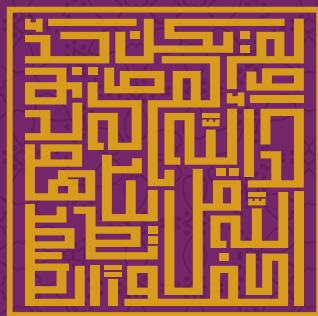


THE PATH OF MONOTHEISM

Leading a God-centered Life



MAULANA
WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

THE PATH OF MONOTHEISM

Leading a God-centered Life

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FOREWORD

The essence of monotheism is to believe in the one God, have complete trust in Him, make Him one's sole concern, and worship Him alone.

Every person embarks on a spiritual quest, seeking a centre of peace and trust for himself. God alone can provide this centre for man. God is the sole answer to the spiritual quest of individuals. Those who have discovered God have attained everything they desire according to the demands of their nature. Realisation of God is the ultimate goal of human beings. In this world, true success is achieved by making God one's sole concern. Every individual is an incomplete being, but one finds complete fulfillment by establishing a profound connection with God.

Monotheism entails the belief in the oneness of God, recognizing that all powers and authority belong solely to Him. He alone is deserving of worship, and no act of worship should be directed to anyone other than God. Only God fulfills the needs, desires, and

wishes of human beings. He governs the system of the entire universe, and the right of superiority belongs solely to Him. Any belief that associates anyone other than God with these aspects is false.

The belief in monotheism (*tawheed*) holds a crucial position in Islam. It is the foundation upon which all Islamic actions are built. Without the foundation of monotheism, the other actions would cease to exist. The essence of monotheism is to believe in the one God, have complete trust in Him, and make Him one's sole concern.

Monotheism is not merely a traditional belief; it represents the most significant intellectual revolution based on a remarkable intellectual discovery. Monotheism entails the recognition of God as the Creator and Lord of humanity. When an individual realizes the existence of God, the Creator and Lord of the universe, it initiates an intellectual storm within his mind, turning an ocean of realization into a raging tempest.

Subsequently, a profound transformation occurs in his thoughts and emotions, resulting in the emergence of a new person—a monotheist in the true sense of the word. The initiation of the Islamic call aims to bring about an intellectual revolution within individuals

based on the belief in the one God. Only after this intellectual revolution can individuals become true monotheists, and when this revolutionary thought inspires many people, they form a society known as an Islamic society.

Individuals require a set of guidelines to tell them how to live in this world. These serve as life's guidebook for man. God is the ultimate source of these guidelines. God provides reliable guidance to human beings to navigate the journey of life successfully in every situation. God is the Creator and Lord of human beings. He alone reserves the right to inform man about life and death. Where did the caravan of humanity begin, and where does it lead to? What is the right path that guides man to his destination without straying?

The most crucial need of every human being is to find God, establish a deep connection with Him, foster a loving relationship with Him, understand God's Creation Plan for man, and build his life accordingly. Such a God-centered life is the only righteous way to live in this world.

Wahiduddin Khan

January 1, 2015

New Delhi

THE ESSENCE OF MONOTHEISM (TAWHEED)

God is the Creator and Lord of human beings. He alone is deserving of worship. In this world, true success is achieved only by making God one's sole concern.

Realisation of God is the ultimate goal of human beings. In this world, true success is achieved only by making God one's sole concern. Every individual is an incomplete being, but one finds complete fulfillment by establishing a profound connection with God.

Every person embarks on a spiritual quest, seeking a centre of peace and trust for himself. God alone can provide this centre for man. God is the sole answer to the spiritual quest of individuals. Those who have discovered God have attained everything they desire according to the demands of their nature.

Individuals require a set of guidelines to tell them how to live in this world. These serve as life's guidebook for man. God is the ultimate source of these guidelines. God provides reliable guidance to human beings to navigate the journey of life successfully in every situation.

God is the Creator and Lord of human beings. He alone reserves the right to inform man about life and death. Where did the caravan of humanity begin, and where does it lead to? What is the right path that guides man to his destination without straying?

The most crucial need of every human being is to find God, establish a deep connection with Him, and foster a loving relationship with Him. Then, one should direct one's entire life toward God. A God-centered life is the only righteous way to live. Those who embrace such a life find true success, while those who neglect it remain deprived and unsuccessful.

THE LIGHT OF THE UNIVERSE

Man requires guidance that enlightens his mind, enabling them to think correctly. God alone is the source of this intellectual and spiritual light.

