allah, to belie all false standards and to abolish all bases and traces of polytheism.

We read in the Holy Qur'an that Prophet Nuh had warned his deviated son that all the infidels of his time would be perished in the Deluge because of Allah's wrath. The son replied that as long the wrath of his father's Allah persisted he would perch himself safely on the top of the mountain. Just imagine the logic of the son of Prophet Nuh. He had thought the mountain and its protection as counter to Allah's wrath. This is the glaring example of polytheism. Thus if we also, like the son of Prophet Nuh, take anybody else—man or any other thing—as equal to Allah, .we are polytheists

Examples of Polytheism

A person says there is no necessity of offering Salatul Istisqa (prayers for rains) as water can be stored now in dams and lakes for our needs. Another person says that it is not the time now that Allah sends down His wrath so that people are struck with famine because ship-loads of food-grains can now be had from abroad. Still another one argues that he admits the sanctities of the religious laws but by this it does not mean that we should violate the international laws,

or he says that on the face of the commands of Allah he should also take into consideration the consent of the people and as such sometimes he obeys the commands of Allah and sometimes of the people also. Such a kind of notion or view-point is in contravention to the belief in the Oneness of Allah.

In the Holy Qur'an about 200 times the words, "dunillahi" or "dunihi" have been repeated in connection with polytheism. It refers to a god other than Allah. If we want to pinpoint the true sign of a polytheist's belief, which should be correct and be according to the Holy Qur'an, the word "dunillahi" i.e. beside Allah will be more appropriate.

Hence, those who go after others and expect their honour and success from non-Divine beings and establish the laws of others instead of Allah; those who have pinned their hopes on others besides Allah and their article of faith depends on pleasing others besides Allah; and those who fear beings other than Allah and work for them have undoubtedly excluded themselves from the bounds of monotheism. The Number of Polytheists: In the above mentioned sense the number of devout people, who have not considered any other being besides Allah as their centre of attention or have not pinned any hope on them and who are not hypocrites but honour the commands of Allah and who only enforce the commands of Allah, is very small.

The Holy Qur'an says:

(Most of them do not believe in Allah, they are but pagans. (Surah Yusuf, 12:106

Anxiety, the Sign of Polytheism

A big problem of psychology is anxiety and to check worries is its main object. But in my opinion anyone who has entered the fold of monotheism and his thought and deeds are only for Allah there is no chance of his suffering from nervous exhaustion and depression. But when the thoughts and deeds of man are not for the sake of Allah only, he is likely to suffer from neurosis. In other words as soon as a man sets his foot on the path of Allah, Allah rewards him for his deeds. Allah hears his implorations and watches his deeds and that man is the one who does not pin his hopes on anyone except Allah.

All that we discuss in our daily talks about problems that such and such person's work was hampered or not hampered, or he achieved success or was doomed to failure, or he prospered or got ruined, and besides all that psychology deals with them by saying that such and such failure was the cause of anxiety, are outside the pale of monotheism because in the belief of monotheism there is no such thing as failure.

It was immaterial for the Holy Prophet and it made no difference with him when he used to tend sheep or migrated to Madina, or took refuge in the Cave of Thaur, or was in the battlefield,

or delivered a sermon from the pulpit of the Masjid, or performed circumambulation of the Holy Ka'bah or carried bricks for the construction of the masjid, or wore martial dress or ordinary civilian dress. True, responsibilities do change, but wishes do not have any effect. On the other hand we are such that if someone in authority deprives us of our position, dress, pulpit, office or residential place we go to the extremes of grieving or on the point of committing suicide, because these things have become so loving to us or in other words these have become our part and parcel and an idol of worship for us. In some countries the government in power put pressure on religious leaders to invoke Allah's blessings for the ruler in the masjid and sometime lure them with bribe or intimidate them to do so. Just as we have learnt from the hadith that when crimes are given appreciation the domination of the despot is strengthened and as a natural consequence it invites the wrath of Allah. As a despot becomes more powerful the commands of Allah become weakened. Under this situation if a religious leader instead of submitting to the pressure of such despots abandons his seat, or gives up the job of sermonizing and leading the people in congregational prayers, he can relieve himself from that pressure and thereby save himself from sins. But when residential place, professional security, dress and status become the centre of attraction for him, they make him their captives. May Allah save us, for the sake of sincere .believers, from those captivities and gods (temptations) which have entered our hearts

Signs of Polytheism

Associating anyone with Allah is the worst sign of evil and we deal here with one aspect of it:

1. Practical Effect of Polytheism Polytheism is the cause of nullifying the good deeds. According to the Holy Qur'an, man's total deeds go in waste because of polytheism.

