

# LECTURE ONE

## INTRODUCTION

The subject I will discuss for these two nights—tonight and tomorrow night—just as announced, is religion\* vs. religion. There may be an ambiguity in this phrase. The ambiguity is a consequence of the fact that we have, up until now, thought that religion was continuously opposed by disbelief, and that throughout history, the struggle has been between religion and non-religion. It is because of this that the interpretation of 'religion vs. religion' may seem foreign, ambiguous, strange and unacceptable.

Recently I have become attentive to the fact—perhaps I was aware of it some time ago but not with the same clarity and precision that I now sense—that opposed to this concept, throughout history, religion has always fought against religion and never in the sense that we understand today, religion against non-religion.

When history is spoken about, it is not the current usage of the word 'history', that is, 'the history of the appearance of civilization and writing', that I refer to. It is the beginning of the social life of the present day human being upon this earth. Thus, whereas the beginning of writing has a 6000 year old history, the history I am speaking about is more than 20,000 or 40,000 years old. That is, through various fields—archeology, history, geology, the study of myths and legends—we have more or less a summary knowledge of the first human being, his life-style, type of belief and the direction of social changes to the present time.

Throughout all of these ages, the first part of which has been told through myths and legends, as we grow close to today, it becomes more clear and better documented and history itself begins to tell us that continuously, in all stages, religion has stood up against religion and that throughout history, without exception, it has been religion which has, in unbroken succession, fought against religion. Why? Because history knows no era or society which lacks religion. That is, there is no historical precedence of a non-religious society. There has been no non-religious human being in any race, in any era, in any phase of social change on any part of the earth.

In more recent years, from the age when civilization, thought, reasoning and philosophy began to grow, we occasionally encounter individuals who did not accept the Resurrection or God, but never throughout history have these individuals taken the form of a class, a group or a society.

According to Alexis Carrel,\* past history has continuously consisted of societies and these societies were, in a general sense, religiously structured. The pivot, heart and basis of every society was a deity, a religious faith, a prophet or a religious book and even the physical form of every city was a sign of the spiritual condition of the society.

Throughout the Middle Ages and even before Jesus, peace be upon him, in the East and in the West, all of the cities consisted of a complex of houses or a complex of buildings—where these buildings were often tribal—but in every phase of a tribe, based upon aristocracy or based upon its social condition, it was placed in the high point, greater, more important and closer to the heart of the city or else in the form of classlessness. At any rate, that which existed in all of the large cities, which is similar in all civilizations of the East and the West, is this that all of these cities were symbolic. A symbolic city is a city which shows itself in a clear and determined form.

This symbol, which is a sign of the character of the great city, was a temple whereas this sign today is clearly losing its role. For instance, Tehran is not a symbolic city. That is, if we look at the collection of building positions, we see that they have not been joined around an axis, a building, a religious structure or even a non-religious one in the sense that the buildings do not have a heart or an axis.

But in an aerial photograph of the city of Mashhad, it is clear that this city is symbolic, that it is a city whose complex of buildings have been joined around an axis which is the heart and the sponsor of the city.

Why were these cities symbolic? Because, essentially, no architecture—whether it be the architecture of a civilization, of a nation or of a city—existed without a religious explanation. All of the books that we can look at, even in our own Persian language, books which have been written about cities like *The History of Qum, Balkh, Bukhara, Nishapur, The Virtues of Balkh*, etc. which describe cities, all of them begin with a religious story. That is, they could not convince themselves that such a large city would be built and would appear because of a factor other than a religious factor or that they be built for a reason other than a religious and spiritual one. It was always that a prophet had been buried there or that it was built upon the basis of a religious miracle or that later it would be that something sacred or a religious person, was to be buried there. At any rate, the legitimation in every case is a religious legitimation.

This shows that, in general, all ancient societies, whether they were in the form of classes or classlessness or tribal or tribalessness, whether they took the form of a great empire like that of Rome or that of separate city-states like those of Greece, whether in the form of tribes like the Arabs, whether they were civilized and developed or backward and degenerated, in all races, human gatherings have a single spirit,

called a religious spirit and ancient man, in every era and of whatever thought, is a religious human being. Thus the phrase, 'non-religious' which today we understand from the word 'disbelief (*kufur*)\* did not exist in the sense of atheism\*, a lack of belief in the metaphysical, in the Resurrection, in the Unseen, in God, in the sacred or the existence of One or several gods in the world, because all people held these principles in common.

That which today we define as atheism, non-religion or anti-religion, is a very new concept. That is, it relates to the last two or three centuries. It refers to that which took place after the Middle Ages. It is a definition which has been imported into the East in the form of a western intellectual product, that *kufur* means a lack of belief of a human being in God, in the metaphysical and in another world.

In Islam, in all ancient texts, in all histories, in all religions, when *kufur* is spoken about, it is not in the sense of non-religion. Why? Because there was so such thing as non-religion. Thus, *kufur* (as defined today as ingratitude, disbelief, infidelity\* or unbelief) was itself a religion like a religion which refers to another religion as *kufur*, just as the other religion of *kufur* refers to yet other faiths as being among those who are *kufur*. *Kufur*, then, means another religion, not a non-religion.