The Quran states, “God is the light of the heavens and the earth.” (24:35) This means that any light that exists emanates from the essence of God. Therefore, without God’s provision of light, no other source can provide it.

Consider the scenario where the sun ceases to exist. Darkness would envelop the Earth from all directions. Likewise, if there were no stars, the entire universe would be immersed in profound darkness. God has spread numerous radiant celestial bodies throughout the universe, ensuring that every part receives the gift of light. Without this cosmic arrangement, despite the vastness of the world, it would become a terrifying abyss of darkness.

This principle applies not only to physical light but also to intellectual and spiritual illumination. Every human being requires guidance that enlightens their

mind, enabling them to think correctly and discover the spiritual nourishment that bestows wisdom for life. God alone is the source of this intellectual and spiritual light. There is no other spiritual light that a person can find anywhere other than in God.

KNOWLEDGE OF MONOTHEISM

Monotheism is the foundation upon which all Islamic actions are built. Without this necessary foundation, the other actions would cease to exist.

The belief in monotheism holds a crucial position in Islam, and numerous books have been written on the subject in Arabic and other languages. These books emphasize that the knowledge of monotheism is the most sublime and essential knowledge. In a well-known tradition narrated by Muadh Ibn Jabal, the Prophet highlighted the significance of monotheism.

Undoubtedly, the knowledge of monotheism holds the highest position. However, from a practical perspective, its importance lies not only in its superiority as knowledge but also in its role as the foundation upon which all Islamic actions are built. Without the foundation of monotheism, the other actions would cease to exist.

INTELLECTUAL REVOLUTION

Belief in one God, the Creator and Lord of the universe, initiates an intellectual storm within one's mind, turning an ocean of realization into a raging tempest.

Monothism is not merely a traditional belief; it represents the most significant intellectual revolution based on a remarkable intellectual discovery. Monothism entails the recognition of God as the Creator and Lord of humanity. When an individual realizes the existence of God, the Creator and Lord of the universe, it initiates an intellectual storm within their mind, turning an ocean of realization into a raging tempest.

Subsequently, a profound transformation occurs in one's thoughts and emotions, resulting in the emergence of a new person—a monotheist in the true sense of the word. The initiation of the Islamic call aims to bring about an intellectual revolution within individuals based on the belief in monotheism. Only after this intellectual revolution can individuals become true monotheists, and when this revolutionary

thought inspires many people, they form a society known as an Islamic society.

What is monotheism (*tawheed*)? Monotheism entails the belief in the oneness of God, recognizing that all power and authority belong solely to Him. He alone is deserving of worship, and no act of worship should be directed to anyone other than God. Only God fulfills the needs, desires, and wishes of human beings. He governs the system of the entire universe, and the right of superiority belongs solely to Him. Any belief that associates anyone other than God with these aspects is false. The concept of monotheism in the Quran is expressed in the following verse:

“God: there is no deity save Him, the Living, the Eternal One. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belong whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the Earth. Who can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows all that is before them, and all that is behind them. They can grasp only that part of His knowledge which He wills. His throne extends over the heavens and the Earth, and their upholding does not weary Him. He is the Sublime, the Almighty One!” (2:255)

Worshipping God means worshipping one’s Creator and Lord, the only entity deserving of such worship. When a person bows down to someone other than

God, he is bowing down to a creature like himself, unworthy of such reverence. Worshipping God grants greatness to humans while worshipping anyone other than God leads to a life of superstition. Worshipping God opens the door to the realization of God, whereas worshipping anyone else closes that door.

Monotheism is belief in the one God, but there are countless forms of polytheism. For a monotheist, there is only one God who becomes his sole concern, the centre of his attention, and the object of his worship. His entire life is dedicated to this one God. On the other hand, a polytheist lacks a single central point of focus, leading to the emergence of countless forms of polytheism, ranging from the worship of stars, the earth, idols, saints, graves, wealth, power, and family.

The Quran explicitly condemns such practices. A monotheist attributes all greatness to one God and seeks the fulfillment of his desires solely from Him. His worship is directed only to God, and he places his utmost trust in Him, considering Him superior in every aspect. Worship represents the ultimate expression of attachment to someone, which is why all forms of worship are exclusively the right of the one God. Worship of any kind is impermissible for anyone other than God.

CENTRE OF FEAR AND LOVE

Islam emphasizes that one should direct one's attention solely towards God, making Him the sole focal point of one's attention wholeheartedly.