Sometimes a small deed defeats all our efforts. Following are some examples:

- (i) A student studies throughout the year but he does not appear in his examinations. His lessons remain unchecked, and though they happen to be intact, yet he loses social status.
- (ii) A man who has been very particular about keeping his health but if he takes a small quantity of poison all his life long precautions become useless.
- (iii) If a student kills a son of his teacher he nullifies all his good deeds despite his lifelong efforts, services and the affection of his teacher.

Thus associating someone with Allah is like taking a poison or killing a teacher's son. The Holy

Qur'an says:

If people worship idols, their deeds will be turned devoid of all virtues. (Surah Anam, 6:89)

2. Psychological Effect of Polytheism It is abundantly clear that the root cause of man's

anxiety is that he cannot please all people because people are in good number and each one of them expects one or the other thing from him. As he cannot possibly please everybody he becomes worried because in order to please one person or a group of persons, one will have to displease another person or group of persons. Here the question of monotheism comes under discussion. The monotheist only knows to please one Being and that Being is Allah. It is of no concern to him as to what other people want or expect from him. By this he is naturally wellcontented. In this context the Holy Qur'an cites two examples:

(i) Can many different lords be considered better than One All-Dominant Allah? (Surah Yusuf, 12:39)

It means whether man can be happy in pleasing One Allah or he can be so in pleasing so many with varying kinds. (ii) Allah advances the example of a man who is owned (as a slave in common) by a number of men at loggerheads, and another man who is owned by only one. Are these two alike in attribute? (Surah Zumar, 39:29)

Hence, a man who is subservient to only one person remains in peace but the one who is under the domination of many people of bad habits and temper, cannot be in peace. It is too difficult to please others but it is Allah Who becomes pleased with His servants. In the Supplication of Kumayl we come across the following words: Ya sari'ar riza (He whose pleasure is quickly achieved However if others get pleased with us at all they never forget our shortcomings. It is only Allah Who is so kind as to overlook our mistakes and shortcomings, as we recite in the Supplication of Kumayl: "O Allah! You reveal our merits and cover our faults". (See: The Supplication of Kumayl, ISP 1985)

In principle if people do not act within the sphere of monotheism or the bounds of Allah and are pleased with me, it will have no value at all. What will they do for me? They can just clap their hands or name the street after me or do similar other useless things for encouraging me.

What else can they do?

Apart from this was there anyone else except Allah Who took care of me while I was still in my mother's womb? Am I not still under His care? Will I have no concern with Him on the Day of Judgement? Are all the virtues and merits not from Him? Are not the hearts of the people under His control? Then why should I forsake Him and run after frivolous things?

In short, instead of trying to please others who have varying tastes when their pleasure does not affect my past and future, it is better to please only Allah the One, Whose pleasure is quickly achieved and Who can change the people's mind for me, and with whom rest my past and future. The Holy Qur'an says:

Do not consider anything equal to Allah lest you should become despised and neglected.

(Surah Bani Israil, 17:22) We ran after people for receiving their attention throughout our life and ultimately came to the conclusion that people liked us only because of their selfish motives. It is only Allah who likes us for our own sake. Our friends make new friends and then desert us to let us remain in perpetual misery. As mentioned in the following verse of the Holy

Qur'an:

Believers some of your wives may prove to be your enemies, so beware of them. (Surah Taghabun, 64:14)³⁰ If it is told that some of our wives and children are our enemies it is in this very sense that some of our wives and children want us only for the sake of their own comforts no matter if we are recompensed with misfortune and ruination.