Thus, throughout history, whether it be the history of the Abrahamic religions or the religions of the East or the West—in whatever form it takes—wherever a prophet or a religious revolution appeared in the name of religion, it was first manifested in spite of and in opposition to the existing religion of its own age and secondly, the first group or force which arose against this religion, stood against it, persevered and brought about a struggle, was religion.

Here we encounter an extremely important point which solves the most basic problem of the judgment today of in-

tell  
ent  
wh  
tion

This  
tion  
peo  
mer  
cise  
hist  
of fa  
tion  
accu  
in h  
bein

But  
not c  
that  
thro  
ent f  
and  
gion  
senti  
war  
One

Thus  
religi  
our c  
wron  
last t  
19th c  
rope,  
from  
no res

tellecuals of the world and also we can, then, test and scientifically and historically analyze the greatest judgment which all of the intellectuals of the world have made in relation to religion.

This judgment—that is, the judgment of intellectuals in relation to religion—that religion opposes civilization, progress, people and liberty or that it is inattentive to them—is a judgment which came into being based upon objective and precise scholarly studies of the realities and continuous historical experiences. It is not a curse. It is not an expression of fantasy that is born of vengeance and hatred or evil intentions and malice. Rather, it rests upon experience and is an accurate scholarly conclusion based upon realities existing in history, in human societies and in the life of the human being.

But why, at the same time, in my opinion, is the judgment not correct? Because even we who are followers of a religion, that is, we who are religious types, do not know that, throughout history, there have been two religions—in different forms but, in reality, one—which quarreled, were at war and in conflict with one another. Not only do these two religions have differences with one another, but, as I said, essentially an ideological and religious war in the past was a war between these two religions but for a special reason. One we are not aware of it at the present time.

Thus, as a result, first of all, we have a general opinion about religion. We prove it in a general way and then prove it in our own religion in a particular way. But this method is wrong. It is a mistake which the anti-religious forces in the last two or three centuries have made, in particular, in the 19th century, which is the peak of objection to religion in Europe, for they were not able to separate these two religions from each other whereas these two religions not only have no resemblance to each other, but they are even hostile and

contradictory to one another and, essentially, they continuously, without any interruption, throughout history, fought with each other, still do and will continue to do so.

Their judgment related to one line of this religion and was correct and experienced, based upon historical realities, but they were unaware of the line opposite this religion—which was itself a religion—just as we who are religious are unaware of the other. This correct judgment of theirs which conforms to half of the realities was automatically made into a generalization to include all of the realities, i.e. even the other contradictory half, that is, the contradictory line to this religion and the mistake lies here.

Just as I said, these two religions, in their various forms, differ from one another. If we want to weigh all of the qualities of these two religions and count their qualities, whatever quality we prove in one way for one of them, we are obliged to negate that very same quality for the other religion.

As the terms I use are terms which we are all familiar with, but as they have another meaning, I ask that as soon as I use a term, you not define it according to the meaning which you previously had in mind. Rather, define and judge the word in vogue according to the special definition which I use.

Let me first give a word of explanation of the ambiguity which exists in these words and which is in vogue, causing mingling of these two subjects which are completely separate. They are: *kufr*, *shirk*\* (multitheism)\* and *paganism*\* or *idolatry*\* which we continuously use in religious terminology.

#### ***Kufr* (Ingratitude, Denying the Truth)**

*Kufr* means to cover or to plant, i.e. where in farming, a seed is planted and then covered over with earth. In the hearts of people, a truth exists. However, because for certain reasons, the truth is covered over by a curtain of ignorance, mal-

ice, self-  
*kufr*. The  
truth of  
coverin  
gion.

**Multith**  
*Shirk* o  
multith  
a perso  
who do  
posed J  
less pe

Who a  
lieve in  
there is  
of exce  
a perso  
sensibi  
ists hav

They h  
relatio  
in the  
we loo

Theref  
is relig  
point o  
gious  
religio  
non-re  
by som  
eties.

**Idolis**  
Idolis

ice, self-seeking interests or absolute foolishness, it is called *kufir*. This *kufir*, however, does not mean the covering over the truth of religion by means of a non-religion. Rather, it means covering over the truth of religion by means of another religion.

### **Multitheism (*shirk*)\***

*Shirk* or multitheism does not mean godlessness. Rather, multitheists have more gods than we do! A multitheist is not a person who does not believe in a deity. It is not a person who does not worship a deity. As we know, those who opposed Jesus, Moses and Abraham are multitheists, not godless people.

Who are multitheists? They are not people who do not believe in a deity. They are people who believe in more than there is. That is, they have extra gods. They are worshippers of excessive deities. Thus, from the scholarly point of view, a person who does not have a religious belief and religious sensibilities cannot be called a multitheist because multitheists have deities.

They have various deities. They believe in their servitude in relation to these deities and in the influence of these deities in the destiny of the world and their own fate. Thus, just as we look at God, a multitheist looks at his own gods.

Therefore, from the point of view of emotions, a multitheist is religious. He or she is a religious individual but from the point of view of meaning and from the point of view of religious realities, he or she is a person who has gone astray. A religion which has gone astray is something other than a non-religion. Thus, multitheism is a religion and it is known by some as the oldest form of religion among human societies.

### **Idolism**

Idolism is a special form of the religion of multitheism. It is

not synonymous with it. Multitheism has been recognized as being a religion of the common people throughout history and, in one phase, it became manifested in the form of idolism. Thus, idolism means the making of statues or sacred things which, from the point of view of its followers, that is, the followers of the religion of multitheism, are sacred or belong to the sacred.