The essence of monotheism is to have complete trust in one God and to be deeply attached to Him with one's heart and mind. It means making God the central focus of one's emotions, both in terms of fear and love. The human mind and heart naturally seek a focal point, someone upon whom they can rely, place their hopes, trust wholeheartedly, and whose remembrance becomes the essence of their lives.

A human being cannot survive without having a centre for his existence. Whether it be wealth and power, idols and deities, or any other thing, if this centre is something other than God, it amounts to polytheism. But when one makes only God, the Lord of the Worlds, the centre of one's existence, it is called monotheism, the belief in the oneness of God. Islam emphasizes that one should direct one's attention solely toward God, making Him the sole focal point of one's attention.

When a person makes God one's deity, one acknowledges the existence of a true Being as one's deity. In contrast, when someone makes something other than God one's deity, one has bestowed deity status upon something that does not truly exist, even if they have constructed an imaginary form of that hypothetical deity. The person who worships God as one's deity has discovered the real source of power.

On the other hand, someone who worships something other than God as one's deity is attached to something that lacks actual existence. A worshipper of God is blessed with eternal bliss, while a worshipper of something other than God faces nothing but eternal deprivation.

THE MISSION OF THE PROPHETS

The mission of the prophets was to help people lead their lives on monotheistic lines so that they may receive divine blessings in this world and the Hereafter.

Throughout human history, every prophet sent by God had a mission to guide man away from polytheism and towards the worship of one God alone. Their purpose was to help people reform their lives in accordance with this belief and receive divine blessings in both this world and the Hereafter. However, in the long history of humanity, the message of nearly every prophet was rejected by their contemporaries, especially those influential figures in society who failed to believe in and support the prophets.

The Quran describes this historical reality as follows: “Alas for human beings! They ridicule every messenger that comes to them” (36:30). This neglect of God’s prophets reached such an extent that their messages were deemed unworthy of being recorded in the annals of human history. While stories of kings

find a place in historical records, the mention of the prophets is almost absent.

However, there is one exceptional case, and that is the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (peace be upon him). With exceptional divine assistance, the Prophet succeeded in transforming monotheism from a theoretical concept into a living movement. He took it from the theoretical stage to the stage of a practical revolution, leaving a lasting impact on history.

TWO BARRIERS

The system of monarchy and the prevalence of superstitious beliefs acted as two constant barriers to the mission of the Prophets achieving positive results.

Why couldn't a movement based on monotheism achieve a practical revolution in ancient times? There were two main reasons for this: the system of monarchy and the prevalence of superstitious beliefs. These two fundamental factors acted as constant barriers against the mission of the Prophets.

Before the advent of Prophet Muhammad, the polytheistic system of monarchy was dominant. In the present age, democratic politics is the norm, where political leaders gain the right to rule through public votes. However, in ancient times, kings ruled by convincing people that they were representatives of god or offspring of god. This led to the emergence of beliefs such as *suraj vanshi* and *chandra vanshi*. In today's world, the foundation of governance is secular democracy, while in ancient times, it was based on polytheistic beliefs. The Quran

refers to this event in the following verse: “Pharaoh said to Moses, ‘I am your supreme Lord’” (79:24).

For the kings, it was politically advantageous to keep the belief in polytheism alive. Consequently, under their patronage, the entire system of life revolved around polytheism, from places of worship to birth and death rituals. This polytheistic system existed worldwide for thousands of years in ancient times. Under the kings’ patronage, it became so powerful that it consistently posed a significant barrier against the message of the prophets. As a result, in ancient times, the prophets’ movement remained limited to conveying their message and couldn’t reach the stage of a widespread practical revolution.

The second obstacle in this chain was what can be described as the age of superstition. In ancient times, modern scientific discoveries had not yet been made, and people could not comprehend the true nature of natural phenomena. They observed various astonishing things in the world, such as the sun, moon, stars, mountains, seas, the earth, the sky, trees, and animals. Witnessing the diversity of these manifestations, human beings developed the misconception that there were multiple creators or that these diverse manifestations represented different gods.

This theory of the multiplicity of gods emerged, leading people to consider the sun and moon, among others, as extraordinary and worthy of worship. They found it hard to believe that with such diversity and multiplicity among creatures, there could be only one God for all of them. God's Prophet Abraham pointed out this fact: "My Lord, they have led so many men astray! Anyone who follows me is with me, but if anyone turns against [You], You are indeed forgiving and merciful" (14:36).

