

The Effect of the World View of the Individual upon his Activity

The form and characteristics of this orderly system which man follows in his life is dependent upon his conception of the nature of the Universe and of himself, who is an inseparable part of that Universe. Thus we see that a group of men do not admit the existence of a creator for the world and imagine that the world came into being accidentally and that man is only this material form which comes into existence at birth and ceases to exist at death.

These men organize their way of life and rules for living with a view to the material needs of their ephemeral earthly existence, and this alone. They follow a path which can lead to no more than a limited material happiness and well-being.

On the other hand those who accept a creator for the universe and believe that the regulation of the affairs of men and of the world is in the hands of "the gods" do not consider man's life to be just this material existence; they organize their way of living in such a way as to attract the favor of the gods and keep away their anger, and in this manner to achieve happiness in life and remain safe from unpleasant occurrences resulting from gods' wrath.

Again, those who accept the Unity of God and believe that the Universe and all that is in it is governed by One God who is All-Wise and All-Powerful, and that man does not cease to exist at death but lives an eternal life, will organize their lives accordingly, that is, with an eye to assuring felicity in both worlds.

It is thus clear that "religion" is the organization of life, and that life lived according to a program is religion. Those who try to separate religion and life and claim that the first of these is only empty formalism are sadly mistaken. It is in view of this that Islam calls the path one follows in life "religion", while it calls the true way the "Straight Path" and the false way the "Deviated" or "Crooked Path". God says:

"The curse of Allah is on evil-doers, who debar (men) from the path of Allah and would have it

crooked, and who are disbelievers in the Last Day." (Qur'an 7: 44-45.)[1](#)

[1](#). This and all subsequent quotations from the Qur'an are from the translation by Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, The Meaning of the Glorious Koran, New York, 1953.

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