



PNU University

Mystical Texts In English (1)

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امروزه کتاب‌خوانی و علم‌آموزی، نه تنها یک وظیفه‌ی ملی، که یک واجب دینی است.

مقام معظم رهبری

در عصر حاضر یکی از شاخصه‌های ارزیابی رشد، توسعه و پیشرفت فرهنگی هر کشوری میزان تولید کتاب، مطالعه و کتاب‌خوانی مردم آن مرز و بوم است. ایران اسلامی نیز از دیرباز تاکنون با داشتن تمدنی چندهزارساله و مراکز متعدد علمی، فرهنگی، کتابخانه‌های معتبر، علما و دانشمندان بزرگ با آثار ارزشمند تاریخی، سرآمد دولت‌ها و ملت‌های دیگر بوده و در عرصه‌ی فرهنگ و تمدن جهانی به‌سان خورشیدی تابناک همچنان می‌درخشد و با فرزندان نیک‌نهاد خویش هنرنمایی می‌کند. چه کسی است که در دنیا با دانشمندان فرزانه و نام‌آور ایرانی همچون ابوعلی سینا، ابوریحان بیرونی، فارابی، خوارزمی و ... همچنین شاعران برجسته‌ای نظیر فردوسی، سعدی، مولوی، حافظ و ... آشنا نباشد و در مقابل عظمت آنها سر تعظیم فرود نیاورد. تمامی این افتخارات ارزشمند، برگرفته از میزان عشق و علاقه فراوان ملت ما به فراگیری علم و دانش از طریق خواندن و مطالعه منابع و کتاب‌های گوناگون است. به شکرانه‌ی الهی، تاریخ و گذشته ما، همیشه درخشان و پربار است. ولی اکنون در این زمینه در چه جایگاهی قرار داریم؟ آمار و ارقام ارائه‌شده از سوی مجامع و سازمان‌های فرهنگی در مورد سرانه‌ی مطالعه‌ی هر ایرانی، برایمان چندان امیدوارکننده نمی‌باشد و رهبر معظم انقلاب اسلامی نیز از این وضعیت بارها اظهار گله و ناخشنودی نموده‌اند.

کتاب، دروازه‌ای به سوی گستره‌ی دانش و معرفت است و کتاب خوب، یکی از بهترین ابزارهای کمال بشری است. همه‌ی دستاوردهای بشر در سراسر عمر جهان تا آنجا که قابل کتابت بوده است، در میان دست‌نوشته‌هایی است که انسان‌ها پدید آورده و می‌آورند. در این مجموعه‌ی بی‌نظیر، تعالیم الهی، درس‌های پیامبران به بشر، و همچنین علوم مختلفی است که سعادت بشر بدون آگاهی از آنها امکان‌پذیر نیست. کسی که با دنیای زیبا و زندگی‌بخش کتاب ارتباط ندارد بی‌شک از مهم‌ترین دستاوردهای انسانی و نیز از بیشترین معارف الهی و بشری محروم است. با این دیدگاه، به‌روشنی می‌توان ارزش و مفهوم رمزی عمیق در این حقیقت تاریخی را دریافت که اولین خطاب خداوند متعال به پیامبر گرامی اسلام (ص) این است که «بخوان!» و در اولین

سوره‌ای که بر آن فرستاده‌ی عظیم‌الشان خداوند، فرود آمده، نام «قلم» به تجلیل یاد شده‌است: «اقْرَأْ وَ رَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ. الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ» در اهمیت عنصر کتاب برای تکامل جامعه‌ی انسانی، همین بس که تمامی ادیان آسمانی و رجال بزرگ تاریخ بشری، از طریق کتاب جاودانه مانده‌اند.