Thus, the prominent manifestations of nature, such as the sun and moon, deceived mankind. People began considering these manifestations as great and deserving of worship, instead of recognizing them as creations of the Almighty God. In the present era, both of these suppositions have ended. The powerful global political revolution through democratic ideas has abolished the ancient system of polytheistic monarchy. Today, there is no existence of the ancient system of kings anywhere. They have been replaced by modern democracy, eliminating the effective patronage that had been a significant obstacle to the rejection of polytheism and the affirmation of monotheism.

Now, in today's world, it is entirely possible to continue and advance the prophetic call without facing resistance at any stage, from beginning to end.

THE BEGINNING OF MONOTHEISM

The beginning of monotheism involves discovering God as the Creator and Lord of the universe. As a result, a new personality emerges within a person.

The beginning of monotheism comes through realization. It involves discovering God as the Creator and Lord of the universe. When a person achieves this realization, the Quran describes the impact it has on them in detail: “When they listen to what has been sent to the messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of the Truth they recognize. They say, ‘Our Lord, we believe, so count us among those who bear witness. Why should we not believe in God and the truth that has come to us? We yearn for our Lord to admit us among the righteous.’ And for their words, God will reward them with Gardens through which rivers flow, wherein they shall abide forever. That is the reward of those who do good.” (5:83-85)

The Quran describes the personality that emerges from the discovery of God in various ways. In this

context, one verse is translated as follows: “True believers are those whose hearts tremble with awe at the mention of God, and whose faith grows stronger as they listen to His revelations. They are those who put their trust in their Lord.” (8:2)

THE MESSAGE OF MONOTHEISM

A monotheist makes God his sole concern, lives a God-centred life, strives to protect himself from God's punishment, and eagerly seeks His blessings.

The message of monotheism is primarily directed toward individuals rather than any system. This belief takes a firm hold within the individual. It instills in him the conviction that God is his Creator and Lord. It fills him with a sense of awe and reverence for God. It influences his entire personality, guiding his thoughts and emotions. His whole life becomes God-oriented.

Such a person constantly remembers God. He strives to protect himself from God's punishment and eagerly seeks His blessings. The belief in monotheism permeates the core of his character to such an extent that it profoundly impacts his entire life. A monotheist makes God his sole concern, dedicating his entire life to Him and His teachings.

MONOTHEISM VS POLYTHEISM

Monotheism (*tawheed*) means making God one's sole concern in every aspect, while polytheism (*shirk*) entails associating anyone or anything with God.

Chapter 2 of the Quran states: “Yet some set up equals with God and adore them with the adoration due to God, but those who believe love God most. If only the wrongdoers could see—as they will see when they face the punishment—that all power belongs to God and that God is severe in punishment.” (2:165)

According to this verse, *shirk* (associating partners with God) is the act of equating others with God, either wholly or partially. It involves giving the adoration and worship that is reserved for God alone to someone or something else. Even if a person attributes such a status to oneself, he commits polytheism (45:23).

In other words, monotheism (*tawheed*) means making God the sole focus and concern in every aspect, while polytheism (*shirk*) entails associating anyone or anything with God, whether partially or completely.

When a person realizes that it is God who brought him into existence from nothingness, granted him a unique and superior personality, placed him on a remarkable planet like Earth, and created a life support system for him, this realisation forms a deep connection with God within him. God becomes his sole concern. This is the foundation of intense love for God.

As one further understands that all these things are unilateral gifts from God, which can be taken away at any time, one becomes apprehensive about being held accountable for the responsibilities attached to these divine gifts. This awareness generates a feeling of intense fear, as mentioned in the Quran (9:18).

Thus one comes to realise that all authority belongs solely to God. No one else possesses any authority, even in a partial sense. God is the Giver as well as the Depriver. He is the one who bestows and takes away. This recognition reminds a person of his complete helplessness, leaving him with no option but to surrender himself entirely before God.

MONOTHEISTS VS POLYTHEISTS

Monotheism emphasizes that humans should have the utmost love for their Lord, trust Him alone, and place their hopes in God alone.

A profound spiritual connection is established psychologically when a person truly believes in the existence of the One God. He starts receiving inspiration from God. He begins to experience God in his memories, catching glimpses of Him in his tears. God becomes ever-present in his thoughts and feelings as if he has entered the proximity of His divine presence and started living under the shelter of His mercy.

The Quran declares that associating partners with God (shirk) is the greatest injustice (zulm). (31:13). Zulm refers to placing something in the wrong place. In other words, shirk is completely alien in this universe. Therefore, embracing polytheistic beliefs or engaging in polytheistic actions has no place in God's plan of creation.