3. Collective Effect of Polytheism

In a society based on monotheism personal interests, governing laws and collective thinking are on one and the same plane. Authority, commands, laws and the path are the same and it is the path of Allah and the command of Allah and Allah is the Patron and Guardian of everybody. But in a polytheistic society instead of one law and one direction there are several laws and directions and everyone defends his own line of direction which he has adopted for himself.

The Holy Qur'an says:

In that case each god would have taken away his creatures and claimed superiority over the others. (Surah al-Mu'minun, 23:91) That is to say in this society the lawyers defend their clients and not the truth. In this society the aim of life is not to worship Allah but to flatter the people.

The Holy Qur'an says:

Lord, when we obeyed our chiefs and elders they led us astray. (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:67)

According to the Holy Qur'an:

People are envious of each other. (Surah al-Mu'minun, 23:91) Hence, everyone adopts the way of his liking and seeks pleasure in it, wants to please himself without caring for the truth and falsehood. He is concerned only with his own interest, his well-wishers, and his social standing, but he does not respect his opponents even though they have reasons to be on the right side. The Holy Qur'an says:

Who have divided themselves into various religious sects, each one happy with their own belief. (Surah al-Rum, 30:32) Domination, suppression, false propaganda and opposition are the collective signs of polytheism. The Holy Qur'an says: Do not associate yourselves with the pagans who have divided themselves into various religious sects, each one happy with their own belief. (Surah al-Rum, 30:31–32) Do not think that only the idolater is the polytheist, but it means that you should not join the school and path of that person who sows the seeds of

discord and thrusts his personal opinion, likes and dislikes on some school and deprives it from its reality and piety, otherwise you too will become a polytheist because side by side with .Allah's command you introduce your own views in which you are interested

The Effect of Polytheism in the Next Life

To enter the Hell with disgrace in the Hereafter is included in the effects of polytheism. We read in the Holy-Qur'an at several places that on the Day of Judgement the polytheists will be addressed that they followed the gods besides Allah and worshipped the deities in the hope that they would remove their sufferings. On that Day they will be told to call those deities to come to their rescue! The Holy Qur'an says: Do not consider anything equal to Allah lest you be (thrown into Hell, despised and driven away from Allah's Mercy. (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:39

Grandeur of Monotheism

It is the style of the Holy Qur'an that apart from chalking out a mode of action of doing good and abstaining from evil, it teaches us in parables and uses analogies which by themselves are interesting. The Holy Qur'an says that for the believers the example of Fir'aun's wife (Asiya) is so good and interesting, for despite being under alluring atmosphere she did not swerve from the right path. She was so truthful and steadfast in her belief that all the pomp and glamour of the court of Fir'aun could not shake her faith and she achieved greater success in her belief so much so that she prayed to Allah for her salvation in the Hereafter. The Holy Qur'an says: To the Believers, as a parable, Allah has advanced the event of the wife of Fir'aun who said, 'Lord, establish for me a house in Paradise. Rescue me from Fir'aun and his deeds and save me from the unjust people'. (Surah Tahrim, 66:11)

We also read in the Holy Qur'an that there is a clear example of the infidel wife of Prophet Nuh. She was prevented from the right path by her lust and obstinate nature to the extent that despite being lodged in the House of revelation and being in the proximity of Prophet Nuh she went astray. The Holy Qur'an says: Allah has reminded the disbelievers about the event of the wives of Nuh and Lut by advancing (a parable. (Surah Tahrim, 66:9

Progenitor of Monotheism

The Holy Qur'an says about Prophet Ibrahim:

Say: Allah has spoken the truth. Follow the upright rites of Ibrahim who was not an idolater. (Surah Ale Imran, 3:95) Now we proceed with the historical events that took place in the time of Prophet Ibrahim so that we may prepare a list of his achievements by which it becomes evident that he was the loyal and noble hero of the school of monotheism. Prophet Ibrahim was obedient to Allah in the discharge of his obligations and no power on earth could distract him or prevent him from the right path. He came out with flying colours from the trials and tribulations. The Holy Qur'an says: When his Lord tested Ibrahim 's faith and he satisfied the test, He said, "I am appointing you as (the leader of mankind" (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:124