That is, they are either similar to a god or they believe that basically it is a god or they believe that they are intermediaries or the representatives of a god and, at any rate, they believe that each of these gods is effective in a part of the workings of life and the world. Thus, idolism refers to one of the factions of the religion of multitheism.

In the Holy Quran, when they (multitheists, idolaters) are attacked or when discussions are held with them and criticism is made of them, attempts are made so that dialogues be held in more general terms with them and include both multitheists and idolaters. Why? So that later this very judgment which has presently come to mind, not come into being and we not imagine that the Islamic movement only opposes those existing forms of idolism but rather, understand that the attack of Islam, following the monotheistic movements of the past, is an attack on the roots of the religion of multitheism in a general way and in whatever form it took, including the form of the worship of statues and we imagine that we should only recognize the opposition (that is, the religion of multitheism) when it takes the form of idolism, for the Holy Quran says, "*Worship you what you yourselves carve out?*" (37:95)

Has it only been statues of wood and stone which we constructed with our hands throughout history and throughout the width and breadth of geographic lands that we then worshipped? No. Multitheism was and is manifested in hundreds of physical and non-physical forms as one of the

com  
form  
idoli

This  
carve  
ner o  
relig  
side  
gion  
it. It  
mani

**Mon**  
This  
but I  
speak  
these  
in the  
of the  
hami  
create  
Will,  
Will.

Another  
which  
verse.  
exister  
the un

The w  
of all  
Abrah  
the inv  
in exist  
ation, t



common religions in the history of humanity. One of its forms, at the present time, in all human societies, is that of idolism in the form of African or Arabian ignorance.

This, "Do you worship those things which you (yourselves) carve?" is a general principle. It is a description of the manner of religious worship in the religion of multitheism. This religion of multitheism moved forward, throughout history, side by side and step by step, exactly parallel with the religion of monotheism and it continues to move forward with it. It never ended with the story of Abraham or with the manifestation of Islam. Rather, it still continues.

### **Monotheism (*tawhid*)\***

This is a discussion which relates to the history of religions but I will endeavor to speak in our own terms of Islam and speak from our culture. In a religious front, that is, in one of these two fronts, there is the worship of the One God, God in the Name of the Awake, Willed, Creator and Determiner of the universe. These are Qualities of God in all the Abrahamic religions. There is the Quality of Creator, that is, He created all of the world. There is the Quality of the Divine Will, that is, the world moves and is guided through His Will.

Another Quality is that which rules over existence and which has Vision and Absolute Awareness of all of the universe. At the same time, God is the direction towards which existence and creation moves and He determines the goal of the universe.

The worship of this Absolute Power which is the great call of all of the Abrahamic Traditions, essentially, the goal of Abraham in announcing this well-known cry, consisted of the invitation to all human beings to worship the One Power in existence, to orient their attention to one direction in creation, to believe in one effective power in all of existence and

one place of refuge throughout life.

This invitation, which in history is announced as being the invitation to monotheism, *tawhid*, has a material and this-worldly side, as well. It is clear when a group believes that all of this creation is built by one Power and that all of this created world, whether human or animal, whether plant or even inanimate, one force rules and that other than He, there is no effect and that all things, forms, colors, types and substances, are built by the One Creator, this world view of Divine Unity and the Unity of God in Existence, logically and intellectually requires the unity of humanity upon the earth. That is, when monotheism announces that all of creation is one empire, in the hands of one Power and that all human beings are one Source, are guided through one Will, are oriented towards one way, are made of one type, have One God, and that all powers, symbols, manifestations, values and signs must be destroyed before Him, when a person like myself, who believes in monotheism, looks at the world, I automatically see this world as having a total, living form. I see a Universal, a Spirit, a Power that rules over the physical.

Thus it is a universal. Also, when I look at all of humanity, as a unified genus, I look at it with one value because it has been created by one Hand and there is one Order.

This religion of monotheism, one of the two religions, is based upon the worship of One God, the belief in one Power for all of Creation and all of the fate of humanity in history. As I have said, the unity of God, of necessity, brings about the unity of the universe and the unity of the human being. On the other hand, this particular belief of humanity is the primordial desire of human beings for the worship of one Power, the belief in one Sanctity (as Durkheim\* says) or the belief in the unseen (as the Holy Quran says). This belief is part of the primordial nature, *fitrat* \* of humanity which has

contin  
its last  
places

If we f  
has en  
it has  
ship is

This fe  
ism br  
passes  
the liv  
tains a  
of mor  
a belie  
classes  
and th

PREVE  
This ve  
uance i  
The cor  
being t  
we mer  
sist and  
There i  
from th  
edge th

Look at  
books c  
and Isla  
Moses a  
ment ha  
ond, Ba

continuously existed. A sign of something being *fitri*\* is first, its lasting quality and, then, its presence in all areas and all places. Thus these signs show that something is *fitri*.

If we follow a nation throughout its history, we see worship has endured. If we look at the world in any one era, we see it has always existed in all places and this shows that worship is instinctive, based in one's primordial nature.

This feeling of worship brought by the religion of monotheism brings about the recognition of the Power which encompasses the world and, as a result, ends in the recognition of the living world in its powerful, sensitive form which contains a Will and a goal. This desire, by means of the religion of monotheism, is also manifested in history in the form of a belief in the unity of humanity, the unity of all races, all classes, all families and all individuals, the unity of rights and the unity of honor.

### PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF MONOTHEISM

This very religious feeling, on the other hand, finds continuance in the history of religions, in the form of multitheism. The continuation takes a form in every era which brings into being the greatest power to confront the first religion which we mentioned. It brings into being the greatest power to resist and to prevent the spread of the religion of monotheism. There is not sufficient time for me to describe all religions from this point of view but with the familiarity and knowledge that we have, at least about the great prophets.

Look at Moses in the Pentateuch\*, in stories relating to it and books on it and Pentateuchal culture and even in the Quran and Islamic Traditions: the greatest forces which confronted Moses and, more than anything else, harmed Moses' movement have been shown to be first, the Samaritan and the second, Balaam.

### THE SAMARITAN\*

After a great deal of anguish and struggle and even after his victory of making the One God familiar to his people in his society, Moses destroys calf worship and idolism which was one of the types of multitheism in those days. After all this, the Samaritan once again builds a calf. He takes advantage of the slightest opportunity, which was the absence of Moses, so that the people worship the calf.

This person who built the calf so that people worship it instead of Yahweh, God, Allah, was not a godless or non-religious person. He was a believer in religion. He was a preacher and even a religious leader.

### BALAAM\*

Is he a materialist philosopher? Is he a temporalist? Is he a Metternich or a Schopenhauer? No. Balaam is the greatest priest of that time. The religion of the people turned around this individual and it is because of this that he arises, in spite of Moses, and confronts Moses' movement. As the religion, emotions and faith of the people were in his hands, he could undertake the greatest struggle in history to confront the truth—the religion of monotheism—and strike the most effective blows.

### THE PHARISEES\*

Let us look at Jesus. His sermons, his sufferings and the blows which Jesus withstood until close to the end of his life, which terminates in his crucifixion, according to Judeo-Christian traditions', when he is destroyed, when he is defeated, when he bears all of the blows and treason, all of the pressures, all of the slander, all of the evil words and the ugliest of insults which are given in relation to him and his mother, all were done at the hands of the Pharisees.

#### Who were the Pharisees?

The Pharisees were the defenders and masters of the religion

of the time. They were not materialists. They were not atheists. They were not temporalists. There were no materialists at that time. Those who confronted Jesus and his followers were believers, pursuers and preachers of the religion of multitheism.

Let us look at the Prophet of Islam. Were the several people who stood before him at the battles of Uhud,\* at Taif,\* at Badr,\* at Makkah, with swords unsheathed, godless men? Were they essentially not believers lacking in religious feelings? Not one person can be found who was not. Not even one. All were people who either in truth or hypocritically believed.

The reason they gave as their battle cry was that the Prophet, the son of Abd Allah\* and his followers must be done away with, "because they want to destroy the honor and respect of Abraham's house." Why? "Because they reject our principles, sacredness and beliefs. Because they want to destroy this house and this sacred land of Makkah. Because they want to break our sacredness, our idols, our temples and our priests who stand behind us and the gods." Thus, the battle cry of the Quraysh\*, the battle cry of all of the Arabs who fought against Islam, throughout the lifetime of the Prophet, was the cry of 'religion vs. religion'.

After the Prophet of Islam, this very same battle cry begins in another form. Had disbelief arisen and stood before Ali, before the movement which continued the spirit of Islam, which wanted to continue it? Was it godlessness and non-religion? Or the reasoning that God does not exist? Or was it the belief in a religion which brought about the war between the Umayyid\* tribe and the followers of Ali,\* the war between the descendants of Abbas\* and the family of the Prophet in opposition to this religion?

## THE PARADOX

Among the particularities of that religion, that is, the Abrahamic religion—we refer to it as the Abrahamic religion because everyone more readily understand this—the monotheistic religion, is the worship of God. Throughout history, one religion and one creed was announced before all of these movements of multitheism. According to our belief and according to the philosophy of history, from Adam to the Seal\* (the Prophet of Islam) continuously until the end of the history of humanity, the worship of One Deity, as the Creator of the world, was announced, Who Determines all of the values of human beings and the goal of history in the life of humanity.

This was announced to stand before the worship of the arrogant ruler who rebels against God's Commands, the *taghut*\* to stand before this movement which invited humanity to submit before this great Beloved of Existence, this great secret of Creation, this great goal of Creation which ended and terminated in God. It was announced to submit before this System and before this goal. Confronting this goal, which is called Islam, and, as Islam itself describes it, 'submission' (islam) is the name of all true religions, were those who worshipped an arrogant leader who rebelled against God's commands.

But this religion of monotheism, while it invites humanity to submit before God, in the same way and for this very reason, it invites humanity to rebel against anything that is other than He. opposed to this, the religion of multitheism or *shirk* invites humanity to rebel against this great Beloved of Existence, before this invitation of Islam to God, Who is the meaning of all of existence and the eternal goal of all life, and to rebel against the religion of Islam and it calls this 'surrender'. It terminates automatically in surrender and slavery to hundreds of other powers, to hundreds of other polarizations and forces, where each pole, each power, each class and

each gr  
Multit  
servitu  
disgrac  
idols, t  
pressio  
people

This is  
the gre  
what y  
to be, v  
capital  
riod, th

Among  
positio  
of the n  
gitimat

WHAT I  
A revo  
dividu  
though  
in all i  
mission  
which  
place it  
the tru

The par  
not sho  
It clear  
first sta  
the hei  
not cha

each group has a god.