God is the Creator, Owner, Sustainer, and Controller of this world. He possesses all power. Hence, considering anyone else as God or associating partners with God is to give some supposition the status of reality. It involves attributing existence to something that does not exist in this world at all. The polytheistic mindset is the epitome of evil. When a person thinks in a polytheistic manner, one chooses something unreal. When a person nurtures polytheistic thoughts in his mind, he adopts something that has no existence. The very existence of the universe denies it. Polytheism fails to provide intellectual sustenance or illuminates a person with the spiritual light that gives meaning to his existence in this world.

The reality of monotheism cannot be encapsulated in a single word. The Quran teaches us that it represents a relationship between a servant and his Lord, encompassing feelings of love, fear, and trust. A person can be called a monotheist when he finds God in such a way that He becomes his beloved. He places the utmost trust in Him, fearing any act that may deprive him of His mercy. Monotheism is the exclusive dedication of all these human emotions to God. Here are a few verses from the Quran:

“Yet some set up equals with God and adore them with the adoration due to God, but those who believe love God most. If only

the wrongdoers could see—as they will see when they face the punishment—that all power belongs to God and that God is severe in punishment.” (2:165)

“God! There is no god but He, so let the faithful trust Him.” (64:13)

“They used to hasten to do good, called on Us in hope and fear, and were always humble towards Us.” (21:90)

According to these verses, the concept of monotheism emphasizes that humans should have the utmost love for their Lord. They should place their highest trust in God alone. Their hopes and concerns should be deeply connected to God, as they eagerly call upon Him day in and day out.

This realization is known as *maarifah*. Through this discovery, a personality is developed that lives in the remembrance of God. God becomes one’s sole concern. Such a person is a true monotheist. Conversely, one who has not made God one’s primary concern and whose thoughts are focused on something other than God is involved in shirk according to Shariah. According to Shariah, God is the ultimate goal of human beings, while other things are only meant to serve as necessities for them.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MONOTHEISM AND POLYTHEISM

Monotheism entails discovering and worshipping the Creator, while polytheism involves being attached to the creation.

According to the Quran, belief in polytheism is the root of all human evils, while faith in monotheism is the source of all human virtues. The Quran explicitly states:

“God will not forgive anyone for associating something with Him, while He will forgive whomever He wishes for anything besides that. Whoever ascribes partners to God is guilty of a monstrous sin.” (4:48)

Monotheism entails discovering the Creator, while polytheism involves being attached to the creation. Monotheism is living in alignment with reality, while polytheism means living based on superstitions. Monotheists are the desired individuals in this world because they align themselves with the will of the Creator.

The Creator of this world has designed it according to a specific plan, and those who believe in one God fulfill that divine plan. They follow the blueprint set by God for mankind. Therefore, monotheists are the chosen people of God, fulfilling His will.

On the other hand, polytheism and its followers stand in opposition. Polytheism is an alien concept in the realm of God. If monotheists are the desired people in this world, polytheists are the undesired ones. The belief in polytheism does not have the approval of the Lord of this world.

If a square object is placed in a circular hole, it will not fit inside. However, when a circular object is placed in a circular hole, it fits perfectly. The same principle applies to monotheism and polytheism. Human beings were created only for monotheism. According to human nature, they were designed solely for monotheism. Therefore, living a monotheistic life is in accordance with their nature, while living a polytheistic life goes against human nature.

The behaviour of polytheists differs from that of monotheists. They turn to non-divine entities in times of success and seek refuge in them in times of

failure. These supposed non-divine entities dominate their hearts and minds in all circumstances. If a monotheist through his experiences continues to receive divine inspiration, a polytheist is deprived of the same.

THE INSTABILITY OF POLYTHEISM

Polytheism means making someone other than God one's deity, whereas no entity except for God possesses this status.

What is polytheism or shirk? Polytheism is when a person makes someone other than God one's deity. The Quran states, "This is an evil exchange for the wrongdoers!" (18:50)

This verse can be seen as a commentary on the entire history of humanity. Human beings have repeatedly bestowed the status of a deity upon someone other than God. Yet, each time, it has been proven that their choice was misguided. Therefore, except for God, no entity possesses the status of a deity.

In ancient times, humans worshipped nature for thousands of years, attributing divine status to it. Nature worship, with the belief that bodies such as the sun, moon, mountains, and seas possessed divinity, was widespread. Consequently, everything in nature became worthy of worship for humans.

THE AGE OF SCIENCE

Human knowledge has reached a point where only one choice remains: submitting and humbling oneself to the one and only God.

In the era of modern science, every aspect of nature became subject to investigation. Through this research, it was revealed that nature was simply nature, devoid of any form of divinity. With this realization, the notion of nature worship came to an end, as nature lost its status as a deity.