Merits of Prophet Ibrahim

Desecrated the Idol of Temporal Desires: Prophet Ibrahim was ordained by Allah to slaughter his beloved son, Prophet Isma'il. When he was born his father's age was hundred years. Without advancing any excuse Prophet Ibrahim obeyed the command of Allah to which he gave priority over his paternal love. He broke the idol of personal desires and wishes. When he suppressed his sentiments and emotions and laid down his son and started slaughtering him with a knife, there came the following Divine command:

O' Ibrahim! you have fulfilled what you were commanded to do in your dream. Thus do We reward the righteous ones. It was certainly an open trial. (Surah Saffat, 37: 105)

Crushed the Tyrant Ruler of His Time: Prophet Ibrahim disagreed Namrud by shattering his vanity through logic and reasonings The Holy Qur'an says: O Muhammad, have you heard about the one who argued with Ibrahim about his Lord for His granting him the kingdom? Ibrahim said, "It is only my Lord who gives life and causes things to die" He replied: "I am the giver of life and death". Ibrahim said, "Allah causes the sun to rise in the East. Can you make it rise in the West?" Thus the unbeliever was confounded. Allah does not guide the unjust people.

(Surah al-Baqarah, 2:258) **Destroyed the Idolatry of Heavenly Bodies:** The Holy Qur'an says: When it became dark at night he (Ibrahim) saw a star and said: "Is this my Lord?" But when it disappeared, he said: "I don't adore those who fade away" When Ibrahim saw the rising moon, he said: "Is this my Lord?" But when it faded away, he said: "If my Lord had not guided me, I should have certainly gone astray. (Surah al-An'am, 6: 77-78)

Severed Relations with his Relatives: Prophet Ibrahim severed relations with his relatives for the sake of Allah. The Holy Qur'an says: Lord! the idols have misled the people. Whoever follows me is my friend, as for those who disobey, you are certainly All-Forgiving and All-Merciful. (Surah Ibrahim, 14:36)

Abandoned his Wife and Suckling son: Prophet Ibrahim abandoned his wife and the suckling son for the sake of Allah. The Holy Qur'an says: O Lord! I have settled some of my offspring in a barren valley near your Sacred House so that they could be steadfast in prayers. Lord! fill the hearts of the people with love for them and produce fruits for their sustenance so that they may glorify You. (Surah Ibrahim, 14: 37) Never Cared for His Life: Prophet Ibrahim cheerfully obeyed Allah when he was thrown in the fire. The Holy Qur'an says: O We said, O fire! be a comfort and peace to Ibrahim. (Surah Anbiya, 21:69) The Holy Qur'an has dealt with this subject in detail but we have quoted some relevant verses .only for the sake of brevity

Deceit is Polytheism

We read in the hadith that every sort of false pretence is polytheism. Of course polytheism is of varying degrees. Sometimes it is very apparent as for instance worship of the idols, the sun, the moon and the stars, and sometimes it is so hidden that man himself is unable to detect it. We have read in the hadith that the problem of this type of polytheism and monotheism is as difficult as perceiving the movement of an ant on a slab of stone in the dead of the night. Therefore, without the ever-present guidance of Allah and of one's own deepest consideration and quest for searching truth one cannot prevent himself from falling into the trap of .polytheism

Signs of Sincere Believer

1. Does not Wait for Any Return: The Holy Qur'an considers those people as the embodiment of virtue and sincerity who offered their food which they needed most at the time of breaking their fast to the needy ones for three consecutive days, and simply said that they did not do it in the hope of any reward, or praise or thanks. (Vide: Surah Dahr, 76: 7—9). Therefore, anyone who expects something in return of the favour done to a third person by way of a word of appreciation is void of sincere devotion and purpose. Such a person finding no appreciation of his deed feels sorry for it. Such a person should make an appraisal of his true intentions. 2. Controls the Fury of Inherent Tendencies: The second kind of sincerity is that one is not swayed away by his inborn passions. We all have heard that when Imam Ali overpowered his enemy and laid him on the ground for severing his head from his body, the wretched fellow spat on his face out of his deepest rancour and disrespect and the Holy Imam got infuriated. For a while Imam Ali paused till he composed himself and then he proceeded to behead the

enemy. Afterwards, he explained that the reason of his making a pause was that he did not want to be swayed away by the dictates of his personal desire as the enemy had made him infuriated, hence he did not want to mar the noble spirit of Jihad as otherwise it would have appeared as an act of retaliation.