دانشگاه پیام‌نور با گستره‌ی جغرافیایی ایران‌شمول خود با هدف آموزش برای همه، همه‌جا و همه‌وقت، به‌عنوان دانشگاهی کتاب‌محور در نظام آموزش عالی کشورمان، افتخار دارد جایگاه اندیشه‌سازی و خردورزی بخش عظیمی از جوانان جوای علم این مرز و بوم باشد. تلاش فراوانی در ایام طولانی فعالیت این دانشگاه انجام پذیرفته تا با بهره‌گیری از تجربه‌های گرانقدر استادان و صاحب‌نظران برجسته کشورمان، کتاب‌ها و منابع آموزشی درسی شاخص و خودآموز تولید شود. در آینده هم، این مهم با هدف ارتقای سطح علمی، روزآمدی و توجه بیشتر به نیازهای مخاطبان دانشگاه پیام‌نور با جدیت ادامه خواهد داشت. به‌طور قطع استفاده از نظرات استادان، صاحب‌نظران و دانشجویان محترم، ما را در انجام این وظیفه‌ی مهم و خطیر یاری‌رسان خواهد بود. پیشاپیش از تمامی عزیزانی که با نقد، تصحیح و پیشنهادهای خود ما را در انجام این وظیفه‌ی خطیر یاری می‌رسانند، سپاسگزاری می‌نماییم. لازم است از تمامی اندیشمندانی که تاکنون دانشگاه پیام‌نور را منزلگاه اندیشه‌سازی خود دانسته و ما را در تولید کتاب و محتوای آموزشی درسی یاری نموده‌اند، صمیمانه قدردانی گردد. موفقیت و بهروزی تمامی دانشجویان و دانش‌پژوهان عزیز آرزوی همیشگی ما است.

دانشگاه پیام‌نور

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Preface

The aim of this book is improving the ability of students in the field of religions studies in dealing with English texts in their own specific area. It has now been widely acknowledged that students need to read a considerable amount of reading materials in order to improve their comprehension, reading fluency, and other skills needed for developing their future target tasks. This book has been designed to provide its audience with a good opportunity to practice reading and its important related skills through working with a wide variety of texts. One of the fundamental assumptions of this book is that improving students' expertise in reading texts in their disciplinary area is contingent upon dealing with a wide variety of texts and reading exercises.

At the very beginning of every unit, general and behavioral objectives are introduced. To help students get an overview of each reading passage, they are given passage main points to come to an overall understanding of the text they are about to read.

Perhaps one of the most distinctive features of this book is its extensive coverage of new words and their definitions. The reading passages students encounter in this book are relatively long and usually have a wide variety of new words which may be unknown to most students. An attempt has been made to illuminate the meanings of such words along with some other useful information such as their parts of speech or where necessary, their usages. Following new words is the main part of each unit, where there is the reading passage. Reading passages used in this book have been for the most part taken from two major sources: *The Encyclopedia of Religion* and *The mystics of islam* by Reynold A. Nicholsom. The order of passages in this book almost

corresponds to that of the original book so that students can follow different discussions in a more understandable way. Each of the passages is followed by comprehension exercises: **True-False Items** and **Multiple-choice Items**. The purpose of these exercises is to help students check their understanding of the passage.

Language Exercises also make an important part of this book as the developer of this textbook presumes that content and language are intricately inseparable. Probably, the main purpose of such exercises is to help students learn, remember, and use the words they have encountered in the reading passages. These exercises are **Sentence Completion** and **Matching Exercise**. A **Cloze Test** also follows Language Exercises. The purpose of such exercises is to help students improve their ability to use the words in the right context, especially because this ability has been shown to be directly related to reading expertise and even the whole language proficiency and therefore, this exercise can check a good number of reading skills.

Finally, each unit ends with two **Translation Exercises**. In part one, students are asked to translate a text they have already read. In part two, students should try to find appropriate Persian equivalents for some new words they were introduced at the beginning of the unit. Of course, it must be mentioned that there is a Glossary at the end of the book, where students can find the alphabetical list of all new words with their corresponding Persian equivalents. Needless to say, like other textbooks published in Payame Noor University, all answers for different exercises have been provided before the Glossary to help students check their own answers.

I hope this book can take students of Religions and Mysticism one step further towards a good understanding of texts in their specific disciplinary area. I would be glad if I could receive any feedback from students, colleagues, or other interested readers using this book.

Autumn/1394
Ali Reza Jalali

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Unit 1

Monotheism 1

General aims

This unit is designed to introduce students to the basic issues in the study of monotheism and at the same time, familiarize them with some key concepts and terms.

Behavioral Objectives

After carefully reading this unit, you are expected to

1. Come to a relatively good understanding of monotheism and do Comprehension Exercises 1-2,
2. Comprehend and learn the new words introduced in this lesson and do the related Language Exercises 3-4, and
3. Practice translation in a preliminary manner and do Translation Exercises.