Multitheism means servitude. It means rebelling against servitude to God and, at the same time, it means surrender, disgrace and the enslavement of humanity in bondage to the idols, that is, that which deceivers, liars, ignorance and oppression all built with the help of one another is to invite people to servitude and worship of other than God.

This is rebellion against God's commands, rebellion before the great Power of Being and surrender to, "Worship you what you yourselves carve out?" No matter what it wants to be, whether it be Lat\* or Uzza\* or a machine or virtues or capital, whether blood or ancestor, whatever it is in any period, these are idols before Allah, before God.

Among the particularities of the monotheistic religion is its position of attack and revolution. Among the particularities of the religion of multitheism, in its general sense, is the legitimation of the status quo.

#### WHAT DOES A REVOLUTIONARY RELIGION MEAN?

A revolutionary religion gives an individual, that is, an individual who believes in it, who is trained in the school of thought or *maktab\** of this religion, the ability to criticize life in all its material, spiritual and social aspects. It gives the mission and duty to destroy, to change and to eliminate that which one does not accept and believes to be invalid and replace it with that which one knows and recognizes as being the truth.

The particularity of the religion of monotheism is that it does not show indifference before it. Look at all of the prophets. It clearly shows that these monotheistic religions, in their first state at the beginning of their manifestation, which is the height of their purity and their lucidity, and they have not changed in the least bit, nor have they been transformed,

take the form of a movement against the status quo, take the form of rebellion against defilement and oppression, a rebellion which announces servitude to the creator, that is, the cause of creation and submission to the Laws of Existence, which are the manifestation of the Laws of God.

Look at all religions. Look at Moses. Did Moses not rebel before three symbols? Korah\*, the greatest capitalist of his time. Balaam, the greatest priest of that deviated religion of multitheism. And the Pharaoh, the greatest symbol of political power of his time. Did he not arise against the status quo? What was the status quo? Enslavement and humiliation by the minority of the Sebtians towards another race called the Coptics. Moses' movement was a struggle against racial discrimination which was the superiority of the Coptics over the Sebtians, a struggle against the social situation, which was the domination of one race over another race, or the enslavement of a race. It is to replace an ideal. It is the realization of a clear purpose for life and society which is the salvation of an enslaved race, its guidance and its migration to the promised land. It is the development of a society based upon an ideology and based upon a social school in which an arrogant leader who rebels against God's Command, who is the legitimizer of discrimination, is destroyed and replaced by monotheism which signifies the unity of society and humanity.

#### WHAT DOES A RELIGION OF LEGITIMATION MEAN?

The endeavors of the religion of multitheism or *shirk* are always to legitimate and defend the status quo by making use of metaphysical beliefs, a belief in god or gods, a belief in the Resurrection, that is, legitimating the belief in the Resurrection, and distorting the belief in unseen powers and distorting all principles of religious beliefs.

That is, in the name of religion, people are made to believe, "The situation which you have or which your society has is



a situation which you and your society must have because this is the manifestation of God's Will. It is destiny and fate." Destiny or fate, in the sense that we understand it today is a souvenir concocted by Mu'awiyah.\* History clearly shows that belief in a fate or pre-determination was brought into being by the Umayyids. Because of their belief in pre-determination, Muslims were held back from taking any kind of responsibility or action or making criticism. Pre-determination means accepting that which is and whatever will happen.

#### COMMANDING TO GOOD AND PREVENTING EVIL\*

But see the Companions of the Holy Prophet who believe in their social responsibility at every moment, commanding to good or virtue and preventing evil or vice which exists in an absurd way in our minds and which cannot even be mentioned in an intellectual community, is that very thing which the intellectuals of Europe today have replaced with terms like 'human responsibility', 'artist's responsibility' and 'intellectual's responsibility'. What does that which philosophy, art and literature speak about in terms of responsibility in today's society mean? It means exactly what commanding to good and preventing evil means but we have so made commanding to good and preventing evil that we actually command to good and prevent evil in a way whereby we repudiate it.

#### THE CONTINUATION OF MULTITHEISM

The religion of multitheism continued, throughout history, in two forms. As I said, the mission and goal of the religion of multitheism is to legitimate the status quo. What does the status quo mean?

We see that, throughout history, human societies are divided into the noble and unnoble, master and slave, abased and enslaving, ruler and ruled, captive and free, a group which has an essence, roots, race and is of a golden extraction and

another group which lacks these. A nation which is more virtuous than another nation. A class which is continuously superior and has preference over another class.

This discrimination which the preferred and aristocratic group have always had from the beginning over other families, this 'multitheistic' belief which existed in life and its agent was also the prosperity of one group and the abasement of another group, was automatically to legitimate the situation which is exactly opposite 'monotheistic' belief which is the destroyer of this situation. The religion of multitheism says, "Multiple gods must come into being for the multiple realms and the multiple rules in the world so that multiple groups, multiple classes, multiple families, multiple races and multiple colors be realized in society upon the earth and continue."

One group can, with coercion, abase another group and then that coercive group itself takes the legal, social and economic rights of society but they are difficult to maintain and keep. This is why coercive forces, throughout history, always took hold of these resources and abased the majority but it has not been able to maintain its domination with coercion.