3. A Sincere Person is Never Sorry and Unsuccessful: A sincere person performs his action for the sake of Allah only and his reward remains preserved before Allah and thus he is not affected by consideration of victory or defeat, happiness or grief. As we have already said before such a man never has any anxiety or worry as these originate from unbridled desires, failures and frustrations. The object of such a man is to attain Allah's pleasure only and thus .leads a happy life

How One Can Avoid Polytheism and False Hopes?

The Holy Qur'an has severely warned against polytheism and in fact if we come out of the clutches of the Satan and on the one hand suppress our inwardly dominant temporal desires and on the other hand eradicate the external power of ruthless despots, then there will remain no question of polytheism and hypocrisy. The causes of all our misfortunes and difficulties are polytheism, intemperate desires and despotic domination, and getting rid of all these things is the prerequisite of monotheism. It is because unless we cleanse a utensil from bad food we cannot put fresh food in it. Thus, in the realm of monotheism the declaration of the words La ilaha (There is no god) come prior to Illallah (except Allah). In this regard the Holy Qur'an points out the following causes of polytheism:

The belief considering other things as one's guardians besides Allah is as feeble as a spider's web. (Surah Ankabut, 29:41) Why then have you taken guardians other than Allah when such guardians cannot benefit or harm themselves. (Surah ar-Ra'd, 13:16) Those whom you worship instead of Allah do not have the power to create even a fly, even though all of them would come together for the task. (Surah al-Hajj, 22:73)

Do those who establish friendship with disbelievers instead of the believers seek honour? Let them know that all honour belongs to Allah. (Surah an-Nisa, 4:139)

The Holy Qur'an further teaches in parables how the notorious despots like Qarun, Fir'aun and Namrud and their coteries failed to avoid the wrath of Allah. In short the Holy Qur'an has advanced the following guidelines for the abolition of polytheism: (i) Unravelling the Reality: By exposing the weakness and the vulnerability of polytheism it is sufficient to know that all those guardians who have no power to benefit or harm or to create or bestow honour can become the center of our hopes and aspirations! (ii) Teaching in Parables: By teaching in parables as to

how people depended on all their guardians, idols etc. and could not get any benefit from them, but Allah protected Prophet Ibrahim from the blazing fire, Prophet Yusuf from the well, Prophet Yunus from the belly of the fish and Prophet Muhammad from his sworn enemies who had surrounded his house.

(iii) Drawing Comparison: To root out polytheism the Holy Qur'an uses the method of drawing a comparison between polytheism and monotheism and warning how man falls into the ditch of total disgrace by accepting one thing for the other in place of the right and correct thing. To

illustrate the point a few verses of the Holy Qur'an can be quoted below:

Is the One who can create, equal to those (idols), who cannot create anything? Why then do you not understand? (Surah an-Nahl, 16:17) Those whom you (pagans) worship besides Allah, are themselves servants just like yourselves. (Surah al-Araf, 7:194) In fact these are as helpless, feeble and wanting as you are. After all why have you so simply sold your honour and dignity and why are you so submissive to those who are just like you! However, if you lose your faith in Allah you will lose your sense of honour and self-respect. On this occasion it is pertinent to mention what Allama Iqbal says.