Subsequently, the era of industrial civilization began, granting humans access to numerous previously unknown advancements. Unfortunately, the success of modern industrial civilization deceived many, leading them to perceive it as a substitute for a deity. As a result, people started establishing a similar relationship with the industrial civilization that should only exist with the actual deity. However, it soon became evident that human industry had a significant

negative aspect: it not only produced civilization but also brought about industrial pollution.

In the 21st century, this industrial pollution reached alarming levels, resulting in what is known as global warming. It became clear that the world created by modern industry was highly polluted, making it impossible for any creature, including humans, to survive.

People believed that industrial civilization would transform the world into a paradise for them. However, it became apparent that beyond its ultimate limit, industrial civilization offered humans nothing but an industrial inferno. Thus, the assumption of industrial civilization as a deity also proved false.

Subsequently, humans elevated themselves to the position of a deity. According to this philosophy, everything one seeks outside of oneself exists within man. Under this assumption, it was believed that human existence had only one negative aspect: death. People came to believe that modern medical science would solve this issue and enable humans to live eternally in this world. However, despite extensive medical research, modern medical science could not provide the formula for human longevity. Even this theory, which was given the position of a deity, proved to be baseless.

Now, human knowledge has reached a point where only one choice remains: for humans to become realists and submit to the one and only God, humbling themselves before Him. Within this realization lies the secret to human success in this world and the Hereafter.

ANCIENT POLYTHEISM, MODERN POLYTHEISM

Man has embraced the blessings while forsaking the Bestower. Abandoning the Creator-centered perspective, they have adopted that of creation.

The world today presents two paths for humanity—the straight path and the path of deviation (16:9). The straight path is when an individual gives the Creator a central position in their life, making God their sole concern. The path of deviation is when a person becomes preoccupied with the creation, planning their entire life solely based on worldly matters. The first path is known as monotheism, while the second path is known as polytheism. Our universe comprises only two elements—the Creator and the creation. The religious term for the Creator one's sole concern is monotheism, whereas the religious term for considering created beings one's everything is polytheism.

Throughout human history, God's messengers have come in every age, guiding people towards right and wrong. Every prophet had the same mission—to call

humanity towards monotheism and warn them against polytheism.

The ancient form of polytheism (shirk) was rooted in nature worship. In ancient times, people elevated nature to the status of a deity, engaging in worship of natural phenomena and diverting their focus from the Creator to the creation.

Even in the present time, this form of polytheism continues to persist. Today, people continue to give importance to the creation over the Creator. The difference between ancient and modern shirk lies in its manifestation, not its essence.

In the past, humanity worshipped nature as a deity, whereas in the modern age, humans have turned it into a form of entertainment. The objects of emotional devotion were creatures in the past, and they remain, creatures, even today.

The prevailing theory in modern times is to live in the present, focusing on immediate happiness and disregarding future concerns, what is called the concept of living in 'here and now'. But what is this 'now'? It is the provisions of life that we have received in the form of nature. These provisions are blessings bestowed upon us by God. Humans have not created any of these sources of entertainment; they

have received them from the Creator. Everything has been created by the Creator. However, today's human beings have embraced the blessings while forsaking the Giver, the Bestower. They have abandoned the perspective centered on the Creator and adopted a perspective centered on the creation.

It is in human nature that when someone receives something, they should express gratitude towards the giver. The feeling of gratitude is an essential aspect of human nature. Unfortunately, in current times, human beings have directed their sense of gratitude towards the created beings instead of the Creator. Instead of sincerely acknowledging the Bestower, they offer gratitude to the created beings. The heartfelt gratitude that should have been given to the Bestower, has instead been diverted towards the creation.

Today, we often come across examples of this in people's conversations and writings. Each individual can witness such examples in their daily experiences. For instance, I would like to refer to an article published in The Times of India, New Delhi (27th January 2008) by Donna Devane. An excerpt of the article titled 'Be happy here and now' is given below:

“Gratitude fills my soul as I enjoy my computer, more about my home, enjoy the feeling of a

hug from my daughter. There is so much to be grateful for each moment of each day. I find that where gratitude goes, joy flows. Spend a few moments throughout the day with thought-shifter statements. A few of the thought-shifter statements that I use are: I am so happy and joyful to believe. I am so happy and grateful for this wonderful mind, and body that allows me to enjoy, touch, taste, sound, and movement. I am so happy and grateful for my family, and friends, and the love we share. I am so happy and grateful for my home and utilities. I am so happy and grateful for my computer, my internet, my ability to type and share with friends all over the world.”