New words and their definitions

approachable

adj.

that can be reached by a particular route or from a particular direction

The summit was **approachable** only from the south.

archaic

adj.

from a much earlier or ancient period or history

‘Thou art’ is an **archaic** form of ‘you are’

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authority **n.**
the power to give orders to people

She now has **authority** over the people who used to be her bosses.

autonomy **n.**
the ability to act and make decisions without
being controlled by anyone else

But a few high gods developed with **autonomy**, as guarantors of the order of the world.

avatar **n.**
the incarnation of a Hindu deity(as Vishnu)

Visnu can be worshiped in many **avatars**.

battle **n.**
a combat between two persons
a general encounter between armies, ships of
war or aircraft

He served in two naval **battles** against the Byzantines.

contribute **v.**
give something, especially money or goods, to
help somebody/something

The writer personally **contributed** 5000 dollars to the earthquake fund.

cosmic **adj.**
connected with the whole universe

Do you believe in a **cosmic** plan?

defy v.
challenge to do something considered impossible; dare confront with assured power of resistance; disregard

The beauty of the scene **defies** description.

degeneration n.
the process of becoming worse or less acceptable in quality or condition

The plurality of gods found in most primal religions was a **degeneration** from original perception.

deity n.
-God

We can extend the term to include conceptions of **deity** in certain other traditions such as Zoroastrianism, Sikhism.

description n.
a piece of writing or speech that says what somebody/something is like; the act of writing or saying in words what somebody/ something is like

Police have issued a **description** of the gunman.

dimly adv.
not very brightly or clearly

I did remember, but only **dimly**.

discern v.
know, recognize or understand something, especially something that is not obvious

It is possible to **discern** a number of different techniques in her work.

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distinct **adj.**
clearly different or of a different kind

The results of the survey fell into two **distinct** groups.

emphasize **v.**
give special importance to something

His speech **emphasized** the importance of attracting industry to the town.

fertile **adj.**
that produces good results; that encourages activity
(of a person's mind or imagination) that produces a lot of new ideas

The streams of the monotheistic vision run dimly through the **fertile** valleys of archaic agricultural religions.

guarantor **n.**
a person who agrees to be responsible for somebody or for making sure that something happens or is done

The United Nations will act as **guarantor** of the peace settlement.

hunter **n.**
a person who hunts wild animals for food or sport; an animal that hunts its food

The nomadic **hunters** of Tierra del Fuego, have definite conceptions of a supreme god associated with the sky who is changeless, invisible.

immutable **adj.**
that cannot be changed; that will never change;
unchangeable

God is one, eternal, and **immutable**.

inappropriate **adj.**
not suitable or appropriate in a particular
situation

It would be **inappropriate** for me to comment on what your tutor said.

incarnate **v.**
give a definite or human form to a particular
idea or quality

Visnu **incarnates** himself in an avatar to do battle.

intimate **adj.**
having a close and friendly relationship

We are not on **intimate** terms with our neighbors.

invisible **adj.**
that cannot be seen

She felt **invisible** in the crowd.

just **adj.**
that most people consider to be morally fair and
reasonable

God, the Wise Lord, is good, **just**, and moral.

monolithic **adj.**
constituting a massive undifferentiated and
often rigid whole

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The attitude which subjugates other religions and imposes a **monolithic** system on all may be a result of this type of monotheism.

morality **n.**
principles concerning right and wrong or good
and bad behavior

Standards of **morality** seems to be dropping.

obscure **adj.**
not well known

He was born around 1650 but his origins remain **obscure**.

order **n.**
the way in which people or things are placed or
arranged in relation to each other

The names are listed in alphabetical **order**.

pantheon **n.**
all the gods of a nation or people

The high god tends to become head of the divine **pantheon**.

perception **n.**
the ability to understand the true nature of
something; insight

There is a general public **perception** that standards in schools are falling.

permit **v.**
allow somebody to do something to happen

Radios are not **permitted** in the library.

plurality **n.**
a large number

Monotheism differs from those views that accept a **plurality** of divine beings.

polytheism **n.**
the belief that there is more than one God

Monarchic monotheism is close to **polytheism**.

preside **v.**
lead or be in charge of a meeting, ceremony,
etc.