"If a man out of his sheer blind foldedness adopted the servitude (worship) of another person, he will be like the one who possessed a grain of self-respect and freedom, handed it over to qayhobad and jamshed " "In the servile attitude he is worse than a dog. I have never come across an instance in which one dog may have lowered his head before another dog". The Holy Qur'an says:

Can any of your idols guide you to the Truth? (Surah Yunus, 10:35)

4. Prayers, Invocation and Remembrance of Allah

The fourth important weapons for demolishing polytheism are the offering of prayers, glorifying of Allah, invocation, and the remembrance of Allah, for if each word and each sentence of it is uttered with rapt attention, it will fill the human heart with the belief of monotheism. To take an example if we ponder for a while over the following recitals:

Allah u Akbar (Allah is Great), bihawllillahi (With Allah's Power) and "iyyaka na'budu" (You alone do we worship), we shall come to know that the meaning of Allah u Akbar by any measure and standard is greater than man's power of conception worthy of looking at, hearing, saying and writing, far superior to all, and mightier than the might of all temporal powers and despots and their tricky contrivances.

bihawllillahi wa quwwatihi qqumo wa aq'ud, (I lie and rise only by the Might of Allah). iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nasta'in (We worship only Allah). Neither we owe allegiance to the East nor to the West. We seek help only from Allah. He is All-Powerful and His Might is infinite.

Whatever is on earth is His Kingdom. He helps man with air, sand, clouds, moon and water. He has helped mankind through His angels. He has frightened His enemies and has destroyed them by hailstones on their heads and has helped the believers by pacifying them. We seek help from Allah in Whose hands is our life's existence.

In short every word of our supplication enlivens the spirit of the belief in monotheism and does away with our attachment with everything except Allah. But it does not mean that we should give up efforts and quest for learning and that we should refuse to take personal benefits from the world resources.

This is almost certain that in this book our discussions are not exhaustive, for if we have described four cardinal points for elaborating the inspiring effect of monotheism and rooting out polytheism, it does not mean that there is not the fifth point. While teaching the fundamentals of belief these are the cardinal points which Allah has instilled in my brain.

.Perhaps there may be other methods of approach on this subject

Signs of Idolatrous Nations

The Holy Qur'an says:

When Allah, the One is mentioned, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Day of Judgement begin to shrink but when the idols are mentioned, they rejoice. (Surah az-Zumar, 39:45) For example when we say that according to the commands of Allah we should oppose such an idea or person or group of persons, they become annoyed, and when we say that according to such and such international law they become joyful. This is the sign of polytheism of these people. When we say that Allah wills they become unhappy but when we say that according to the people's will they become happy. In all matters these people have pinned their hopes on the East and the West instead of the Divine revelations. They are attracted in things and persons other than Allah and are only interested in submitting to their passions and temptations instead of Divine commands! This is the sign of the downfall and of a nation's going astray

When Obedience to Parents is forbidden?

In the Holy Qur'an at five different places obedience to one's parents is greatly stressed and at four other places respect and reverence to parents have been dealt with side by side with belief in monotheism and obedience to Allah. It is so because the very existence of man is in the first instance due to Allah and at the second stage it is concerned with the parents. This is one

aspect of this issue but on the other aspect of being kind to one's parents is another important issue which has been mentioned side by side with monotheism, belief, worship, and obedience to Allah.

In the ahadith (traditions) respect and reverence to parents have been so emphasized that looking at them with love and affection constitutes a kind of worship to Allah. But in spite of all these recommendations if the parents try to distract their off-springs from the path of Allah, their obedience is forbidden and it will be incumbent on the off-springs to disobey their parents. Such disobedience has been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in following two verses.

The meaning and explanation of both are one and the same: We have enjoined man, to be kind to his parents; but if they try to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge then do not obey them. (Surah al-Ankabut, 29:8) If they try to compel you to associate Me with that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. (Surah Luqman, 31:15) Such sort of direction from the parents' side is sometimes manifest in the shape of sympathy when they say, "O my son! If we do not obey such and such despot, we shall be deprived of our means of sustenance. Our property, status and honour will be safe by acting as their yes man". Sometimes they castigate their sons by saying that their forefathers too were following the similar path as they themselves had obeyed the despots of their times with respect and veneration and had passed a fully satisfied life. "It is the tradition of our forefathers", they say, "to adopt such and such methods and to reject such and such procedure". With such notions, according to the Holy Qur'an, the parents with all their dominating influence wish to put their offsprings on the wrong track of polytheism. Thus under the circumstances when the question of belief in gods other than Allah arises, the parents should not be obeyed

