

Two World Views

How do you view the world? How do you consider man as a phenomenon? What is your view with regard to man and the world? In reply to these questions, two totally opposite views exist: the divine view and the materialistic view: In other words: the religious world view and the materialistic world view.

Materialistic world view

The supporters of this type of view consider the world to be permanent and existence to have come about without any aim or intention. In this view, the world is a collection having no particular aim. On the contrary, it is shaped from material elements tangled with each other without any aim, and they all are vain and aimless. Within this great collection, man is also an aimless and confused existence marching towards annihilation. He does not have any motive and his end is despair, darkness and annihilation. He does not have any refuge or hope and he lives a life of darkness and horror.

The life of man is also according to the materialistic world view, vain and aimless. There is no one to whom man is answerable, no being who may be aware and higher to him and who may well know the good and bad of man and recognizes his behavior and who punishes or rewards him. And no absolute criterion exists to assess the deeds of man and his good and bad character...

Religious world view

In the religious world view, the present world is not permanent. On the contrary, it is created and it is dependant. In this view, the world is a creation, created on the basis of a minute accounting for continuity, arrangement and special compatibility for a designated aim and the world is dependant on the power of a powerful creator; forceful intention and a wise being, who is also powerful and is giving it continuous support and protection.

In the religious view, nothing in the world is vain and aimless. And among all the beings, man is having an excellence and has a higher aim that he pursues throughout his life. His end is not despair and

hopelessness; on the contrary, it is hope and eagerness. He is a being, which cannot be annihilated; who is traveling in this temporal on his way to the permanent world of the hereafter. In the religious world view, man is answerable before his beneficent and merciful creator. He is having a great answerability before his God, as He has created him with free will and allotted duties to him.

Religious world view believes that man is having a creator who is seeing and aware. He is the witness of all his actions all the time, and He rewards the doers of good deeds and punishes the wrong doers.

World view of the prophets

The view of the prophets about man and the world is divine. Prophets consider the worldly phenomena to be dependant and needful. They deem them to be signs of the power and greatness of the knowing and powerful creator. Prophets and their followers believe that the world is a creation of the beneficent and merciful God and all goodness is from Him and a policy connected to the world is in His hands. The world is not futile and a plaything, on the contrary it is created for a special aim.

They also have a special view and opinion with regard to man and his success. They consider him to be a respectful, exalted and a chosen being, who is a compound of two aspects: a body, which is made of clay and a soul, which is created from the ethereal and celestial world. That is why he is a superior being, everlasting, trustful and trustworthy one of the Lord and who is answerable to Him.

In this view, real success and perfection of man lies in recognition of God, movement towards Him and satisfaction in His pleasure; and since all power and goodness is only from Him, attention to Him leads to all goodness and lofty human values.

The first words of the prophets called to the worship of God and His oneness and negation of every type of polytheism. Prophets considered worship of God and monotheism as the foundations of human values and nobility and forgetting God and carelessness about the remembrance of the Lord as the roots of all evils and attachment to other than God as factors of destruction and misfortune.

Future of man and resurrection in the view of the prophets are perfectly clear, full of hope and nice. Prophets believe that the righteous and believing man will have a bright and comfortable future. He is traveling from this world to the world of the hereafter, which is much more vast and superior to this world and there he would see the final consequences of his deeds.

That is why prophets were having such clear and definite belief with regard to the world, man, success of man and his future; and they had perfect faith in this lofty and true view of theirs.

Foundation of the Call of the Prophets

Foundation of the call of the prophets was this same world view and they based their religion and code of law (Shariah) on it. The first sentence of Prophet Nuh (a.s.) to his people was:

اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

“...serve Allah, you have no god other than Him; surely I fear for you the chastisement of a grievous day.” (7:59)

The first words of Prophet Hud (a.s.) to his people were:

اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ إِن أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا مُفْتَرُونَ

“...serve Allah, you have no god other than He; you are nothing but forgers (of lies).” (Surah Hud 11:50)

The first statement of Prophet Salih (a.s.) to his people was:

اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ مُجِيبٌ

“O my people! serve Allah, you have no god other than He; He brought you into being from the earth, and made you dwell in it, therefore ask forgiveness of Him, then turn to Him; surely my Lord is Nigh, Answering.” (11:61)

Prophet Shuaib (a.s.) also, in the beginning of his prophethood, said to the people:

قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ وَلَا تَنْقُصُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ إِنِّي أَرِيكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ وَإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُحِيطٍ / وَيَقَوْمِ أَوْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْنُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

“O my people! serve Allah, you have no god other than He, and do not give short measure and weight: surely I see you in prosperity and surely I fear for you the punishment of an all-encompassing day. And, O my people! give full measure and weight fairly, and defraud not men their things, and do not act corruptly in the land, making mischief.” (4:84-85)