They asked if I would **preside** at the committee meeting.

presuppose **v.**
accept something as true or existing and act on
that basis, before it has been proved to be true

Teachers sometimes **presuppose** a fairly high level of knowledge by the students.

primal **adj.**
connected with the earliest origins of life; very
basic; primeval

Research in recent years has made it clear that a great many **primal** have conceptions of a high god who is creator of the world.

primordial **adj.**
existing at or from the beginning of the world;
primeval

Wilhelm Schmidt believed that a **primordial** monotheism was the earliest form of human perception of deity.

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realign **v.**
change the position or direction of something
slightly

The road was **realigned** to improve visibility.

remote **adj.**
far away from places where other people live;
isolated

The farmhouse is **remote** from any other buildings.

respect **n.**
a particular aspect or detail of something

In this **respect** we are very fortunate.

sovereignty **n.**
complete power to govern a country

The country claimed **sovereignty** over the island.

spring **n.**
a place where water comes naturally to the
surface from under the ground

Monotheism is like a river with many **springs**.

subjugate **v.**
defeat somebody/ something; to gain control
over somebody/something

Her personal ambitions had been **subjugated** to the needs of her family.

submission **n.**
the act of accepting that has defeated you and
that you must obey them

Such a belief ends naturally in unquestioning **submission** to the divine will.

substantiate **v.**
provide information or evidence to prove that something is true

The results of the tests **substantiated** his claims.

supremacy **n.**
a position in which you have more power, authority or status than anyone else

The company has established total **supremacy** over its rivals.

tendency **n.**
if somebody/something has a particular tendency, they are likely to behave or act in a particular way

I have a **tendency** to talk too much when I m nervous.

term **n.**
a word or phrase used as the name of something, especially one connected with a particular type of language

Register is the **term** commonly used to describe different levels of formality in language.

theism **n.**
belief in the existence of God or gods

Philosophers have used the term **theism** with the same meaning as monotheism.

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tributary **n.**
a river or stream that flows into a larger river or
a lake

Monotheism is like a river with many **tributaries**.

valley **n.**
an area of low land between hills or mountains,
often with a river flowing through it

A small town set in a **valley**.

Passage main points

* The term monotheism refers to the religious experience and the philosophical perception that emphasize God as one, perfect, immutable, creator of the world from nothing, distinct from the world, all-powerfully involved in the world, personal, and worthy of being worshiped by all creatures.

* The term monotheism presupposes the idea of theos—a divine being with mind and will, fully personal, conceivable in images drawn from human life, and approachable through prayer.

* Obscure as they are, springs of monotheism can be discerned at the very earliest levels of known human cultural life, in the primordial high god of the archaic hunters.

Reading Passage

Monotheism 1

Theodore M. Ludwig

MONOTHEISM. Derived from the Greek mono ("single") and theos ("God"), the term monotheism refers to the religious experience and the philosophical perception that emphasize God as one, perfect,

immutable, creator of the world from nothing, distinct from the world, all-powerfully involved in the world, personal, and worthy of being worshiped by all creatures. Some forms of monotheism, however, differ about the notions of God as distinct from the world and as personal.

The term monotheism has generally been used theologically rather than for philosophical or cross-cultural descriptions of religion. Philosophers have used the term theism with the same meaning as monotheism, and cross-cultural descriptions find categories like monotheism and polytheism to be inappropriate in describing some religious traditions. The term monotheism presupposes the idea of theos—a divine being with mind and will, fully personal, conceivable in images drawn from human life, and approachable through prayer. In this respect monotheism differs from deism and from the various forms of monism. It also presupposes the unity of the divine and raises one theos exclusively to absolute supremacy and power, producing and governing everything according to the divine will. In this respect monotheism differs from those views that accept a plurality of divine beings. In the strict sense, monotheism best describes the idea of God in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and in the philosophical systems based on these traditions. But we can extend the term to include conceptions of deity in certain other traditions such as Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, and some forms of Hinduism and Buddhism, even though these traditions include somewhat different conceptions, such as the existence of evil forces alongside God, the nonpersonal nature of God, God's complete immanence in the world, or the fundamental unreality of the world. In this article, the basic requirement for a religious tradition to be considered monotheistic is that it emphasize both theos and monos.

Monotheism in Religious History. Whereas monotheism is most often associated with the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religions and philosophies, tendencies contributing toward a monotheistic outlook have long been present in human religious history. Monotheism is like a river with many springs and many tributaries. The course of the river