Polytheism—an Unpardonable Sin

Polytheism is an unpardonable sin. The Holy Qur'an declares in the following two verses: Allah does not forgive the sin of associating others with Him but He may forgive other sins. Whoever believes in other gods besides Him has indulged in a great sin. (Surah an-Nisa, 4:48) Allah does not forgive the sin of associating others with Him but He may forgive the other sins of whomever He wants. One who considers anything equal to Allah has certainly gone far away from the right path. (Surah an-Nisa, 4:116) Thus the benevolent will of Allah is for those whom He wants to pardon and the will of All-Wise Allah is related to man's piety and virtuous deeds.

Counter-measures against Polytheists

It is imperative that we should not be unaware of those whose focus of attention is on gods

other than Allah and whose endeavours are directed towards defeating the purpose of the obedience to Allah. Their main objective is to raise themselves and to strengthen the position of their followers. It is because if we do not follow the path of Allah, we shall attract the attention of all such groups of people. We shall be like blind creatures, and shall fall into their trap and they will devour us like cannibals, who after fulfilling their mission will leave us in the

lurch and will go after chasing other victims like us.

The revered teacher martyr Murtaza Mutahhary used to advise us to recite often the following piece of supplication: "O Allah! Whosoever abandoned the righteous path of Yours and entered into a different fold, got defeated and whosoever went after other gods besides Allah suffered a terrible loss".

The esteemed readers should please pay their attention towards the under-mentioned established facts: Man should choose one of the following three alternatives:

(i) That path which man determines by his own free will.

(ii) That path which others fix for him.

(iii) That path which Allah chooses for him.

The first path is not correct because we decide to act on one day and on the second day we think that our decision was wrong. Actually, it is certain that owing to lack of proper knowledge and under the influence of inborn tendencies we cannot select a right path from amongst the hundreds of paths.

The second path is also not correct because according to the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali: "Since my mother gave birth to me as a free man why should I become the slave of anything whatsoever?" and therefore blind following is in itself a form of polytheism. The Holy

Qur'an says: If you obey them, you shall most surely be polytheist. (Surah al-Anam, 6:122)

Now remains only the third path which is the path of Allah (sabilillah). The Holy Qur'an says: This is My path and it is straight; follow it and do not follow other paths which will lead you far away from the path of Allah. Thus, does Allah guide you so that you may become pious. (Surah al-Anam, 6:153) He has sent the Book to His servant and has made it a flawless guide for mankind. (Surah al-Kahf, 18:1) Muhammad, you are a Messenger and you follow the right path. (Surah Ya Sin, 36:3—4) O Lord! Keep us on the right path—the path of those upon whom you have bestowed favors, not (the path) of those upon whom your wrath is brought down, nor of those who go astray, (Surah al-Fatiha, 1:6, 7)

And we would certainly have guided them in the right path. And whoever obeys Allah and the Prophet is with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours. From among the Prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the good, and how an excellent company are they! (Surah an-

Nisa, 4:68, 69) In short this path is the path of obedience to Allah and this path is the path which has come down to us from the Infinite Knowledge of Allah through the medium of Divine revelations which have been conveyed to us by infallible Prophets, the Holy Imams and just and upright jurists.

Now that the path of Allah has been fully defined, we should show our reaction to the other paths and schools, otherwise people would take wrong advantage of our lethargy and would try to distract us from the path of monotheism.

Allah orders the Holy Prophet to keep aloof from the pagans. The Holy Qur'an says: The pagans do not have any right to establish the Mosque of Allah. (Surah Tawba, 9:17) After it was made clear that the pagans are to be the dwellers of Hell, the Prophet and the believers should not have sought forgiveness from Allah for them even if they may have been relatives. (Surah Tawba, 9:113)

Prophet Ibrahim and those with him are the best examples for you to follow. They told the people, 'We have nothing to do with you and with those whom you worship besides Allah. We have rejected you. Enmity and hatred will separate us for ever unless you believe in One Allah'. ((Surah al-Mumtahinah, 60:4