Almighty Allah has said with regard to the messengership of Musa (a.s.):

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ / إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ فَاتَّبَعُوا أَمْرَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَا أَمْرُ فِرْعَوْنَ بِرَشِيدٍ / يَقْدُمُ قَوْمَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فَأَوْرَدَهُمُ النَّارَ وَبِئْسَ الْوَرْدَ الْمَوْرُودُ

“And certainly We sent Musa with Our communications and a clear authority. To Firon and his chiefs, but they followed the bidding of Firon, and Firon’s bidding was not right-directing. He

shall lead his people on the resurrection day, and bring them down to the fire; and evil the place to which they are brought.” (4:96-98)

In continuation of these verses, He says:

يَوْمَ يَأْتِ لَا تَكَلِّمُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ فَمِنْهُمْ شَقِيٌّ وَسَعِيدٌ / فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ شَقُوا فَفِي النَّارِ لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَشَهِيقٌ / خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَّالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيدُ / وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ سُعِدُوا فَفِي الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ عَطَاءٌ غَيْرَ مَجْدُودٍ

“On the day when it shall come, no soul shall speak except with His permission, then (some) of them shall be unhappy and (others) happy. So as to those who are unhappy, they shall be in the fire; for them shall be sighing and groaning in it: Abiding therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord please; surely your Lord is the mighty doer of what He intends. And as to those who are made happy, they shall be in the garden, abiding in it as long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as your Lord please; a gift which shall never be cut off.” (11: 105-108)

If we look carefully, we would see that two basic pillars are present in the call of all the prophets:

1. Worship of One God and 2. Future of man, his success or misfortune. (Resurrection); therefore, faith in these two basics of monotheism and resurrection shape the foundation of the call of the prophets.

The prophets, by establishing evidence and proof and by showing miracle, call people to faith in these two basics motivating them to contemplate and ponder on the secrets and mysteries of the world, awaken their God-searching nature, so that they may worship God only.

And through their religious view, they may witness the signs of His power in every corner of the world; that they may discover the aim of the creation of man and have faith in the world after death and may be thoughtful about their success or misfortune in future.

First of all, the prophets reformed the beliefs of the people with regard to God and resurrection, as they are the complete basis of all their deeds and behavior. After that they entrusted to them the heavenly program and their code of divine laws. And in this way they called them to goodness and reformation. But the faith, morals and manners of all are according to one's faith and belief.

Hence true faith lead to good deeds and puts forth beautiful blossoms. And the result of corrupted and improper belief is nothing, but destruction and injustice. Thus reformation of people requires the reformation of their world view and beliefs. And the same method was employed by the prophets.

Faith in God and Judgment Day strengthens the hearts of people so that they may not struggle except on the path Almighty Allah and that they do not accept the obedience of anyone other than Almighty

Allah.

Prophets and unity of method and aim

Throughout history thousands of prophets have come from Almighty Allah for the guidance of man; some of them came with a special code of laws and others were missionaries of the religion of the previous prophets. Ultimately, the principle of heavenly religions and program of all the prophets was one and the same. All of them invited man to one and the same aim. Collectively, all the heavenly religions rest on the following three fundamentals:

First: Recognition of one God, who has created the world and faith in Him (monotheism);

Second: Belief in resurrection and the world of the hereafter and the everlasting future of man (resurrection);

Third: Belief in prophets, unity of the way and their way and aims (prophethood);

Prophets called man to accept these basic fundamentals and asked them so that they may adopt the guiding program of religion into their lives and that they should submit to the commands of the wise God. They should base the program of their life only according to the program that religion has chalked for them. All the prophets from Adam to the Messenger of Allah (S) have called man to this same reality. They have named this path that is chosen and liked by God for men as the 'religion of God'. It is only one religion and not more than that.

There is not the smallest difference between the principles and generalities of the call of the prophets and each of them mentioned the previous prophet with respect and honor and followed his methods and message. In the same way, they gave glad tidings of the advent of the coming prophet and informed their followers to have faith in him and accept his call. Almighty Allah has also said in the Holy Quran:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْنُكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ قَالَ أَأَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ إِصْرِي قَالُوا أَقْرَرْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا وَ أَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

“And when Allah made a covenant through the prophets: Certainly what I have given you of Book and wisdom- then an apostle comes to you verifying that which is with you, you must believe in him, and you must aid him. He said: Do you affirm and accept My compact in this (matter)? They said: We do affirm. He said: Then bear witness, and I (too) am of the bearers of witness with you.” (3:81)

The Holy Quran says thus with regard to faith in prophets and the unity of their way and aim:

قُلْ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ
وَالنَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ / وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ
مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

“Say: We believe in Allah and what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Ibrahim and Ismail and Ishaq and Yaqub and the tribes, and what was given to Musa and Isa and to the prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit. And whoever desires a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers.” (3:84-85)

Islam means submission to the command and religion of God. In this meaning, all the prophets were ‘Muslims’ (those who submit), although terminologically Islam is the last heavenly religion brought by Prophet Muhammad (S) for mankind and Muslim is a follower of this faith.

Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.) in his supplication to Almighty Allah prayed in this way:

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ / رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ
فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ / وَمَنْ يَرْغَبْ عَنْ مِلَّةِ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدْ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ / إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ
لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ / وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ يَبْنَؤُا إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمْ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ / أَمْ
كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتَ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ وَاللَّهُ ءَابَاؤُكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ
وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًا وَحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

“Our Lord! and make us both submissive to Thee and (raise) from our offspring a nation submitting to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully), surely Thou art the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful. Our Lord! and raise up in them an Apostle from among them who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them; surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise. And who forsakes the religion of Ibrahim but he who makes himself a fool, and most certainly We chose him in this world, and in the hereafter he is most surely among the righteous. When his Lord said to him, Be a Muslim, he said: I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds. And the same did Ibrahim enjoin on his sons and (so did) Yaqub. O my sons! surely Allah has chosen for you (this) faith, therefore die not unless you are Muslims. Nay! were you witnesses when death visited Yaqub, when he said to his sons: What will you serve after me? They said: We will serve your God and the God of your fathers, Ibrahim and Ismail and Ishaq, one God only, and to Him do we submit.” (2: 128-133)

That is why Almighty Allah has introduced the prophets with one aim, which is the same submission before Allah and those who are opposed to their ways and manners are termed as foolish and ignorant, like in the following verses:

وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ أَنِّي أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَ أَنْبِئُكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدَّخِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ / وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَلِأَجْلِ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَجِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا / إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ / فَلَمَّا أَحَسَّ عِيسَىٰ مِنْهُمُ الْكُفْرَ قَالَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ ءَأَمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَآشْهَدُ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ / رَبَّنَا ءَأَمَنَّا بِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ وَاتَّبَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

“And (make him) an apostle to the children of Israel: That I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I determine for you out of dust like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with Allah’s permission and I heal the blind and the leprous, and bring the dead to life with Allah’s permission and I inform you of what you should eat and what you should store in your houses; most surely there is a sign in this for you, if you are believers. And a verifier of that which is before me of the Taurat and that I may allow you part of that which has been forbidden you, and I have come to you with a sign from your Lord therefore be careful of (your duty to) Allah and obey me. Surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord, therefore serve Him; this is the right path. But when Isa perceived unbelief on their part, he said: Who will be my helpers in Allah’s way? The disciples said: We are helpers (in the way) of Allah: We believe in Allah and bear witness that we are submitting ones. Our Lord! we believe in what Thou hast revealed and we follow the apostle, so write us down with those who bear witness.” (3:49-53)

All divine prophets like teachers of the same school, are sent one after another to call human beings to submission to religion of God and that by their guidance, they may lead man to the path of perfection, which is the same straight path. Religion and aim of the prophets was common and all of them made efforts to gain the satisfaction of Almighty Allah and His proximity. There was no difference between the heavenly religions of the prophets, except in secondary laws of religions. And that too was due to difference in conditions and circumstances as also the capacities of people.

Circumstances, levels of understanding and capabilities of people were not same during all ages, therefore the prophets spoke to the people in accordance to the level of their understanding and gradually bestowed to them perfection and maturity in understanding and awareness in accepting the concepts of religion till prophethood reached to the last of the prophets, Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (S). He was sent for the guidance of people with such detailed and specific principles of faith that no prophet before him had come with such details.

He came with a comprehensive set of laws and greatness of religion cognition that his religion included all the modes of contemplation, reasoning and research. And the religion that he brought was the last and the most detailed code of law and faith that Almighty Allah has ever sent for humanity. Almighty Allah has said with regard to the comprehensiveness of the religion of Islam as compared to the previous faith as follows:

شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحًا وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُنِيبُ

“He has made plain to you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nuh and that which We have revealed to you and that which We enjoined upon Ibrahim and Musa and Isa that keep to obedience and be not divided therein; hard to the unbelievers is that which you call them to; Allah chooses for Himself whom He pleases, and guides to Himself him who turns (to Him), frequently.” (42: 13)

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/prophethood-and-prophet-islam-ibrahim-amini/two-world-views#comment-0>