It is here that religion, that is, the religion of multitheism takes up the mission of preserving this situation. Its work was to make people submit, be content with the belief that whatever took place was God's Will, convince themselves that, "I am connected to a low class not only because my essence is lowly but because my god, my lord, my creator and my master are lower than the masters of other races, lower than the idols of that race, lower than the gods of the other race."

Thus, when this situation is like this, when the discrimination of race and class, which take the form of this religion of multitheism, are strengthened and firmed up, the status quo

is always  
tinue in  
of devel  
is always  
establish

Look at  
princes a  
priests in  
types like  
Africa an  
spoke of  
be the pre  
and move  
over them  
was at the  
land was  
ers, that  
Zoroastria

We see that  
follow, as  
prophets s  
has legitim  
life of anci  
intellectua  
who rebel  
and idolis  
opposed th

### THE ROOTS OF OWNERSHIP

The  
are econom  
over the ab  
and the see  
order to pre

is always and forever supposed to be like this and it will continue in this way. This is why, throughout history, the class of developers and guardians of the religion of multitheism is always the highest class and has even more power, is more established and more wealthy than even the ruling class.

Look at the Sassanian era. The priests dominated over the princes and the military. Look at the Magis.\* Look at the priests in Europe. Look at rabbis of the Israeli tribes and types like Balaam. Look at tribes, idolatrous tribes. Look at Africa and Australia, the religion of witch doctors, those who spoke of the unseen, the astrologers, those who claimed to be the preservers of the existing religion. They all held hands and moved alongside with the rulers or else they dominated over them. In Europe, sometimes more than 70% of the land was at the disposal of the priests. In the Sassanian era, more land was in the hands of the priests than any other landowners, that is, the feudalists or endowed for temples and Zoroastrian places of worship.

We see that the prophets, the prophets that we believe in and follow, as opposed to that which we think and imagine, these prophets stood before a religion which, throughout history, has legitimated the oppressive and inhuman situation of the life of ancient societies from the economic, ethical as well as intellectual point of view and the worship of arrogant rulers who rebelled against God's Commands, in a general sense and idolism, in a particular sense. It was these prophets who opposed the spread of multitheism.

## **THE ROOTS OF THE RELIGION OF MULTITHEISM**

### **OWNERSHIP OF A MINORITY OVER AN ABASED MAJORITY**

The roots of this religion, the religion of multitheism, are economic. Its roots are in the ownership of a minority over the abased majority. It is this very factor of economics and the seeking of superiority which requires a religion in order to preserve and legitimate itself and eternalize its way

of life. What factor is stronger than this religion that an individual automatically accept and be content with his abjectness.

#### **LEGITIMATION OF THE STATUS QUO**

It has been this religion—the religion of multitheism which has continuously legitimated the status quo. In what form? One was the form of the belief in and accept the idea that the existence of several nations and the existence of several families were the effects of God's Will. 'It is metaphysical!'

#### **PROMOTION OF CLASS SUPERIORITY**

So that they themselves, in opposition to the other class, would prosper through the privileges which were continuously, throughout the history of rulers, in the exclusive control of rulers and they always monopolized history.

#### **NARCOSIS OR INNER SURRENDER**

Just as the anti-religious forces of today correctly say, the elements of the religion of multitheism consisted of ignorance, fear, discrimination, ownership and the preference of one class over another. These people, that is, those who are anti-religious, are correct. It is right that, "Religion is the opium of the masses of the people," so that the people surrender to their abjectness, difficulties, wretchedness and ignorance, surrender to the static situation which they are obliged to have, surrender to the disgraceful fate which they and their ancestors were obliged to have and still have—an inner, ideological surrender.

#### **WITHHOLDING RESPONSIBILITY**

Look at the Murji'ites\*. The Murji'ites in Islamic society negate the responsibilities of every criminal in history. The Murji'ites say, "Why does God speak about the scales on the Day of Judgment? Because He will see to Mu'awiyah and Ali's accounts?" That is, "When He is the judge, then you should not speak. What's it to you who is in the right and

who is in the wrong. You carry on with your life."

## THE MOVEMENT OF MULTI THEISM: MANIFEST AND HIDDEN

The religion of multitheism moves in two forms in history. The first form is that of a straight path which we see in the history of religions, that is, the religion of the worship of beads, the worship of something which is taboo, the worship of Magi, the worship of new lords, the worship of several gods and the worship of spirits. This is the hierarchy of the religion of multi theism in the history of religions but these are the obvious forms of the religion of multitheism.

The second form is the hidden form of the religion of multitheism which is more dangerous than any of the others and more noxious. It is this hidden form of the religion of multitheism which has caused more harm and done more damage to humanity and to the truth than anything else. That is, multi theism hides behind the mask of monotheism.

As soon as the prophets of monotheism arose and confronted multitheism, multitheism stood against them. If these prophets were victorious and they were able to make multitheism fall to its knees, then multitheism would continue in its hidden form through the followers, successors and those who continued its way in the shape of monotheism.

This is why we see that when Balaam, who stood before Moses, is removed from the way as a result of the movement of Moses, he takes the form of the rabbi of the religion of Moses and the form of the Pharisees who murdered Jesus.\* It is this group which destroys Jesus and stands alongside the idolatrous Caesar of Rome against the defenders of monotheism. They work together and play out their roles together. They are either followers of that very group which stood against Moses or they are followers of that group

which fled with Moses. They are the same Balaam and the Samaritan who now appear dressed in the clothes of the religion of Moses.