Just as humans possess the power of hunger and thirst, they also possess a strong inclination to acknowledge the favours of their Benefactor. It is in their nature that they cannot bear receiving significant benefits without recognizing and acknowledging them. This characteristic is inherent in all human beings, regardless of gender.

Whatever humans possess is a gift from God, whether it is their existence or the entire system outside them known as the life support system. In such a situation, it is in human nature to fully acknowledge

and appreciate the Giver of all these blessings—God Almighty. Among these blessings are direct blessings from God to humans, such as air, water, and light, while other things are indirect blessings. These are the things human beings have discovered in nature and transformed through the intellect bestowed by God into various manufactured goods, including consumer goods.

All these blessings demand that humans acknowledge them with their hearts and minds. However, influenced by self-devised philosophies, humans thoroughly enjoy these blessings but abandon the Giver of these blessings. This is a grave mistake that leaves human nature unaddressed.

This internal contradiction poses a problem for everyone. In the present age, both men and women face this predicament. The tension and stress experienced in modern times directly result from this internal contradiction.

The Quran expresses this reality in the following words: “Surely, in the remembrance of God, hearts can find comfort” (Quran 13:28). It means that peace of mind can only be attained through the remembrance of God.

HIDDEN SHIRK

Monotheism is having intense love and fear exclusively for God. Shirk means placing one's love and fear in someone or something other than God.

“When only God is mentioned, the hearts of those who disbelieve in the Hereafter shrink with aversion, but when others are mentioned alongside Him, they rejoice.” (Quran, 39:45)

Commentator Mahmud al-Alusi narrated a personal incident while explaining this verse. He witnessed someone calling upon a deceased person for help during a calamity. Alusi advised him, saying: “O person! Call upon God, for He says, ‘And when My servants ask you (the Prophet) concerning Me, indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me.’” (Quran, 2:186) Upon hearing this, the person became enraged and replied that “the saints hear more quickly compared to God.” (*Tafsir Al-Alusi*, 12/266)

This mindset sometimes becomes evident through

openly trusting someone other than God, which is known as clear shirk. Additionally, this mindset can also manifest as hidden shirk, which can be described as idolizing personalities or having a personality cult, in today's language.

In many religious circles, you will find a focus on reciting God's name on prayer beads and reading the Quran. However, if you discuss God in those gatherings, people may not show interest. On the contrary, discussions about their favourite personalities continue day and night, and their fascination with them never wanes.

Hidden shirk is often more dangerous than obvious shirk because it does not appear to be a form of shirk. Even those who engage in verbal and written crusades against obvious shirk are also involved in this hidden shirk.

The Quran states that those who have true faith are the ones who love God the most (2:165). Conversely, it also advises that guidance is attained by those who fear no one but God (9:18). This indicates that the essence of monotheism lies in having intense love and fear exclusively for God. On the other hand, shirk occurs when a person places his intense love and fear in someone or something other than God, whether it be a living or non-living entity.

MONOTHEISM IN THE AGE OF SCIENCE

The monotheistic concept of God should be presented in a contemporary style, and by using modern means of communication it should be spread worldwide.

The emergence of modern science has undermined another foundation of polytheism. In the present time, scientific discoveries have demystified the notion of real multiplicity in the manifestations of nature and the inherent greatness attributed to them.

Modern science, through analysis and experimentation, has demonstrated that everything, despite its apparent diversity, ultimately consists of a collection of atoms, which are in turn composed of electromagnetic waves. This discovery has dismantled the myth of multiplicity in nature. Despite their outward differences, all things are ultimately unified in their reality. It is as if the advancement of knowledge has refuted the polytheistic theory and provided a solid basis for the theory of monotheism.

Moreover, modern science has provided evidence that everything on Earth or in the vast expanse of space is nothing but helpless creations bound by the unchanging laws of nature. They lack any personal choice or power to any extent.

However, superstitions have not completely disappeared. Even today, millions of people believe in various mysterious superstitions throughout the world. For instance, many among the educated class do not worship idols, but they have yet to discover God.

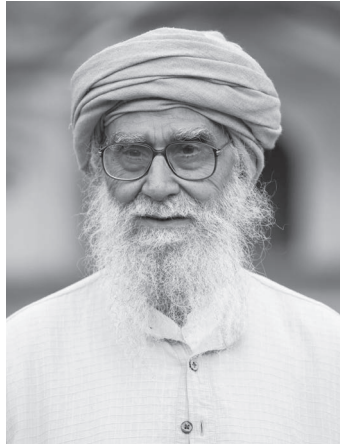
The only difference is that while their ancestors were engaged in idol worship, they have replaced it with another deity in the form of the laws of nature. This belief has become deeply ingrained in their minds, much like how ancient humans embraced gods and goddesses.