The priests of the Middle Ages committed more crimes than any criminal in the name of a religion which had historically been founded upon love, friendship, loyalty, patience, forgiveness and kindness in the name of Jesus, a person who was the theophany of peace and forgiveness—crimes the Mongols never even dreamed of and they shed more blood than any other criminals have ever done.

Are they, then, followers of the way of Jesus? Are they disciples of Jesus? Or are they continuing the way of the religion of multitheism? It is these very Pharisees who have now taken the form of priests so that they can turn Jesus' religion, from within, towards multitheism and they ended up doing so.

Thus, these words, spoken in the 19th century to the effect that "religion is the opium of the people," or "religion is so that people will patiently bear their abasement and wretchedness in this world in the name of hope after death", are correct. It is the opium of the people so that people find belief in the idea that whatever happens is in God's hands. It is because of God's Will and any efforts to try and change the situation, to try to improve the life of the people is to oppose God's Will. This is correct.

It is correct when the 18th and 19th centuries' scholars said, "Religion is born of the ignorance people have about scientific causes." And the fact that they said, "Religion is born of the delusive fear of people," and that, "Religion was born from discrimination, ownership and the abasement of the feudal age," is correct.

But which religion are they referring to? That very religion which always had history in its realm—other than the few

more  
they  
ism.  
the  
ligio  
the A  
mon  
foll  
Qura

The p  
not a  
Lat a  
form.  
Qura  
strikes  
of the  
ism ru  
Messe  
the Ho  
jihad a  
religion

The rel  
name o  
the four  
religion  
legitima  
and inn  
is indiff  
dominat  
who said  
is born o  
soning is

But they  
know rel

moments which glowed like the splendor of lightning and they were extinguished—is that very religion of multitheism. Whether this religion of multitheism be in the name of the religion of monotheism, the religion of Moses or the religion of Jesus, or in the names of the Prophet's caliphs\* or the Abbasid caliphate, all are in the name of the religion of monotheism, in the name of jihad\* and the Quran and the followers of the religion of multitheism even place the Holy Quran on the point of their spears.

The person who placed the Holy Quran on spear points was not a Quraysh who stood before the Prophet in support of Lat and Uzza. He could not preserve multitheism in this form. He enters from the inside and then places the holy Quran on the tip of his spear and strikes a blow at Ali. He strikes a blow at God's religion and the Prophet. In the name of the religion of Islam, once again, the religion of multitheism rules over history in the name of the caliphate of God's Messenger and in the name of a rule whose Constitution is the Holy Quran. Essentially, the caliph who goes upon the jihad and goes to the *hajj*, once again rules in the name of the religion of multitheism.

The religion of multitheism rules in the Middle Ages in the name of Jesus and in the name of Moses. They are among the founders of the monotheistic religion and once again, the religion of multitheism, rules in their name, the religion of legitimation, the religion of narcosis, the religion of statics and immobility, the religion of limitations, the religion which is indifferent to the life situation of people which always dominated over human societies throughout history. Those who said religion is born of fear, born of narcosis, is limiting, is born of the feudal age, spoke the truth because their reasoning is based upon history and historiography.

But they have not understood religion because they do not know religion or history. Whoever studies history will see

that, throughout history, the work of religion has been just this—to preserve the religion of multitheism, either through assuming the name of monotheism or directly in the name of multitheism.

I have compared all of the names and qualities which refer to gods or a deity in the Abrahamic religions as well as the multitheist religions and I have seen that it is true that the religion of multitheism is born of the ignorance and fear of the people. Why?

Because religious multitheists, that is, people who propagate the religion of multitheism, are afraid of the people awakening, becoming literate, becoming scholars. They want knowledge to always be in the monopoly of one thing—themselves. Why?

Because as knowledge progresses, the religion of multitheism is destroyed for that which preserves the religion of multitheism is ignorance. The awakening of the people means the awakening of a spirit of objection and criticism in people, the divine ideal in people, the seeking of justice in people. This weakens and shakes the foundation of multitheism. Why?

Because throughout history that religion was the preserve and guardian of the status quo and this situation has existed throughout the history of humanity, from before the age of feudalism until the age of feudalism and afterwards in the East and in the West.

The same names of gods are continuously defined in the hierarchy of the multitheistic religions, that is, qualities or names like awe, dread and coercion in their particular despotic sense.

But all of the Names and Qualities of God in the Abrahamic

Traditions  
ities v  
cepts:  
and B  
prived  
rely u

Thus,  
tory an  
of the  
Abrah  
human  
univers  
the nee  
Beauty

The pro  
continu  
whethe  
they be  
nomic c  
of the re  
tus quo  
to upro  
the scale  
Holy Qu  
in order  
accept th

CONCLU  
Thus, the  
history, re  
ligion has  
fought w  
based up  
need of a  
before the



Traditions reflect two ideas. That is, all the Names and Qualities which exist in the Abrahamic religions show two concepts: first, love and beauty and the worship of One Majesty and Beauty and second, that God is the refuge for the deprived and oppressed, the Master, the Lord and the One we rely upon.

Thus, we see that it is true that religions which existed in history and ruled, are born of ignorance and are born of the fear of the people from natural forces or powers whereas the Abrahamic religions, born of love, born of the need of a human being for a goal, the need for a single rule over the universe, for one direction or orientation in Creation, answer the need of the human being for the worship of Absolute Beauty and Absolute Perfection.

The prophets of this religion—the Abrahamic religions—continuously challenge all of the visages which rule, whether they be social or spiritual and all idols, whether they be logical, physical or human, whether they be economic or material. They challenge all of the manifestations of the religion of multitheism, that is, the religion of the status quo. Their responsibility and that of their followers was to uproot the status quo and replace it with justice. Justice, the scales and equity, which are continuously repeated in the Holy Quran, along with the Message of the Messenger, are in order to establish justice and equity and not in order to accept the status quo.

### CONCLUSION

Thus, the conclusion that I want to make is that, throughout history, religion has not been confronted by non-religion. Religion has been confronted by religion. Religion has always fought with religion. The religion of monotheism, which is based upon awareness, consciousness, insight, love and the need of a person, a primordial, philosophical need, stands before the religion which is born of ignorance and fear.

Whenever a prophet was sent to the religion of monotheism, which is a revolutionary religion, to stand and confront the multitheistic religion, human beings were invited to follow the laws of nature which rule the universe in the universal, revolutionary journey of creation which is the theophany of the Divine Will. Essentially, the necessity of the religion of monotheism is rebellion, denial and saying 'no' before any other power.

And reciprocally, confronting the worship of God, there is the worship of an arrogant leader who rebels against God's Commands, a *taghut* who invited human beings to rebel before the system of truth which rules over the universe and the lives of humanity, resulting in the enslavement to the various idols which were representatives of multiple powers of society.

God and the deprived people form one front in the Pentateuch and the Gospels (those parts which have not been distorted and thus, deduction from them is possible), in the Holy Quran and everywhere without exception. Who opposes this front? The worshippers of an arrogant leader who rebels against the Commands of God, the *taghuti*. Who are they?

These very people, that is, those people who, according to the Holy Quran, are wealthy aristocrats, *mala'*,\* and insatiable people who live in ease and luxury, *mutrif*,\* people who have ruled in their own society without having any responsibilities. Throughout history, the religion of the wealthy aristocrats and the insatiable people who live in ease and luxury ruled. It either ruled in a very clear and apparent way in its own name or it preserved itself under the cover of the religion of God and the people.

The religion of monotheism is a religion whose rule in history was not realized. In my opinion, this is one of the hon-

or  
to  
wa  
ru

The  
is t  
of  
aga  
live  
aga

The  
por  
the  
relig  
and  
scio  
ized  
criti  
perf

At th  
of ar  
the v  
ease  
legiti  
tory,

I say  
an in  
religi  
alized  
about  
which  
a relig  
forms

ors of Shi'ism that it did not accept mat which was offered to the world in the Middle Ages as Islamic power. Its *jihad* was against the greedy eyes of imperialism and it saw the rule of the Caesars, not the caliphate of God's Prophet.

Thus, the Abrahamic religions or the monotheistic religion is that religion which continuously arose against the worship of an arrogant ruler who rebels against God's Commands, against the wealthy aristocrats and the insatiable people who live in ease and luxury and they invited people to arise against them.

The religion of monotheism announced that God is the supporter of the deprived and oppressed people. It addressed the people. Its goal has been the establishment of justice. The religion of monotheism is born of awareness, consciousness and the need for love, worship and the most extensive consciousness possible of the people but not as it has been realized in history. Rather, it took the form of a movement of criticism against history and it has never been realized in a perfect form.

At the same time, the religion of multitheism, the worship of an arrogant leader who rebels against God's commands, the wealthy aristocrats and the insatiable people who live in ease and luxury, that is, idolism, that is, the religion which legitimates the status quo and the religion of narcosis in history, continuously existed, held power and dominated.

I say to those intellectuals who always ask, "Why do you, an intellectual, rely so much on religion?" If I speak about religion, I do not speak about a religion which had been realized in the past and which ruled society. Rather, I speak about a religion whose goals are to do away with a religion which ruled over society throughout history. I speak about a religion the prophets of which arose to destroy the various forms which the religion of multitheism had taken and

which at no time in history was realized by the religion of monotheism in a complete form from the point of view of society and the social life of the people.

Our responsibility is to put forth efforts for the realization of that religion in the future. This is the responsibility of humanity, so that in the future, the religion of monotheism, as it was announced through the prophets of monotheism in human society, replace the religions which render one senseless, narcotize and legitimate multitheism. Thus, my reliance upon religion is not a return to the past but rather the continuation of the way of history.

## LECTURE TWO

### INTRODUCTION

In the first part, I expressed what I meant by the phrase 'religion vs. religion'. As opposed to that which we may think, I recently realized (even though this discovery is not a very complicated philosophical or scientific one, but often very simple issues bring about very harmful results because we do not attend to them), religion has not, throughout history, fought against disbelief in the sense of what we feel it means, that is, non-religion—lack of religious belief—because in the past there was no society or class which was godless and without a religion. Throughout history, as history bears witness and all historic-sociological documents show, religious sociology and all historical research of the human being bears witness, human beings continuously, throughout their social past, were religious.

And also, we said in the first part that, continuously, the so-