In ancient times, many evils afflicted human life and society, depriving human beings of their dignity. The Prophet of Islam and his Companions initiated a revolution based on monotheism that liberated the world from that dark age and propelled humanity into a period of true progress.

For the first time, humanity experienced the blessings destined for them by God. However, due to self-created superstitions, human beings had deprived themselves of

those blessings. Humanity emerged from the long period of darkness and entered a new era of enlightenment. Yet, despite apparent material advancements, mankind continues to remain in problems and is deprived of happiness and peace of mind.

The need of the hour is to revive the call to monotheism with renewed vigour. On the one hand, the monotheistic concept of God should be presented with new evidence and in a contemporary language that resonates with people. On the other hand, utilizing modern means of communication, it should be spread worldwide until the predicted time foretold by the Prophet of Islam arrives, that no home—big or small—will remain in which the call of monotheism has not entered. (Musnad Ahmad, Hadith No. 23814)

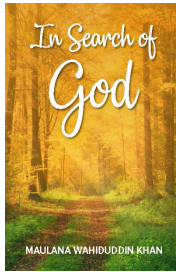


Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (1925-2021) was an Islamic scholar, spiritual guide, and an Ambassador of Peace. Having received international recognition for his work, the Maulana authored over 200 books and recorded thousands of lectures giving the rational interpretation of Islamic concepts, prophetic wisdom and the spiritual meaning of Quran and Islam in the contemporary style. His English translation of the Quran is widely appreciated as simple, clear and in contemporary style. He founded Centre for Peace and Spirituality International in 2001 to re-engineer the minds of people towards the culture of peace and present Islam in the modern idiom based as it is on peace, non-violence, and spirituality.

www.maulanawahiduddinkhan.com
www.cpsglobal.org

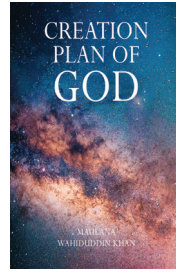
QURAN TRANSLATION, BOOKLETS OF MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

In Search of Truth



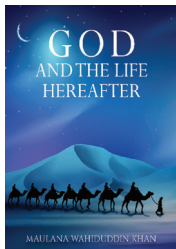
The purpose of man's existence is to attain the realisation of his Creator and live a God-oriented life to be rewarded with a place in eternal Paradise in the Hereafter.

Creation Plan of God



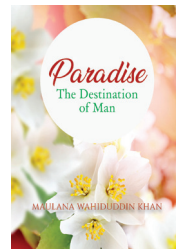
God made the present world as a selection ground. Those who keep a check on freedom, bow before the truth without compulsion, and lead principled lives will be settled in Paradise after death.

God and the Life Hereafter



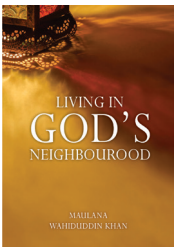
Our hopes and dreams will be fulfilled in the next world after death, and not the present world. This world is an arena for making efforts to determine our future in the eternal life after death.

Paradise, The Final Destination of Man



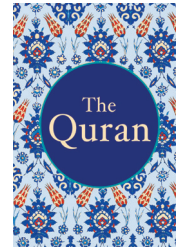
Man is a seeker of Paradise by his very nature. To be eligible for entry into Paradise, we must discover and submit to our Creator and willingly adopt divine ethics in this world of test..

Living in God's Neighbourhood



The leaflet explains that in order to eliminate the root cause of violence, we have to begin our efforts from the re-engineering of minds of individuals. We have to take them away from the culture of violence and bring them closer to the culture of peace.

The Quran



The Quran, a book which brings glad tidings to mankind along with divine admonition, stresses the importance of man's discovery of truth on both spiritual and intellectual planes.

Read more such books, watch videos and listen audios of Maulana Wahiduddin Khan at www.cpsglobal.org

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Believing in one God, known as monotheism or tawheed in Islam, forms the basis for all Islamic actions. This belief acknowledges that all power belongs to God alone. He is the only one deserving of worship. He controls the entire universe, provides for all of creation, including humans, and holds ultimate authority. Recognizing God as the Creator and Master of the universe brings about a spiritual and intellectual revolution in man. When many people share this transformative belief, they come together to form an Islamic society.